

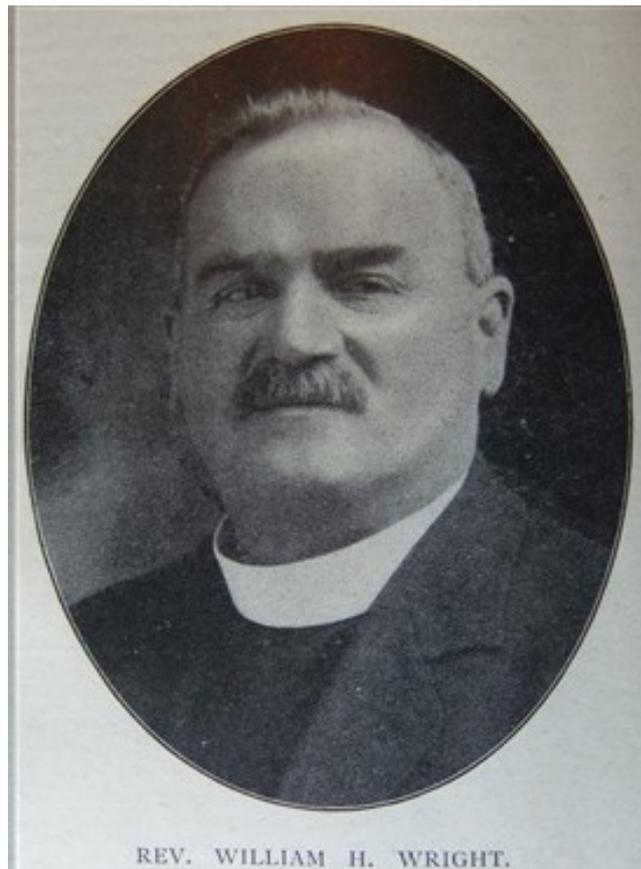
WILLIAM HENRY WRIGHT

William was born at Intake, nr Sheffield, Yorkshire,

He entered the Primitive Methodist ministry in 1899.

After one year in Bradford he spent three very profitable years at Biggleswade.

After several years in appointments mainly in and around London he came to Maidenhead in 1926 where he died in service on 12 March 1928. when he collapsed and died suddenly whilst waiting to purchase a railway ticket



A few more details of his life can be found via:

http://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/category/primitive_methodist_ministers

The several newspaper entries below bring some aspects of his life to light

Sandy Primitive Methodsit Church

The Primitive Methodists celebrated their Sunday School Anniversary on Sunday and Monday. The preacher on Sunday was the Rev W. H. Wright, of Biggleswade, and on Monday evening the same gentleman gave his popular lecture, entitled "Gideon Ousely, the famous Irish Preacher" the chair on this occasion being taken by Mr. G. Goodwin. There were large congregations on both occasions. Special hymns and anthems were well tendered by the children and the collections were in aid of the School Funds.

(Biggleswade Chronicle 13 June 1902)

FAREWELL SERMON OF THE REV. W. H. WRIGHT

A crowded congregation gathered at the Primitive Methodist Church on Sunday evening to listen to the farewell sermon of the pastor of the church who had laboured most acceptably and effectively for three years in the town.

