
A table of contents for the *Congregational Studies Conference Papers* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_congregational-studies-conference_01.php

Perseverance and Assurance

Congregational Studies Conference 1994

Congregational Studies Conference Papers 1994

Ian Densham,
Norman Bonnett
and
Guy Davies

For information on EFCC and previous Congregational Studies Conference Papers, contact:
The Administrative Secretary, An Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches, PO Box 34, Beverley, North Humberside, HU17 8YY
efcc.org.uk

Contents

The papers are printed in the order in which they were given at the Conference; as usual each contributor is entirely responsible for the views expressed in his paper.

Rev. Ian Densham is minister of Zion Congregational Church (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion), St Ives, Cornwall.

Rev. Norman Bonnett is minister of Nazeing Congregational Church, Essex.

Rev. Guy Davies has served in the Congregational Ministry.

Foreword

The 1994 Studies Conference was marred by the inability of Derek Swann, its ever present chairman, to be in attendance owing to family illness. Alan Tovey, the General Secretary of an EFCC, stepped ably into his place.

The Conference was grateful for the papers given by Ian Densham, Norman Bonnett and Guy Davies. Ian was obviously greatly moved and encouraged as he reviewed God's past mercies to the Independent cause in St Ives. Though there is scholarly disagreement about the precise extent of the continuity of the Independent cause, it was good to be reminded of God's faithfulness down to the present day.

Norman gave us a clear and encouraging paper and pointed out how, in some respects, John Eliot's missionary work anticipated some modern perspectives on the work of missions. Regrettably it isn't possible to reproduce some of the memorabilia and slides that Norman brought with him.

It is hard to believe that the Studies Conference had not heard a paper on Thomas Goodwin. Guy Davies informed us about Goodwin's life and times, and warmly encouraged us to seek the assurance that Goodwin speaks of in his exposition of Ephesians 1:13.

In 1995 we expect to meet at Westminster Chapel on Saturday 18 March, when the papers will include one about the formation of the London Missionary Society.

Michael Plant

Studies Conference Secretary

Sherwood, Selina and Salubrious Place

Ian Densham

The story of the work of God at Zion in St Ives could be summed up by the writer to the Hebrews, "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today and forever." It is a testimony to the sovereign and keeping power of God.

A Brief History of Zion Congregational Church, St Ives: From 1662 to the present day

St Ives appears to have been a stronghold of the truth from the beginning of the 17th century. In 1622 the local council enacted a bye law against the practice of Sunday fishing. St Ives was also one of the very few Cornish boroughs which joined the Parliamentary side during the Civil War. In 1648 the authorities paid the sum of £1–15s–7d to the "Joyners for taking downe the Organs and Railings (rood screen) of the Church," an act of destruction barely excused by the religious zeal of the wreckers.[1]

During the Commonwealth period, the local Puritans, under their fanatical leader, Major Peter Ceely, had things very much their own way at St Ives. The Rev. Leonard Welsteed was back at the Parish Church, having been previously ejected for nonconformity. However, this was not to last.

The Restoration in 1660 was followed by the fourth Act of Uniformity in 1662 and many godly ministers were ejected from their livings. (And lost a year's salary to boot!)

> We refer to the fact that on Bartholomew's Day, August 24th, 1662, more than 2,000 clergy of the Church of England, educated, thoughtful, pious men, found it impossible to make the declaration imposed by the Acts of Uniformity, of unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer—in short, found it impossible to preserve their conscientiousness and remain any longer within the pale of that church. On that ever memorable day, without concert, having but little opportunity of becoming acquainted with each other's intentions, innocent of any design of making any political demonstration, these Christian men and ministers, commending themselves to the God they honoured, resigned their livings and therefore their income, their station and their office, to suffer with their wives and children poverty and banishment, imprisonment and cruel sufferings, rather than sacrifice their religious conscientiousness to the claims of arbitrary power. The history of our country contains no other passage which illustrates on so grand and impressive scale as this, the triumphs of religious principle

> over situations and intimidations deliberately employed to test its reality and power.[2]

Many Cornish clergymen were ejected from their livings. One such was Thomas Tregoss who was a native of St Ives. He was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, and had returned to St Ives and preached with great acceptance. He had been ordained on August 17th 1657 and taken up ministry in the town. He was a diligent preacher and pastor.

Towards the end of the first fishing season of his ministry in the town, the men were getting very worried as winter was drawing near and no decent catch had been made. Thomas persuaded the people to join him in a day of prayer and humiliation. The following day a very great shoal of pilchard was seen and taken.

During the next summer the boats had been out on a Saturday and the men were drying their nets on the Sunday. Thomas told them that they deserved to lose the Lord's blessing. They never had a chance to use their nets again for all that season!

Thomas moved to the parish of Mylor and Mabe in October 1659, where he studied and preached as before. The Act of Uniformity put an end to his public life, but he continued to preach to his family and friends. Many came to hear him, and as a result, he was arrested and sent to prison in Launceston Jail. There, he preached unceasingly to the prisoners.

On his release he went to live near Penryn (just north of Falmouth). He still kept up his illegal services and people came from far and near to hear him. The Lord greatly used him to the conversion of many souls.

During the early part of 1664 Thomas Tregoss preached from Luke 7:47, "And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." This sermon, seven years after his ordination, was the means of his own conversion![3]

On 7 April 1665, Tregoss preached at Mabe and was interrupted by Mr Thomas Robinson, J.P., who served him a warrant to appear before Mr Robinson on the 16th at Helston. Despite defending himself well, he was sent again to Launceston Jail for three months.

The Beginnings—Rev. Joseph Sherwood

Another Cornish clergyman who was ejected was the Rev. Joseph Sherwood, of St Hilary. He is described as "a man of engaging manners, with a kind and lovable disposition."[4]

He had been the incumbent of St Hilary for some 16 years. Although he suffered from distressing indisposition, and was seldom, if ever, free from pain,

the interests of his people were so dear to his heart as to lead him to most patient and untiring labours for their welfare.

He had an intense love for his people and was devoted to his work both in the study and the pulpit.

On being ejected from the living of St Hilary, Joseph Sherwood resolved still to serve the Lord as a preacher of the gospel, whatever risks he might face. In harmony with this resolution we find that not long afterwards he went to live in St Ives, and established there and at Penzance regular services. He preached in the two towns alternately on Sundays, and gave a weekly lecture in each place.

> It was not possible for any who came under the ban of the Bartholomew's Act to show zeal for God and at the same time to escape the hatred and persecution of men. All worldly good had been sacrificed already; afflictions and buffetings followed as the heritage of the faithful. Mr Sherwood cast in his lot among the despised ones, feeling with the Apostle; "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel," and with Moses "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches" than wealth or human favour.
>
> While still at St Hilary, after his ejectment, Mr Sherwood's persecutions began. Summoned before the magistrates he was required to answer to the charge of having neglected to attend his own parish church. The terms of his defence are preserved. He said, "That, as there was no sermon, he could not with any degree of satisfaction attend merely to hear the parish clerk read over the prayers; but that if there was a sermon to be delivered, he would attend on the following Sunday."[5]

Three Sundays went by and there was still no sermon. One of the church wardens told him during that week that there would again be no preacher, and that the people would love to hear their old pastor's voice once again. So, like the Chief Shepherd, "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered."

> Moreover, he was moved with righteous indignation against the tyranny of the times, as is shown by the theme of his address, which evidently was understood to apply to persons in authority. Great numbers followed him to the church, wondering if he would dare to preach to them. While the prayers were read he sat in the desk by the side of the clerk. Then the anxious and astonished crowd saw him ascend the pulpit he had so faithfully occupied, and eagerly listened to the Lord's word from his lips. After earnestly praying, he announced Leviticus 26:25 as his text: "And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant."[6]

This was like a firebrand to his enemies, who determined to bring him to trial. But no-one would admit to having heard his sermon! Eventually, by decoy and

subterfuge, the authorities trapped the church warden into admitting that he had been there.

He was brought before Mr Thomas Robinson, chairman of the Petty Sessions. Justice Robinson was known as a "heresy hunter" and gloried in the name! He reviled Mr Sherwood and called him a rebel—and much worse. Mr Sherwood replied to the charges by simply saying that "As he was a minister of the gospel, and as at the church there was so great assembly, he could not but have compassion on the multitude and give them a word of exhortation." "But," said Mr Robinson, "did ever man preach from such a rebellious text?" "Sir," rejoined Mr Sherwood, "I know man is a rebel against his Creator, but I never knew that the Creator could be a rebel against His creature." "Write his mittimus for Launceston Jail," cried Mr Robinson to his clerk. Then turning to Mr Sherwood he remarked: "I say, sir, it was a rebellious text." On hearing this Mr Sherwood looked him full in the face, and uttered the following ominous words: "Sir, if you die the common death of all men, God never spoke by me." He was then sent to jail, where, like another Joseph imprisoned for his virtues, he found favour with the keeper of his prison, and was permitted to walk about the castle and the town.

Mr Robinson returned home, and not many days later a remarkable fulfilment of the condemned pastor's prophecy surprised the neighbourhood, already excited by the events of the time. He had arranged to meet another justice on the market day for the prosecution of their favourite duty of "heresy hunting." Who should they have in their sights but Thomas Tregoss, who had already twice suffered a term of three months' imprisonment for persisting in preaching the gospel. Tregoss had now been at liberty for four days, and Justice Robinson was making arrangements for apprehending him a third time, with some others who had been guilty of similar offences.

> The day had come for joining with his neighbour, another Justice, in fanatic hunting, and he had ordered his man to meet him with his horse. Walking through his fields at Trevenegue, he was met by a servant maid, who was returning from milking. As they stood by the gate talking together, a bull that had always appeared tame and harmless, and with which Mr Robinson had often played, moved as usual towards him. Having pressed the milkmaid gently aside, the bull made a furious assault on Mr Robinson, "struck his horn into his thigh, lifting him up, and threw him over its back." His bowels were torn open and his leg broken by the fall. The bull continued to savagely gore him.[7]

His sister, hearing of this event, hastened to help. "Alas, brother" was her agonized cry, "What a heavy judgement is this!" in reply to which he groaned as he died: "It is a heavy judgement indeed." The whole neighbourhood was

stricken with awe and many were of the opinion that Divine Judgement had come upon him. The authorities straightaway sent a messenger to bring Mr Sherwood home.

When Mr Sherwood was released from jail, he had no immediate assurance of his own safety. In a few days he was summoned again to the justices' meeting in Penzance and fully expected to be again committed to prison. However, the circumstances of Mr Robinson's death did provide a means of deliverance for the persecuted pastor. On his appearance Justice Godolphin led him aside, and said: "Sir, I sent for you to know how you came to express yourself in such a manner when we committed you. You know what has since befallen Mr Robinson." Mr Sherwood replied: "Sir, I was far from bearing any malice against Mr Robinson, and I can give no other answer than that, when we are called before rulers for His Name's sake whom we serve, it shall be given us in that hour what we shall speak." Mr Godolphin answered: "Well, sir, for your sake I will never more have a hand in persecuting dissenters." From that day on, he was never molested again.

For some years he preached in a warehouse belonging to a Mr Lee, and a good number met for worship. Then Mr Lee very generously built a meeting house for the congregation. Sherwood was assisted in his labours by the Rev. Charles Morton, who, after a brilliant career at Oxford, had been presented with the living at Blisland. He, too, had been ejected. His house in St Ives was also licensed as a meeting house on 22 July 1672, and he worked very closely with Joseph Sherwood, touring West Cornwall as an itinerant preacher. He encountered much persecution and moved to London, where he opened an academy at Newington Green. Among his pupils were Samuel Wesley, father of John, and Daniel Defoe.

1700 to 1775

Joseph Sherwood died in 1705 when he was about 90 years old.[8] For three years the Independent community in St Ives was without a minister.

Sir Cloudsley Shovel (1650–1707) was an English sailor who had been knighted after the battle of Bantry Bay (1689). In 1705, he was made Rear Admiral of England and took part in the capture of Barcelona. On the way home in 1707, his ship was wrecked off the Scilly Isles, and his body was washed up and buried in Westminster Abbey.[9] But, when the news of his victory at Barcelona reached St Ives there were great rejoicings. One of the ways in which the inhabitants expressed their gratitude for Sir Cloudsley's achievements was by tearing down the little Presbyterian chapel! But the work did not cease. The church of God continues, even if there is no building.

On 7 July 1708, the Rev. Robert Gough was ordained to the ministry.

The "Evans Manuscript,"[10] one of the most important documents of old Dissent, records that in 1717, under Mr Gough, the congregation at St Ives numbered about 160, of whom 10 were "gentlemen," 26 were "tradesmen," and 12 were "labourers." (What were the others?)

Mr Gough was succeeded by Mr William Tucker around 1728. He was then followed by Rev. Jasper Howe of Falmouth who came to St Ives about 1740. He is reputed to have ministered in the town for 40 years, which would mean that he was still there in 1780. That seems unlikely, as he was ordained in 1704 and would have been over 90 by 1780. However, it is not impossible. We do know that he was succeeded by a Mr Jones from Wales. It is possible that Mr Jones came towards the end of Jasper Howe's ministry, maybe as an assistant, who took over from him.

The Exeter Visitation Books, which contain the bishop's "Replies to Queries" concerning dissenting congregations, give us some insight into the state of the congregation at St Ives during these years.[11]

In 1745, the "Replies to Questions" report that, "20 families of dissenters met in the Presbyterian house under the pastorate of Jasper Howe. Many people called Methodists meet at the house of John Horne at unseemly hours."By 1765 there were only 12 Presbyterian families meeting under Jasper Howe's ministry. But in 1764 it is recorded that,

> Mr John Stephens, married Anne, daughter of Mr Seaborn of Bristol, and on the death of his father about the year 1764, he disposed of everything connected with the trade and fishery of St Ives, and having abandoned the sect of the Presbyterians, to which all his family and relations had been strongly attached, he pulled down the chapel, and withdrew his support from its minister; proceedings remembered to his disadvantage on subsequent occasions.[12]

But the church was still there the following year. Some have argued that this signalled the end of the Presbyterian witness. But there is evidence that in 1774 there was still a worshipping community of Independents in the town. And in 1775, the Countess of Huntingdon visited St Ives with Rev. Thomas Wills of St Agnes.

Debate Over the Foundation Date of Zion

There has been much debate over the foundation date of Zion since it was first raised by Rev. Harold Read in 1912. This was taken up by Rev. Clifford Morris in the 1940's and he attempted to show that Zion had no connection with the earlier Presbyterian cause. Mr Morris was obviously very embarrassed by the word "Congregational" in the Church's title. He even wrote a booklet about the history of the chapel where he seeks to "prove" his case. However,

the late Rev. Matthew Francis, who made a special study of the Countess and her churches, has given a detailed critique of Mr Morris' work. It is significant that all Connexional references to the foundation of the church before 1912 date back to 1662,[13] and apart from the years of Mr Morris' ministry, the church has always adopted this date.

I have had some very helpful correspondence from Mr John Creasey of Dr Williams's Library referring to this. He is of the opinion from the Congregational records at the library that the present church cannot claim continuity with the earlier Presbyterian cause. But the church was not linked with the Congregational associations until the middle of the 1800s. Now, from the records that we have at the church, and also by careful research in the Cornwall County Archives and the Devon registers (which covered Cornwall for this early period), I want to show you that we have good reason to believe that the work does indeed go right back to 1662.

The question to address is this: "Did Jasper Howe's congregation form the basis of the folk that heard the Countess' preachers in 1775?" When Mr Stephens pulled down the building in 1764, did the congregation collapse also? No, for in 1765 there were still twelve families meeting. John Stephens did not destroy the work of God. In fact, his actions were remembered to his disadvantage. The building had been destroyed before, in 1705, but the work of God had continued.

By 1779, the "Replies to Questions" state that there are "no papists and no meeting houses for dissenting congregations in St Ives." But, as the lady at the Devon Record Office told me, these answers are suspect. Firstly, because the vicar at that time lived in St Erth (well outside the parish), and secondly, because we know for certain that there was a Methodist meeting house in St Ives, which dates from 1743. It is also extremely unlikely that there were no papists in the town.

The "Thompson List" also records that there was no dissenting church or minister in St Ives by 1773, but this was composed by a Baptist, and again it took no account of the Methodists, who by then were firmly established.

Furthermore, a number of those who were converted in the early 1800s, came from godly dissenting families, who clearly stretched back to these years.[14] A further fact concerns the site of the present building—but more of that when we get there!

