

t.b. Barratt (1862-1940)

by Keith Malcomson

Keith Malcomson's sermon highlights the life and impact of Thomas Ball Barratt, a key figure in the Pentecostal movement in Europe.

Scripture: Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:4, Ephesians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Jude 1:20

Topics: "Pentecostal Movement", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Keith Malcomson shares the inspiring story of Thomas Ball Barratt, a pioneer of Pentecost in Europe. Barratt's journey from Norway to America and back, his encounter with the baptism in the Holy Ghost, and his fervent prayer burden for nations led to a powerful Pentecostal movement in Oslo and beyond. Despite facing opposition, Barratt's obedience to God's call resulted in the spread of Pentecost to Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, India, and eventually across Europe, building unity among revival centers and churches. His legacy of emphasizing Jesus as the center of the church and the importance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit continues to impact Pentecostal believers worldwide.

Transcript

Thomas Ball Barratt was born in Albaston, England on the 22nd of July, 1862 into a family of strong Wesleyan Methodists. His family moved to Norway while he was yet very young. As a Methodist minister Barratt had Pastored several churches in Norway, translated a number of books from English (he was bilingual) and defended the Methodist cause in Norway. He went to America in 1906 to raise funds for their Mission work in Oslo. He went to A.B. Simpson's missionary home and while there had a mighty 'touch' of the anointing of God. He at first called this the baptism in the Holy Ghost. An opportunity arose to testify at a gathering of Bishops and Evangelists in a large Methodist church where they were asking "How shall we evangelise New York?" After the preaching the isles and altar was filled with many of these ministers on their faces crying out for the power of the Holy Ghost.

While in New York he heard of the outpouring at Los Angeles which prompted him to earnestly seek God. While staying and praying with his Irish friend Pastor Brown, the fire of God fell upon him and he began to speak and sing in tongues. He said it was a night they would never forget. For twenty years he had been a minister without this blessing. With this came a burden of prayer "At times I had seasons of prayer in the Spirit when all New York, the United States, Norway, Scandinavia and Europe, my beloved ones and friends, lay like an intense burden on my soul. Oh, what power was given in prayer! My whole being was at times as if it were on fire inside, and then I would quiet down into sweet songs in a foreign language. Oh,

what praises to God arose from my soul for His mercy! I felt as strong as a lion, and know now from whence David and Samson got their strength."

In the years leading up to this time a great hunger and heart cry was ascending from evangelical believers in Sweden, Germany, Holland and across Europe. He did not leave America with the hoped for finance but he said he was leaving with 'a blessing of greater worth than every cent in America.' Upon returning to Norway two months later Barratt began to preach this Pentecostal message in Oslo. Hundreds at a time began to receive the Holy Ghost and this movement spread like fire, although amidst much opposition. 'Folk from all denominations are rushing to the meetings many are seeking salvation and souls are being gloriously saved. Hundreds are seeking a clean heart, and the fire is falling on the purified sacrifice.' Just one incident in these meetings was of one preacher who spoke in four separate languages which he did not previously know, one of them being English. Then he broke into prophesy calling sinners to Christ. Great crowds flocked to public meetings and ministers came from other European countries, such as Boddy from England, Lewi Pethrus from Sweden and Pastor Paul from Germany, hungry to receive.

An invitation came from A.A. Boddy in England and so in September 1907 Barratt held six weeks of meetings at Sunderland which commenced the Pentecostal movement in Britain. Concerning these meetings he said 'We have a waiting meeting in the vestry after each service...the fire falls every day. Hallelujah! The meeting last night lasted till 3 o'clock this morning' The daily newspapers quickly picked up on these manifestations and began to report what was happening impartially. One paper called Barratt the Evan Roberts of the North. Of this time Barratt says 'the eyes of the religious millions of Great Britain are now fixed upon Sunderland.'

But before long there was probably more opposition from the religious press in Britain to this Pentecostal experience than any where else. Over these years Barratt was instrumental in taking Pentecost to Sweden, Switzerland, Holland and even India. Later in 1909 after ministering in Syria, Palestine and India he returned and spoke at the Sion College annual Convention in London then at the now annual Sunderland convention. He sent out a regular paper called 'The Victory of the Cross' published in German, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, Spanish and Russian. His books and writings were of great influence to Pentecostal leaders and churches across Europe.

In 1910 in answer to a Divine call he started Pentecostal Centres in Copenhagen, Gothenburg and Christiania. These were to be years of building unity between revival centres in Europe and of building up the Church of God as a living witness. For the rest of his days he pastored the Filadelfia Church in Oslo though he continued to travel, especially in Europe. His hearts desire was to have Jesus as the centre of the church and all that they did. He said 'As regards salvation by justification we are Lutherans. In baptismal formula, we are Baptists. As regards sanctification, we are Methodists. In aggressive evangelism we are as the Salvation Army. But as regards the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are Pentecostal.'

He made one last visit to Britain in 1935 at the invitation of the AOG and held a convention in Sunderland, the birthplace of this great move. Smith Wigglesworth was also in attendance at these meetings. The great Victoria hall was packed with crowds from near and far. He preached on The Personality of the Holy Spirit. The power and glory of the Spirit swept across those gathered. This work of God that had started 28 years before in this very town was still fully Pentecostal and marching forward in the land by the power and grace of God.

It was in 1939 at Stockholm that he was chosen as President of the first European Pentecostal Conference, just one year before his death in 1940. After this conference some German delegates were arrested almost immediately upon returning home. But God took his servant before the storm broke upon his beloved Europe. At his funeral they sang songs which were all composed by Barratt and Lewi Pethrus preached that farewell sermon. Later on his gravestone was engraved with a likeness of him hugging his precious Bible.

Thomas Ball Barratt truly was a Pioneer of Pentecost in Europe.

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