

Glad Tidings

of the Kingdom of God

1596

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The Faith of Isaac Newton - page 12

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Glad Tidings

of the Kingdom of God

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Its objectives are - to encourage the study of the Bible as God's inspired message to mankind; to call attention to the Divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn men and women that soon Christ will return to Earth as judge and ruler of God's world-wide Kingdom.

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Harder Than it Looks

One of the great experiences of visiting a river town is a boat trip. Each year, more than 400,000 people visit the famous English town of Cambridge (our cover picture), and many will at some stage enjoy time on the river Cam in a flat-bottomed boat called a punt. It can be restful and enjoyable, especially with a commentary explaining the colleges and beautiful gardens that can be seen so well from the river.

But punting is not as easy as it looks, as many have found out! For a start, the river varies greatly in depth, being so deep in places that you can lose the whole length of your pole and still not touch the bottom. In other places, the river bed is very muddy and the pole can get stuck fast. Many a novice has ended up in the river while trying to retrieve a pole. One of the first lessons with punting is that the pole is not just for propulsion, it is also used to steer. That's the clever bit. If you don't understand that, the punt will go around in circles carrying everything and everyone in its wake!

It is fair to say that life can be very much like this. In the uncharted waters of our future, we benefit greatly from good instructions; we need to practise; and it gets easier as we accept help.

Instructions

Ideally to be successful on the river you need some instructions and plenty of practice! There will be many times when we think progress is slow. We may often lose our pole or hit the bank or another boat.

This is rather like our lives. Life is never as easy as it looks. We need to

learn the basic rules to life, and put them into practice. The Bible gives us the rules for living and these instructions come from the God who created us and understands us better than we know ourselves. Think about these examples:

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14).

Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:31–33).

All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Through the Bible, God is telling us to get our priorities right and focus on His purpose, in which case He will look after our eternal well-being.



Practice

Once we have found the instructions, then we need to practise them until we get more proficient. Back on the river, if you have had a bit of practice you may feel you are making reasonable progress until you come across scores of other people in their punts each trying with difficulty to control their movement. At times the river becomes a tangled mass of boats, poles and people all going in different directions. It takes considerable skill to steer a course through this entanglement, anticipating the speed and direction of all the other boats.

Life can be just like this. We will often feel we have made a mess of things, but that is no reason to give up. The Bible tells us to keep on trying, not to get discouraged, but to practise doing the right things:

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer (Romans 12:9–12).

Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6:9).

Through His writers, God is telling us not to get downhearted or give up on doing the right things, but to carry on and trust His plans for us.

Letting God Take Control

Only when we are in a punt that is properly in control can we relax a bit



and enjoy the scenery, the magnificent buildings and beautiful gardens that slip past our gaze.

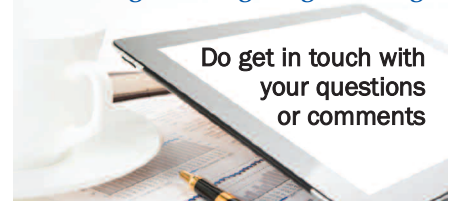
In life, we all find it hard to steer our course and really need someone with us in our boat to guide us through so that we can get safely to our destination. If our lives are being steered by God, we can start to appreciate all He has done and listen to His instruction. This is the Gospel message, which means salvation to anyone who is prepared to take the time to listen.

The Bible tells us that if we trust in God He will steer our course through life and bring us to His Kingdom.

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?... In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:31–37).

Editor

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The Ten Commandments in the 21st Century - 8

Living the Ten Commandments

Over the last few issues we have completed our survey of the Ten Commandments, what they meant when they were given and, in particular, how they apply to us in the 21st Century. We have seen that they are all important, and how they express the behaviour that God expects of us if we are trying to please Him.

Jesus was asked about the commandments:

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”. Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:36–39).

We could see the first part of Jesus’ answer as a summary of the first of the Ten Commandments.

But for the second part, he chose a tiny commandment tucked away in Leviticus 19:18. If we really treat our neighbour as we would treat our-

elves, we would never steal his cow, because we would hate to be deprived of our milk supply if he did that to us. Instead, if we learned our neighbour has no milk for his children to drink, and for that reason he was tempted to steal our cow, we would give him our own milk, because that is what we would like to happen to us if we were in the same position.