..... The subject of the sermon was "Three years ministry" and the text announced by the Rev W H Wright was Acts xx 31 verse from which the pastor preached a very earnest and practical discourse. He said there was very little similarity between Paul who wrote these words and himself. The similarity was in the number of years only. There was no similarity in the preacher's ability and work accomplished or in the great enthusiasm which burned in St Paul's heart. As Paul looked back upon his work he could say he had not hesitated to warn them night and day with tears. But as the apostle looked back there was always a dark streak in his sky, dark patches more or less caused him considerable regret. He had hailed men and women to prison and had persecuted the Church, but these dark streaks only spurred him on to labour with greater energy for his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Paul's was a wonderful ministry, he had testified when it was dangerous, in fact his whole life was crowded with effort for the good of men. The fact that Paul had laboured night and day for 3 years had suggested the subject already announced and although as he (the preacher) looked back he felt he could not say that he had kept back no part of the truth as Paul could had he been their minister now for 3 years and as he looked back it seemed scarcely three weeks. How well did he remember the first day that he came to Biggleswade, a place he had never heard of before he was appointed by the conference to come to. He had fancied that he was only coming to a small country place, but when he saw their beautiful Market Square for the first time he was greatly deceived. He had found many difficulties, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he had been enabled to work among them for three years, and as he looked back he could thank God that there were some bright spots in his ministry. He had formed friendships that he should not forget. They had worked together most unitedly. From the first day he had found a hearty people, willing to work, but who had little confidence in themselves. To take a concrete case, there was their new school, which he should look back on as his monument. When he first suggested the building of their school, some had doubted whether it could be done, and when they had started to build some said "Can you finish?". He prayed that everyone present might learn from the result of their past faith and perseverance, to have greater faith in God and in themselves when filled with His Spirit. If ever he believed in prayer, he did now for that was the secret as to the money was raised for their new school.

During his ministry dark spots had been caused by having to part by death with faithful workers. At one place in his circuit four or five of the principal workers had passed away into heaven. This had been one of the greatest trials of the preacher's life, but "God buries his workmen yet carries on His work". He was glad at the close of his ministry to be able to say that in every place they had an increase of members, teachers and scholars. Their funds were never in a healthier state, for which he felt like shouting "Hallelujah". He prayed that God would inspire in their hearts a fuller confidence and in the coming weeks they would see a greater prosperity. Oh that every member might learn to work with God as well as for God and to check every expression that would burden and distress any other worker. They were soon to have another minister, a young man full of life and promise, and under the blessing of God he prayed that the future days might be even more prosperous and enjoyable. There were several ways of hindering or helping a minister in his work. He trusted they would help Mr Robson as they had helped him, by appreciating his ministry, by constant attendance whoever was in the pulpit; by never speaking evil of their fellow members; and by building him up in the arms of earnest prayer and faith.

In conclusion Mr Wright said he could not thank them enough for their attention and attachment. He should never forget their great kindness. He had preached to them many times, his constant theme had not been of Hell and its punishment but of the living Christ. The keynote of his 3 years ministry had been the Crucifixion of Christ and the power of the cleansing blood of Christ. He had striven to be the servant of Christ in their midst, and appealed for their constant co-operation with Mr Robson, who would soon be amongst them. He prayed that the peace of God might be their abiding portion and that the future days of their beloved church in Biggleswade might be even brighter and happier than those of the past. He should hope on some future day to visit the town and preach again the good news of the gospel.



BIGGLESWADE. Primitive Methodist Chapel RE-OPENING SERVICES

After several weeks devoted and self-sacrificing labour, the Rev Elijah Oliver and his band of voluntary workers have accomplished the task of completely renovating the interior of the Primitive Methodist chapel, and they were very heartily congratulated upon the excellent way the painting and varnishing of the walls and seats had been carried out at the re-opening services held on Thursday afternoon and evening last week which were largely attended. The congregations included friends from as far off as Bennington, near Stevenage. Letchworth. Shefford and Arlesey.

The services of the Rev W. H. Wright, popular minister of 25 years ago, were obtained. and he delivered an excellent discourse in the afternoon from the words "I go to prepare a place for you".

The Rev. Joseph Britton, the supt minister of the Wesleyan Circuit, assisted in the service and offered prayer.

About a hundred people sat down to an excellent tea In the School-room, which was well served by the lady workers, and many renewed all friendships over "the cup that cheers"

At 7.30 p m. the chapel was packed for the mass meeting, over which Mr. F. Bracey. snr of Bennington, Herts very affably presided. The gathering was much enheartened by the singing of some old Methodist hymns by the choir, and the congregation, with Miss M. Bunce at the organ.

The prayer was offered by the Rev. E. R. Bishop, of Hitchin, as the Rev. S. S. Coulson the supt minister had to return to Letchworth to attend another meeting.

