

## Bessell's Green, 1667.

ON the coachroad to Hastings and Rye, a mile short of Sevenoaks, a lane runs up the Westerham valley, and about a mile west is the little Common of Bessell's Green where stand two Baptist chapels, visited by T. R. Hooper who wrote of them in our volume III. at page 228. Documents of the older church are in the Museum and at Somerset House. William Jeffery was the leader in the district from 1644, writing the *Whole Faith of Man*, signing every important document from 1653 till 1660; in this corner he was backed by John Reeve. In those days they worshipped in private houses, and it shows their pluck that when the new Conventicle Act was being enforced, they opened a register thus:—

“A booke belonging to the church or congregation of the Saintes of God in Jesus Christ Assembled in the parish of Orpington in the County of Kent. Anno Domini 1667 Sept. 29. Wee whose names are underwritten being beleevers baptized and stated upon the six principles contained in the 6 chapter Hebrues verses 1 and 2 according to the order of the gospell do resolve to sett downe together in a church or congregationall waye with the help of the Lord takeing for our rulle to walke by the written word of God contaynde in the ould and new testament and from this Church or Congregationall waye wee doe not Intend to depart to anye other Church' or congration to sett downe with them without the advise and consent of this Church or congration meeting at Orpington in the county of Kent. Whereby the bands of love may not be broken.”

Orpington is eight miles north, over the Down; only in the security of 1716 did the church build its meeting house here in the parish of Chevening. From it descend the Sevenoaks church of 1748 and the second Bessell's Green church of 1770.

W. T. WHITLEY.