

**MEMOIR OF JOHN PRINCE,
*P. M. Travelling preacher, who died August 1. 1833, at
Frome in Somersetshire.***

John Prince, son of John and Mary Prince, was born at Clay Hill in Shropshire, May 29, 1797. It appears from his papers, that the Spirit of the Lord strove with him, and he had very serious thoughts in childhood, though he says, "I cannot say that I then experienced the new birth: and am sorry to say that in my twenty first year, I gave way to temptation, and became very wicked, but was continually followed with conviction. And at length, being taken violently ill, and fearing I should fall into eternity, and be lost for ever, I began to cry to God for mercy; he heard my prayer, and raised me up again; and I am thankful that I was the object of his mercy, and not of his wrath.

"All this time I was under conviction, and it seemed to me that hell was open to swallow me up; and I thought whether there was salvation for me or not. But it became my determination that if I perished, it should be, 'crying out for God.' So I ceased not to pray daily unto him; and, at length, while upon my knees in the open field, the Lord spoke peace to my soul. What I then enjoyed is better felt than described. And in a short time I was convinced that I must preach the gospel. But, looking at the greatness of the work, and my own insufficiency, I resisted the strivings of the Spirit of God, But, oh! what I suffered at that time!—My soul was kept in bondage, until being at a quarterly meeting, I was asked if I would go on the plan, to which I agreed, But with quivering lips, and trembling limbs, I attended to that duty. And after my first appointment, I had some thought of not going any more; but when the time came I was forced (constrained) to go. And shortly after, I had a foresight of my being called out as a travelling preacher, But looking at my insufficiency, and my temptations being powerful, I knew not what to do, No one knew my feelings but God and myself; and death would have been a welcome messenger to me. But remembering my former vows unto the Lord, and knowing my sufficiency was of God, and while asking of the Lord concerning the matter, I consented to go, if he would give me a more evident token of my being called to the work, And God complied with my request; and my way being open, I could no longer refuse to go, weak and unworthy as I was, to be an itinerant preacher,"

He was taken out by the Hopton Bank Circuit, in the year 1828, and travelled there three quarters of a year; and he says, "On July 4, 1829 arrived at Cwm Circuit, and on the 5th, went to a prayer meeting, and found it good to be there." During his stay in this circuit, he witnessed many powerful seasons of the manifestations of the Divine power and glory; and of the convincing and converting of sinners unto God.

"July 3, 1830," he says, "this day got to my circuit, namely Blaenavon, and was gladly received."-- In this circuit, he experienced much of the Divine power, and saw much fruit of his labours in preaching and family visiting. He frequently visited eight or ten families a day besides fulfilling his other duties; therein setting a good example to his brethren.

"July 7, 1831," he says, "arrived at Haverfordwest, my new circuit. Lord help me, Amen."—This petition the Lord graciously answered; and enabled him to fulfil the duties of his station, with diligence, fidelity, and zeal, to the great satisfaction of the people.

In 1832, he was appointed to the Frome Circuit, in Somersetshire. And he writes, "July 6, arrived at Frome, my circuit place. At night I was at a meeting. I gave out a hymn and prayed, and Mr. Turner preached and a good time it was; a gracious feeling came down, and many seemed happy, praise the Lord" —

During his stay in this circuit, he was indefatigable in his exertions for the welfare of souls, and the glory of God. Whilst travelling in this circuit, he was frequently exposed to danger from the prevalence of that alarming disease, the Cholera Morbus, with which Paulton was so awfully visited. But, knowing in whom he had believed, he courageously faced all danger, and faithfully discharged the duties devolving upon him—possessing a good degree of confidence in his God, he was not afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day—At this critical season was verified in his experience, that exceeding great and precious promise, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."? Psalm xci, 4,

The last memorandum in his journal, runs thus, "June 1, 1833, I travelled to Rodstock, and on June 2, we held a Camp Meeting, and about fifteen or sixteen hundred attended. This meeting was attended with Divine power, particularly the Lovefeast. 3, We held a missionary meeting at the same place." At these meetings his appearance and deportment were peculiarly striking, and were noticed by many, so powerfully did the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon him.

A few weeks before his death, he slept in a bed which he thought was damp, and he felt very poorly, but continued his labours as usual till about a fortnight before his departure. Being one day very hot, he drank largely of cold small beer. This very much disordered him; notwithstanding which he would not give up his labours wholly, till the fever rose to such a height that he could hold out no longer.

He preached with difficulty at Frome on the Friday, took a little medicine on Saturday, and went, (contrary to the wishes of his friends,) to his appointment at Maiden Bradley, on the Sunday; and from thence to the Deverells on Monday and Tuesday, but could not preach. On Wednesday he returned to Maiden Bradley; and not being able to get any one to supply his appointments, he, with great difficulty, addressed the congregation. When he had done, he was nigh to fainting: and it was with very great difficulty the friends got him to his lodgings there. The next day he reached his lodgings at Frome; and, being extremely ill, the doctor was called in, who pronounced his disease to be a billious fever. Medicine was administered; and, thinking himself a little better, he got up early the next morning. But the doctor coming in soon after breakfast, was much displeased at finding him up, and ordered him to bed again immediately, he became very delirious, with very little lucid interval. But though deprived of the exercise of reason, it was very evident that his mind was wholly taken up in the work of God. Sometimes he seemed as if taken up with chapel building; giving directions to the workmen &c. At other times, in preaching the gospel, and most devoutly supplicating the throne of grace, and singing the high praises of his God and Saviour. These were seasons of deep interest, and heavenly consolation, The room at these times of holy worship, seemed to be filled with heaven's glory, filling the minds of all present with,

"That speechless awe which dares not more:
And all the silent heaven of lore— —."

Lying very still for more than two hours, he broke out in singing

'A glimpse of bright glory o'er-powers my soul ;
T sink in sweet visions to view the bright goal;
My soul while Pm singing is leaping to go:
This moment for heaven I'd leave all below— —"?

And lying still for about half an hour, without a struggle or a groan,
"His happy spirit wing'd away, ~
To realms of everlasting day— —"

About a quarter before three o'clock on Thursday morning, August 1, 1833.

Jesus thine everlasting friend,
On whom for heaven thou didst depend,
Hath unto thee his glory given;
Now safely log'd with bim in heaven.
Prepar'd by grace for that blest sight;
Remov'd from sorrow to delight;
In robes of glory now array'd,
New glories to thy view display'd,
Ceaseless thy ravish'd soul will raise,
Eternal songs of love and praise.

F. HERMON.

Approved by the quarter day board.

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1834/290