Mr. Bracey, in his address said he knew the great amount of sacrifice and service that the work had meant to the pastor and the workers. He heartily congratulated them all upon their splendid work, and was glad to know that they had also obtained an increase in their membership, under the ministry of Mr. Oliver (applause). They were living in topsy-turvy times and only Christ could put things right (applause).

The choir, under Mr. R Bunce, then gave a tuneful rendering of an anthem "Let all the people praise Thee", Mrs. W. F. Abbias singing the soprano solos very sweetly.

(Continued.....)

BIGGLESWADE. Primitive Methodist Chapel
RE-OPENING SERVICES (**Continued**)

In announcing the lecture. Mr. Bracey referred to a visit to St. James's Hall, London, where he heard the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes preach, and said he had not forgotten the sermon or the text on that memorable occasion. He had much pleasure in asking the Rev. W. H. Wright, whom they were all glad to see, to give his lecture on "Hugh Price Hughes, the Methodist Fire-brand - His day and our day" (applause)

The Rev. W. H. Wright was cordially welcomed and in his opening remarks referred to his own ministry 25 years ago speaking of the valued workers of his day, some of whom had passed to their reward and others he was glad to see there that night still engaged in the choir and other church work. He said he was particularly glad to see their old friend. Mr. James Bone, of Shefford, there (applause), and Mr. G Bryant. Mr. R. Bunce and Mrs. Hubbard (applause). He also eulogised the ministry of Mr. Oliver (applause), and congratulated the men and women who had carried out the work well in beautifying the sanctuary (applause)

For over an hour Mr. Wright related the story of the life and work of the Rev. H. P. Hughes, whom he described as a most remarkable Wesleyan minister, and as a great and courageous social, temperance and religious worker, who had left his mark on London. The story of Mr. Hughes' conversion in his boyhood days and of his first sermon, preached when 14 years of age on the table of a Welsh farm-house, deeply moved all present. It was prophesied by these elderly people who comprised Mr. Hughes' congregation that the boy would become a future president of the Wesleyan Conference. and that prophecy, said the lecturer, was wondrously fulfilled.

His first Church was at Dover and on the first Sunday evening there were 18 conversions, and in later years he led many to Christ, in his wonderful ministry at St. James' Hall, in the West London Mission. The slogan of Hughes' day was " Educate and Legislate," and this notable minister believed in both these things. but he added another word and that was " Re-generate." He said what men needed was new hearts - new natures - which could only be obtained through regeneration. The lecturer also related how Mr. Hughes supported the late Mr. W. T. Stead in his great work of cleaning the music hall and theatres of London, and for social purity generally. He spoke of his fiery eloquence throughout the country on behalf of temperance and social purity and how this largely helped to create what The Times' newspaper sarcastically called "The Non-conformist Conscience." Mr. Wright also spoke eloquently of the great work Mr. Hughes and the late Dr. Guineas Rogers did in the formation of the Free Church Council in 1892, which had united the tremendous forces of non-conformity against the forces a evil and unrighteousness in this country. His description of Mr. Hughes' sudden call to his reward, after a strenuous and useful life, was most impressive and was listened to with rapt attention by all. The lecturer closed with a very fervent appeal, when the lecturer touched upon the work of the Christian church and ministry in our day, and spoke of the golden opportunities of the present. He closed by thanking God for such a life, as he had tried to describe in his lecture.

The Rev. E. Oliver, who was heartily greeted., thanked Mr. Bracey and Mr. Wright for their help. He was sure they had all greatly enjoyed the lecture (applause). He also expressed thanks to those who had assisted him to carry out the work of decoration. They had given the walls three coats of paint and the seats four, including the varnish. They were also indebted to Messrs. F. Wright and Son for the loan of scaffolding and ladders (applause), and to Mr. A. W. Watkin, who had inscribed "The Beatitudes" - on the wall behind the rostrum so beautifully (applause). Mr Watkin had spent many hours in carrying out this work and they were very grateful to their Wesleyan friends for their help (applause).

