

Wilson Barrett

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by R. Heppenstall

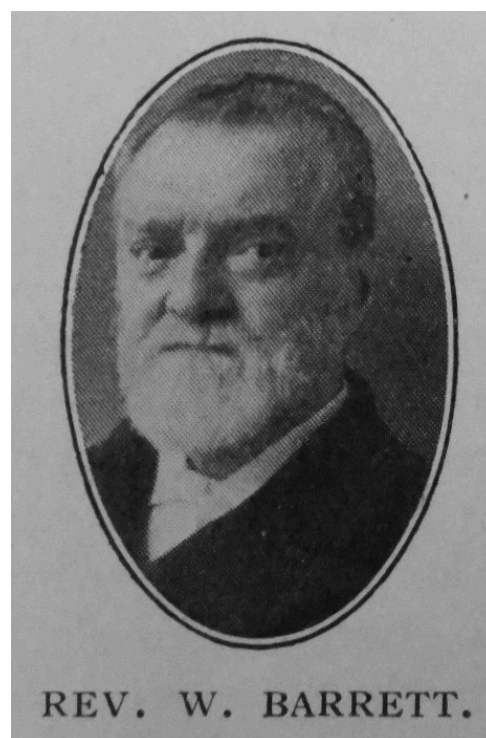
The subject of this brief memoir was born at Low Moor, Clitheroe, on July 1st, 1841. His parents were in humble circumstances, and with them he moved to Grimshaw Park, Blackburn, in 1845. His early advantages were few, he having to become a "half-timer" in the cotton mill at eight years of age. At thirteen he became a "full-timer," and to improve his education and to acquire knowledge he attended a night school. At the age of fifteen at Clayton-le-Moors he joined the Mechanics' Institute, and here he made good use of the books within his reach, and acquired those intellectual tastes which yielded him so much pleasure in afterlife.

As a boy he was religiously inclined, often committing to memory long chapters of the Bible, and especially the Psalms, for which he fed a deep love. He was fortunate, at this period, to be brought under the ministry of the Rev. J. Macpherson. He says: "One Sunday afternoon I heard Mr. Macpherson talk on repentance and faith. I believed and resolved to be a Christian, and I felt at that moment that I was truly converted." Having taken this important step, he joined the Church, and became a Sunday-school teacher, and soon made his first attempt at public speaking, and he gave such promise that the Quarterly Meeting asked him to prepare for the plan. He was from the first a great soul-winner and laboured with acceptability. In 1861, acting upon the advice of the Revs. J. Crompton and C. Jackson, he prepared for admission to the ranks of the ministry, and entered upon his duties at Winster the same year.

He subsequently travelled the following stations:—Coalville, Lincoln, Clay Cross, Newark, Donnington, Leicester, Sheffield, Bury, Bolton, Knowlwood, Buckley, Sutton-in-Ashfield. He had two terms of service in the Clay Cross Circuit, where he did a great work. He superannuated in 1907, and served several circuits in a "special capacity," finally retiring in July, 1913.

On his various circuits he made his mark as an earnest and faithful worker, and experienced an encouraging amount of success. He superintended the erection of seven chapels, and very considerably reduced the debts on Connexional property. In Leicester his name is fragrant, because it was here, at Curzon Street, he so heroically took up a case of acute chapel distress and ushered in better days. At Bottoms, in the Knowlwood Circuit, he, aided by a devoted wife and family, made "all things new." The story of his success here reads like a romance, and would very fittingly go along with some of the great records of our early founders. He received the congratulations of the Manchester District, and, best of all, the work then begun has continued, so much so that a one-time empty chapel is now the most prosperous in the circuit.

Intellectually Mr. Barrett was far above the average. His mind was keen and analytical. He read many books, and mastered some of the great English classics. He had a wide knowledge of Biblical



literature and philosophy. He was a man of liberal and independent opinions, and held somewhat closely to the orthodox faith, although not binding himself to outworn forms of expression of that faith. His preaching was searching, pointed and scriptural. It was a style peculiarly his own, and well fitted his general independence of character. He was almost ideal as a pastor. Though seemingly brusque in manner, yet beneath there was a tenderness and sympathy deep and real. Like his Master, he went about seeking to bind up the broken in heart. Always generous to a fault, no case of need or suffering appealed to him in vain. He was a hater of shams, and loved intensely persons of an unassuming and yet real character. He took his full share of executive work in districts, filling many positions, and was on many occasions a delegate to the Conference.

Last July he came to reside at Chesterfield, where he had many friends, and hoped to do a little preaching as his strength permitted. But his days here were few, and the end came with startling suddenness. His last public appearance was at the funeral of Mrs. Harvey, wife of Mr. W.E. Harvey, M.P. Some observed how much weaker he had become, and when he passed away he left behind him a stainless record and a life of beautiful and devoted service.

Before the interment a service was held in the Brampton Church, Chesterfield, on Saturday, December 13th, and was largely attended by friends from many parts of the Connexion. The Rev. W. Vaughan conducted, and a tender address was given by Rev. Jabez Bell, the Revs. G.G. Martindale and B. Arnfield, and Messrs. W. Dann and G. R. Parkin taking part. On Sunday, Dec. 14th, a memorial service was held in the above church, the writer preaching from the words "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

References

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