The Visit of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon

George Whitefield made a number of visits to the West Country. On one such visit in 1750 he arrived at Redruth, and on March 10th he wrote to the Countess:

> At *St Andrews* we had a very powerful season, and yesterday at *Redruth* several thousands attended, and the word was quick and powerful. Invitations are sent to me from *Falmouth,* and several other places. I want more tongues, more bodies, more souls for the LORD JESUS. Had I ten thousands he should have them all. After preaching, about noon I am to go to *St Ives,* and in about nine days I hope to be at Exeter. Your Ladyship shall be sure to hear how the LORD prospers the gospel plough.[15]

By 21 March, he writes from Exeter:

> I think it is now almost an age since I wrote to your Ladyship, but travelling and preaching have prevented me. Immediately after writing my last, I preached to many thousands, at a place called *Gwinnop.* The rain dropped gently upon our bodies, and the grace of GOD seemed to fall like a gentle dew and sprinkling rain upon our souls. It was indeed a fine spring shower. In the evening I rode sixteen miles to St. Ives, and preached to many that gladly attended to hear the word; a great power seemed to accompany it. On the morrow, being LORD'S day, I preached twice to large auditories, and then rode back again rejoicing to *Gwinnop.* In my way, I had the pleasure of hearing that good was done, and had fresh calls to preach elsewhere.[16]

And again, he writes:

> As I am persuaded your heart's desire and prayer to GOD is, that the kingdom of the LORD JESUS may be set up on earth, I cannot return to London without informing your Ladyship, that the gospel has been most gladly received in these western parts. I have been very near the land's end, and every where souls have fled to hear the word preached, like doves to the windows. The harvest is great, yea very great; but the labourers are few. O that the LORD of the harvest would thrust out more labourers! Something out of the common road must be done, to awaken a thoughtless world. GOD has been terribly shaking the metropolis. I hope it is an earnest of his giving a shock to secure sinners, and shaking them to cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?"[17]

The Countess visited Cornwall in 1775. She spent some time with the Rev. Thomas Wills at St Agnes, who had married her niece. She wrote to one of her students then living in Dublin:

> My call here is to the tinners and thousands and tens of thousands of poor perishing creatures whom all seem to neglect; their souls are the object of my loving care; and if the Lord permit, I wish to make three or four establishments in the heart of the tin mines for their instruction and salvation.

While Selina was visiting Thomas Wills, they came to St Ives. Here she "engaged a room for preaching purposes, and soon the gospel of the grace of God was declared to the inhabitants by some of her students and co-workers in the Master's service."In 1886, the Rev. Clayton Fuidge wrote a valuable

manuscript history of the church in which he states, "Although it is not positively certain where the Countess first held services for the preaching of the gospel, yet some of the oldest people with whom I have conversed have led me to believe that the room was situated near the bottom of the hill leading to Barnoon."[18]

Three years after the visit of the Countess, John Wesley came on one of his many visits and wrote in his journal on August 28th 1778, that "peace and love prevailed through the whole (Methodist) circuit. Those who styled themselves My Lady's Preachers, who screamed and railed and threatened to swallow us up, are vanished away. I cannot learn that they have made one convert—a plain proof that God did not send them."[19]

But Wesley was not always right. He writes in his journal on a number of occasions in very disparaging terms about the ineffectiveness of "My Lady's preachers," in other parts of the country where their work continued. The work did struggle at this time, but the light did not go out.

By 1786, the Rev. Robert McAll, a student from Trevecca, was sent to the town. His preaching made an immediate impact and a great time of blessing followed. I have accounts of some of the men who were converted at that time, and they tell a thrilling story of God's goodness and grace poured out. One such is the account of Andrew Noall, a fisherman, who was one of the converts of Mr McAll's ministry.

Andrew Noall's greatest delight was the service of God. When he died, quite suddenly, in 1856, he was preparing to accompany the children of the chapel on an outing to the country. But sudden death was sudden glory to Andrew Noall. He was "mighty in the Scriptures" and he loved the doctrines of the gospel.

> One of his maxims was, "Take care of the house of God, and God will take care of your house." He had a large family. It has been known when they were all young and times were very hard in St Ives, that for his Sunday dinner he had only barley bread, and yet he had always something to give to the cause of God. … "Them that honour Me I will honour." … In the last church meeting he attended, in alluding to the slackness of some to contribute, he said to his minister, "I have no notion, Sir, of a cheap gospel. I for one would not thank you to preach for nothing. The Lord has ordained that they that preach the gospel should live by the gospel." The same principle and uprightness, honesty and conscientiousness, pervaded all his actions, and governed his practice. Hence he was beloved and respected by all who knew him, rich and poor, and by old and young.[20]

Salubrious Place

At great expense (£120.00) in 1802 Robert McAll secured a 1,000 year lease

on an old dilapidated building on the site where the present church is built. By 1804, the title to the property was passed over to a group of local trustees, who included the Rev. Timothy Wildbore of Falmouth and Penryn. He also had been a student at Trevecca, and appears to have been a great friend of Robert McAll.

This property was an old salt house and fish cellar. Only one room was habitable, and this was let out to a lady called Amey Crane. In 1824, a deposition by an elderly member of the congregation referred to the property as "Le Malle's fish cellar."[21] Le Malle is a Huguenot name. Back in 1680, shelter had been given to the Huguenots who had fled across the channel and come to St Ives. Jean Lemal (Le Malle) lodged in a house "close to the White Hart Inn on the Wharf—the oldest house in St Ives." It was known as Carn Glaze, but in the deeds of 1699 it is called "UGNES HOUSE"—Huguenot's House! (It fell to ruins in 1887.) Jean, a Breton fisherman, married Christiana Botterell in 1709, and she bore him 8 daughters. Jean was drowned in the bay when out fishing and Kitty was left to bring up the children.[22] Another link with the earlier years is established.[23]

It took some time before the site could be turned into a building suitable for worship, so young Andrew Noall used to follow the preacher from house to house and hold the candle for Mr McAll while he preached. For much of the time they met in the old Market House (demolished in 1832 to make way for the present structure). Eventually the cellar became a meeting room and the salt house was home for the minister. The lane (it is no more than a footpath) that runs up the side of the property is called "Salubrious Place."

In 1813, Mr McAll left for London and a series of short pastorates followed. The work languished somewhat. By 1821 the chapel was about to be closed. But Rev. Timothy Wildbore had been keeping an eye on things. In 1818 he arranged for the meeting of the Associating Independent Ministers (of which he was the treasurer and Robert McAll had been the secretary) to be held at St Ives. He preached from Isaiah 53:5 in the morning, the Rev. Moore preached in the afternoon from Acts 26:17–18, and Rev. J. Foxell of Penzance preached from Romans 6:4 in the evening. In 1821, these three gentlemen were asked to apply to Sir Christopher Hawkins (the local M.P.) to purchase the Chapel House at St Ives.[24]

By 1822, Mr Wildbore appealed to the trustees of the Countess Connexion, and in 1823 they sent the Rev. Thomas Stevenson to take over the work. He worked hard and a significant revival occurred, so much so that the building was considerably enlarged. A report in the *Evangelical Register* for April 1825 reports about St Ives:

> The chapel at this place was received into the Connexion nearly two years ago, at which time the cause there was very low. With gratitude to Him who maketh the little one to become a thousand, we have to state, that under the ministry of Mr Stevenson, the congregation has so increased as to make an enlargement of the place necessary, which by this time, we expect is nearly effected.[25]

From 1828 till the late 1850s there are many references to a chapel erected at Hellesveor, just a mile or so out of St Ives. However, although there is a baptismal register, there are no other details about this chapel, and no-one has been able to discover where it was situated.

The building work of 1825 involved lengthening the chapel, making the far end circular shaped, putting in two galleries, all for a total price of £530.00! In 1827 Mr Stevenson left. A series of short pastorates followed, and little was accomplished until Rev. E.S. Hart's ministry from 1851–7. By 1852 greatly enlarged congregations are reported and the report in the Connexional magazine makes encouraging reading.

> Since my settlement amongst the people of my charge, the attendance on the means of grace has been unusually large. The Word of the Lord is listened to with deep attention, and many tears are shed. This is a matter of sincere gratitude to the Author of every good and perfect gift, as well as of great encouragement to myself. … During the past year, God has given testimony to the Word of His grace; several additions have been made to the church; not a few are under conviction and deep concern about their souls, and inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. The Sunday School flourishes, and an interest has been excited amongst the young of the congregation, which I pray God may be deepened. The church is harmonious, and united in the bonds of Christian love. … God is in our midst—His Word has free course and runs and is glorified.

In 1860 a prayer meeting was held "for the purpose of seeking the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."[26] The chapel, which seats 350, was full and so was the vestry. The chairman observed that there had never been such a sight presented before in this ancient town, and he hoped that it was the beginning of great and good things. The Rev. J. Thompson was now the minister, and throughout his ministry the chapel was often full and many folk were converted. But how soon things can change. After his departure in 1865 there were a succession of short ministries and the work declined rapidly.

Rev. Clayton Fuidge

Mr Fuidge commenced his ministry on 29 June 1879, and soon proved himself to be one of the most energetic ministers the church has ever seen. By now, the building had deteriorated, the membership had dropped and

little seemed to be happening. Mr Fuidge rolled up his sleeves and proceeded to begin a wholesale renovation of the building with the help of a local builder.

> It was in the spring of 1882, when a few friends of Zion thought it advisable to examine the woodwork of the roof and ceiling of the Chapel. Our purpose was to ascertain, if possible, the probable strength of the roof, and to form some opinion as to the best methods to be adopted for ensuring the safety of the congregation. Everything was in a "ruinous decay"; and it was felt to be imperatively necessary to do "something". But this "something" was not done, until it became a serious question whether the building would not be publicly pronounced unsafe for religious worship. To avoid such a possibility it was resolved to carry out certain repairs such as securing the roof and renewing certain portions of the ceiling. The personal appeals of the Pastor to a few friends for financial aid, having been responded to in a liberal and kind hearted way, this work of securing the roof, etc., was commenced in July 1883. The proposal was to remove two of the old principals of the roof—and put two new ones in their places. For this purpose it was necessary to remove a large portion of the slating. When this was done the DISASTER as described in the following extract from a local newspaper published in August 1883, occurred:[27]
>
> ***SERIOUS DISASTER AT ST IVES***
>
> "An accident of a very serious nature has just befallen the pastor and congregation of Zion Church, St Ives. For some time past earnest efforts have been made to improve the building known as the Congregational Church, which is the oldest Nonconformist place of worship in the town. Last week these improvements commenced. The roof, which is a very expansive one, was first to be repaired. All went well until about 5 o'clock on Monday morning, when a sudden heavy downpour of rain caused the exposed ceiling to bend under the additional weight of water. Fearing the consequences, the pastor—Rev. W. Fuidge—and a carpenter hastened to the building and succeeded in removing all unnecessary weight from the ceiling. They had only just completed this when the ceiling fell with a tremendous crash, doing great damage to the seats, pulpit, gas fittings, and other fixtures. Both the carpenter and the minister had a narrow escape, for they had only bare time to get on to the scaffolding before the ceiling fell. This disaster will no doubt cast a gloom over the prospects of the church, as fully £100 will be needed to meet the expense of the disaster.
>
> "A great deal of the responsibility falls on the respected pastor, whose efforts in endeavouring to restore the church and to provide the needful accommodation for his congregation have been most untiring. Much sympathy has been felt for the pastor, and there ought to be no doubt as to the widespread sympathy

> taking a practical form, so that necessary funds may be forthcoming to defray the large expense which restoration will incur."[28]
>
> After this disaster other difficulties were met with. Upon examination it was found that the whole of the slating and woodwork was in such a bad condition, that to repair it would only be a useless expenditure. Accordingly a new roof had to be erected, and the old ceilings altogether removed. It was truly a time of trial. But God carried on His work. The personal appeals of the pastor to sister churches in the county, and to friends in Bristol, London, &c., were kindly responded to, so that in about a year nearly the whole of the expense of these improvements was met.
>
> The condition of the interior then received attention. The narrow, old-fashioned, high-backed pews were, with other fittings, condemned; and at last it was decided to make a "clean sweep" of the whole interior. But this was easier SAID than DONE. Still, our trust was in God; and the work proceeded. The Lord of the Harvest generally sent us "just enough" money to keep the workmen agoing. After six months' toil the work was so far completed as to allow of Re-opening Services in August 1884. The Rev. Professor Chapman, M.A., of Plymouth, preached the Dedication Sermon, and various other ministers of the county were present, all of whom spoke highly of the work done.[29]

The final building enterprise of the indefatigable Mr Fuidge, was to purchase the two cottages that stood in front of the chapel and hid it completely from the street. The approach was up a narrow insanitary passage, only four feet wide. In 1885, Mr Fuidge and the trustees were able to obtain these cottages and demolish them and construct a new approach to the chapel. The chapel now fronts onto Fore Street, a narrow cobbled street, but still the main street through the town.

The energetic Mr Fuidge left St Ives for Kidderminster in September 1888. He was followed by Rev. Henry Goddard (1888–91) and the Rev. Thomas Morgan (1892–96). During the latter's ministry the membership of the Sunday School increased elevenfold, the congregation fourfold, and the membership more than doubled. As a result, a new School Hall was built next to the chapel. God was again blessing His people.

Up to the Present Day

To give you a flavour of the next few years, let me quote and comment on some extracts from the chapel minute books.

> December 25th 1888.
>
> On Christmas Day two carol services were held in the church. In the evening

there was a crowded house, many were obliged to go away for want of room. The Pastor preached two appropriate sermons.

July 7th 1889.

The Sunday School Anniversary services were held, when two appropriate and impressive sermons were preached by the Rev. Harry Goddard, Minister. Morning 1 Kings 14:13. Evening Matt. 18:1–4 … The collections amounted to £1–12–3. The attendance was excellent.

Church Meeting—March 23rd 1898 (Rev. J.P. Southwell).

The Pastor read a petition re. Sunday Closing, was told to sign on behalf of the church and send to the M.P. for the Western Division.

Church Meeting—August 31st 1898.

Resolved that a resolution protesting against the granting of a 7 days license to the Cornish Arms, Treloyn, be submitted to the church and congregation on Sunday evening next and that the decision be communicated by the church to the presiding magistrate at the ensuing Brewster Sessions.

December 18th 1898. An 8 days mission to be held in February 1899.

March 2nd 1899.

40 members were present at Church meeting (Previously, 20, 14, 12 etc.) 19 new members received. This was the result of the mission in February, as the following minute reveals:

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously carried that the secretary write to the Rev. J. Kingdon on behalf of the church expressing their warmest heartfelt thanks and gratitude for his services which through God's Holy Spirit had been the means of blessing many souls.

Proposed by the chairman that united prayer be made by every member each day at 6 o'clock.

A fellowship meeting followed and as one after another bore testimony to the cleansing power of Christ, we could truly say, "God was in our midst." The manifestation of His presence was such as had not been witnessed for many years. May each one abide in His presence.

July 11th 1899.

Chairman suggested that a "Notice" be put up requesting the people to discontinue the practice of drying clothes on the rails of the Church.

September 30th 1901.

Three new incandescent lights were ordered for the Orchestra, on the motion of Mr England, seconded by Mr Ward.

November 5th 1901.

Mr Southwell advised the members to read some denominational paper, such as the *Examiner* or *Christian World,* and study the various parts relating to the great change which the Congregationalists intended to make in the management and government of their churches.

A report from the *St Ives Echo,* January 25th 1902.

240th ANNIVERSARY.

The pastor, Rev. J.P. Southwell, gave a lecture on "Our Founder and his Friends, The Early Independents of Cornwall."

The lecturer introduced his subject by referring back to the days of King Charles II, when the Act of Uniformity was passed, which caused the Independents and Puritans to leave the Church of England. There were no less than 18 Church of England ministers in Cornwall, who for conscience sake would not conform to the Act.

Prominent amongst these were Thomas Tregoss (a native of St Ives) who formed the Independent Church at Penryn, and Joseph Sherwood (Vicar of St Hilary) who founded the St Ives Church. From the death of Sherwood in 1705 to the time of Robert McAll who built the present Church in 1801 the Independents continued to worship regularly in St Ives.

August 11th 1912 (Rev. A. Harold Read).

A standing vote of condolence was agreed to and the Secretary was asked to convey the resolution to the widow of our deceased brother James Hodge who was accidentally drowned on Bank Holiday in the company of his brother Thomas Hodge. Several of the members spoke to the worth of our brother, and he would be missed from all the various organisations of the church. He was zealous and faithful in the discharge of all the tasks allotted to him. Of him it can truly be said, thou shalt be missed, for thy seat will be empty.

November 12th 1912 (Rev. A.H. Read).

On the following Sunday it was proposed and agreed to that we celebrate the 250 Anniversary of the Church and the Great Ejectment of 1662. Services to be conducted by the Pastor.

January 6th 1914.

It was decided to hold the Church Anniversary if possible, on February 1st & 5th. The Pastor was instructed to make arrangements with Rev. W.C. Fuidge

(former Pastor) for this, and the Sunday School Anniversary. He reported that the choir would render a Cantata during the week.30

THE CHURCH FIRE—SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER 1914

On Sunday Nov. 22, just as the opening hymn was being sung in the afternoon school, the church was discovered to be on fire. The children were quickly dismissed. The Fire Brigade was summoned. Friends helped—quickly and successfully. The conflagration was extinguished before very extensive damage was done. The evening service was held, by kind permission, at the Central Hall.

It appears that the fire was the result of the old fashioned heating system failing. A new system was proposed, the "Wright Steam heated gas radiators".