The Apostle Paul sums it up neatly like this:

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law... Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law (Romans 13:8, 10).

If all the nations of the world lived by this commandment, there would be no place for war, no poverty or crime, and everyone would be happy. One day, in the Kingdom of God, Jesus will teach all the nations that this is the way to live.

We have the opportunity, in God’s love, to be there too; even to be amongst the teachers that Jesus will send out to tell the world: *“This is the way, walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21).*

To seize that opportunity, we must believe God’s promises, be baptised and live lives that practise loving God and loving our neighbour NOW.

David M. Pearce
(Concluded)



Steps to the State of Israel - 1

The Balfour Declaration

Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his redeemer, the LORD of Hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no God... Fear not nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses" (Isaiah 44:6–8).

The Bible is clear: the existence of the people of Israel – the Jews – makes them witnesses to the existence of God. Hence, whilst Christadelphians do not support Israel politically, they have a keen interest in them.

This small nation, which was almost destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, has survived the ravages of time. In fact, despite the wickedness of anti-Semitism over many centuries, culminating in the Nazi holocaust, the Jews have not been wiped out but have seen a modern day revival. Israel is now a nation again after nearly 2000 years of stateless wandering amongst most of the countries of the world.

The Bible prophesied that they would be scattered and that one day they would return to the land God had promised them:

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations... He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock. For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him (Jeremiah 31:10–11).

This is clearly an important sign for the world today, and so this series of articles will look at some of the steps that have led to the formation of the

modern State of Israel, as we find them foretold in prophecy, and can read them for ourselves.

2017 marks the centenary of the statement issued by the British Government known as the Balfour Declaration (named after Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour) and it is reproduced in full opposite. A number of reasons have been put forward as to the British Government's motivation, and some are considered below.

British Self-Interest

By November 1917 the First World War had been raging for three years. While many people focus on the carnage on the Western Front, significant fighting had been taking place in the Middle East. Strategists considered that knocking Turkey (Germany's ally) out of the war would open up the "soft underbelly of Europe".

Attempts to do this in the Dardanelles (Gallipoli) and in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) had failed. The Prime Minister David Lloyd George was insistent that there should be another attempt by crossing the Suez Canal and invading Palestine. He considered that this would be an encouragement to the British people and wanted to give them Jerusalem as a gift by Christmas 1917.

Furthermore, the Suez Canal was the main artery of British Trade to and from India. Britain controlled Egypt at the time and wanted to settle people on the canal's East bank that would be favourable to them. So, who better than the Jews?



Foreign Office.

November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

The Plight of the Jews

Persecution of the Jews was not a new thing, but it was evident in the late 19th Century that such anti-semitic sentiment was reaching a new intensity. The trial of a French Jew, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, on trumped-up charges of treason, highlighted the degree of hatred there was for the Jews not only in France but across the whole of Europe.

This resulted in the formation of a Jewish movement called Zionism, led initially by a Viennese newspaper reporter called Theodore Herzl. His book "*Der Judenstaat*" (the Jewish State) acted as a clarion call to Jews to consider forming their own state.

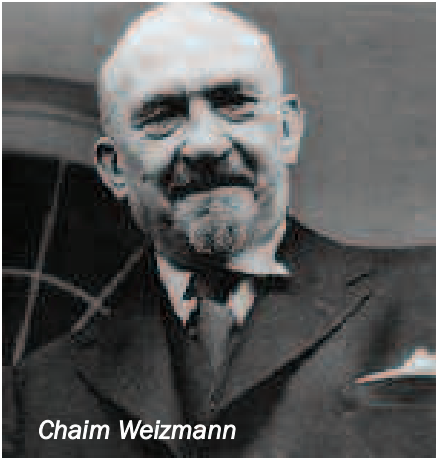
Herzl approached many governments and found a sympathetic ear in Britain. In fact the British offered the Jews a tract of land in Uganda in the early 1900s. This split the Zionist

movement, some wanting to take up the offer, the rest refusing to settle for anywhere other than Palestine, their ancient homeland. In the end this offer came to nothing and it was not until 1917 that Britain was in a position to make an offer of a homeland in Palestine itself.

Reward for Helping the War Effort

A key figure at this time was a Jewish émigré to Britain called Chaim Weizmann. He met Arthur Balfour (then Prime Minister) in 1906 in a private interview and convinced him that Jews would not accept anywhere to settle but their ancient homeland of Palestine.