Mr. H. T. Northwood, who had acted as hon. secretary of the Renovation Committee then gave a detailed account of how the money had been raised. The cost was nearly £20. They had received several donations: and £12 2s. was raised at a sale; and as a result of the gatherings that day, the total receipts were, £28 4s. 9d. (applause). He was glad they had £8 in hand after paying expenses, but £10 was needed for the renovation of the organ: and the Schoolroom and the outside of the chapel also needed renovations (hear hear).

The Doxology was heartily sung and the Rev. W. H. Wright concluded a memorable day's service. with the benediction.

Primitive Methodist Sunday School Anniversary.
VISIT OF THE REV. W. H. WRIGHT

The Primitive Methodist Sunday School Anniversary was held in beautiful weather on Sunday and Monday and large congregations were present at the three services on the former day, particularly in the evening, when extra seats had to be provided.

The officers were very fortunate in securing a visit from the Rev W. H. Wright of Maidenhead, who 23 years ago was a very popular minister in the town. and during whose ministry the Sunday Schools were erected.

Mr. Wright preached earnest discourses morning and evening. and gave an appropriate address at the Young Peoples gathering in the afternoon, at which Mr Elisha Pike of Shefford, presided and recitations and solos were contributed by the scholars. Unfortunately Mr. R. Bunce, the choirmaster, has had a poisoned arm for several weeks. and was unable to train the choir and scholars, but Miss M. Bunce, his daughter, who presided at the organ throughout the day, is to be complimented upon her tuition, and the singing of the special hymns was greatly enjoyed.

At the evening service the choir gave a tuneful rendering of the anthem "I waited patiently for the Lord". The collections on Sunday realised £10 16s.

The annual public meeting on Monday evening was also an inspiring gathering, when the scholars sang several hymns from the printed collection, with Mr. Arthur Grummitt at the organ. Mr. Henry Arthur, the Superintendent of the School presided and was supported by the Revs. K Oliver and W. H. Wright. After a hymn, prayer was offered by the Rev. E. Oliver and Miss Edna Cannon recited "The Singers". Solos were also sung by the Misses Edna Coleman, Freda Wright and Gladys Benson with Mr. A. Grummitt as accompanist, and all were heartily applauded.

In his address from the chair, Mr. H. Arger referred to the fact that when the Rev. W. H. Wright was the minister, he was a scholar in the School and now he was the superintendent of the School. There had been many changes since Mr. Wright left Biggleswade, but he was pleased to be able to say their church and school was never in a stronger position than it is to-day. There are 110 scholars in the school and 16 officers and teachers and last year £20 was raised by the anniversary and other efforts which was all expended on the scholars.

The Rev. K Oliver. who received a very hearty welcome, gave a very thoughtful address to the teachers and the parents present. To the former he spoke of the boy who was a diamond in the rough, but who could be burnished and made beautiful in character, by prayer and love. In a forceful way Mr. Oliver urged the parents to co-operate with the teachers, and to support them by their own prayers and godly example. It was in the godly home where character was formed, and many present realised that they owed a debt they could never measure or repay to godly fathers and mothers and Sunday School workers.

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Primitive Methodist Sunday School Anniversary.
VISIT OF THE REV. W. H. WRIGHT (**Continued**)

For over half-an hour the Rev. W. H. Wright delighted every one present with a splendid address, which was again and again applauded. He spoke of the great pleasure it gave him to be at the Sunday School anniversary and said that the services on the previous Sunday would be a pleasant memory as long as he lived. He was also pleased to have one of his old scholars in the chair that night. On the previous day he had remarked to a friend "When we built this school we did not know what good work would be done here" and now after 21 years he was glad to find an old scholar was their superintendent (applause). He was also delighted to meet Mr. Oliver and to find such wonderful progress had characterised his ministry. He was sure Rev. Oliver was a God-sent man (applause). They were all so sorry that Mr. James Bone, of Shefford who was the superintendent of the Sunday School when he (Mr Wright) was the minister, was now very unwell, and therefore could not be present at the Centenary. He was also very pleased to see the old members of his church and rejoiced with them in their prosperity. and he prayed that the life of their pastor might be spared for many years to come (applause).