May 22nd 1917.

MEMORIAL from Zion Congregational, Countess of Huntingdon's Church, St Ives, Cornwall. To David Lloyd-George, Prime Minister.

"That the members of the above Church and Congregation this day May 20th 1917, assembled would respectfully inform the Prime Minister and the Food Controller that they would the more cheerfully and loyally observe the Royal Proclamation urging economy in the consumption of grain and bread were the Government to at once prohibit the destruction of any kind of food for the manufacture of intoxicating liquor. Signed on behalf of the Church and Congregation, Pastor and Secretary." (A. Harold Read & W.P. England)

In the Spring of 1923 a very gracious revival broke out in our midst, resulting in the addition of 40 new members on Good Friday, March 30th 1923.

March 22nd 1924.

At a preliminary Committee meeting held on this date, it was unanimously decided to write the Rev. F. Kenworthy of Brackley asking his views on the Second Advent. We received a letter in reply to say that he cancelled his visit to St Ives. (In view of the Pastorate.)

Committee present: J. Rouncefield, William M. Grenfell, Henry Lugg, Sam Quick, H. Rouncefield, Miss A. Congdon.

March 30th 1924 (Sunday).

At a Church meeting held on this date, the letter sent to the Rev. F. Kenworthy was read to the assembly, also his letter we received in reply to it and his reasons for cancelling his visit to us. At this meeting, a vote of confidence was given by the assembly to the present committee, fully empowering them in their negotiations to candidates for the Pastorate, whether they are prepared to preach the whole integrity of the Word or not.

By July 1924, Rev. R. Harmstone was appointed to the pastorate. However, there was some friction over Rev. Harmstone's ministry. Three church officers resigned when he came. When he left, 7 years later, the church was in serious financial debt. There are many references to the deficit due to Mr Harmstone, and "trying to come to terms with Mr Harmstone." There were probably faults on both sides, but it was a sad period.During the 1930's the church faced very hard times. Financially, they seemed to stagger from one crisis to another. The threat of closure was very real. However, the Lord brought them through these years.

In January 1939 there was a general failure of the fishing. (There was also a serious life boat disaster when the boat was lost and all but one of the crew.) This left many folk in St Ives poverty stricken. Then in July 1940 on a Saturday evening a considerable portion of the roof fell away and damaged the school roof as well. So the church got together to make a camouflage net to sell to the Government for the War effort to help towards the debt of repairing the roof.

For a brief period in 1940, Rev. W.A. Bryant, a retired Methodist minister acted as pulpit supply. He was very involved in politics and was not appreciated by many, as he does not appear to have been a Bible preacher. Those who can remember his time at Zion say that there were strong doctrinal disagreements between him and some of the members.

The July 27th 1941 minutes record a unanimous call to a Rev. Wesley Hemming. He was a young layman, pursuing theological examinations and seeking a pastorate. But the Congregational Union stepped in and DEMANDED that the church withdraw its invitation, because he was not a denominational man.

Yet the Lord overruled the interference of man and in December 1941, the Rev. Frank Doddridge Humphreys became pastor. He was a direct descendant of Philip Doddridge. Every Sunday he would have at least one of Doddridge's hymns. His ministry was greatly appreciated, and there are those alive today who remember him with affection. Every Sunday evening during the war he prayed for each of the church members who were on active service by name. This was followed by the hymn "Holy Father, in Thy mercy, Hear our earnest prayer, Keep our loved ones now far distant 'Neath Thy care." Every one of them came back.

December 30th 1941:

> Arrangements were discussed as to holding week evening services in the church and it was decided to commence a Prayer and Fellowship service on 10

> February 1942. Mrs Humphreys would be soon opening a meeting for women.

On September 29th 1942 there is reference to some damage caused by an air raid to the Church and School.

The Church Anniversary (281st) was held on Sunday February 14th 1943 and conducted by the Minister, Rev. F. D. Humphreys. The services were continued on the following Thursday with the Cantata "Belshazzar's Feast", followed by a pasty supper. All the services were well attended and the financial result was a record.

In March 1946 Mr Humphreys was suddenly taken ill and died. This was a great blow to the church. The Rev. E. Jefferys, a relation to the Pentecostal Jefferys, was conducting evangelistic meetings in the town and offered to fill the pulpit. The trustees were alarmed at a Pentecostal, and suggested a temporary measure for the summer. They then suggested to the church that they invite the Rev. Clifford Morris of Peacehaven to the pastorate. While he was at St Ives, he sought to prove that the church was never a Congregational church. He printed a "History of Zion" with a foundation date of 1775. By November 11th 1947 he had issued an ultimatum to the church to remove the word "Congregational" from its title. By June 22nd 1948 he was complaining that as he could get no official recognition outside the Connexion, he was going to join the FIEC! Then, in 1950 he asked the minister of Penzance Baptist Church to baptise him, and he prepared a sermon to preach to Zion to show them the error of their ways. Fortunately, he asked advice from the Connexion, and they told him not to preach it! Copies of much of the correspondence remain today. He resigned in 1950.

Again, three short ministries followed. The church was hit by the scandal of one minister running off with another woman, while refusing to resign.

Then, in June 1962 the Rev. A. J. Harries was appointed. He stayed for 12 very happy years. It was my very great privilege to meet Mr Harries a few weeks ago. He is now in his 80's and a sick man. But he was full of the Lord's goodness to him while he was at St Ives. His testimony to the faithfulness and dedication of the saints at St Ives was a great encouragement to me. His parting words were, "If the Lord sends revival again, I feel sure it will start in St Ives!"

For many years, Zion held a dual membership. They belonged to the Connexion and also to the Congregational Church. When the URC was proposed, the church at St Ives rejected any further involvement with the new body. The deacons issued a paper to the church members for discussion and approval at the December 1971 church meeting to join EFCC, because "…it is based firmly on the Christ declared in the Scriptures and not the Christ of

modern philosophy." However, for some unexplained reason they did not join and their association was transferred to the Congregational Federation. When I became pastor, I raised the issue of membership of EFCC. When it came to the church meeting, many expressed surprise that the church was not already in membership. So we joined EFCC and came out of the Federation immediately!

Just before Mr Harries came to Zion another important event took place. Mr Eddie Murt became Church secretary. Eddie had been brought up in Zion, and had become a Christian before the war. He was known for his clear Christian testimony. St Ives is still a close knit community, and everyone knows everyone else's business. He was born and bred "downalong", which means the bottom part of the town, near the harbour. In his teenage years, like so many of his contemporaries, he went off to the war in the navy. Many of the lads he was with would leave their money in his safe keeping when they went ashore, "because they knew they could trust him, because he read his Bible."

The Kola Run was a convoy that travelled from Scotland to the Kola inlet in Northern Russia. Eddie went on the last few trips, sailing on the Lapwing. On March 20th 1945, the Lapwing was sunk just outside the inlet. Now, you have not got long to live in those icy waters, and many men lost their lives. Only a handful were rescued. God had His hand on Eddie, and he was one of those who was rescued against impossible odds. At the end of the war he joined the Cornwall Electric Power Company, later to become SWEB. But he also devoted himself unstintingly to the work of the gospel in St Ives.

On the evening of July 23rd 1970, a great fire hit Fore Street. The flames raged through many buildings and gutted them. Eddie heard the news and was out to see whether the chapel was safe. Fore Street was like an inferno. There was a strong wind blowing, fanning the flames in the direction of the chapel. He told me how he could see the flames shooting up over the chapel roof. It seemed as if the chapel was bound to be destroyed. The building right next to the chapel caught light and burnt furiously. The fire brigade were helpless to control the blaze. Many of the buildings were predominantly wooden, and the street is so narrow. But suddenly, without warning, the wind changed direction and the heavens opened and the rain poured down. In a moment of time, the crisis had been averted. God had kept His house yet again. The only fire damage was to the corrugated plastic roof of the kitchen, and there was some slight water damage in the small back room.

On May 3rd 1974 a report appeared in the *St Ives Times and Echo.*

> Ivor Dean, the actor well known to television audiences as Inspector Teal in the Saint serials, which starred Roger Moore, is now a familiar figure in

> Downalong, St Ives, where he lives at 5 Bunkers Hill. Mr Dean has a wide reputation as an astrologer psychic and Roger Moore owes a lot to the accuracy of his predictions.

The article went on to describe Dean's predictions for Roger Moore. In the same issue the film *The Exorcist* was banned from showing in St Ives.

A fortnight later the following advert appeared:

> TV co-star of "THE SAINT". Ivor Dean invites you to visit his ZODIAC HOUSE, The Digey. Horoscope advisory centre for astrological treasures. Opening soon.[31]

Now, this is only just around the corner from the chapel. So the friends at Zion began to pray that the Lord would overrule and that this centre would not open. By 16 August 1974 Mr Dean was dead! He died in Treliske hospital where he had been in intensive care for several weeks as the result of a sudden and severe illness. This had a very solemnising effect upon the congregation, and there are those today who still refer to the dramatic way in which God answered their prayers.

The Rev. Gordon Oram came to Zion in June 1974. He set about encouraging the United Beach Missions to come to the town in the Summer months. They have come every year since 1975, and now are in St Ives for 11 weeks during the summer. He also exercised a faithful Biblical ministry for 6 years, and had the joy of seeing a number of folk join the church.

The last few ministers have all held to believers' baptism. With the abuses of indiscriminate infant baptism that some have followed, this has not been an issue that has caused any friction. There are those who have been baptised as infants; others have been baptised as believers. But on the primary doctrines, Zion has always stood clearly on the Word of God.

This was demonstrated a few years ago within the Connexion. The trustees had taken the Connexion in to "Observer Status" of the Inter-church process. We saw this as a further erosion of the truth. The church was united in its response and I was asked to speak to the Conference. After many had spoken, Eddie asked to say a few words. He then spoke of the danger we were in. I was greatly moved to hear what he said and to have such support.

We live in days of small things. Since I have been the minister, the membership has gradually fallen as one after another have been called home.

But as I reflected on these things, I was constrained to remember a few of those who had died since I have been at Zion. What a testimony they had!

Annie Peters. When I visited her, she would tell me what she had been reading in the Word of God that day and who she had been praying for. She

never travelled more than a few miles away from St Ives all her life. But she knew God in a way that few do today.

Bobby Hodge. When I first met him, he was already forgetful and had lost some of his ability to think straight. But he never forgot the house of God. And he was always at the prayer meeting. We had to prompt him when he forgot who he was praying for. And if we suggested the wrong name, he would tell us. But he loved his Saviour. At one prayer meeting I was talking about heaven and he butted in, "I can't wait to get there." A fortnight later he was at the funeral of another servant of God. Afterwards, he went down the town to tell all he met what a wonderful time of rejoicing there is when a believer goes home. And the Lord took him—in the street, just as he was glorying in the glory.

Emma Lander, whose favourite text was John 15:16: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you bear much fruit." "We are such privileged people," she would say. "Fancy the Lord choosing me! What a privilege!" She and her husband (who died before I came to Zion) had guided the church through the war years and after. They had been chapel delegates at the Connexion Conference for many years.

Bill Morgan, who was a Commando Training Instructor in the war. He helped to set up the Commando Training Unit at Bosigran, just down the coast. He was a man's man: soldier, commando, insurance agent, rugby player, climber, realist. He was not converted till his 50's. But 20 years later when death stared him in the face at the end of a painful illness, his Bible and his hymnbook were his constant companions. He knew his failures, but he also knew his Saviour.

Raymond Francis, who for years was involved with the Exclusive Brethren. He didn't join Zion until 1984. But what great liberty and joy had come to him though the gospel.

And Eddie Murt. I knew him for 9 years. We had become in that time close friends. He told me that I was the first minister that he had ever felt he could call by his Christian name! He longed and prayed and worked tirelessly to see God bless the work at Zion. He was a man of action, but also a man of prayer. His last report as church secretary shows his concern. He didn't know it would be his last. The Lord took him home quite suddenly last year.

Listen to the words of a true Cornish Christian. In that last report he said:

> When I took on this secretarial job in 1960 they said, "There is nobody else here to do it." Things don't change much. … But this society exists to worship God and to spread the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ and this message has been proclaimed over hundreds of years.

> Some times we are feeling down when we look around at the few that are with us. But things haven't changed. Can you just imagine how few there were here on the Sundays when the Wesley boy was in town. How low the funds were in the winters when the herring gave the bay a miss and there were more dinner times than dinners.
>
> God has seen fit that we commence 1993 in good heart. We are looking for the showers—and most welcome they would be. But showers are of short duration. We must be looking for an abundance of rain. When Elijah's servant first saw it, it was no bigger than a man's hand. And I think God will be encouraging and blessing the work here. In fact I believe the blessing has arrived already. The green shoots of recovery.
>
> Churches have been having a rough time lately. I'm sure none of us could foresee the possibility of closure of Wesley or Bedford Road (Methodist chapels in the town), yet that fact has arrived. People often say, "How do you manage to carry on up Zion?" I tell them, we've had fire, we've had flood, we have famine in the land. But whatever position we hold in Zion we are only the caretakers in God's House. …
>
> May I close by thanking God for His faithfulness to us as a church and people. When we have felt too tired, too cold or too old to come to worship—He has been there with the few as He has promised to do. The same God, yesterday, today and for ever.

Last Sunday, we had the joy of receiving in two new members—the first for four years. Eddie would have been thrilled. The God who has kept His work at Zion, St Ives all these years is the same God, yesterday, today and forever. I often remind the folk that when the Countess came to St Ives, only 20 families were meeting. But God revived His cause. We need another Selina, another preacher like George Whitefield. But above all, we need another visitation from God. We still preach the gospel of the grace of God, for this is our only confidence.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come.
'Tis grace that brought us safe thus far
And grace will lead us home.

To God alone be glory.

Thanks are due to the following for help in the research for this paper:
Mrs Margaret Staplehurst—Connexional Records.
Cornwall County Record Office, Truro.

Cornish Resource Library, Redruth.

Devon Record Office.

The late Miss Stephanie Wright and The Evangelical Library, London.

Mr John Creasey, Dr Williams's Library, London.

Mr Ian Gardner, Solicitor to the Connexion.

Other resources as noted in the footnotes, together with the records and minutes of the church.

1 The first part of this paper draws heavily on an unpublished manuscript by St Ives historian, the late Cyril Noall, who did much research to produce the tercentenary history of Zion Chapel.
2 Rev. R.G. Williams, writing in the *Penzance Congregational Magazine* in 1875.
3 John Gillies, *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival* (Banner of Truth) page 137.
4 Quoted by Cyril Noall.
5 *History of Nonconformity in Penzance* by Rev. A. W. Johnson, 1876 (which includes much information about St Ives as well in the early years). Cornwall County Records (Ref: DDX 682/53).
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*. Ed. J.O. Thorne.
10 Original is at the Dr Williams's Library, London.
11 Information from the Devon Record Office, where the diocesan "Replies to Questions" for these years are kept. Before Truro became a diocese, all records were administered from Exeter.
12 Lake's Parochial History of Cornwall, 1865 Volume 2 Page 262.
13 See, for example, the "List of Churches" in *The Harbinger*, March 1895.
14 See, for example, the "Memoir of Andrew Noall" in The *Harbinger* of December 1856. His parents were "pious and respectable" and "trained up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Andrew Noall was born in 1785, just 10 years after the visit of the Countess. By then, the Methodists were strongly established in the town. Yet Andrew Noall's parents were dissenters, but not Methodists. (See also the life of John Grenfell, born in St Ives in 1780—*The Harbinger*, November 1858).
15 *The Works of George Whitefield* (London: 1771), Vol. 2, Letter DCCCXXIV, pages 339, 340, Redruth, March 10th 1750.
16 Ibid., Letter DCCCXXV, page 340. Exeter, March 21st 1750.
17 Ibid., Letter DCCCXXVII, page 342. Exeter, March 24th 1750.
18 Handwritten Manuscript, in the chapel records.
19 Volume 4, page 127, 1901 printing of *John Wesley's Journals*. See also his unreasonable criticisms of "My Lady's Preachers" at Grimsby (Vol. 4 page 149) and at Belton, Lincolnshire (Vol. 4 page 177).
20 Memoir of the late Mr Andrew Noall, *The Harbinger*, December 1856.
21 Information from research into the history of the buildings in Fore Street and The Wharf, St Ives, carried out by Mr T. Richards of Bristol, formerly of St Ives.
22 Information from J.H. Matthews, *History of the Parishes of St Ives, Lelant, Towednack and Zennor*.
23 Since this lecture was given, further research has uncovered some letters written by Rev. Thomas Stevenson, minister of Zion from 1823–27. He wrote to H.F. Stroud, at the Connexional Headquarters, Chapel House, Spa Fields, London on October 8th 1823, quoting a document by Elizabeth Jenkyns of St Ives: "Mr Francis Stephens … left in his

will £5 per annum for ever towards the support of a dissenting chapel in St. Ives, and that for this purpose he had encumbered certain freehold premises called Le Malle's Fish Cellar and Premises situate and being in the borough of St. Ives …"

He wrote to a James Arundell Esq. of Exeter on March 10th 1824, with details of the Hawkings family, from whom Robert McAll purchased the present site, and also added, "Francis Stephens left an annuity of £5 per annum towards a dissenting chapel in the town. He died in 1742."

