

## Rev. Joseph Nock

### Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by W Wardle

Rev. JOSEPH NOCK was a native of the West Bromwich circuit. Very little is known about his early life, but he often stated that his opportunities for mental culture were few indeed.

For some years he was employed in the forge, and had to commence work early in the morning and continue till late in the evening. So that his time for reading books was limited indeed. He was always very anxious about his salvation, and never without serious religious impression. In his teens he was savingly converted to God. We have no record of the exact date, but we required none as to the fact. His everyday life was a living witness.

He was soon placed upon the plan of his native circuit, and soon showed signs of usefulness. He set to work to improve his mind, and in a very short time the circuit officials saw in him the necessary qualifications which warranted them to recommend him for the ministry.

He was pledged by the Conference of 1867, and travelled successfully in the following circuits—Darlaston, Hay Branch, Shrewsbury, Redditch, Prees Green, Oswestry, Rhosymedre, Nantwich, Keighley, Winsford and Tarporley, Bradley Green, Leigh. When he commenced his work as a probationer he gave himself heart and soul to it; feeling his lack of culture he sought by incessant application to study to fit himself for the whole duties of the ministry. How well he succeeded is best known by those who heard him most. His command of language, his knowledge of things in general, and of the Word of God in particular, made him a mighty power both in the pulpit and on the platform. His ministrations to his own people and to other churches, to whom he often spoke, were highly praised by all. There was nothing of the *slipshod* in connection with his work. His heart and soul were *in it*. He carried into his work his whole mental and spiritual manhood. His loyalty for his own church was like a treasure he prized, and he expected loyalty in those who like himself stood pledged to be governed by its discipline. How much he grieved over men who were governed by small personal considerations and actuated by other motives it is impossible to speak. It is only just to say that he allowed less worthy men to irritate him more than was advisable or good either for himself or them. He enjoyed the confidence of his brethren in the ministry, and the best laymen in his own district.

For some years he was the secretary of the Tunstall District Committee, and was esteemed for the care and pains displayed in this position. At the December Quarterly Meeting, 1889, the Leigh circuit heartily invited him to become its superintendent; that invite he accepted. In the following July he went to Leigh, with a full determination to throw himself fully into the work of the station. He was full of bright hope. The station was more compact than those he had been accustomed to, his duties as District Secretary would cease. He would often appear before the same congregation; would have more time to devote to his work, which to him was dear as life. For a time all went well. Leigh friends welcomed him into their midst, profited by his ministry. It was only for a season of two months.

On a Sunday evening in September, he was appointed at Platt Bridge, and he was preaching with great power. He suddenly stopped, trying to repeat a passage of Scripture, he failed, his work was finished for that night, his ministerial labours were finished for ever. The friends showed the greatest attention, conveyed him home in a covered carriage. The doctor was summoned, and thought that rest might restore him to strength and service. This failed. The best medical skill failed. The brain became paralysed; for nine months he lingered and suffered keenly. Then on July 5, 1891, he was called to rest and promoted to Heaven. While consciousness and speech remained, there was unshaken confidence in the wisdom, power,

and grace of Jesus Christ. When he was unconscious he was going to his appointments, preaching Jesus to the people. He had a great desire to recover from his sickness, so that he might serve his Master better than he ever had done, and that he might do something in acknowledgment of the exceptional kindness his Leigh friends had shown him. It is simple justice to say that no circuit could have done more than Leigh circuit did for our afflicted brother.

Brother Nock was a saintly man. From his reading and reflecting on the memorials of Miss Havergal commenced a new era in his spiritual life, it led to a valuable correspondence with the Havergal family; it led also to a more experimental and practical ministry. He was transparently honest; rarely men questioned his prudence, but never his integrity of purpose. He was a Primitive Methodist minister to all intents and purposes, believing with all his heart both in its doctrine and discipline. The Connexion had done so much for him through its agency; he had been raised (using his own words) from the lowest social conditions to the highest positions a mortal man can occupy.

Brother Nock was peacefully laid away to rest in the Leigh Cemetery. A great crowd followed, and looked upon the impressive scene with deep emotion. This service, in which many ministers took part, will long linger in the memory.

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#### References

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