When he was not furthering the Zionist cause, Weizmann was a research chemist at the University of Manchester and he had discovered a



way to make acetone by fermentation. At the time this was considered a failed experiment, but in the heat of the First World War, when there was a serious shortage of acetone for the manufacture of munitions, Weizmann's invention came to the fore. It was Lloyd George who put forward the idea that the Declaration was a reward to Weizmann for his acetone process.

Propaganda Coup

Another rationalisation for the Declaration is that it would favourably influence the Jews of Russia and America, who would persuade their governments to pursue the Allied cause in the First World War.

The Real Reason

No doubt all these motivations played their part. However, there was a far more significant influence at work in the minds of the decision-makers in government in 1917. This was the English Bible.

Most of these people had been brought up to read and learn the Bible and consequently they were very

favourably disposed to the Jews: the People of the Book. When talking about Palestine, Lloyd George had said that place names kept coming into the conversation that were *"more familiar to me than those of the Western Front"*. Balfour's biographer stated that his interest in Zionism stemmed from his boyhood training in the Old Testament under the guidance of his mother.

In his book *"Trial and Error"* Weizmann recounts his second meeting with Balfour, then First Lord of the Admiralty, who told him *"I believe that when the guns stop firing you may get your Jerusalem."*

Balfour and Weizmann

One of the remarkable aspects of this story is the unlikely friendship that arose between Zionist Chaim Weizmann, and statesman Arthur Balfour.

Weizmann was born in Russia to a relatively poor Jewish family who were involved in the timber trade. He trained as a chemist and worked in research for many years, as well as taking a leading role in the effort to promote Zionism. Balfour was from an aristocratic family: his uncle Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister in the late 1800s. Balfour held high office for over 20 years. Yet both men had grown up to read and learn the Old Testament scriptures and as a result were greatly influenced by it, regarding the Jews as God's people.

In 1925 Balfour was invited to Jerusalem to lay the foundation stone of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus. By that time he was the Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and he wore his official robes for the occasion, as we can see in the picture opposite.

Five years later, the last non-family member to visit Balfour on his deathbed was Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann lived for another 27 years and became the first president of the newly founded State of Israel.

God at Work

The events in this article could be total coincidence, from a purely human point of view. However, when you read Bible prophecy, it becomes very apparent that God has always been at work directing people and nations to bring about the purpose He had from the beginning:

But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people of Israel, for they will soon come home (Ezekiel 36:8).

It is an interesting fact that while people make their own decisions, often for reasons of self-interest, God uses this to further His purpose. In fact most often the people concerned will never realise that they were part of God's plan.

The Declaration of November 2nd 1917 and the subsequent liberation of Jerusalem from Turkish rule on December 8th of that year were important steps in God's plan.

However, while the land had been liberated, much was yet to happen before Israel could become a nation again. We shall consider these next steps in the following instalments.

Simon Collard



A Librarian's View of the Bible

As Deputy Librarian at Cambridge University Library during the 1980s, Reg Carr was fascinated to trace the library's connections to the Bible. Even in such a prestigious collection of books, the Bible stands above other texts because of its enduring value and fascinating history.

The city of Cambridge and its world-famous university is proud of its intimate association with the Bible. In printing, translation and preservation, this connection has been built over many centuries.

Printing

The Cambridge University Press was founded in 1584, and was printing Bibles in English as early as 1591. This was when the University Printer, John Legate, published an edition of the Geneva translation of the Bible. This popular Bible was published in an unsuccessful attempt to break the monopoly of the London-based Queen's Printer, Christopher Barker.

This was the first complete Bible to be printed in Cambridge, and it predated the King James Version by some 20 years. Today, the University Press still publishes a wide range of Bibles, and these quality products continue to sell in large numbers all over the world.

Translation

Not long after James I came to the throne of Great Britain after the death

of Elizabeth I in 1603, he ordered that a new translation of the Bible should be undertaken. We know this today as the King James, or Authorised Version. This is believed to be the most widely read work in English of all time.

On the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft, the King commanded that the translation work should be divided between six companies of scholars, two of which were in Cambridge. Of the 48 men appointed by the Crown, 14 were members of the Cambridge companies. There were also a few 'Cambridge' men who worked in the London translation companies, including Bishop John Overall, a former Master of St. Catharine's College, and Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, who had been Master of Pembroke College.