This further establishes that the present chapel is built on the very site of the premises that were used by Jasper Howe's congregation. The originals of these letters are with the records held by the Connexional solicitor.

24 Minutes held at County Records, Truro, of meetings of Associating Independent Ministers. (Ref: DDX 682/150).
25 *The Evangelical Register* was the name of the Connexional magazine of the period.
26 *Connexional Magazine*, February 1860.
27 Handwritten manuscript of Rev. Clayton Fuidge
28 *The Cornishman*, August 1883.
29 From Clayton Fuidge's handwritten history.
30 It is of interest to the debate over the foundation of Zion, that Rev. Clayton Fuidge, who wrote the first "History" of the chapel, and had talked to some of the early converts of Mr McAll's ministry, came back to take the church's 252nd Anniversary. This dates the foundation back to 1662.
31 *St Ives Times & Echo*, May 24th 1974.

John Eliot, 1604–90: Son of Nazeing—Apostle to the Indians

Norman Bonnett

Occasionally one finds oneself in a position wherein one feels singularly ill-equipped for the task in hand. Wise folk avoid such situations but the fool-hardy, of which group I am obviously a member, will occasionally be ensnared into such insecure roles.

I do not come as an historian to this task. Not, that is, as one who has a thirst for learning and remembering every fact and facet of man's activities in times gone by. I have naturally an interest in such things, but a true historian has within him that application for his subject that I reserve for such idle occupations as cricket or rugby football! So to those who are themselves historians of the addicted variety, I offer my respects and apologies, and I ask for their indulgence. To those who need to be enthused for short-term excitements about matters historical I say: "Take heart, I am at one with you!"

It seems to me that we should first pin down the geographical setting of John Eliot's life. Most of you will have no idea where Nazeing is and will probably be amazed to know that it has produced such a noteworthy evangelist, not to mention those of Nazeing stock who accompanied and supported him in his travels.

Today Nazeing is a sophisticated modern village made up of some five thousand souls. It consists of many beautiful, not to say opulent, houses which have been built almost entirely since the war. There are other estates, both private and council, which have transformed the village from a somewhat sleepy farming community into a busy commuting-cum-retirement haven for those whose lives have been or are centred in London.

Before the war Nazeing would have resembled in size and quality of life the Nazeing John Eliot would have known. Much of his early life would have revolved around the church and what we now know as Upper Nazeing, an area of buildings which are older than the more active area we call Lower Nazeing.

How then does the life of John Eliot fit into the area of his day? Here we have a simple map1 which shows Nazeing where he grew up, Widford where he was born, Cambridge where he attended Jesus College and first met Thomas Hooker, and finally Little Baddow where he assisted Hooker in the local school.

So with James I on the throne and Shakespeare busily writing plays in London, John Eliot was born in 1604 to Bennett and Lettes Eliot in Widford.

Bennett was a yeoman landowner of some standing and owned land in Ware, Widford, Nazeing, Hunsdon and Eastwick, all in the Essex—Hertfordshire border area. The family moved to Nazeing in 1607, but we know little of the life the family enjoyed there, beyond that which is recorded in the Church registers. John's baptism is celebrated in a window at Widford Church put there by Americans in 1895.

We know very little about Bennett's wife; we are not even sure of her name, but it is generally accepted that she was the "Lettes Ellyot" buried in Nazeing on 16 March 1620–1 after the birth of her youngest child, Mary.

All this needs to be set against the great movements of the time, especially of course the Reformation and the Puritan emergence. Essex has the reputation of being the most Puritan of counties during the reign of Elizabeth I and up to the Civil War of the 1640s. In practice it seems that the centre of discontent with the Established Church was always Colchester (or Dedham) and no doubt the Flemish refugees from wars in the Low Countries were directly involved. The western side of the county was much less active in this respect, but Nazeing seems to have been the great exception to this rule. Like most religious movements, it is always difficult to say precisely where and how new thinking starts, but a certain John Hopkins, who was installed as vicar of Nazeing in 1571, was ejected in 1590 for non-conformity, and it may be that some of his parishioners had formed an enthusiasm for his views.

It was into this situation that Bennett Eliot moved in about 1607. Already he had clear Puritan leanings; was a thrifty hardworking yeoman farmer; and was, it seems, determined to give John, the fifth of eight children (the first John, buried a year before the "Apostle" was born, was buried "infans" only 12 days old) the best education available. He went therefore to Jesus College, Cambridge at the age of 15, already immersed in strong Biblical Evangelical teaching. John set forth to pursue a B.A. degree, but life at Cambridge would be hard and disciplined in those days and John would be at the financially poorer end, though not the poorest of the scholars he mixed with. He was, it seems, a keen student and he emerged at the age of 19 with a good B.A. degree, having studied Rhetoric and Logic, Cicero's orations and the arguments of Aristotle and other classical authors. He had a particular interest in Hebrew and Greek—all valuable disciplines for the paths into which his God would lead him.

Before he set out on his journey to the New World, three great changes or developments took place in his life.

Born, no doubt, of his evangelical Anglican upbringing and the argumentative hothouse of university life, he emerges as one who had that "blessed assurance" of Christ's total victory on the Cross, an assurance which

both pervaded and changed his life for ever. Arising from this depth of persuasion, there emerged that challenge which is manifested at some time to every born again Christian. I speak of the call to full-time Christian service. Many decide that such a course is not for them; some know at once which route they must follow, while others spend their lives wrestling with a lack of certainty or perhaps of obedience. We may be sure that under the various influences upon his life John would have felt constrained to offer his life in such service. To the earnest Puritan of the day the main burden of Christian witness fell upon the ordained ministry. William Kellaway has pointed out in his book on the 'New England Company' that John Eliot's name does not occur in the Diocesan Registers of London, nor can we assume that with his growing Puritan stance he would be inclined to accept the Thirty-Nine Articles. Surprisingly, Eliot's name was clearly included in the lists of emigrant clergy given by Neal in Anderson's *History of the Colonial Church.* John Winthrop's diary accepts Eliot as a fully accredited "minister of religion", a description which could only be Anglican. Hovering around all this is his admiration for the Rev. Thomas Hooker, who would have subscribed originally to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and who had become the Rector of Little Baddow by the time Eliot is found working in his school there.

Hooker himself was to be the third great influence in John's life. He, too, had sprung from yeoman stock and had been both a scholar and later a Fellow at Cambridge, and it was as a "lecturer" or popular preacher that he made his name amongst English Puritans, having been expelled by the Archbishop of London, Thomas Laud. He was a most stimulating preacher and attracted "divers young ministers … that spend their time in conference with him", according to Chancellor Duck in 1629 who wished for Hooker's departure.

When he followed Eliot to New England in 1633, Hooker had been deeply influential in the spread of non-conformity and was to be used in the shaping of Congregationalism and democratic institutions in his new-found homeland. He was in the mainstream of the non-conformist movement, and he had brought much irritation to the established Church and much enlightenment to many young Christians, especially to John Eliot.

So to quote Neville Cyer's biography, "For this young man, committed to Christ and, like Hooker, unwilling to be muzzled, unafraid of hard work, and of yeoman stock, a graduate of repute and an ordained minister of God's Word, the way forward became clear. When Puritan emigrant friends of Thomas Hooker invited him to join them as they sailed to Boston, and when the woman to whom he was now engaged agreed to follow, the way was open and John Eliot, the man of God, at twenty-seven set out upon his life's career."

On 16 August 1631 the two hundred and fifty ton *Lyon,* having been

laden at Gravesend where she had received John Eliot as a passenger, was riding off the quay at Deal, Kent. It was here that the principal passengers and crew were to board her. Amongst them was the family of the Governor of Massachusetts, John Winthrop, who must have shared with John those feelings of excitement, of fear and apprehension which mingle in the human heart at such times. The Age of Exploration was in full spate, yet, whilst this fact helped those whose minds were persuaded to follow suit, there were many discouraging stories of a howling wilderness and of savages with wild dispositions. The Governor surely would have been privy to all information, true and false, receiving it even as they journeyed from Deal.

The land was also described as an earthly Paradise, full of space, of healthy living and luscious produce, and no doubt these stories would serve as an underpinning to that calling which John Eliot and his associates had received.

One further aspect of the New World story concerned, of course, those who were native to those parts, called "redskins" by the first travellers. They were fond of painting their bodies with red ochre or vegetable pigment to bring out their natural features, their Mongoloid eyes and long noses. They were not the magnificent horsemen of the cowboy films we all love but rather similar to the Aboriginal folk of Northern Australia, scantily clad with dark hair lines down the middle of their heads and living in dome-shaped or cylindrical huts of bark and grass.

The Plymouth Plantation of the Pilgrim Fathers had been established in 1620 and to that event belongs a full share of honour and romance. These people were Separatists and followed in a long line of those who had worshipped furtively and suffered publicly for over a century in England before they embarked in the Mayflower for New England. The Puritan settlement in Massachusetts Bay was in some ways more important than that of Plymouth. It was, to date, the greatest effort of colonialisation which Englishmen had made. Its lasting effects upon America were more decisive in terms of Christian development and also in legal and political change. We may not entirely approve of the before and after miracle of American history, but we cannot deny the vastness and speed of that miracle.

Legally the change began in March 1628. The Council of New England sold to a company of "Knights and gentlemen about Dorchester that part of New England lying between the Merrimac River and the Charles River on Massachusetts Bay." On June 20th a preliminary expedition under John Endicott had sailed from Weymouth in the Abigail, arriving on September 6th. Endicott reported well of this land and this set in motion the Great Migration which saw some 20,000 of England's best citizens cross the Atlantic in twelve years. Most of these were seeking freedom from religious persecution.

In 1629 a Royal Charter constituted as a corporation "the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England", whose seal bore the figure of an Indian with the words "Come over and help us". Francis Higginson, one of the Colony's first ministers, was at pains to declare that "the going to" was more important than "the escaping from". "We do not go", he said, "as Separatists from the Church of England, though we cannot but separate from the corruptions in it; but we go to practise the positive part of Church reformation, and propagate the Gospel in America."

It was into this situation, wherein a form of Christian conduct we would recognise as Congregational had developed, that John Eliot stepped in 1631 at the age of twenty-seven. He had probably taken orders before leaving England and his fame as a scholar and as a preacher had gone before him to Massachusetts. Upon his arrival in Boston he was invited to take the place of a Mr Wilson, the minister, absent in England. By the time he returned, the Church was keen to appoint Eliot as his colleague. At the same time, some people from Nazeing arrived who wished to form a new Church in Roxbury, a mile from Boston. They claimed Eliot as their pastor; so he became the first minister to the Congregational Church at Roxbury, a place which is today but a suburb of Boston. There in 1632 he was appointed and commissioned in Congregational fashion and became the Teacher of Roxbury until the day he died. He had already welcomed his three brothers and three sisters to the Colony, but on September 4th 1632 he caused the first marriage to take place in the Roxbury Church by being married himself to Hannah Mumford (or Mountford). Roxbury was now home for him. From here he would spend his life in service to his Lord and in seeking to lead those who were his flock and his neighbours to salvation.

Here in Roxbury, John was confronted by a truly "apostolic" task—a pioneer area, a first generation of settlers to be schooled in the ways of the Lord, a church to be built and a school to be erected among a community pulsating with the assurance that God had brought them to this place to seek a new life, new freedom and new opportunities together. Eliot had been led to reject the call to stay in Boston with its comparative security and had instead followed the invitation to play a leading role in the fashioning of this new society from scratch. His salary was £60.00 per annum, from which he provided for the appointment of one Thomas Welde whom he employed as an assistant minister until 1641.

Hannah and John Eliot lived a hard life in their wooden house in Roxbury. Around them the forest was being felled, the ground tilled and gardens planted. The old Indian footpaths became roads used by growing numbers of men and animals. There were the scents and sounds of emergent

life transferred from Essex to transform this wilderness into a home. Between their wedding day in 1632 and the year 1646 five sons and a daughter were born to them, three of the sons failing to outlive their father.

In addition to his fervency for the gospel and its preaching, John had emerged as a leader and an innovator for good. He fought against social injustice and poor labour conditions whilst seeking to improve what today we call the "quality of life" through legal rights and public amenities. He had that fine mix too between a belief in human freedom and rights to personal convictions and the responsibilities one has to the collective good and the established forms of government.

I am, however, allowing my fascination with the man and his background to delay our arrival at the "main course" of his life and work; for it is as "Apostle to the Indians" that he is chiefly remembered. Here we most clearly see a coming together of those qualities of fervency, of courage, of obedience and, not least, of that pioneer spirit which marked his entire life. We come then to John Eliot the missionary, remembering that such a concept during the century following the Reformation would contain no organised Protestant missions to the world outside of Christendom. The contact between Protestant countries and non-evangelised lands was minimal and was, of course, receiving an enormous boost from the explorations to Plymouth and to Boston.

Claims to be the first to do this or that are always dangerous, but it is very probable that Eliot was the first Protestant missionary, the first to translate the Scriptures into a heathen tongue for the purpose of missionary work and the first to devote his life to be a professional missionary as we understand the term today. He had no precedents to guide him. The Catholics had already sought to evangelise the Hurons and other Indian tribes with commendably disciplined obedience, but with methods Eliot would reject.

He set out in 1643 to study the difficult Indian language known as Algon Quin with the help of a native who had been a servant in an English speaking house. It was, of course, an enormously difficult task. The spoken word had to be set down for the first time and its meaning traced and checked through countless varied uses. The Indian equivalent for "our question" needed forty-three letters to record the sounds.

He worked day after day through firstly the Ten Commandments and then the Lord's Prayer, followed by various texts of scripture, until in 1646 he was ready to attempt speech with the Indians and to preach to them for the first time at Nonantum on 28 October. The journey from Roxbury could be dangerous but he rode out with three companions, Isaac Heath, Thomas Shepard and Daniel Gookin towards Nonantum Hill some four miles away.

He arrived safely at Wasubon's wigwam which had been prepared for the meeting.

The text chosen was Ezekiel 27:9 "Prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Come from the four winds O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live."

He spoke for an hour and a quarter, setting forth the Gospel in all its fullness, wondering, no doubt, whether his hearers were understanding. The Indians confirmed that they had understood, and there followed a time of questioning which contained some very basic enquiries concerning the very nature of the world in which we live:—

"What is the cause of thunder?"

"What makes the sea ebb and flow?

"What makes the wind blow?"

There were, however, questions based upon Biblical beliefs, such as the correctness of there being an image of God when images were expressly forbidden, and how could there be many people in the world when almost all were drowned in the Great Flood? Clearly there had been communication in the Indian tongue, so another meeting was arranged. Some gifts of apples to the children and tobacco to the men had been presented as tokens of friendship and goodwill. During the following two months three further meetings took place, resulting in Indians coming forward, declaring themselves converted and ready to receive the Gospel.

There began an integration of life between the two groups, a number of children and adults were taken into homes and workshops for training and employment and further instruction in Christianity. The results were encouraging, and a number of tracts were published in the 1640s, demonstrating the development of the work which John Eliot had initiated. Titles such as *The Day-Breaking, if not Sun-Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England, Strength out of weakness, Glorious manifestation of the further progress of the Gospel* (1652) and *an Historical account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England in 1675–77.*

By the close of 1646 the ministry of Eliot was beginning to make a real impact, and the tract for 1647 tells that the Indians had drawn up some thirty points for private and public conduct. They included:—no more powwowing; monogamy to be the rule; the Lord's Day to be strictly observed; hair to be kept comely as the English do; no more killing of lice between teeth; no Englishman or Indian to enter each other's house without first knocking. The code also included fines for idleness, wife-beating and polygamy. Violating the Sabbath could cost ten shillings. Their desire was for better clothing, together with the possession of the tools to produce a way of life akin to that of the

white man. Instead of the hunt and the war-path, there was now the field and the garden for men and the spinning wheel for the women. In winter-time the men supplied the colonists with brooms, eel-pots, baskets and turkeys. In the spring they bought cranberries, fish and strawberries, followed in summer by whortleberries and grapes. They learnt the art of hay making in order to feed John's horse in winter.

All this is to show the immense change in everyday life occurring in the lives of the Indians. They appeared to be readily accepting the ways of the Colonists but, as always in such circumstances, the real problems concerned rights and ownership of land. The Indians, much to Eliot's satisfaction, wanted to be given land on which to build their own town. He had believed that it was necessary for the Indians to abandon their nomadic life-style if they were to progress in the Christian life and character. He petitioned colonial government accordingly, and the journal of Governor Winthrop records that Eliot stated that such a development was essential if the Indians were to progress in civility as well as religion. He induced the Massachusetts court to set land aside for Indian residents who were voted £10.00 to prosecute the work.

