

CHAPTER 6

Rev. John Dorrington (1847 - 1857)

Possibly because of the size of the congregation now, the lengthy interregnum which preceded the arrival of Mr. Dobson (35 years) was not repeated after his death, for his successor (Rev. John Dorrington) was inducted a year later on 21st May 1833.

Mr. Dorrington was born at Mile End in East London on 4th July 1787, and in 1803 he offered his services to the Itinerant Society as a teacher in one of its schools at Nine Elms, Battersea in South London. This Society had originally been formed to open up Sunday Schools to teach children to read so that they might be equipped to read the Scriptures, and also to license places for preaching in the villages within a radius of 10 miles around London.

He preached on alternate Sundays at Barkingside in Essex, where it was written that 'the place of worship greatly improved and the hearers increased in number' under his ministry.

This experience prompted him to consider entering Hackney College in order to train for the ministry, but older friends objected to a 'learned ministry' and he abandoned this idea. The decision was a source of considerable regret to him in later years.

He nevertheless sought a pastorate, and his first lasted from 1813 to 1833 at Henham, Essex. He wrote in his diary 'I resolved by the grace of God that my talents, prayers, labours, visits, recreations, shall all be made to bear on the great objects of the Christian ministry'.

On the death of Rev. James Dobson, Mr. Dorrington transferred to Great Chishill, and was inducted at

an Evening Service at which Rev.W.Merchant of Foulmire and Rev.J.Medway of Melbourn participated, and Mr.J.Dobson (son of the late minister) spoke on behalf of the church.

Mr. Dorrington was obviously well satisfied with the results of his ministry, for he explains the absence of minute books in the following manner :

'The undisturbed harmony of the Church accounts for the fact of their not having kept any minutes of its proceedings. Indeed, there was none of any importance to enter, except the names of new members. And for this, all that appeared requisite was to put them down in the list and the time they were received'.

An attack of paralysis obliged Mr. Dorrington to resign the charge at Great Chishill in 1847. In somewhat singular manner, his notice of resignation was read out to the congregation on 26th December 1847 in the following words :

'Christian friends, according to intimation given a short time ago, I have this day to announce that I am no longer your pastor, it having pleased God to deprive me of a voice sufficiently strong to have the efficient discharge of public duty'.

Mr. Dorrington retired to Chelmsford, but soon afterwards, on 6th December 1852, his wife Catherina Regina died in her 78th year and was buried in the Chapel graveyard. He died on 14th August 1863 in Wells, Somerset, where he was buried.