

Notes.

Hanham, Bristol.

Bristol is one of the strongholds of Baptists. In the days of persecution, they tested the law and secured a certain amount of liberty. Yet in 1714 it was felt needful to build a chapel in Hanham Woods, for greater privacy. It has been touched by the hand of time, and the friends have erected a Bicentenary Church; also have published a tasteful souvenir as a tribute to the founders.

Benjamin Stinton's Manuscripts.

In our first volume, at page 199, regret was expressed that three out of four volumes of Stinton's manuscripts had been mislaid; in that article it was assumed that they formed a Journal, like the fourth volume still preserved at Dr. Williams' Library. This however was a mistake. Dr. Rippon, a successor of Stinton at Southwark, was attracted by the Annual Register begun by Burke in 1758, and projected a Yearly Register for Baptist matters, to be issued in two parts at Whitsuntide and Christmas. Soon after advertising his idea, he was unexpectedly presented with three MS. volumes written by Stinton and other papers, which caused him to derange his materials and issue a slip explaining the circumstances. The paging was so extraordinary that special directions were printed for the binder, and from the completed volumes usually found to-day, many fugitive pages and the original covers are missing. Happily a few sets survive in the original state, notably at the Baptist Mission House; part of a set was lately given to the Society from the library of the late Mr. W. Taylor of Bolton. Some contents of Stinton's three MS. volumes may be identified by subtracting from the Register everything later than Stinton's death in 1719, and whatever was promised in the original Advertisement before Rippon knew of Stinton's MSS. We thus obtain (a) The Introduction to the London Confession of 1644; paged 4 (at foot), 8-12. (b) An account of the Baptist churches in Ireland, with letters which passed between the Irish, English and Welsh churches in 1653; paged c (at foot), 14-20. (c) A narrative of the proceedings of the General Assembly of 1689, being sheet D,

paged 41-56. (d) An Account of the churches 1689 and 1692 in double column, half-sheet E, paged 57-64. The last page (un-numbered) begins the epistle of 1690, but breaks off in the middle of a sentence with a hand promising the continuance; a head-note promises also the narrative of 1692; but the sheets containing these have never come to the present editor's notice. (e) The Confession of Faith originally modified from the Westminster Confession in 1677, but "First printed at London. 1688," and endorsed by the Assembly of 1689. This is sheet A, paged i-vi, 1-10, sheet B, 11-26, sheet C, 27-41 and 42 blank. It will be noticed that sheet C ends with 40, a Contents page without number, and a blank; sheet D begins with a title-page unnumbered, a blank, a heading page only marked D2, and then 44; that is to say, there are two pages wrongly numbered. As in December 1793 Rippon wrote a new preface, and issued cancel sheets of his 1790 list, these relics of the past were "deranged," and often appear at the end of volume 4 when he abandoned the undertaking. The preface of 1793 distinctly refers to Stinton, and plainly says that to these Thomas Crosby "afterwards made additions, and published his work in four volumes octavo," a statement independently verified by higher criticism in our volume I, pages 197-202. But we may now see that what Crosby did not use, was used by Rippon; and if the three volumes ever turn up, they will probably yield little more than is already in print.

The Bell Lane Church.

In the library of the Alfred College, New York State, the Seventh Day Baptists, possess some documents of the seventeenth century. Three letters from the Bell Lane church, in London, have been examined by Mr. C. H. Greene of Battle Creek, who sends a list of signatures. The Bell Lane Church is supposed to have organised soon after the Restoration; in 1664 the temporary Conventicle Act started a stream of emigration, and Stephen Mumford went thence to Newport in Rhode Island, newly chartered by Charles; here he joined the church of Mark Lukan. This seems to have opened up communications between the two churches.

On the "26th day of March 1668," a letter from the Bell Lane church, London, to Newport, Rhode Island, was signed by John Labourn, Edward Fox, William Gibson, Robert Woods, Aaron Squibbs, Robert Hopkins, John Jones, Christian Williams, Samuel Clarke, Richard Parnham.

On the 17th of the 6th month 1674, Bell Lane wrote to Newport asking about Isaac Wells who "had been an officer with Mr. Tillam at Colchester, but had been long gone." Wells had settled in Long Island, at Jamaica, and was probably a member of Hubbard's Seventh-

day church at Newport as early as 1675. The London men signing the enquiry were Chr. Williams, John Jones, Hugh Heslepp, Robert Woodward, Francis Walters, Richard Farnham, Robert Hopkins, John Labouré.

On 22 August 1685, this "Bell Lane" church wrote again to Newport, the signatures being John Belcher [senior], Henry Cooke, Robert Hopkins, John Laboura, John Walters, Joseph Parkham, Giles Ray, Christopher Willyams, Simon Blunt or Brunts.

On these lists Mr. Greene suggests that the John Jones who figures in 1668 and 1674, may be the John Jones who in 1654 signed the Fifth-Monarchy Declaration, as a member of Feake's church. Mr. Greene points out also that the Jones of 1674 purported to join Pinners' Hall in 1687, but was after much dispute adjudged to have remained a member of Bell Lane. He does not appear in the negotiations of 1702 when the churches united; presumably he was dead.

John Belcher was reported in the State Papers of 26 September 1661 as the chief preacher at Colman Street, likely to tread in the footsteps of Venner. This somewhat strengthens the guess that John Jones the Fifth-Monarchist is John Jones the Sabbath-keeper. Belcher is well known down to his death in 1695.

Simon Brunt was one of the prominent members of the church, who practically led it after the death of Belcher, till the fusion with Bampfield's church. Samuel Clarke had been spared even earlier to become assistant minister at Mill Yard.

William Gibson went to Rhode Island in 1675 with Mumford, who had come back to report on the actual conditions and to invite others to the haven of rest.

Hugh Heslepp was a friend of Thomas Tillam, baptized by him at Hexham on 15 December 1652. Like Tillam he was connected with the church at Cheshire, where he was reported to the bishop in 1664; and next year he was the first to put up a tombstone at Hill Cliff, over Elizabeth Haslop. It is not usual to find one man thus a member successively of three churches widely-separated.

Richard Parnham was the mainstay of the church till his death, and is mentioned in other correspondence as jointly in charge of it. Aaron Squibbs surely is related to the Arthur Squibb who on 28 October 1672 took a license to be a Baptist Teacher at his own house in Chertsey. Robert Woods is apparently the shoemaker who in 1669 was reported from East Ruston in Norfolk as leading a conventicle of nearly a hundred; three years later he took a licence there. The church at Ingham was the result of his labours, and subsequently called a Stennett to the pastorate.