The place, it was agreed, would be further from the English settlement than Nonantum had been. The Indians were not fence builders by nature (it doesn't go with the nomadic life) and the Colonists' cattle trampled their corn; so the adventure of Natick, meaning "a place of hills", began. The hills looked on the meadows and the meadows on the river. This was to be the Promised Land and thither the tribes went at Eliot's call to live in the New Way in a new place. They built better wigwams than before, many having separate sleeping quarters. There were a few houses in the English style, but wigwams were cheaper and warmer and needed no nails. There were three long streets, two on the Boston side of the river, and each householder had an allotment of land. They had a large meeting house, English style, the lower half of which was used as a schoolroom on weekdays and a church on Sundays. Above was a spacious room for storing furs and town property. Alongside this building there was a circular fort covering about a quarter of an acre and palisaded with split trees ten to twelve feet high. When Governor Endicott rode out to inspect, he marvelled at the timber work of the house and its chimney. Except for the assistance of an English carpenter for two days, all the work had been done by Indians. That included the magnificent timber footbridge some ninety feet long and nine feet high over the river.

What though of government? Something different from the old tribal order of sachems, sagamores and powwows (chiefs, subchiefs and priests) was necessary since these systems had already begun to fade away.

Eliot turned to God's word, to Jethro's advice to Moses: "Thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens" (Exodus 18:21) such was provided in Natick soon after 1651.

Eliot had already written his republican tract *The Christian Commonwealth, the Civil Policy of the rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ.* It was a cause close to his heart and after the death of Charles I in 1649 men's minds were greatly exercised about forms of government. He wrote the tract between the execution of Charles and the appointment of Cromwell as Protector of the Commonwealth, but it was not published until 1659.

In 1660 it was condemned by the Massachusetts Court as a seditious work, for by now the Monarchy was back. Charles II was now on the English throne and promised on April 14th 1660 "liberty to tender consciences, and that no man should be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion on matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom".

Eliot saw this as the end of the old troubles and was one of the multitude who trusted the man who had signed the declaration. He himself went the whole way and, with characteristic thoroughness, recanted and signed an address of welcome to the new monarch.

Mindful of his motto that "the way from one extreme to another is through the middle", the "Apostle" took ten years to test the reality of the changes going on amongst the Indians. The first professors were closely examined, their confessions taken down and circulated in Boston and in London, in order to give approval to the highly significant step that Eliot was about to take—the formation of an Indian Church.

An examination of the converts was fixed for 13 April 1654 where one confessed that "I believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God because, when we learn it, it teacheth our hearts to be wise and humble".

The need was, of course, two-fold. Firstly to have Christian residents able to provide oversight and instruction of the members, and secondly to have the Bible in the Indian tongue. Eliot set himself the task of taking on this laborious work. It took him ten years of daily devotion, translating the entire Bible word for word. In this we find his pre-eminence as a Missionary. In this we find an extraordinary act of application and faith, a faith which sometimes gave way to severe doubts about his ability to complete the work in his own lifetime. The New England Company came to his aid, and in 1661 the New Testament was printed and a copy sent to Charles II for his approval. By 1663

the whole Bible was printed in Cambridge, Massachusetts by Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson at the expense of the New England Company.

Of the First Edition of a thousand only a few copies now exist, for the Indian War of 1675 must have meant the destruction of many. The second edition was published in 1685, when John Colton greatly assisted in the necessary revisions. This time the print produced 2,000 copies of which about 60 still exist.

Natick was a marvel which pointed to the better way of Christian brotherhood and led to the planting of the faith in many other Indian settlements. Within ten years there were seven other towns of praying Indians within a radius of forty miles from Boston, and by 1687 there were six churches and eighteen assemblies professing the Name of Christ, with twenty-four Indian preachers and four English ministers using the Indian language. The number of Indian converts has been variously estimated; the settlements were small and scattered, and there was constant opposition from chiefs and priests, creating ebbs and flows in the red man's church. At least 3,600 of them were at one time either members or catechists until the war threw the whole scene into confusion.

The "Apostle's" methods were modern to an astonishing degree. He urged his converts into pathways of decency in regard to better homes. He gave them schools, restricted their opportunities to obtain drink, and secured laws which protected their ownership of land. He taught the Indians anatomy and the cure of common ailments, and protested to the Governor of Boston against certain Indians having been sold into slavery. One can only marvel at the vitality and effectiveness of his life. Eliot probably lived and even slept in his study during the last twenty years of his life. He was a lover of the sunrise and charged his students: "I pray you, look to it that you are morning birds". His application to his work seemed to increase as did his years, but his strong disciplined body which had served him well for eighty-six years could serve no longer.

A fall from his horse hastened his end and, as he waited, he asked the Church to seek a successor, and used his time in the instruction of Negro slaves, for he saw that they too were precious and had immortal souls. He provided for their continuance by giving seventy-five acres of land for the teaching of Indians and Negroes in Roxbury in 1689.

In his last illness, the Indian "Apostle" foresaw the trial coming upon his friends. He said, "There is a cloud, a dark cloud upon the work of the Gospel among the poor Indians. The Lord revive and prosper the work, and grant it may live when I am dead."

John Eliot died on 20 May 1690 in his eighty-sixth year. His last words

were "Welcome Joy", and addressing those about him, he exhorted them, as he left them, to "Pray, Pray, Pray!" He was one of the world's standard bearers; a strong man who lived simply, a scholar who was also a man of action, a reformer without rancour, and a Christian who lived by faith.

It appears, sadly, that the number of Indians speaking the language learnt by Eliot rapidly diminished after the 1675 war, and by the middle of the nineteenth century it was difficult indeed to find anyone who spoke it.

Thomas Goodwin: His Life, Times and Quest for Assurance

Guy Davies

There has been a considerable revival of interest in the Puritan Movement of the 16th & 17th centuries over the last fifty years or so. Academics have begun seriously to review Puritan life and thought. For example, Christopher Hill began publication of his writing on the 17th century era in 1940 and Geoffrey Nuttall published his *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* in 1946. The old cliché expressed in the following words by Kenneth Hare in his poem *The Puritan* has been found to be largely groundless:

> The Puritan through life's sweet garden goes
> To pluck the thorn and cast away the rose;
> And hopes to please, by his peculiar whim,
> The God who fashioned it and gave it him.[1]

The Puritans were not killjoys or self-righteous hypocrites, but men of Scripture who thought deeply about God, lived thoroughly to God and depended wholly upon God in Jesus Christ for full and free salvation. Their written works attain a level of precise, profound and practical understanding of the Word of God that remains unparalleled in evangelical literature until this present day.

But renewed appreciation of the Puritan movement has not simply been the preserve of academics and theologues. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, as you will know, was both fascinated and heavily influenced by Puritanism.

While still feeling the call to the ministry in the mid-1920s, Lloyd-Jones became interested in Richard Baxter's life and writings. The works of both Baxter and John Owen were among Dr Lloyd-Jones' wedding presents.

He was later to assert in a paper given at the Westminster (formerly Puritan) Conference in 1971, on *Puritanism and its Origins:*

> My interest in this subject is not academic, and never has been. Puritanism can be a snare and a real danger. There are these voluminous tomes, and very easily one can play a most exciting intellectual game picking out subjects and having most interesting theoretical discussions. That has never been my approach to Puritanism.

The Doctor went on to say:

> …a true and living interest in the Puritans and their works has gripped me, and I am free to confess that my whole ministry has been governed by this.[2]

Through his preaching and teaching ministry in Westminster Chapel and his chairmanship of the Puritan and Westminster Conferences, Lloyd-Jones was able to transmit his enthusiasm for things Puritan to a new generation of pastors.

The Banner of Truth Trust, founded by Iain Murray, began to reprint Puritan works, beginning in 1958 with Thomas Watson's *Body of Divinity*. Subsequently the massive, sixteen volume *Works of John Owen*, and the *Works* of Richard Sibbes, John Flavel, and others have followed. We are all now probably aware of at least the names if not the writings of some of these Puritan divines. Also Grace Publications has been involved in simplifying and abridging Puritan classics such as Owen's *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* for us to read.

Dr J.I. Packer's long held interest in the Puritans was opened up to the public in 1991 when he published his *Among God's Giants*. This is a collection of articles and papers written by Packer on Puritanism over the years, including some references to Goodwin.

However, our Puritan, Thomas Goodwin has received considerably less attention than some of his contemporaries. The Banner has only published two of the twelve volumes of his *Works*, under the titles *Justifying Faith* and *The Work of the Holy Spirit in our Salvation*.

Apart from the three papers delivered at the Westminster Conference in 1980, articles in *Evangelical Times* and the *Evangelical Library Bulletin*, commemorating the tercentenary of Goodwin's death in 1680 and a small section in Peter Lewis' *The Genius of Puritanism*, very little up-to-date material that I know of has been published on our divine.

But this apparent modern-day lack of recognition of the importance of Thomas Goodwin is uncalled for and belies his true historical and theological significance. His influence as a figure in the history of Congregational Independency is profound. Goodwin's value as a theological writer is great too. In the eyes of his own peers, he was highly esteemed, and for those "in the know" today his *Works* have been read with much profit.

So Thomas Goodwin is no obscure figure from the past. We have much to learn from him today as Evangelical Congregationalists. Pastor Michael Plant encouraged me to carry on with my research on Goodwin for this paper by quoting to me the following words of Alexander Whyte:

> My feeling is that two or three of your best and ablest men mastering Goodwin might transform the Scottish pulpit, as it rallied Oxford around Goodwin's pulpit in his eightieth year. I wish I were young enough to preach nothing else. Indeed there is nothing else worth preaching.

I do not feel that I have mastered Goodwin. But if I can stimulate some of you to give yourselves to further study in this area, I will be more than happy.

My aim is a practical, not an academic one. I want to see living and breathing modern day Puritans in today's church. Men and women who are eminently Biblical in their whole approach to life, who *know* their God well, serve Him with Holy Spirit inspired fervent consistency, desire to see as pure a church as there can be in a sinful world, and who are hopelessly in love with Jesus Christ, who loved them and gave Himself for them.

What I propose to do first of all is give you a biographical sketch of Goodwin's life and spiritual progress. This, I feel is necessary because Goodwin, as I have said, is nowadays a little known figure. But also because an understanding of his life throws light on the views he held and taught. Secondly, I want to focus on Goodwin's views on assurance of salvation, and then, more briefly, on his influence on the formation of the Congregational doctrine of the church. I will then try to sum up and apply what we have learned to our own situation.

The Life and Career of Thomas Goodwin

Goodwin's Family Background, Birth and Education

Thomas Goodwin was born prematurely on October 5th 1600 in Rolesby, a small village near Yarmouth in Norfolk. He was the eldest son of Richard and Catherine Goodwin. His premature birth made him a somewhat frail child.

His parents were of a godly disposition and hoped that their son would one day become a minister of the gospel. They obtained the best locally available classical education for Thomas in grammar-learning.

Goodwin soon proved himself to be an able scholar and was sent to Christ's College, Cambridge on August 25th 1613, at the age of thirteen, one year ahead of the normal age of entrance.

Young Thomas now entered the world of learning at Cambridge which was still influenced by the preaching of the 16th century Puritan preacher William Perkins, who died ten years earlier.

At Cambridge Goodwin was able to listen to the preaching of two well-known Puritan pastors of the day, Richard Sibbes and John Preston. But in his early years, Puritanism did not seem too appealing. He was more influenced by the flamboyant preaching style of Arminian ministers such as Doctor, later, Bishop Senhouse. Senhouse's sermonic style was full of literary allusions and quotations,

> …adorned with flowers of wit and human learning, collected from the Fathers, Poets and Historians.[3]

Such "preaching", if indeed it may be so-called, won the applause of the scholarly literati of Cambridge.

Goodwin himself gained a reputation for diligent study in comparison with many of his elders and attracted much attention to himself at the University. He desired to be a popular preacher after the Senhouse mode and, he later confessed:

> …[I] gave myself to such studies as should enable me to preach after the mode then of high applause in the University.[4]

In 1616 Thomas graduated with a B.A. at sixteen years of age. In 1619 he removed to Catherine Hall, graduating M.A. in 1620. He later became a lecturer there.

So, humanly speaking, Goodwin, a bright, intelligent, eloquent, academically successful young man was going somewhere. But God had something more in mind than academic glory and popular applause for Thomas Goodwin.

Goodwin's Spiritual Pilgrimage

Thomas Goodwin's religious impressions began early. He recalls that:

> I began to have slighter workings of the Spirit of God, from the time I was six years old; I could weep for my sins, whenever I did set myself to think on them, and had flashes of joy upon thoughts of the things of God. I was affected with good motions and affections of love to God and Christ, for their love revealed to man, and with grief for sin, as displeasing them.[5]

Although this statement seems to display spiritual sensitivity, even perhaps early godliness, in young Thomas, he later added this reflection to it:

> This showed how far goodness of nature might go, as well in myself as others, to whom yet true sanctifying grace never comes.

Such "slighter working of the Spirit of God" did not amount to six year old Goodwin being a truly sanctified child of God.

The proof of this is seen in what happened to Goodwin while at University. He began to attend upon the preaching of Richard Sibbes, the Puritan preacher. He also read with relish Calvin's Institutes. But one day, all his serious religious impressions were shattered. Goodwin was due to take communion at the University in the belief that,

> …if I received that sacrament, I should be so confirmed, that I should never fall away.[6]

However, Goodwin's University tutor had other ideas and refused him the sacrament before all the College because he was "little of stature" i.e. too

young. Thomas was thoroughly humiliated. His religious exercises now stopped.

> But after this disappointment I left off praying; for being discouraged I knew not how to go to God. I desisted from going to hear Dr Sibbes any more. I no more studied sound divinity…[7]

It is at this time in his life that Goodwin began to be attracted to the superficial and spiritually unhelpful ministrations of Dr Senhouse. He became Arminian in his thinking. After all, their teaching that you could come into and go out of a state of grace, on the surface of things seemed to fit Goodwin's own experience.

In his heart of hearts, however, Goodwin reflected:

> That which I observed as touching the matter of my own religion, was, that those Godly fellows (Perkins' disciples at Christ's) and the younger sort of their pupils that were godly, held constantly to their religious practices and principles without falling away or declining as I knew of.[8]

He once exclaimed:

> They talk of their powerful preaching, and Mr Rogers of Dedham and such others, but I would gladly see the man that would trouble my conscience.[9]

Goodwin was to have his wish granted. "To Dedham you shall go". Rogers was on form. Dr Rogers was renowned for his animated and awakening preaching style. The godly of those days would say to each other "Let us go to Dedham to fetch fire."[10]

Goodwin recounted to John Howe his experience of seeing and hearing the fiery Rogers preach:

> Mr Rogers was … on the subject of the Scriptures. And in that sermon falls into expostulation with the people about their neglect of the Bible… He personates God to the people telling them, "Well, I have trusted you so long with my Bible: you have slighted it; it lies in such and such a house all covered with dust and cobwebs. You care not to look at it. Do you use my Bible so? Well you will have my Bible no longer". And he takes up the Bible from his cushion and seemed as if he were going away with it and carrying it from them; but immediately [he] turns again and personates the people to God, falls down on his knees, cries and pleads most earnestly, "Lord, whatsoever thou dost to us take not thy Bible from us; kill our children, burn our houses, destroy our goods; only spare us thy Bible, only take not away thy Bible." And then he personates God again to the people, "Say you so? Well I will try you a little longer; and here is my Bible for you, I will see how you use it, whether you will love it more, whether you will value it more, whether you will observe it more, whether you will practise it more and live more according to it".' This had a tremendous effect upon the congregation. Goodwin himself was deeply

> moved. he was 'fain to hang a quarter of an hour upon the neck of his horse weeping, before he had the power to mount, so strange an impression was there upon him …[11]

Conviction of sin

But no lasting effect was had upon Goodwin by all this. The Lord really began to work upon him during a funeral sermon. The day was October 2nd 1620. Goodwin was out "to be merry"[12] with some of his college friends, but they heard a bell toll at St Edmund's church, signifying that there was to be a funeral service. Goodwin was reluctantly persuaded to attend the service by one of his colleagues. He later reminisced;

> I was loth to go in, for I loved not preaching especially that kind of it that good men used, which I thought to be dull stuff…[12]

The preacher was one Dr Thomas Bainbridge. His text was Luke 19:41–42, Christ's tears over unrepentant Jerusalem. Bainbridge pressed upon his congregation the dangers of deferring repentance. "*This thy Day*, not to-morrow, but today".[13] The preacher then warned his audience that to leave off instant repentance could result in judicial hardening, everlasting blindness of heart and mind to saving gospel truth. Goodwin gives us something of the thrust of Bainbridge's passionate plea for repentance *now!*

> "The matter of the sermon was vehemently urged on the hearer, whoever he was who deferred his repentance, not to let slip the opportunity of that day, but immediately to turn to God, and defer no longer, being edged with that direful threatening, lest if he did not turn to God in *that day*, the day of grace and salvation, it might be eternally hid from his eyes."