As recently as 2014, the work of these scholars has had further light thrown on it. In the archives of Sidney Sussex College, a notebook was discovered, which contained the work of one of the translators, Samuel Ward. The significance of this commentary is described by Jeffrey Miller, the scholar who identified it: *"It points the way to a fuller, more complex understanding than ever before of the process by which the King James Bible... came to be."*

Preservation and Collection

The Cambridge University Library houses one of the most extensive and valuable collections of Bibles in the world. Since 1984 it has been home to

the library and archives of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which contains at least 40,000 Bibles.

The Library's own Bible collection is full of rare and interesting items, and it has been strengthened over the years by many generous gifts, such as the 150 Bibles donated in 1933 by Arthur Young. This endowment included a fine copy of the Gutenberg Bible of c.1455, the first book ever printed by the use of movable type.

More recently, too, in 2013–14, the Library was fortunate enough to be able to mount a successful £1.1m fundraising campaign to secure the Codex Zacynthius, a 7th Century Greek manuscript version of the text of part of Luke's Gospel.

From time to time, items from the Bible collection are publicly exhibited. This makes a very worthwhile visit for anyone interested in the Bible.

Real Value

However, the real value of the Bible lies not in its monetary cost, its literary qualities, or even its history. Its worth lies in the nature of its author, and what it can do for those who read it and believe it.

The Bible makes a very clear statement, that it was inspired by God, and the people who wrote it down were writing God's words, not their own:

No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21).

The Bible provides ample evidence for this claim, which is often the subject of articles in *Glad Tidings*. The key proof is that it contains material

which could not have been known by those writing it down. This includes both highly accurate prophecies about future events, and scientific or geographic facts.

We also read that, if we believe the Bible and decide to obey what God asks of us, we share the hope of faithful men and women throughout its pages: to live for ever in the Kingdom of God:

Having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:22–23).

The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever (Daniel 7:18).

These are life-changing truths. If you want to consider how God cares now for those who follow Him, then read Romans 8:28–39. This is the real value of this remarkable book.

Reg Carr



To access previous editions of 'Glad Tidings' please visit our website:
www.gladtidingsmagazine.org

The Faith of Isaac Newton



In this article, we explore the faith of Isaac Newton – the man many consider to be the father of modern science. A great deal has been written about him over the centuries since his death, but more recently, scholars have been able to publish a fascinating insight into his personal beliefs.

It was only relatively recently that the majority of his private manuscripts became available for study. As a consequence, major strides in our understanding of Newton's beliefs have been made over the last 20 years.

Incredibly, Newton understood from the Bible that the Jews would be restored to Israel. This was hundreds of years before the re-establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and despite the land being firmly under Ottoman rule for the whole of Newton's life. For Newton, this was to

be a sign that soon his beloved Lord Jesus Christ would return to set up God's kingdom.

A Man of Faith

One of Cambridge University's best-known scholars, Isaac Newton is revered by many for his prodigious contributions to the study and understanding of maths and science. Indeed some 374 years after his birth, his theories remain essential knowledge for High School and University students alike. His best-known contributions are perhaps his gravitational theory and the three laws of motion that bear his name to this day. In addition, he discovered important geometric formulae; set the cornerstone for modern differential calculus; is said to have given birth to the field of optics; and made great strides in astronomy by providing mathematical explanations for the circuits of the planets and making key contributions to the invention of the reflecting telescope.



Far less well known is the fact that Newton wrote significantly more about matters of faith than on science – although he is unlikely to have made that distinction himself. Instead, he would have included both topics under “*Natural Philosophy*”, dedicating *The Principia* (pictured overleaf, regarded as his greatest work, and perhaps the greatest single work of the Scientific Revolution) to faith in God:

When I wrote my treatise about our System I had an eye upon such Principles as might work with considering men for the belief of a Deity and nothing can rejoice me more than to find it useful for that purpose.

At his death on 20 March 1727, Newton left behind a treasure trove of manuscript material, including three million words on theology, church history and biblical prophecy. So why are Newton’s thoughts on matters of faith not more widely known?

Beliefs Held Privately

The answers lie in the non-mainstream beliefs Newton embraced, the age of intolerance in which he lived, and the fact that his unpublished manuscripts were not available for study until very recent times. Since his death many unfounded assertions have been made about Newton’s beliefs, by orthodox and atheist alike. These can now be examined by careful review of these manuscripts, which reveal Newton’s true faith.

