

WILLIAM THOMAS GILL.

Born Stratton (Nr Bude) 1852. Entered the Wesleyan ministry 1877

His arrival in Maidenhead was reported in the ADELAIDE ADVERTISER for 9th October 1903

Some seven hundred Wesleyan ministers, as a result of the itinerant rule in Methodism, are busily engaged in changing their circuits. This work is crowded into two days, and Sunday will witness large congregations in the churches, who will assemble to hear and pass judgment upon the preachers. All expenses incurred in the personal removal of ministers and their families are met by the circuit they leave, that to which they are going paying the cost incurred by the transit of their luggage. There was probably no pastor among the number so privileged as the Rev. William T. Gill, newly appointed to Maidenhead, for whose benefit the Great Western Railway Company stopped the Plymouth to London express to enable him to alight there after a journey from Bodmin, Cornwall. Mr. Gill was responsible for the entire railway arrangements for the recent Wesleyan Conference at Camborne. (Daily Telegraph September 4 1903)

The Slough, Eton & Windsor Observer for the 5 September 1903 filled in the details:

THE NEW WESLEYAN MINISTER

The Rev William T Gill is the newly appointed Wesleyan minister to reside in Maidenhead in succession to the Rev J A Aldington and he will commence his ministerial duties next Sunday, preaching both morning and evening. In a recent number of the Methodist Recorder, a series of Conference portraits included that of the Rev W.T.Gill who had charge of the Conference railway arrangements and the following biographical sketch: Mr Gill was born in Bude but was only about twelve months old when his parents removed to Plymouth, where he received his early business training. On going to London he joined the church in Jewin Street, became a teacher in the Sunday School and a Local preacher. He soon became secretary of the Sunday evening prayer meeting and Thursday bible class in connection with Messrs Cook and Sons' warehouse. From Jewin street Mr Gill passed into the ministry, The Chairman of the First London Synod who examined him, being the late Rev G.T.Perks. Mr Gill at Dr Pope's request was sent to Didsbury College where he became College Missionary Secretary. Every circuit in which he has travelled has, at the close of the term, expressed its appreciation by presenting him and Mrs Gill with valuable gifts. Mr Gill's preaching (to use the words of the Bodmin circuit stewards in the June Quartely Meeting) is "clear, competent, helpful and of a high tone"; his pastoral vistration is highly valued. Shortly after going to Bodmin he opened up correspondence with the Home Office with a view to being granted permission to visit Bodmin County Gaol in the interests of nonconformist prisoners. Through the valuable efforts of the Rev R.W.Allan this right has now been acceded to all ministers resident in towns where there are prisons. Mr Gill takes a keen interest in young people. He has paid special attention to the Wesley Guild with gratifying results. Temperance and Education have always had a large share of his advocacy. Mr Gill's business capacity has proved useful in the renewal of various trusts and freeing property from debt. At the Plymouth conference he was railway secretary, a position which he holds in connection with the Cambourne Conference.

His ministry in Maidenhead started with a baptism of fire !

A fire broke out on Sunday afternoon in the shops of Miss Clayton, dressmaker and milliner, High street, Maidenhead, The premises were completely destroyed, together with Mr. McPhun's tobacconist shop adjoining, While very considerable damage was done to the establishment of Mr. Pallan surgeon dentist. A portion of the Wesleyan Church premises at the rear was also involved, and as the fire occurred while 100 children were in Sunday school, the alarm was great. The Superintendent. Mr. Truscott, Deputy Mayor, at once dismissed the school, and the children were conducted away by a back route, the usual entrance being on fire. The school and church escaped. Being Sunday afternoon, few of the Fire Brigade were at home, and but for the valuable help of a number of civilians, including the Wesleyan minister, the Rev. W. T. Gill, and all the Sunday-school staff and police, greater destruction would have resulted. The total damage amounts to many thousands of pounds.

(London Standard 29 September 1903)

He had three fruitful years in Maidenhead before his scheduled departure in September 1906

THE WESLEYAN MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY met in the Wesleyan Church Parlour on Monday evening. when Mr. Symmons presided. The Rev. William T. Gill read a paper on "Milton: Poet and Statesman". Before proceeding to the main subject, the reader, by way of introduction, gave a resume of the religious and social developments arising out of the Reformation that led to the growth of Puritanism and Presbyterianism in this country. and ultimately to the rise of the Independents, of whom Milton was one of the most illustrious representatives. Sketching the earlier life of Milton during his travels in Italy, Mr. Gill proceeded to analyse and describe those qualities of mind which made Milton what he was. Chief among these was the high standpoint from which he regarded life, which he himself had expressed in the words, "He who writes a poem must use a poem". Added to this was the God-like nature he attributed to man. from which sprang that love of civil, ecclesiastical, and personal liberty that always characterised his actions and writings. Milton's cooperation with Cromwell in the great struggle for liberty was very fully dealt with. In conclusion, the close of Milton's life and his noble work of composing "Paradise Lost" was most effectively described. An outline of "Paradise Lost" was closely followed by the audience.

(March 1906)

After leaving Maidenhead his son died:

GORDON EVANS GILL
Captain Royal Engineers (City and Guilds College)
Son of Rev. and Mrs. W. T. Gill of Wembley
died at Wembley of influenza
while on leave from Palestine
on 12th March, 1919.

Rev William Thomas Gill died on 8th September 1938 in Hereford Hospital; following a fall.