Goodwin commented:

> I was so far affected, that I said to a companion of mine who came to church with me, and indeed had brought me to that sermon, *"That I hope to be the better for this sermon as long as I live".*[14]

Deep conviction of sin now set in. Goodwin refused the company of his friends and returned to Catherine Hall. "I thought myself …" he said, "… to be as one struck down by mighty power." He continued:

> The grosser sins of my conversation came in upon me, which I wondered at, as being unseasonable at first; as so the working began, but was still prosecuted more and more, higher and higher; and I, endeavouring not to entertain the least thought of my sins, was passively held under the remembrance of them, and affected, so as I was rather passive all the while in it than active, and my thoughts held under, while that work went on.[15]

Not only was Goodwin convicted of his own personal sinfulness and enabled

to see "the exceeding sinfulness of [*his*] sin", but he came to realise that he had a share in Adam's original sin.

> … I well debated with myself that one place Romans 5 vs. 12, "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by him, and passed upon all men, in whom, or in that all has sinned"* … This caused me necessarily to conceive thus of it, that it was the guilt or demerit of that one man's disobedience that corrupted my nature… I [said Goodwin] … solemnly fell down on my knees before God, the Father of all the family in heaven, and did of my own accord, assume and take on me the guilt of that sin, as truly as any of my own actual sins.[16]

Not only was this so, but Goodwin was made aware of the wrath of God against his sin and of the awful nature of the hell that awaits sinners.

Conversion and Assurance

So much for Goodwin's conviction of sin. But what of his actual conversion experience? Goodwin's conversion was not of the sudden "Damascus Road" variety. It was a long, drawn out struggle.

Goodwin became aware of the beginnings of new spiritual life within himself …

> as he [God] created the world and the matter of all things by a word, so he created and put new life into my soul, and so great an alteration was strange to me.[17]

The Lord brought home to Goodwin's tender conscience the conversion experiences of the apostle Paul and of one Mr Price, a Puritan minister, to encourage Goodwin that he too could experience forgiveness of sin. Reflecting on this fact in later years, Thomas Goodwin wrote:

> God took me aside, and as it were privately said unto me, Do you now turn to me, and I will pardon all your sins though never so many, as I forgave and pardoned my servant Paul, and convert you unto me, as I did Mr Price, who was the most famous convert and example of religion in Cambridge.

The glory of God, not the praise of his contemporaries was now the chief end of Goodwin's life.

> …the most eminent property of my conversion to God I have been speaking of, was this, that the glory of the great God was set up in my heart as the square and rule of each and every particular practice, both of faith and godliness.[18]

Goodwin still had some way to go, however, till he found his soul resting assuredly upon the Redeemer. He commented:

> I was diverted from Christ for several years, to search only for the signs of grace in me. It was almost seven years before I was taken off to live by faith on Christ, and God's free love, which are alike the object of faith.[19]

Early on in his Christian experience Goodwin listened to a sermon by the Puritan Dr John Preston on Romans 12:2 "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind". One point particularly hit home to Goodwin's heart. Preston stated,

> It is when upon the change of a man's utmost end, there is a change made upon the whole man, and all the powers of his soul.[20]

This started Goodwin off on a course of intensive self-examination to see if his life lived up to Dr Preston's principle. By examining himself thus, Goodwin hoped to be able to discern the sanctifying activity of the Spirit upon his soul and therefore to be able to find assurance that he was indeed a changed man. Goodwin's son wrote in his father's Memoir that:

> His thoughts for so long a time were chiefly intent on the conviction which God had wrought in him, of the heinousness of sin, and of his own sinful and miserable state by nature; of the difference between the workings of the natural conscience, though enlightened, and the motions of a holy soul, changed and acted by the Spirit, in an effectual work of peculiar saving grace.[21]

Goodwin would share his spiritual anxieties with his friend Mr Price. This wise and godly pastor was quick to diagnose the cause of his younger friend's ills. He urged Goodwin to look away from himself and his endeavours to find assurance of acceptance with God on account of his sanctification. Here is an example of Mr Price's advice to Goodwin:

> Say unto the Lord: Lord, thou knowest I hate my former sinful course; it grieveth me I have been so long such a stranger unto thee, my Father. Thou knowest now I desire to believe in Jesus Christ, I desire to repent of my sins, and it is the desire of my heart to do thy will in all things. Finding these things in your heart cast yourself upon the righteousness of Christ, and fear nothing; for God will be a most merciful God in Christ unto you. Strive but a little while, and thou shalt be crowned; even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.[22]

Goodwin's great problem was that, although truly regenerate and sanctified, he made his changed life the ground of his assurance instead of resting upon the finished work of Christ alone for assurance of acceptance with God. Happily, Goodwin took Dr Price's advice. He reflected:

> …I was pitched on this great principle, that if I found I were sanctified, as I plainly did, I then was certainly justified. But I did not think my sanctification to be my justification, but an evidence of it only… And thus I was kept from going to Christ actually; though I dealt with God and his mercy in Christ, as having done all that was on his part to be done, in redeeming and reconciling us, as so I dealt immediately with God, in his pure mercy and free grace. But

> as it fell strongly into my thoughts, that there was a necessity of Christ's righteousness to justify me, as well as of his grace which had sanctified me; and the course God took to convince me of it, and to set me a-work about it, was this. He used the very conviction which I had of original sin from Adam, and the two branches of it; the guilt of Adam's actual transgression imputed to me, and the corruption of my nature thence derived… I began to reflect that Jesus Christ was the head for salvation, as Adam had been for sin and condemnation: and that therefore as there were two branches of sin and condemnation derived to me from Adam,—the one an imputation of his fact to me, the other a violent and universal corruption of nature inherent in me;– just so it must be in Christ's salvation of me; and hence I must have an imputation of his righteousness for justification, as well as a holy nature derived from him for sanctification; which righteousness of Christ for justification was perfect, though my sanctification was imperfect. The notion of this did mightily and experimentally enlighten me.[23]

So Goodwin, using the theological argument of Romans 5 and applying it to himself, now found assurance of acceptance with God on the grounds of Christ's obedience and blood. He never again made the mistake of resting upon his sanctification as the primary basis of Christian assurance.

Goodwin's death bears witness to this fact. On his death bed his assurance was full,

> I am going to the three Persons, with whom I have had communion: they have taken me; I did not take them. I shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; all my lusts and corruptions I shall be rid of, which I could not be here; those croaking toads will fall off in a moment… I could not have imagined I should ever have had such a measure of faith in this hour; no, I could never have imagined it. My bow abides in strength. Is Christ divided? No, I have the whole of his righteousness; I am found in him, not in my own righteousness, which is of the law, but in the righteousness which is of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave himself for me. Christ cannot love me better than he doth; I think I cannot love Christ better than I do; I am swallowed up in God.[24]

So, we have the spiritual pilgrimage of Dr Thomas Goodwin, now let us look at his ministerial career.

3. Goodwin's Ministerial Career

i. Preacher at Cambridge

In 1625 Goodwin was licensed "a preacher of the University" [of Cambridge]. In doing so, he subscribed to the supreme ecclesiastical and civil authority of the king, the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles of the Anglican church. Doing so was a condition of being licensed to preach.

In 1628, the great John Preston died, leaving vacant his post of Lecturer to Trinity Church. Goodwin was chosen as his successor. Goodwin's ministry was owned of the Lord to the conversion of many souls, both University scholars "who crowded to hear him" and townsfolk. Some of his scholarly converts were later to become "eminent preachers of the gospel".

Goodwin worked hard at his pastoral duties and preached Jesus Christ and him crucified from the heart to his hearers. "He preached experimentally, for he preached as he had felt, tasted and handled of the good word of life."[25]

However, despite all this, Goodwin proved none too popular with some. By now, Archbishop Laud was asserting his rigid authority over Cambridge. One of the most important of his agents was the Bishop of Ely, who took a dislike to Goodwin and his Puritanism.[26]

The Bishop had opposed Goodwin all along and had tried to make him swear not to preach on "any controverted points of divinity". However, Goodwin responded that almost all "points of divinity" had been "controverted" at one time or another, making such an oath impossible.[27]

Eventually in 1632, Goodwin was made vicar of Trinity, but by 1634 he was forced to resign his charge, together with his fellowship at Catherine Hall, on grounds of conscience. He could no longer take the restrictions that the Bishop was placing upon evangelical preaching, and became increasingly unhappy about the terms of conformity to the Anglican church.[28]

For a man with such early academic ambitions such a decision can only be accounted for by the fact that Goodwin's life now had another, more sublime goal…

> I cheerfully parted with all for Christ, and he hath made abundant compensation, not only in the comforts and joys of his love, which are beyond comparison above all other things but even in this world.[29]

ii. A Pastor in Exile

In 1638, Goodwin married his first wife, Elizabeth Prescott, an intelligent, joyful, godly woman, who gave him his only daughter, Elizabeth. At the risk of fine or imprisonment, Goodwin carried on his ministry among Separatist congregations in London. All the while he was in correspondence with ministers of an Independent persuasion both in New England and Holland. It is possible [see note 28] that Goodwin had become convinced of Congregationalist principles by John Cotton prior to his departure to the "New World" in 1633. This would explain his leaving Cambridge in 1634.

A good number of Puritan ministers and lay folk, wearied with the tyranny of Charles I and his domineering prelate Laud, fled Britain for Holland. In 1639 Goodwin joined them. Laud even tried to impose uniformity of religion

after the Anglican pattern on the British exiles, but the Protestant Dutch authorities upheld tolerance of religion for their foreign guests.

It was while in Holland, or in Amsterdam more particularly, where Goodwin first settled, that he came into close contact with four men with whom he was to side as "the Dissenting Brethren" of the Westminster Assembly. These four men were ministers of Independent convictions, namely Messrs Nye, Burroughs, Bridge and Simpson.

Goodwin eventually became pastor of a church of "about one hundred persons" at Arnhem in which Philip Nye had ministered. Goodwin's peaceable nature and pastoral gifts were evidenced when he was used to heal divisions in the church at Rotterdam over the matter of lay-preachers.

Out of the oppressive atmosphere of Laudian England and also prior to the turbulent years of the Commonwealth era, Goodwin and his colleagues were able to reflect together on the true nature and form of the church. They were later to be thankful for this peaceful time of exile and believed that it helped them to come to an unprejudiced and objective view of the Scriptural doctrine of the church.

Their *Apologetical Narration* stated;

> We had of all men the greatest reason to be true to our own consciences in what we should embrace, seeing it was for our consciences that we were deprived at once of whatever was dear unto us. We had no new commonwealth to frame church government unto, whereof any one piece might stand in the other's way to cause the least variation from the primitive pattern. We had no state ends or political interests to comply with; no kingdoms of our age to subdue into our mould, which yet will be co-existent with the peace of any form of civil government on earth; no preferment of worldly respects to shape our opinions for. We had nothing else to do but simply and singly to consider how to worship God acceptably, and most according to his Word.[30]

However, back home in England the Long Parliament had impeached Laud and invited Puritan exiles to return home. The Puritan revolution in which Goodwin was to play an influential part had begun.

iii. Goodwin in Commonwealth England

a. London Church and Westminster Assembly

In 1640 Goodwin returned home to England. He gathered an Independent church in London, in the parish of St Dunstan's-in-the-East. Here Goodwin remained for ten happy and spiritually prosperous years. It was while pastor of this church that Goodwin came to prominence within the ascending parliamentary party of the Civil War years. He was appointed to preach to the

House of Commons "on the occasion of … [a] … solemn fast" in April 1642. His sermon, later published was entitled *Zerubbabel's Encouragement to Finish the Temple* on the text Zechariah 4:6–9. In it he was to "urge and to encourage you [the M.P's] to church reformation …"[31] Goodwin, politically speaking, like most Independents of his day, had thrown in his lot with the emerging Commonwealth order. This was not the last time Goodwin would preach to Parliament.

By 1643 Parliament was starting to push through its "church reformation". The famous Westminster Assembly was convened by an Ordinance of Parliament. The purpose of this gathering was "… for the settling of the government and liturgy of the Church of England; and for vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the said Church from false aspersions and interpretations."[32] Thomas Goodwin was invited by Parliament to attend and contribute to the Assembly.

A hundred and twenty one divines of Episcopal, Erastian, Presbyterian and Independent convictions were summoned to comprise the Assembly, plus 30 laymen. The largest party was made up of Presbyterians, their number being augmented by the Scottish Commissioners.

Goodwin was a faithful member of the Assembly. Robert Halley commented; "Few of its members attended the Assembly so regularly as Goodwin, or took so much interest in its proceedings".[33] Once again Thomas found himself in league with his Congregational friends from his days in exile in Holland. Along with Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughs and William Bridge, henceforth known as the "Dissenting Brethren", pressed upon the Assembly their Independent views.

Goodwin was thus only one of a minority within the Assembly, but it was a vocal minority, able, when allowed to make its voice heard. Goodwin, although an able and learned debater, became known as a man of peaceable spirit. Even those who differed from him theologically could not but recognise him as a man of grace. Robert Baillie, a Scottish Commissioner, scarcely sympathetic with Goodwin's ideas on church order, could nevertheless enjoy true fellowship with him. Once Goodwin proved particularly disruptive to Presbyterian policy. He had, said Baillie "… assayed to turn all upside down, to reason against all directions. He troubled us so that after long debates we could conclude nothing". Baillie could however testify that after such difficulties he "spent an afternoon with him [Goodwin] very sweetly." Baillie could also comment that Goodwin and his brethren were "learned, discreet, and zealous men, well seen in cases of conscience". Also "the Independents speak much and exceedingly well." However, Goodwin was not perfect and

once the Scottish Commissioner wrote of "hotter words than were expected from Goodwin".[34]

We will return briefly to Goodwin's involvement in the Assembly under the heading of his idea of the *Nature of the Church*. But for now we note that he was one of the members of the Westminster Assembly chosen to present their *Directory of Public Worship* to Parliament in 1644. He was also ordered by the House of Lords in 1647, along with Jeremiah Whitaker, to oversee and examine papers to be printed for the Assembly. His notes, taken mostly in short-hand, fill fifteen volumes.

b. President of Magdalen College, Oxford

In 1649, Goodwin was appointed, by Oliver Cromwell's suggestion, a lecturer at Oxford. In that year he also remarried, having been widowed some years earlier. His new wife was Mary Hammond, a seventeen year old, but far beyond her years in grace and wisdom. Then, in 1650, ten years after gathering his church in St Dunstan's-in-the-East, Goodwin accepted the post of President of Magdalen College, Oxford. At that time John Owen, a fellow Congregational leader and theologian, was made Dean of Christ Church, Oxford.

For Goodwin this change of circumstances was not undertaken without much heart searching. Already, three years earlier, he almost embarked for the New World in response to an invitation from John Cotton. But at the last moment, while even having the best part of his library on board, he changed his mind. It was his love for his church that stopped him going in the end, says Halley; "the entreaty and persuasion of his beloved friends prevailed and induced him to remain as their pastor in London."[35]

According again to Halley this was still his "principal difficulty" in accepting the new post at Oxford. What eventually caused Goodwin to take up the Presidency of Magdalen was the hope of using his new sphere of influence for spiritual good. Halley's Memoir tells us

> After his [Goodwin's] return from Holland, he had for some years, well nigh every month, serious and hearty acknowledgements from several young men who had received "the light of their conversion" by his ministrations in the [Cambridge] University.[36]

Goodwin's desire was to see such spiritual blessings increased under his Oxford presidency.

Goodwin was a worthy recipient of such preferment. He was, as noted earlier, a brilliant scholar in his youth. He also knew previous success as a tutor and lecturer in Cambridge. His store of biblical and theological learning acquired in Holland and London was widely recognised. He was seen to be the

acknowledged leader of the five "Dissenting Brethren" and of the Independent cause along with John Owen. He was well read and manifested "a love of all literature". Such an appointment would have delighted the younger Goodwin, full as he then was of ambitions after academic distinction. But it was a higher ambition that animated the now godly Puritan pastor—the nurture of able and spiritual young scholars for the work of the ministry.

Goodwin and Owen began to share in the spiritual oversight of their students. Prior to their coming to Oxford, it had been customary for College Fellows to preach in turn at St Mary's Church, Oxford, on Sunday afternoons. Now, the two pastors took over that duty between them. Just imagine the effect on the students that the regular ministry of such men would have had. A new spiritual fervour was spread among the Oxford scholars. Philip Henry, father of the famous Matthew the Bible commentator, was at Oxford in those days when

> Serious godliness was in reputation and beside the public opportunities they had, there were many of the scholars that used to meet together for prayer and Christian conference, to the great comforting of one another's hearts in the fear and love of God, and the preparing of them for the service of the Church in their generation.[37]

Once a young Latin and Greek scholar, later to receive prominence in the world of letters, applied to Goodwin for examination prior to entering Magdalen College. The youth found, to his dismay, that the President was more interested in his spiritual condition than in his learning.

> He was to give an account only of the state of his soul, whether he was of the number of the elect, what was the occasion of his conversion, upon what day of the month and hour of the day it happened, how it was carried on, and when completed. The whole examination was summed up with one short question, namely, Whether he was prepared for death?[38]

The boy was apparently so "frightened out of his wits" by Goodwin's close spiritual probing that he never felt able to "go through the terrors" of such an examination again.

