

## Rev. Joseph Smith

### Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Edward Jeffrey

#### MEMOIR OF JOSEPH SMITH, A PRIMITIVE METHODIST ITINERANT PREACHER.

The subject of these lines was born at High-Road Well, in the parish of Halifax, in the county of York, on the 8th of October, 1790. His parents being Wesleyan Methodists, caused their children to sit under the ministry of this sect. Still Joseph's early life was spent in ignorance of saving religion. When a young man, he left his home and went into the county of Kent, to pursue his employment as a cloth-dresser. During his stay there, he became acquainted with her who, as his widow, has to mourn his death. They had two children, a son and a daughter, both of whom died in the Lord before their father.

About the year 1812, our deceased brother removed to Halifax, where, in the year 1815, he was first brought to see his lost condition as a sinner and his need of salvation. He was passing a chapel when the keeper of it who had just opened the doors for an evening's service, said to him, "Come in, and walk up stairs, and hear a sermon." He went in, and occupied a back pew in the gallery, as far from the preacher as he could get; but the word of the Lord reached his heart. He confessed and forsook his sins, prayed for forgiveness, obtained the blessing, joined the Wesleyans, and went on his way rejoicing in the Lord; and from a letter received from his class-leader since his death, it appears that he remained amongst them till he joined the Primitive Methodists. Between the years 1821 and 1823 the latter sect entered Halifax by their missionaries, Brother Thomas Holliday and another, who preached in the streets. Their labours were blessed of God to the salvation of souls, Satan disliking this, raised up the magistrates against the missionaries, who were committed to the Wakefield house of correction as vagrants. After the time of their incarceration was ended, they hastened to preach at the spot whence they had been taken; and soon a church was formed, against which, we trust, the gates of hell will never prevail. Brother Smith attended the open-air meetings, and was abundantly quickened in spiritual things. At a camp meeting held on Greetland-moor, near Halifax, he first officiated in public. Brother Thomas Holliday having laboured till he was nearly exhausted, begged that some professors of religion who were on the outside of the assembled circle of people would enter the circle, and help mourning souls into liberty. None responding to the solicitation, Brother Holliday said, "Well, I cannot die in a better cause than that in which my strength has been nearly spent. I will try again," Accordingly, his labours were resumed, and carried on till nature again flagged. Affected with the determined efforts of the apparently worn-out missionary, Brother Smith rushed into the circle, and rendered all the assistance in his power to carry on the mighty work. He afterwards joined the persecuted sect, soon became a class-leader, then a local preacher, and subsequently a travelling preacher.

He was taken out to travel by the Oldham circuit in the year 1823; and afterwards travelled in the following circuits and branches: Ripon, Hull, Barnard-Castle, Driffield, Barton-on-Humber, York, Pocklington, Scarborough, Bradford, Wakefield, and Leeds. In most of them, if not in all, his labours were crowned with success. In Bradford and Barnard-Castle, glorious revivals broke out under the labours of himself and his colleagues, and in Leeds circuit, he laboured successfully till February, 1843; when he became unable to attend to his ministerial duties. In his affliction he enjoyed many powerful manifestations of the presence of the Almighty, or some time he hoped that he should recover, and even desired, if it were God's will, to engage again in preaching the word of life.

The night before he died, when conversing with his partner, he said, "How happy, my dear, we should live together, were I to get better." And even on the day of his death, when the physician came to see him, he

inquired if there could be nothing more done for him. However, finding that he must depart, he was perfectly resigned to his lot. A short time before he died, he clasped his hands, and shouted, "Glory ! glory ! the room 's full of glory!" and then fervently exclaimed,

"Bright angels are from glory come,  
They 're round my bed and in my room,  
They wait to waft my spirit home ;  
Allis well; all is well."

Just before his spirit took its flight, he said, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." He gave up the ghost at Knottingley, on December 11th, 1843, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the twentieth of his ministry; and on December 15th, his remains were interred in the burying-ground belonging to the Quarry-hill chapel, Leeds. The burial service was performed by Brother T. Bennett, the superintendent of the Leeds circuit; who was assisted by Brother T. Yates, J. Dawson, and C. Kendall.

Having cast a few hasty glances at our deceased Brother till he has been beheld entering the house appointed for all mortals, a few additional glances will now be taken of his Christian and ministerial character. His disposition was amiable, his experience sound, his humility unquestionable, his faith strong, his walk with God generally even, and his love for secret prayer and religious conversation manifest. His sermons were doctrinal and practical. They set forth the truths of religion scripturally and argumentatively; and while they convinced the judgment of his hearers, they also warmed their hearts and improved their lives. He was the converter of many sinners, and emphatically a builder up of believers. He was a firm adherent to the doctrines and discipline of the Connexion; and hence enforced the observance of them on all over whom he had connexional influence. His life was useful, and his death triumphant. May the writer and the readers of these lines meet our departed brother in glory.

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#### References

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