For example, from his study of the Bible, Newton wrote down what he understood to be its true teaching. He concluded that, despite Church history and orthodox Church teachings, the following are true:

- ❖ The Father alone is the one true God, and Jesus Christ is His son
- ❖ Man is mortal, with hope of an afterlife resting only in bodily resurrection
- ❖ Christ will return to the earth to establish a global kingdom of peace for one thousand years
- ❖ Christ’s return will be preceded by the return of the Jews to historic Israel
- ❖ Believers are to be baptized as believing adults.

Had he proclaimed these things publicly Newton would certainly have been branded a heretic. He was rejecting orthodox Church teachings on the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, heaven as the place of man’s reward, the rejection of the Jews as God’s people, and infant baptism.

Newton was known to have been averse to disputes, and he understood from the Bible that only a few would believe the truth. He therefore chose to preach his Bible-based beliefs only quietly through a trusted network of friends.

Hence proper study of his beliefs depends on Newton’s unpublished manuscripts – with these having fallen into private collections and been dispersed around the world via auction, after his death. Happily, in recent decades the majority have found their way into libraries and public collections (one of the most important being the Keynes collection at King’s College, Cambridge). Then in 1991 the majority of Newton’s manuscripts were released on microfilm, and in 1998 the Newton Project brought about unprecedented access to Newton’s private manuscripts through online publication. All of these are

leading a scholarly revolution, which is changing the way we view Isaac Newton and his beliefs.

The Restoration of the Jews

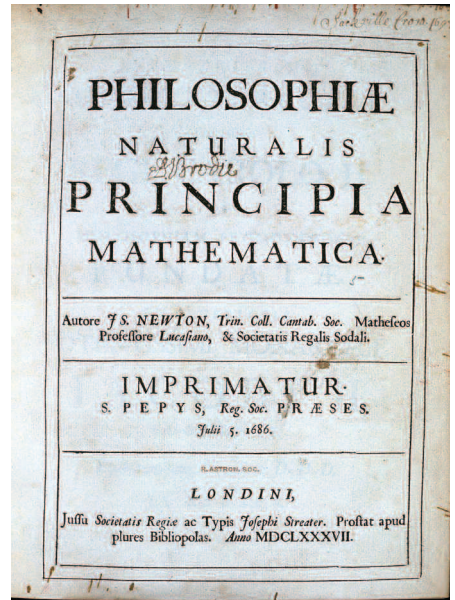
One of the most remarkable points of Newton's beliefs was his confident prediction of the restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel. This was based on his keen reading of Bible prophecy, and is worthy of a more detailed exploration.

Newton was incredibly interested in prophecy and he recognised the Jews as "God's people the Jews". In a time when the Jews were scattered across the world, and the land of Israel (or Palestine) was firmly in the grip of the Ottoman Empire, Newton believed the Jews would be restored to their own land of Israel.

In a late 17th Century paper, he comments that the conversion and the return of the Jews are described in "almost all ye Prophets" as well as recognising the promises made to Abraham. We find these promises in Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

The LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are - northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you



and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, [then] your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you" (Genesis 13:14-17).

Newton strongly believed that the foundations of the Jewish and Christian religions were upon the Abrahamic covenant: "God's covenant with Abraham when he promised that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan for ever."

He claimed that "on this promise covenant was founded the Jewish religion as on that is founded the Christian; and therefore this point is of so great moment that it ought to be considered and understood by all men who pretend to the name of Christians."

Newton recognised the importance of a permanent return of the Jews to

their land, not just the temporary one following their return from captivity in Babylon in round 500 BC. He wrote the following as a commentary on this:

'Tis in ye last days that this is to be fulfilled & then ye captivity shall return & become a strong nation & reign over strong nations afar off, & ye Lord shall reign in mount Zion from thenceforth for ever, & many nations shall receive ye law of righteousness from Jerusalem, & they shall beat their sword into plow-shares & their spears into pruning hooks & nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; all which never yet came to pass.

We can read the Old Testament for ourselves and see that Newton was using the prophet Micah as a basis for his conclusions. In fact he was to a large extent quoting from this prophet and similar words which we can find in Isaiah:

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Micah 4:1–3).

