

Irwell Terrace Baptist

The Rev Dyer pastor of Ebenezer Baptist from 1816 and about half the members seceded and formed a second church later known as Irwell Terrace. This secession from the parent church of Ebenezer was caused by some trivial matter which in 1821, after 129 years, was deemed to be of such importance that it split the church. The first meeting of the new church was in King Street, where a room was taken and licenced for worship, Rev. Dyer continuing as pastor. The new chapel was opened amid much rejoicing on May 23rd, 1823. The opening services were conducted by the Rev« Dr. Steadman, of Bradford, Mr. Fisher, of Liverpool, and Mr. Birt, of Manchester. The Rev. F. W. Dyer preached his farewell sermon on September 28th, 1832, thus closing a ministry in the two churches of 16 years. Eleven of those years were spent in connection with Irwell Terrace. During his pastorate 37 members were added to the church by baptism.

After an interval of two and a half years the Rev. Thomas Dawson, of Bradford College, accepted the pastorate on May 17th, 1835 and continued until September, 1851. During his pastorate he received into fellowship 450 persons. His days at Irwell Terrace were the brightest in its history, the church being really strong, united and spiritually prosperous. The Rev. G. Mitchell, of Horsforth, succeeded the Rev. T. Dawson in March, 1852. Rev. G. Mitchell, who came in March, 1852, and stayed only until March, 1855. In those days particularly, so short a ministry was regarded, to say the least, as unusual. Consider the shattering experience Mr. Mitchell must have had. The same year he came to Irwell Terrace, a group of people newly arrived in Bacup decided to build a Baptist chapel less than 200 yards away from the church to which he had been invited to become pastor. Two years later, in 1854, Waterbarn severed its connection with Irwell Terrace. Then we read that several friends, again in 1854, left Irwell Terrace and formed the church at Zion It can only be regarded as reasonable that Mr. Mitchell would be feeling miserable and depressed, although let it be said that no record exists to suggest this. During 1854 the school buildings were built in South Street at a cost of £1,400.

After the departure of the Rev, G. Mitchell In March, 1855, he was followed by the Rev. E. F, Quant, who remained there until 1861, and for about four years the church was without a minister,

The next minister to take over the church was the Rev, J , G Hall , who began at the beginning of 1865 and stayed there until July, 1872, when he left to enter a new sphere at Astley Bridge. Six months later the Rev. A, Bowden came for a brief eighteen months. Then, for a period of about three years the church was without a minister.

However, in 1877 the Rev. S. S. Hughes, of the Manchester College, came, and stayed, His ministry lasted for fourteen years, during which time the church enjoyed a period of real stability. During his ministry over 130 people were baptised and a new organ was placed in the chapel, Large improvements were made both to the chapel and school premises, He closed his ministry in September, 1891. The Rev, B. T, Field settled in March, 1892, During his stay

the demolition of the old chapel commenced, and on June 25th, 1895, the memorial stones of the new premises were laid. Twelve months later the opening

services were held, The cost had been nearly £3,500, The Rev, C, Spurgeon, son of the well known Rev, C, H, Spurgeon, preached the sermon to a crowded congregation, In 1897, after five years at Irwell Terrace, Mr, Field left to take up work at West Street, Crewe



Irwell Terrace Ladies putting on a performance during the Great War

Ministers

- Rev. W. J. Dyer 1821-1832
- T. Dawson 1835-1851
- G. Mitchell 1852-1855
- E. F. Quant 1855-1861
- J. G. Hall 1865-1872
- A. Bowden 1873-1874
- T. S. Hughes 1877-1891
- T. B. Field 1892-1897
- A. F. Giddings 1899-1902
- H. R. Sumner 1906-1912
- H., Harrison 1914-1920