

STINTON'S REPOSITORY DISCOVERED.

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The Review and Expositor has contained in 1904 and 1905 articles by Mr. Champlin Burrage and the present writer, on a modern copy of a Repository of Documents relating to Baptist History, begun in 1711 by Benjamin Stinton, pastor of the Particular Baptist church in Southwark, founded by his father-in-law, Benjamin Keach. This Repository by the time of Stinton's death in 1719 contained thirty numbers of various kinds. Nearly all were extracts from printed works, which themselves are easily accessible today, and many of which have in reality very little bearing on our history. One, however, is copied from the book of a church which was formed in 1621 and disbanded in 1705, after being entwined with other mixed-membership churches. Three are copies of papers dating from 1616, which explain the origin of several of the oldest London Baptist churches. And there is a letter of 1716 from Philadelphia giving an account of the state and number of the baptized churches in that province.

Stinton's Repository was not used for many years, though it was offered to Daniel Neal, historian of the Puritans. But when a Margate clergyman in 1738 published a history of the Baptists, then Thomas Crosby, brother-in-law of Stinton, hastily threw the papers into order, and published the first volume of his History. This brought to him many communications, and he greatly altered the scale of his work. But he worked into it nearly the whole of the Repository, not in all cases using it quite word for word.

The Repository itself he continued at first to use as it was first intended, copying into it his new material. And he made his marginal notes at the side of the older work. Thus he made memoranda of several books dating from 1642 to 1700 which had references to Baptists; he

copied in a letter which he received from Wiltshire in 1738 with information as to the General Baptists there. But then he must have drawn up his own press copy, and when the fourth volume had been printed in 1740, he rested awhile. Joseph Stennett in 1747 sent him the *Records of the Barkshire Association, 1648-1708*, and these he copied into the *Repository*. A brief note about a book of 1551 is the last entry.

From that time onwards, the *Repository* lay dead. But a hundred years afterwards it came into the hands of the Rev. George Gould of Norwich, who had become involved in a lawsuit which demanded much research into early history. He made a most careful examination of it to glean all the information as to terms of communion, and his results are still tabulated in a loose paper between its pages. Realizing the far wider importance of the *Repository*, and noting that Crosby's use of it had been rather slipshod, he had it most carefully transcribed by a writing-master. This transcript has become known as the Gould manuscript, and the four important documents from it have been published both in America and in England. Much of the Gould manuscript itself has been copied line for line into a similar volume owned by the present writer.

Once the beautifully legible manuscript of Keymer was available, the original manuscript of Stinton, augmented by Crosby, was stored away. But when controversy arose twenty years ago, and the Gould manuscript was cited, scholars came to feel that if it were possible, we should ascend a step nearer the originals, and eliminate any possible errors of copying. Search at that time was useless, but painstaking study was spent, and several scholars came to the conclusion that there could not be any errors of importance.

In 1921, the Rev. George P. Gould, late principal of Regent's Park Baptist Theological Seminary, passed away. When his successor, the Rev. H. Wheeler Robin-

son, was asked to investigate his papers, he had the great pleasure of discovering a bundle from Norwich, which on the death of George Gould the father had passed to George Pearce Gould the son, and had been overlooked ever since. This contained the original Stinton Repository, which henceforth will be one of the treasures of the Angus Library at Regent's Park.

It is a large foolscap folio, in size like the Gould manuscript and its daughter, and in very good preservation. A minute examination shows that Keymer copied it most accurately, not sixty slips of all kinds having been detected, and most of these are only of punctuation and capitals. Two however are of dates, and where criticism had divised that number 12 referred to 1549 not 1599, that number 24 referred to 1664 not 1669, it proves that Stinton had given these dates correctly, and Keymer confused 4 and 9. In one paragraph relating to 1632, an imprisonment of Lathorp's church which led to his emigrating to Scituate in Massachusetts, there have been two slips. The true readings are, (1) that several were committed to the Bishop's prison "called then the New Prison in (a blank) (now a merchant's house again)"; (2) that the prisoners included "H. Dod deceased a Prisoner"; the names are here arranged in four columns, and the order in copying has been wonderfully changed. In a further reference to this imprisonment, numbered 8, a "not" has been interpolated, as a critic divined. The true statement is: "The Answers of Mrs. Jones & Some others in yt time of their Sufferings are yet Extent". In a subsequent paragraph relating to 1620, the sentence ends abruptly "Tuke left them & is a Preacher at Dry" where we now see that a blank was left for a word Stinton could not decipher: history and geography tell us moderns that it was "Drayton", for the village of Dry Drayton is famous in Puritan annals.

In the account of the first known baptisms of believers by immersion in England, four trivial slips of copying

have been made. Three names should be spelt Hen: Darker, Susannah King, Tho Shepard. Then while 41 people were baptized at one time in January 1641-2, two more were baptized on the ninth day of January (John Cathope and Nicholas Martin), and the remaining ten were baptized on January 27, according to a side note by Stinton which was overlooked in the copy.

In the debate with Hanserd Knollys as to whether his child should be baptized, the first paragraph contains a parenthesis from which two words have been omitted; it really runs (because he could not submit his judgment to depend on a Church with its power: so yielded to). Hanserd Knollys was sound as to personal responsibility. The first argument of Jessey for infant baptism is really summarised thus:— "Those in Gospel Institutions are so set down to us. These not cleare", where he apparently means that new orders by Christ and the apostles are to be obeyed as set down, but the orders as to baptism are not clear; whence he goes on to infer that we must interpret them from previous customs.

To number 23 there are two paragraphs which in the Gould manuscript follow the note "taken out of their Church Book, &c." and which precede the title, "A Brief Account of this Church of Christ" &c. Many critics saw that they were a mere summary based on what follows, and divined that they were due to Crosby. The *Repository* shows them in his handwriting, squeezed into a blank half page before Stinton's main title "Numb: 23 An Account of a Church". While Keymer transposed them without notice, he also omitted a series of marginal notes by Stinton, of which the only important one runs "4th Pastor Mr. Stephen More, Author of a Treatise called The Preachers Praise and Practice".

It will be seen that Keymer was really a very careful copyist, and that now we can consult the original, we have scarcely any corrections to make. It remains true that Stinton was by no means so careful. He had the papers

of Henry Jessey, telling the story for thirty years of that church which, gathered in 1616, was represented in his own day by the Congregational churches at Scituate and Barnstable in America, by the Baptist churches at Wapping, Cripplegate, Devonshire Square, Pethy, France, and possibly by some others. Yet by his own dating he copied them in the order 1632, 1620, 1630, 1633, 1638, 1630; and ended by neglecting "several Sheets containing ye names of ye members of ye said Congregation and ye time of their admission". He left several gaps for words he could not decipher; he seems to have made no enquiry as to points of interest raised by the papers; and he let the original papers themselves be lost.

With all the defects of the Repository, we are yet very grateful to Jessey, Adams, Stinton, Crosby, Gould, and Robinson. If any one of the first three had done less than he did, some most important steps in the early history of both Baptists and Congregationalists would be unknown. The present re-discovery may well encourage our antiquarians to pursue their researches that our early history may become yet more luminous.