Prophecy Fulfilled

It's incredible to think how the Bible revealed these events to Newton before they happened, just because he read it with a mind which was keen to understand it. It is no different for us, although we may lack his genius, because God has preserved His word so that we can all read and learn from it.

The Allied Forces under General Allenby freed the land from the grip of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, and the Jews were driven back to the land following the terrible events of the Second World War – leading to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The Bible tells us that this is a sign that the return of Jesus is near, and this is what Newton believed too. We can look forward to this with hope and confidence if we too read our Bible and respond to God's invitation.

In the meantime, we do well to heed Newton's warning advice. He warned his readers not to rely on *"the judgment of ye multitude, for so thou shalt certainly be deceived. But search the scriptures thy self."*

Mel and Matt Brady

For more insight into Newton's beliefs, please refer to the following:

Isaac Newton: His Science and Religion, Stephen D. Snobelen

Isaac Newton, heretic: the strategies of a Nicodemite, Stephen D. Snobelen

"The mystery of this restitution of all things:" Isaac Newton on the return of the Jews, Stephen D. Snobelen

<https://isaacnewton.ca>

God's Truth = Justice

Seventy years ago, Cambridge University passed a momentous resolution. Much later than London and Oxford, they decided to admit women as full members of the University. Prior to this, women had been allowed to sit exams, but were not eligible for the award of degrees.

Injustice

There was one famous woman for whom this was most unjust. In 1890 Philippa Fawcett gained the highest marks in the mathematics exam finals, but it was the man with the next highest marks who got the coveted title of 'senior wrangler.' Philippa did not even get a degree.

Her family was familiar with causes for women as her mother had been a suffragist. Attitudes were very different then. In the Victorian era there were strong beliefs that women had inferior brains and could not cope with academic subjects. Philippa was what mathematicians would call a 'counter example' – something that broke the supposed rule and so showed it to be false.

Absolute Truth

In mathematics, your working and reasoning are either right or wrong. If you cannot solve an equation you cannot get any credit by merely 'describing' or 'discussing' it; either you can solve it correctly or you cannot. In maths, there is most definitely 'truth'; opinion matters little.

It is not fashionable nowadays to talk about absolute truth, and dog-

matism is unpopular. In 2016 the Oxford Dictionaries 'Word of the Year' was 'post-truth', referring to situations in which emotion and personal belief are more influential in shaping opinion than objective facts.

Doubts about truth are not new, however. Some 2000 years ago, at the trial of Jesus, Pontius Pilate asked (probably cynically) "What is truth?" This was in response to Jesus' emphatic statement:

You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice (John 18:37).

The Bible repeatedly claims that there is absolute truth in religious beliefs. Jesus also said:

If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32).

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v} = -\nabla p + \nu \Delta \mathbf{v} + \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}, t)$$
$$\frac{\partial v_i}{\partial t} + \sum_{j=1}^3 v_j \frac{\partial v_i}{\partial x_j} = -\frac{\partial p}{\partial x_i} + \nu \sum_{j=1}^3 \frac{\partial^2 v_i}{\partial x_j^2} + f_i(\mathbf{x}, t).$$
$$\frac{\partial v_i}{\partial t} + \sum_{j=1}^3 v_j \frac{\partial v_i}{\partial x_j} = -\frac{\partial p}{\partial x_i} + \nu \sum_{j=1}^3 \frac{\partial^2 v_i}{\partial x_j^2} + f_i(\mathbf{x}, t).$$

These are strong statements about truth and faith. The context shows that Jesus was referring to freedom from the destructive curse of death. The word 'if' shows that we can get it wrong, and the terms 'no one' and 'except' leave no room for manoeuvre. So according to Jesus, belief in both his words and his actions is the only way we can be saved.

In the first century, the apostles were convinced that the inspired message of the Gospel, as given by God, could not be altered by anyone.

Even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8).

The Bible text has an original meaning which is not subject to private interpretation. Consequently, the messages preached by the prophets and apostles are not a matter of personal opinion or choice (see 2 Peter 1:20, 2:1–2). This means that departing from Bible truth can put us back on the road to destruction.

Real Justice

God's offer of life is conditional on our faithful response, but it is not unfairly discriminatory. The offer has always been equally open to men and women, irrespective of status. There is no suggestion in the Bible that women cannot comprehend the word of God. Men and women have exactly the same opportunity and responsibility.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free,



there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26–28).

