



SCIENCE AND RELIGION IN THE BAPTIST WORLD

A Science for Seminaries project at the Centre for Baptist Studies

Science and Baptist History Case Study 1

Thomas Newcomen

Born 1664, Dartmouth, Devonshire, into a nonconformist family

1685-88 set up a business as an ironmonger in Dartmouth

1704 his home was a meeting place for fellow Baptists.

1705 working on a steam engine

1710 he was leader of the Dartmouth Baptist community and a lay preacher

1712 first working piston-steam engine installed and working

1729 died in London and buried in Bunhill Fields

‘Newcomen was a modest man of great faith who conceived and built perhaps the most important initial contribution to the technological world we now inhabit and take for granted’ (Corfield, ‘Thomas Newcomen the Man’)



Why did these seventeenth century Baptists turn to engineering? It is hard to resist the conclusion that their theology may have something to do with it. (Richards, ‘Steam Leads the Way’)

References

Brian Corfield, ‘Thomas Newcomen the Man’, *International Journal for the History of Engineering and Technology* 83.2 (July 2013)

James Ford, ‘Thomas Newcomen: Inventor and Baptist Minister, 1663-1729’, *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 2.2 (1911)

Eric Preston, *Thomas Newcomen of Dartmouth and the engine that changed the world* (Dartmouth and Kingswear Society, 2012)

D. A. Richards, ‘Steam Leads the Way: The Story of Thomas Newcomen’, *Baptist Quarterly* 30.5 (1984)

L. T. C. Rolt, *Thomas Newcomen: The Prehistory of the Steam Engine*