While presiding over his College affairs, Goodwin again became involved in church life. He gathered a church along Congregational lines which met at his lodgings. Many important figures in the world of learning became members of the fellowship, including Thankful Owen, President of St. John's; Stephen Charnock, Fellow of New College, and several other Masters and Fellows.

One incident that throws a sidelight on Goodwin's catholicity of spirit bears mentioning. John Howe, the Presbyterian, was a student at Magdalen when Goodwin had begun to gather and pastor his church. He was asked why

he did not attend the fellowship. He answered that he could not agree with some aspects of Church polity that the fellowship held to and practised. Apparently, on hearing this "Goodwin immediately embraced him, and readily agreed to admit him upon liberal and catholic grounds to the privileges of their society".[39]

Goodwin's worth to the Commonwealth Establishment was further recognised when he was appointed a Trier along with thirty eight other ministers, some Independent and some Presbyterian, under John Owen's chairmanship. The function of this body was to evaluate ministerial candidates particularly in the light of "Fifteen Fundamentals" of the faith drawn up by Owen. He was also made a visitor of the Universities and schools, with duties including the assessment of studies, the application of discipline, the suggestion of new measures and if necessary the removal of "scandalous offenders".

iv. Goodwin After the Restoration

So, as we have seen, Goodwin was "well in" with the Parliamentarians. Cromwell, as a man of personal toleration and compassion, and also as a true saint, favoured Independents for their tolerant views and promoted their cause whenever possible. Indeed, as his New Model Army was comprised of many Independents, he owed his political existence to them.

But the new British Republic was not to be a long lived one. On September 3rd 1658, Cromwell died, possibly of septicaemia.[40] This was the last thing anyone expected to have happened. The man who had won so many great battles: Naseby, Dunbar, Worcester; the man who guaranteed freedom of worship and freedom from persecution for the Puritan movement, was now dead. Goodwin was one of Cromwell's chaplains at this time, and a prayer of Goodwin's for the dying Lord Protector manifests the sense of reliance on the man: "Lord, we ask not for his life, for that we are sure of; but that he may serve thee better than ever before".[41]

However it was the Lord's will that his servant should not serve Him here on earth any longer. Cromwell died. Some of his last words were possibly heard by Goodwin:

> Faith in the covenant is my only support, yet if I believe not, He remains faithful… I think I am the poorest wretch that lives. But I love God or rather am loved of God…Herein is love not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent us propitiation [sic] for our sins. We love him because he first loved us.[42]

All now seemed lost. All hopes now seemed to founder as Oliver died.

Goodwin is supposed to have taken the words of Jeremiah upon his lips "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived".[43]

No one was found to succeed Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector on a long-term basis. In 1660 the Monarchy was restored and Charles II was made king. The same year saw Goodwin's removal from his Oxford Presidency. He then returned to London, taking many members of his Oxford church with him. There he remained, giving himself to the work of the ministry and the study of theology and the Bible. In 1666 he lost a good part of his library in the Great Fire of London, which was a severe trial to him. That experience brought to the press his volume *Patience and its Perfect Work.*

> Goodwin was to the end a man of the Bible; indeed he had been described as a "living and walking Bible".[44] His son wrote of him in his Memoir: "…the Scriptures are an inexhaustible treasure of divine knowledge, so by an eager search into them, he discovered those truths which are not to be found in other authors. The love and free grace of God, the excellencies and glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, were truths in which his mind soared with greatest delight. And it was not merely speculative pleasure, but these truths were the life and food of his soul; and his heart was affected with them, he wrote them with a spiritual warmth that is better felt than expressed."[45]

In 1680 Goodwin died, as we have seen in our portrait of his spiritual pilgrimage, full of faith. Disappointed he may have been in the outcome of the Puritan Revolution, but Goodwin died speaking of the greatness of Christ's love for Him, his love for Christ and of his being "swallowed up in God".

So here we end our sketch of Goodwin's life. Next I want to go on to note some of his more prominent theological view-points.

III. Goodwin on Assurance and the Church

We now go on to discuss some of Thomas Goodwin's thinking on doctrinal matters. Goodwin was, of course, well within the Puritan theological mainstream. His views were reflective of the influence on him of such men as Sibbes and Preston and his colleague John Owen. But in two areas Goodwin's thought seems to stand out. Firstly his ideas on assurance of salvation were particularly clear and perceptive. Secondly his influence on the evolution of the Congregational doctrine of the church are important for us as Evangelical Congregationalists today. Of course he had much to say on many issues but I want to focus on these two points in this paper.

1. Assurance of Salvation

The question "How do I know I am a Christian?" was one that was addressed much in Puritan pastoral teaching. People in Puritan congregations would have been well taught and doctrinally orthodox. But though they believed all

the right things, how did they know that they themselves had what they would have called "a saving interest in Christ"? (We would say "How do I know that Jesus is my personal Saviour?"). But although the way we phrase things may change, the problem of assurance or the lack of it is still a very real one in the church today.

All the main Puritan authors deal with this theme at one time or another, but it seems that Goodwin developed and crystallised all that was best in Puritan thinking on this matter in a very remarkable way. At least that is how I feel.

Let us look, then, in brief at some elements of Goodwin's teaching on the vexed matter of assurance of salvation.

i. The Biblical Basis for Assurance

Goodwin's major extended expositions on assurance are found in his three sermons on Ephesians 1:13,14[46] and in his treatise entitled *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness*, which deals mainly with the lack of assurance, based on Isaiah 50:10,11.[47] He also has a wide-ranging consideration of the theme in Book II of *The Objects and Acts of Justifying Faith* which is really an exposition of assurance in 1 John.[48] Of course within these respective articles Goodwin deals with many texts of Scripture, especially the Psalms. But his one key verse may be said to be Ephesians 1:13, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise".

In his exposition of Ephesians 1:13, Goodwin proceeds to divide up the text as he understood it:

> First, Here is a WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST DISTINCT FROM FAITH: "After you believed, you were sealed"….*Secondly* THE ORDER OF THAT WORK: it is "after they had believed"….*Thirdly*, THE VIRTUAL CAUSE, if I may so call it, in whom this sealing is wrought: it is *in Christ* "in whom after ye believed ye were sealed". *In whom* referreth to sealing… *Fourthly*, Here is THE PERSON THAT IS THE SEALER; it is the Spirit, the Holy Ghost….

For Goodwin the sealing of the Spirit meant assurance of salvation. It is "not to make salvation *sure in itself*, but to make us sure of it…"[49] The term "seal" signifies this—when the Queen of England places her seal on a document it signifies the authenticity of the document. The seal so placed also keeps the contents of the letter secure. So with Christians, the Spirit reveals to us our spiritual authenticity and security.

Goodwin then goes on to develop his points in more detail. We have not got the time here and now to go into his teaching in detail on this text. But,

suffice to say that the ideas that assurance is distinct from and is consequent to faith and that assurance is the work of the Spirit govern all his teaching on this matter. His insight that sealing is something that happens to us "in Christ" is particularly valuable.

I want now to develop a few recurring themes in Goodwin's teaching on assurance that may prove helpful to us.

ii. Not all Christians have Assurance

This was something most Puritans subscribed to. The Savoy Declaration, Chapter 18, section 3, states: "… infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that the true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it …"

In all his expositions of the doctrine of assurance Goodwin was keen to emphasise this. We may gather that the problem of a lack of assurance was a common thing in Puritan Congregations. It was something the divine himself had to come to terms with as we have seen. Thomas Goodwin therefore gave much thought to this matter. In doing so he developed a well thought-out, coherent and in some areas, original pastoral theology of assurance. I share with you a few important points:

a) Faith and assurance are distinct

In his treatment of assurance in *The Objects and Acts of Justifying Faith,* Goodwin sets out to prove that "the act of faith which justifies the sinner, is distinct from knowing he hath eternal life, and may therefore be without it, because it doth not necessarily contain prevailing assurance in it".[50]

He goes on to give Scriptural examples to prove that faith may be present without assurance, such as in the Sermon on the Mount where "Christ himself…pronounced a blessedness to the poor in spirit, to the meek, to those that mourn, to those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, all which estates want assurance".[51] Also the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican demonstrates that, in the case of the Publican, who "went to his house justified", "he was so much cast down with shame, that he could not lift up his eyes to heaven, and yet he lifts up an eye of faith: "Lord be merciful unto me a sinner." He flies out of himself and has recourse to God's mercy, which by all his carriage, and the opposition made, he had no assurance of."[52]

Goodwin also argued that before "any man can believe his sins forgiven, or look upon any privilege to be had by Christ as his own, he must first be united to Christ, and Christ must be made his, and receiving him as indefinitely offered [in the gospel] to be his (if he will take him), and then, not before, can any man come to believe he hath the pardon of his sins, or that he shall have glory, and be saved".[53]

The "just shall live by faith"—that is by casting themselves upon Christ for salvation. Assurance that we are so justified comes later.

> Assurance comes in as a reward of faith, as a light superadded to faith, that when a man trusted God upon his bare word, and a secret hint of a promise, and hereby hath set his seal that God is true, and bourne the stress of many overpowering doubts and temptations and yet cleaves to Christ, though not fully knowing in his sense [or heart] Christ is his, then God sets to his seal; therefore says Christ, Rev. ii.17, "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna".[54]

b) Why some believers may lack assurance

Assurance of faith may be lacking in a believer for many reasons. In his *A Child of Light Walking in Darkness,* Goodwin deals exhaustively with the problem of hindrances to assurance. The text, Isaiah 50:10,11 reads: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God…"

According to Goodwin this is a picture of "a true believer at his worst … set forth … unto our view; and withal the power of true faith, as it alone upholdeth him in the saddest hour of darkness that can befall him …"[55] The "darkness" of the text through which the Christian must walk is "The light of God's countenance withdrawn; yea all light and appearance to him of his own graces withheld and overclouded; the face of heaven so overcast with darkness that neither sunlight nor starlight appeareth to him, so as he hath no light; yea, rather, finds his own soul beset and beseiged round with all the powers of hell and darkness, and the terrors of the Almighty shot into his soul".[56]

Three causes of this darkness are then stated: "1. God's Spirit … 2. A man's own guilty and fearful heart … 3. Satan."[57]

The Spirit may induce a lack of assurance or cause a period of spiritual darkness by "withdrawing his comfortable presence". He may also reveal God's anger against a believer for his sins. He may "shake over him the rod of eternal wrath, especially when he hath provoked Christ by presumptuous sins already, and to prevent his going forward in the way of his heart".[58] Our own sinful hearts may cause us a time of spiritual darkness. Due to remaining sin we may begin to doubt whether we are indeed God's children. The devil also may bring us into darkness. He may cause us to doubt. "Satan, he hath a special inclination, and a more peculiar malicious desire, to vex and molest the saints with this sort of temptations [sic], of doubts and of disquietness that God is not their God …"[59] He would undermine our faith, get us to doubt our possession of eternal life in Christ and thereby make God a liar. He tries to

inculcate error and heresy to the destruction of faith. He piles on the guilt of our sins as the accuser of the brethren.

God may leave us in such a period of darkness for many reasons, according to Goodwin, simply because He pleases, as in the case of Job; because God would make us useful to others who are to pass through the darkness, to keep us humble after times of "abundance or revelations and comforts" as in the case of Paul with his thorn. Darkness may also be allowed when we become presumptuous, or rely on God's sanctifying work in us for assurance, or previous blessings instead of upon God Himself. What of unrepented sin, a "stubborn stiff spirit under outward afflictions", not standing up for the truth, or sheer "unthankfulness, and too common an esteem had of assurance and [the] light of God's countenance."? All these things may cause God to allow His Spirit to convict us of our sins, leave us to ourselves and free Satan to trouble us—all in all to leave us in darkness.[60]

So, it is possible, according to Goodwin, and he argues his case biblically, for us to be Christians and lack assurance of salvation.

iii. Assurance is desirable for all Christians

Having said that faith and assurance are distinct and that Christians may lack assurance, Goodwin was concerned to demonstrate that full assurance of faith is available to all believers. He also shows us how we may attain assurance of salvation.

a) Assurance for all

In his *Objects and Acts of Justifying Faith*, Book II, Goodwin gives us an exposition of 1 John to demonstrate both the possibility and the nature of true assurance. Unlike Roman Catholics, who believe that assurance is unattainable in this life, or the mystics, who believe that only a select few can attain to it, Goodwin shows us that in the New Testament assurance of salvation is open to all believers.

He takes 1 John 5:13 "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God", as a summary of the teaching of the whole epistle. He points out the recurring idea in this epistle of the certain knowledge we have as believers of the things of God, e.g. 2:3 "Hereby we do know that we know him", or 3:19 "hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before him". John said 1:4 "… write we unto you, that your joy may be full." All these things are taken to indicate that John wants his readers to attain the assurance that they personally have eternal life.

The possibility of knowing such assurance is offered to all. As Goodwin observed

> … the scope of St John is to assure all believers, so he says in general that he writes it to them what [sic] believe; not to apostles only …[61]

b) What assurance is

The nature of assurance is analysed for us in chapter v of Book II of *The Objects and Acts* … In this chapter we are given an exposition of 1 John 5:7,8. We must say at the outset that Goodwin's understanding of these verses is suspect. Textual criticism has shown that 5:7 is not really part of the text of 1 John.[62] His understanding of verse 8 is debatable too. The three witnesses—the "spirit, the water and the blood" are said to bear witness to Jesus Christ, verses 5 & 9. Goodwin sees this and says the "… witnesses have their evidence set to one and the same record, both that Christ is the fountain of life and that God hath given to a believer eternal life."[63] So far so good. However, Goodwin sees the "blood" as "the whole world of justification", the "water" as "sanctification" and the "Spirit" as the witness of the Spirit as to personal assurance. This is probably reading too much into the text. But despite the suspect exegesis, Goodwin goes on to develop what is, in general a sound, practical exposition of the theme of assurance.

c) The three witnesses

"Blood". The first proof of our having eternal life is that we believe in Jesus Christ for free justification. This, bare faith in Christ for justification helps with assurance because "… as the work of faith in Christ's blood, so the effect of his blood thus apprehended, impleaded, evidenceth it to him; for still when guilt ariseth he can oppose Christ's blood to it, and bathes his soul in thoughts of faith about it, and so finds the guilt quelled, allayed, his conscience pacified, stilled, and quieted by it, when no duties nor nothing [sic] else will give him ease."[64]

"Water". We then see that "for whom Christ's blood justifies, it doth also cleanse and sanctify, and washeth away the filth of sin"; thus it is expressed John 3:5, a man being regenerated, and "born of water and the Holy Ghost."[65] This gives us assurance because "the believer finds thus closing with Christ changeth him, renews him, washeth him from the power of sin, puts a new spirit and principle into him, clean opposite to sin, so as he cannot sin; he finds a new spring of gracious dispositions in him, still bubbling naturally up, and cleansing and working out corruptions …"[66]

"Spirit". The third witness is taken to be "an immediate testimony of the

Holy Ghost …" The witness of the "blood" may be overcome by guilt-feelings; that of the "water" by the power of sin.

> There is therefore a third testimony, and that is of the Holy Ghost himself, which is immediate; that is, though it backs and confirms what the other two said, yet quotes them not, builds not his testimony on them, but raiseth the heart up to see its adoption and sonship, by an immediate discovery of God's mind to it, and what love hath bourne to it; which is not argued from what is wrought in itself, but God says unto a man's soul (as David desires), "I am thy Salvation", Psalm xxxv.3, and as Christ said upon earth to some few, "thy sins are forgiven thee", so from heaven it is spoken by his Spirit (which yet dwells in the heart afore), that a man's sins are forgiven, and he is owned by the whole Trinity to be God's child.[67]

Goodwin returns to Ephesians 1:13 in this connection and says, regarding the Ephesians, "But now when they by sheer faith had honoured God, by sealing to his word, then God comforts them by sealing them with his Spirit".[68] He also alludes to Romans 8:16 "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The "witness of our spirits"—that we believe and are sanctified is backed up by the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit that we are God's children. This is the highest form of assurance. "My brethren, it is the next thing to heaven."[69]

So, full assurance of faith is to know, by a direct impression of the Holy Spirit that we are God's children and heirs of heaven. It is God's gift to those who already possess saving faith in Christ and are truly sanctified by the Spirit. What do we know of the blessing of full assurance in our own lives?

iv. Seeking Assurance

Now that we know what is available to us, it is our duty to seek assurance. Goodwin taught that, although a lack of assurance was a common enough experience among Christians, it was not a desirable one in any way. Because God desires that all believers should come to a full assurance of faith—not to seek this blessing is to reject one of God's choicest gifts. Thomas Goodwin wrote "It is the duty of everyone that doth believe to grow up to assurance, and it is his sin not to make out for it …"[70]

Practical directives are given to help us "grow up to assurance":

> …I do see it is my duty to grow up to assurance that I have eternal life, it is my great sin to do otherwise; I see that it will improve all graces in me, it will help me to confidence in prayer, it will perfect my love to God, it will make me serve Him without fear, it will make me more holy, besides all the comfort it will bring in to me; this therefore will I set up as my mark, I will never pray but I will seek this in a more eminent manner; I will never receive the Lord's Supper but I will put in this, that the Lord will come in to bestow it on me; I

> will listen to all the witnesses I find whispering to my heart by the Spirit, or by the promises suggested to me, and that is … [the] … assurance to be attained in this life …[71]

The "child of light walking in darkness" is to "trust in the name of the Lord". Goodwin well knew from his own experience that searching for "graces" or evidences of sanctification as the ground for assurance could lead to introspection and despair. We are to cast ourselves upon Christ.

