

**MEMOIR OF JOHN PEARCY,
PRIMITIVE METHODIST ITINERANT PREACHER.**

John Percy was born at Gaddesby, a small village in Leicestershire, of poor, but honest and industrious parents, who paid due attention to his moral and physical wants, but neglected the more important part of their duty. Being strangers to experimental religion, they could not inculcate its doctrines, nor enforce its precepts on their son. John was early sent to school, and received an education proportionable to the circumstances of his parents. He afterwards wrought with his father, who was a blacksmith, and in that branch of business he made proficiency.

John possessed many amiable qualities, which shone conspicuously in his moral character; he manifested a kind, upright, and charitable disposition, and soon forgave injuries received; but, alas! he was a "lover of pleasure more than God:" he was gay, and passionately fond of cricket playing, and other amusements equally vain and demoralizing. He was much addicted to that detestable and prevalent practice, swearing. I have heard his brother William (who has since died in the faith) say, that few could equal John and himself in this work of iniquity.

In his eighteenth year he heard a female preach at Barsby, a hamlet near to Gaddesby. Her word was applied by the Spirit to the heart of John. The arrows of conviction were deeply lodged in his breast, the poison of which drank up his spirits. His iniquities compassed him about, and the sins of his youth were brought to his remembrance. He returned home greatly distressed in soul, mourning over his mispent life. For some days he went heavily, groaning beneath a load of contracted guilt. For peace he had great bitterness; but the Lord, in love to his soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption. He cried unto the Lord, and he heard him, and saved him from all his fears. He felt that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned all his sins, and he had peace and joy through believing.

He joined the Wesleyan Methodists, and remained a member with them four years. It was impressed upon his mind that he must preach; but they would not allow him; under these circumstances he left the Wesleyans, and joined our society in Gaddesby, and speedily entered upon the work unto which he felt himself called by the Great Head of the church.

Our departed Brother soon found that the office of the ministry could not exempt him from trials. He was soon assailed by the powers of hell, and wounded by the reproach of his enemies. A person professing godliness met with him after he had preached his first sermon, and told him, "The devil could preach salvation by the blood of the Lamb." This coming from a quarter he little expected, nearly overwhelmed him; but grace and strength was proportioned to his day, and he was enabled to go on. As a local preacher, he was active, laborious and useful, punctual in attending his appointments, and well received by the people.

In January, 1836, he was taken out as a travelling preacher by the Wrockwardine Wood circuit, and there commenced his labour on Sunday, January 17. In the circuit he was rendered useful, and sinners were converted through his instrumentality, His journal gives the following account:—

"Sunday, January 17, 1836.— Preached at Whiston, and Wheaton Aston. Good times.

"Sunday, Feb. 7.— Walked fourteen miles: preached at Radnor Lane in the morning; a good time: at Gnosall Heath at two and half-past six; very powerful times. Three joined society. Praise the Lord.

"Monday, Feb. 8.—Preached at Radnor Lane, and one professed to find liberty. _

"April 1.—Preached at Newport; a good time; one professed to find the Lord.

"Thursday, April 14.—Preached at Shiffnal; a powerful time, and good was done.

"Sunday, April 17.—Preached at D. Wood at half-past ten, and at Wrockwardine Wood chapel at two and six; powerful times; eight professed to find the Lord. Glory be to God."

"Thursday, April 14.—Preach-

By the Conference of 1836, he was stationed for Bishop's Castle; and in 1837 he was stationed again for that circuit the first six months, and Ludlow circuit the last six months. In the former circuit his labours were rendered a blessing, though little is mentioned in his journal. A letter from one of the Bishop's Castle local preachers, now before me, states that he was well received, universally respected in every part of the branch and circuit, and was useful in the conversion of souls to God. In Ludlow circuit he preached but few times.

Brother Percy was a labourer. In examining his journal, I find he has sometimes preached three times on the sabbath day, and walked twenty miles, When engaged in missionary enterprizes, &c., he suffered many privations, which he endured patiently and cheerfully, counting not his life dear unto himself so that he might win souls unto Christ, and because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

About Christmas, 1837, his health failed, and being unable to preach, he returned home, having gained the consent of Ludlow circuit, in which he was just commencing his labours. When he had been at home a few months, through due attention being paid him, and a cessation from labour, his health was slowly improving, and in a small degree his strength was increasing, and had he continued at home a proper time, it is probable he had now been in the ministry. Through the repeated and urgent requests of Ludlow circuit, he resumed his labours in 1838, when he was altogether unfit for the work; and the consequence was, his disease returned with greater violence: he soon returned home, where he remained till removed by death. The Conference of 1838, stationed him for Dudley circuit, from which he received every mark of charity and brotherly feeling, though never permitted to take his station.

When I came to Melton circuit in July, 1838, I found Brother Percy in a very emaciated state of body, but entertaining some faint hopes of amendment. During the greater part of his affliction, he cherished a strong desire to recover, and resume his labours; he wished to live and preach the gospel. His affliction was severe he suffered much bodily and mentally; but the Lord was with him, and his grace was sufficient for him. He bore all with christian fortitude and resignation, While he was able. he would sing the 485th Hymn:—

“My life's a shade,” &c,

I saw him on the 6th of December, but he was scarcely able to speak, tasked him the state of his mind: he answered, “I shall get to heaven.” On Saturday, Dec. 8, 1838, he departed this life, in sure and certain hope of a glorious immortality, aged twenty-six years.

By his request I preached a funeral sermon, from, “I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them,” Rev. xiv. 13. The Wesleyan Methodists kindly lent us their chapel for the occasion. The congregation was large, and good was done.

May the reader so live, that he may “die the death of the righteous,” and his last. end be peace, is the prayer of ROBERT PARKS.
(Approved by the Quarter-day.)

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1842/7