Mr. Wright then devoted his remarks to the relation of the members of the church and congregation to their minister. Some people are very anxious that their minister should be a good preacher, and others would prefer one who was a good visitor. He was anxious that the members should realise their own responsibilities. He hoped they would show their appreciation by being regular in their attendance, and by being in their pews at the time the service is announced to begin. Hearers who looked at their hymn books or at their neighbours during the sermon were not helping the preacher or giving him inspiration in delivering his message. They could also help their minister by leading godly lives and thus influencing others for good. Every preacher has the temptation to play the orator instead of speaking so as to be a spiritual help to his people. The apostle Paul, like all other preachers, had this temptation, but he could say "I thank God that I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God". They must also seek for souls big enough to ask God to bless the preaching of His word to their own spiritual need. It is good listeners that make good preachers, and they must never forget that the power of the pulpit is largely affected by those who occupy the pews. The older members need help and encouragement, but if the preacher directed his chief work to the younger ones, they must remember that the children were the hope of the future for the Church of Christ.

At his own church at Maidenhead at the last Young People's Sunday, his own heart had been greatly rejoiced when fifteen of the scholars over 14 years of age had witnessed to Jesus Christ. Mr. Wright closed a very helpful address by giving two true stories to the boys and girls, one of these being about little girl who was the means of leading her own father, who was a drunkard and a gambler, to the Methodist Church where he found the Saviour and became a transformed character. In an eloquent appeal Mr. Wright urged the young people to give themselves to Christ. and to remember that God could use them in leading others to Himself (applause).

After the collection, which realised £1 4s (making the total £12 for the anniversary). Mr. Oliver expressed thanks to Miss Bunce for her valued help and said they all hoped Mr. Bunce would soon be better, and to the Rev. W. M. Wright for the splendid way he had served them at the anniversary. This was carried with acclamation, and Mr Wright feelingly responded, and said how much he had enjoyed his visit and the excellent singing of the children.

The annual school festival was held on Tuesday, the party leaving the front of the Chapel in conveyances at 1 p.m. for Mr. and Mrs James Rook's farm at Old Warden, where a happy time was spent by all. A public tea was also provided and the proceeds are to be added to the £12.

SUDDEN DEATH OF THE REV W H WRIGHT

We deeply regret to record the sudden death of the Rev W H Wright the Primitive Methodist minister at Maidenhead, Berkshire. which took place on Tuesday week, when the rev. gentleman collapsed at the railway station.

He was for some years the popular young minister at Biggleswade. and laboured very zealously in this town, and at Arlesey and Shillington. He was an excellent preacher and took great interest in the young people. He raised money to build the present P.M. schoolroom while resident here. Last year he returned to preach the Sunday School anniversary sermons. and spoke with great power and eloquence on the Monday evening. when he was the picture of health.

He was quite an athlete in his younger days and played at full back with great success for the Greens in many matches at Fairfield.

. He married Miss Pike. of Arlesey. and much sympathy is felt in this district for his sorrowing widow and two daughters in their sudden bereavment. and also for Mr. E.Plike of Shefford (brother-in-law). He was 57 years of age.

The funeral took place in London on Friday afternoon, and the Rev. Elijah Oliver and Rew W. Rawlins represented the Biggleswade Chapel at the Caledonian Road Primitive Methodist Chapel, where the first portion of the service was read.

The Interment took place at Flnehey.. Deceased was minister of Caledonian Road for ten years and then removed to Tottenham, where he did a great work prior to becoming superintendent of the Maidenhead circuit.

He had been in the Primitive Methodist ministry for 29 years. and was on his way to a preaching appointment when he collapsed in the railway station at Maidenhead. A post-mortem examination revealed that death was due to natural causes.

(Biggleswade Chronicle 23 March 1928)