> For would we have peace of conscience and the guilt of sin removed? He is the "Prince of Peace", and is made "righteousness" unto us. Are we in depths of distress, terrors within, terrors without, out of which we see no redemption? He is the "mighty God;" "able to save to the utmost," being made "redemption" to us. Want we grace and his image to be renewed and increased in us? He is "the everlasting Father;" a *father* to beget his likeness in us, and *everlasting* to maintain it ever, when it is begun once: he is made "sanctification" to us. Want we wisdom to guide us? He is the "Counsellor," and is made *wisdom* to us. All we want he hath; even as all he hath we want.[72]

One great motive for seeking assurance is that it will quicken our spiritual progress. During his treatment of Ephesians 1:13, Goodwin stated:

> Observe from hence this, that all assurance that is true assurance, and the true seal of the Holy Ghost, it makes a man holy. If ever anything makes him holy, this doth it. Is he a holy Spirit in working faith? Doth he purify your hearts by believing? He will purify your hearts much more when he sealeth you, when he works joy in believing, unspeakable and glorious.[73]

Or again …

> Much more then, when the Holy Ghost is poured out upon you, and when you are baptized with the Holy Ghost as a Comforter. Look, as when the sun cometh near to the earth, then it is spring: it was winter before: so when the Holy Ghost cometh in this manner upon the heart, it was winter before, but it will be spring now.[74]

We are to wait upon God—to plead with him to give us assurance of salvation. Goodwin concludes his exposition of Ephesians 1:13 with these words:

> Let this therefore be made a motive to seek … [the seal of the Spirit] … at God's hands; urge him with this besides his promises, tell him it will make you holy. It is a great motive to seek it, and it is a motive to you to urge God to obtain it.[75]

v. Conclusion

So, Goodwin held that all Christians both could and should know assurance of salvation. As we have seen, the highest degree of assurance is the direct witness or seal of the Holy Spirit. It is this that we are to seek after above all else. Our

faith in the promises may be subject to doubts. Our "graces" may be clouded over by indwelling sin. But nothing can shake the immediate and infallible witness of the Spirit.

A similar view to Goodwin's was held by many of his Puritan predecessors and contemporaries such as John Preston, Richard Sibbes, the early and later teaching of John Owen and John Flavel. George Whitefield, a reader of Goodwin's works also seemed to agree with him on this point, as did many other leaders of the 18th Century Revival Movement.

In our century the greatest exponent of Goodwin's views on assurance was Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. In his expositions of Ephesians 1:13,14 and Romans 8:15,16 Goodwin's influence looms large. Some modern reformed scholars took issue with the Doctor over this. But in following Goodwin, Lloyd-Jones was in a solid tradition of conservative expositors. The Westminster Confession of Faith endorses Goodwin's view of the "sealing of the Spirit", as do such renowned expositors as Charles Hodge and George Smeaton to name no others. Among modern grammarians the consensus seems to be that Goodwin's contention that the action of the main (aorist) verb in the clause under discussion in Ephesians 1:13, "sealed" at least can be held to be consequent upon the action of the aorist participle "believed". Thus we were sealed with the Holy Spirit subsequent to our believing the word of truth. I cannot go into this too much now, but the basic Greek Grammars will prove my point.[76] It is more important to grasp the burden of Goodwin's teaching. Dr Lloyd-Jones argued in his exposition of Ephesians 1:13 that:

> I am increasingly persuaded that it is our failure to understand this precise statement that accounts for so much lethargy and failure among us as Christian people at the present time. At least I will go so far as to assert that any Christian who is not experiencing the joy of salvation is in that state very largely because of a failure to realise the truth taught in this particular verse of Scripture, for in it we are brought face to face with the way in which we can enter into the fullness which we should be experiencing in Christ.[77]

What we need in the present hour are strong, confident, rejoicing, Spirit-filled Christians. A return to Goodwin's scripturally based teaching on assurance of salvation will be a step in the right direction. Are we as modern day Congregationalists ready to take it?

2. The Nature of the Church

I will not say much about Goodwin's idea of the nature of the church, but as I am addressing a conference of an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches I thought I'd better say something.

As we saw in the biographical section of the paper, Thomas Goodwin was

one of the five "Dissenting Brethren" who stood up for Congregational principles at the Westminster Assembly. With the five so called "dissenters" he wrote the famous *Apologetical Narration,* a veritable tour-de-force for Congregational ideas. In 1644, Goodwin and Philip Nye published John Cotton's influential *Keys of the Kingdom*, an exposition of the Congregational Church polity of the New England Puritans. Then in 1658, Goodwin, together with Nye, John Owen and others were appointed by 120 Congregational Churches to work on what was to be *The Savoy Declaration of Faith*.

Goodwin's views on the church have been given more attention than his views on assurance.[78] Geoffrey Nuttall's *Visible Saints* includes some references to Goodwin's influence on Congregational ideas. But the fullest treatment of Goodwin's doctrine of the church that I know of is in the 1980 Westminster Conference Papers, entitled *Diversities of Gifts.* Graham Harrison in his paper entitled *Thomas Goodwin and Independency* gives us a full assessment of Goodwin's thought on this matter.

Although further study on this subject is to be invited, it is beyond the scope of this paper to deal in any depth with Goodwin's doctrine of the church. Suffice to say that Goodwin taught the generally held Congregational principles formally stated in the Savoy Declaration. Over and against the Anglicans and their national church, he wanted a church consisting of "visible saints" or Christians with credible evidence of conversion and a holy life. He wanted churches to be independent of the control of diocesan bishops and able to appoint their own elders and deacons. He wanted a disciplined church. Over against the Presbyterians, he asserted that the local church is autonomous and independent under Christ and able to govern its own affairs in accord with Scripture. Churches could meet together for fellowship, to discuss and advise one another, but no more.

Goodwin was willing to argue for all these things, yet he was a most tolerant and peaceable man who wanted to promote unity among true believers.

IV. Thomas Goodwin—A Man for Today

Now I want to sum up and apply some lessons from Goodwin's life and thought to us today. Goodwin serves as a good example to us in a number of ways. He was …

i. A Man of the Word

He was described as we have seen as a "living and walking Bible". The Bible was the main source book for all his thinking. He subjected the Biblical text to the most minute analysis so that he might apply the truths he learned through

disciplined exegesis to his readers/hearers. His interpretations of Scripture are warm and practical, arising as they do from a man deeply experienced in the ways of God and thoroughly steeped in Scripture. As a preacher, in comparison with two of his eminent contemporaries it was said "Owen preached earnestly to the understanding, Baxter forcibly to the conscience, Goodwin tenderly to the heart."[79] He calls us to be people of the Word.

ii. A Man of Peace

Although willing to suffer for a principle, Goodwin was a notably peaceable and catholic spirited man. He reflected:

> "As for my part, this I say, and I say it with much integrity, I never yet took up party religion in the lump. For I have found by a long trial of such matters that there is some truth on all sides. I have found Gospel holiness where you would little think it to be, and so likewise truth. And I have learned this principle, which I hope I shall never lay down till I am swallowed up of immortality, and that is, to acknowledge every truth and every goodness wherever I find it."[80]

We must keep our Congregational distinctives tenaciously, but we are to be kind and peaceable toward those evangelicals who differ from us on church distinctives.

iii.A Man who Knew Full Assurance of Salvation

Brian Freer sums up this point for us succinctly. Goodwin's

> …own conversion experience led him to a balanced view of the relative values and positions of justification and sanctification in the matter of assurance. Christ and his justifying grace are the only grounds of assurance, sanctification having a subsidiary value only as the evidence of faith's genuineness.[81]

Full assurance comes when the Holy Spirit makes these things a reality to us.

iv.A Man of God

This is what Goodwin was above all else. He *knew* God in Christ and walked with Him very closely. He emphasised that assurance must lead to holiness and the need for the power of the Holy Spirit to transform us from barren to fruitful Christians. He died swallowed up in Christ. He calls us to greater holiness, more intimacy with our Saviour and to a full assurance of faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. Goodwin's vision of the Church was of a company of Spirit-filled visible saints. How do our churches measure up to this description?

Many have been influenced by Thomas Goodwin's life and writings, such as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Alexander Whyte and D.L. Moody.

But no one has brought his teaching and emphases alive to us today more than the man whom Dr Packer once called "a kind of puritan"—Dr Lloyd-Jones.

He pleaded for a vital, biblical Christianity. He worked for evangelical unity—for churches who were one in the truth to separate from a spiritually bankrupt ecumenical establishment, just as Goodwin felt led to separate from his contemporary Anglican church. But, also like Goodwin, he urged that those gospel churches should express unity in Christ despite differences on secondary issues. But beyond orthodoxy and unity—again like Goodwin—the Doctor saw that our one great need is that of the power of the Holy Spirit in the Church. He challenges us:

> Do you believe in revival, my friend? Are you praying for revival? Are you trusting in the organizing power of the church? Or are you trusting in the power of God to pour out his Spirit on us again, to revive us, to baptize us anew and afresh with his most blessed Holy Spirit?[82]

Dr Lloyd-Jones grasped the lessons to be learned from studying the lives and teaching of Puritans such as Thomas Goodwin. Goodwin, as I hope I have demonstrated, has much of enduring and practical value to teach us. Will our interest in the Puritans simply be academic and irrelevant or will we seek to apply their values to ourselves? Will we stir ourselves up to "sue" God for the blessings with which He so mightily blessed our godly Congregational forbears? I hope so.

References

1 J.I. Packer, *Among God's Giants* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991), p. 341.
2 D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth), 1987, p. 237.
3 James Reid, *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth), p. 320.
4 Ibid. p.322.
5 Ibid. p.321.
6 Ibid. p.322.
7 Ibid.
8 *Diversities of Gifts* (Westminster Conference Papers, 1980), p. 9.
9 Ibid.
10 Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism* (Carey), p. 22.
11 Ibid. p. 22f.
12 James Reid, *Memoirs,* p. 323.
13 Ibid. p. 324.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid. p. 325.
16 Ibid. p. 326f.
17 The Works of Thomas Goodwin, Volume II, Nichol's Series, p. lxi.
18 Ibid. p. lxvi.
19 Ibid. p. lxviii.
20 Ibid. p. lxvii.
21 Ibid. p. lxviii.
22 Ibid. p. lxviii f.
23 Ibid. p. lxx f.
24 Ibid. p. lxxiv f.

25 Ibid. p. xxiii.
26 See Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans & Puritans* (Fontana), p.76ff for Laud's control of the Universities.
27 *Works* II, p. lxxi.
28 Ibid. p. lxxi and see *Diversities of Gifts,* p. 12.
29 Ibid. p. lxxii.
30 Ibid. p. xxvi.
31 Ibid. p. xxviii.
32 *Diversities of Gifts,* p. 24.
33 *Works* II, p. xxx.
34 Ibid. p. xxix.
35 Ibid. p. xxxi.
36 Ibid.
37 J.B. Williams, *The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), p. 19 cited in *Diversities of Gifts,* p. 14.
38 *Works* II, p. xxxiii.
39 Ibid. p. xxxv.
40 Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men* (Mandarin), p. 671.
41 Ibid. p. 675.
42 Ibid.
43 *Works* II, p. xxxvii.
44 *Diversities of Gifts,* p. 14.
45 *Works* II, p. lxxiv.
46 Thomas Goodwin, *Exposition of Ephesians,* 1–2 vs10 (Sovereign Grace Book Club), pp. 227–253.
47 *Works* III, pp. 227–350.
48 Thomas Goodwin, *Works* VIII (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth), pp. 338–420.
49 *Exposition of Ephesians,* p. 232.
50 *Works* VIII, p. 338.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid. p. 340.
53 Ibid. p. 344.
54 Ibid. p. 346.
55 *Works* III, p. 235.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid. p. 243.
58 Ibid. p. 245.
59 Ibid. p. 256.
60 Ibid. see pp. 288–299.
61 *Works* VIII, p. 356.
62 See for example John Stott, *The Letters of John*, the Tyndale Commentary Series, (Leicester: IVP), p. 182f for an up-to-date, conservative approach to these texts.
63 *Works* VIII, p. 360.
64 Ibid. p. 364.
65 Ibid. p. 361.
66 Ibid. p. 364.
67 Ibid. p. 366.
68 Ibid.
69 *Exposition of Ephesians,* p. 251.
70 *Works* VIII, p. 372.
71 Ibid. p. 373f.
72 *Works* III, p. 328.
73 *Exposition of Ephesians,* p. 250.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid. p. 252.

76 In my unpublished *The Sealing of the Spirit* (a copy can be found in the library of the London Theological Seminary), p. 38, I, following a paper by the same title by G.S. Harrison, quote grammarians such as Gresham Machen and C.F.D. Moule to support my case e.g. Machen's comment; '…the aorist participle denotes action prior to the action denoted by the leading verb…' p. 116f *N.T. Greek for Beginners*.
77 D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *God's Ultimate Purpose* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth), p. 244.
78 But see Michael A. Eaton, *Baptism With the Spirit*, Leicester, IVP, p. 80–92 for a good survey of Goodwin on the sealing of the Spirit in relation to the teaching of D.M. Lloyd-Jones.
79 *Diversities of Gifts*, p. 15.
80 James M. Gordon, *Evangelical Spirituality,* SPCK, p. 8.
81 *Diversities of Gifts,* p. 19.
82 D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable* (Eastbourne: Kingsway) p. 280.

Past Conference Papers

Single Papers

1981

A Tovey MA BD . . . . . Robert Browne: The Morning Star of Congregationalism
DO Swann BA BD . . . . . The Church Meeting
P Seccombe BD . . . . . John Angell James

1982

J Legg BA BD . . . . . .Children of the Covenant (available as a booklet)
A Clifford BA MLitt PhD . The Christian Mind of Philip Doddridge
D Boorman BA MLitt . . . . The Origins of the London Missionary Society

1983

H Elias BA BD . . . . . .PT Forsyth—Prophet of the 20th Century
M Boland. . . . . Oliver Cromwell
N Rees BD. . . . . Prayer Life of the Local Church

1984

GT Booth BD . . . . . .The Hymn Writers of English Congregationalism
ES Guest . . . . . John Robinson (1575–1625)
G Fielder MA BD . . . . . RW Dale and the Non-Conformist Conscience.

1985

Prof. T Jones DPhil DD . . .Walter Craddock (1606–1659)
Prof. T Jones DPhil DD . . John Penry (1563–1593)
P Golding BTh MTh. . . . . Owen on the Mortification of Sin

1986

PJ Beale MA . . . . . .Jonathan Edwards and the Phenomena of Revival
DO Swann BA BD . . . . . An Earnest Ministry
P Collins . . . . . Thomas Wilson

1987

DL James MSc ARCS . . . . .John Cotton's Doctrine of the Church
M Plant BA . . . . . Richard Davis and God's Day of Grace
B Jones. . . . . Lionel Fletcher—Evangelist

1988

G Evans . . . . . .Richard Mather—The True Use of Synods
A Tovey MA BD . . . . . That Proud Independency
G Kirby MA. . . . . The Countess of Huntingdon

Papers in a Booklet

1989

GT Booth BD . . . . . Josiah Conder—Hymn-writer and Compiler
J Legg BA BD . . . . . The Use and Abuse of Church History
G Hemming BA. . . . . Savoy, 1833 and All That

1990

EJE Semper BA . . . . . David Bogue—A Man for All Seasons
L James PhD . . . . . Griffith John—The Founder of the Hankow Mission
I Rees BA . . . . . Jonathan Edwards on the Work of the Holy Spirit

1991

A Kelly . . . . . What Makes Churches Grow
ES Guest . . . . . Joseph Parker—The Immortal Thor of Pulpitdom
P Seccombe BD . . . . . RW Dale—Standing Firm or Drifting Dangerously

1992

A Fraser PhD . . . . . When Evolutionary Thought and Congregational Thinkers Meet
D Saunders MA, BEd. . . . . Living Stones—Our Heritage, Our Future
J Little BD . . . . . John Cennick—Conflict and Conciliation in the Evangelical Awakening.

1993 Some Separatists

A Tovey MA, BD. . . . . A Reforming Pair—Henry Barrow and John Greenwood
Prof. T Jones, DPhil, DD . John Penry

Typeset by Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7RN,
Tel: 01691 778659
E-mail: cscinfo@quintapress.com; Web-site: www.quintapress.com