The important thing is to be 'in Christ', which is achieved by belief, followed by baptism, then a changed life of dedication to the ways of God.

Being the 'senior wrangler' was a prestigious achievement. But it pales into insignificance compared with the hope of eternal life. The divine gift is offered to all men and women.

Philippa was disadvantaged in what is now considered an unfair system. Many centuries before, Jesus Christ died a humiliating and excruciating death, an unfair punishment for crimes he never committed. But he did so to give us hope of everlasting life.

For many years, women were denied university degrees, and even nowadays, for many people this type of education is not an option. In contrast, the Gospel message does not require academic achievement (1 Corinthians 1:20–28). It is for anyone, and offers far more than any university. Let us therefore do as the apostle Paul urged and:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Anna Hart

A Christadelphian's Confession of Faith

If you asked a Christadelphian what he or she believed, this is the type of answer you might receive:

My faith is not just a set of Bible doctrines which I believe in theory. It is a faith to be lived as I try day by day to follow the example of the Lord Jesus. My greatest desire is for the Lord Jesus to return to earth so that I might glorify God, with Jesus, in his everlasting, worldwide kingdom here on earth!

1. The Bible

I believe the 66 books of the Bible are the Word of God, all directly inspired by Him. My faith and beliefs are based entirely on the Bible.

2. God

I believe there is only one God, the Father, who created all things. He is the eternal king, all wise and all powerful, everywhere present by His power, the Holy Spirit. God is righteous, just, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, and forgiving sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished.

3. Jesus

I believe the man Jesus of Nazareth is the only begotten Son of God, born of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. He was sent by God to be the anointed king and “righteous one” predicted by the prophets. Although sinless, he suffered, was crucified and died, yet did not decay but on the third day rose to everlasting life and then 40 days later ascended to heaven.

4. Sin and Death

I believe sin is disobedience to God and it results in death. Death is a state of unconsciousness as a body decays.

5. Promises

I believe God has selected people throughout history (such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Mary) and made promises to them. In this way, God promised possession of the land of Israel, and blessings for all nations through a special son who will rule on the throne of David for ever. These promises have only been fulfilled in part and are to be completely fulfilled in Jesus when he returns.

6. Israel

I believe God chose the nation of Israel because of His love for their ancestors, and to provide a witness to humankind of His existence. God gave them His law, prophets, promises and the land of Israel, and cared for them through their history. Jesus was sent first to the nation of Israel, which rejected him, as prophesied. Despite this, God has not rejected Israel, but people from all nations may be part of God's family and heirs of the promises.

7. The Hope of Believers

I believe that Jesus died as a sacrifice so that my sins can be forgiven and I can be made right with God. By the grace of God in Jesus – salvation, resurrection and eternal life in God's kingdom are offered as fulfilment of God's promises to all people on earth who will believe.

8. Kingdom of God

I believe that Jesus will return to earth to raise the dead, and judge them. The wicked will perish, but those who have lived their lives for God will receive the blessing of eternal life in God's Kingdom. Jesus will rule from Jerusalem with justice and peace. His kingdom will extend over the whole earth. Eventually all enemies, including suffering and death, will be destroyed. He will then hand over the kingdom to God Who will be "all in all".

9. Requirements of Believers

I believe God commanded me to repent of my sins and to be baptised (by total immersion in water) in the name of Jesus. I should worship God sincerely in faith and obedience.

10. Prayer and Fellowship

I believe I should constantly seek God's help and forgiveness through prayer, offering Him thanks and praise. I try to read the Bible every day, to listen to God's wisdom. When possible, I meet regularly with other believers, so we can encourage each other and share bread and wine in memory of Jesus' death and resurrection.

11. Way of Life

I believe that God asks me to show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I must stop sinful behaviour such as jealousy, pride, temper, sexual immorality, violence, drunkenness, gossiping, greed and materialism.

12. Marriage

I believe marriage is the lifelong partnership between a man and a woman which is intended to provide loving companionship. Children are a gift from the Lord and must be cherished

and nurtured. Husbands are to love their wives as Jesus has loved us, and wives are to love and submit to their husbands. Sexual relations outside marriage are forbidden. I believe I should marry a fellow believer.

13. Dealing with People

I believe that in all my dealings with people I must maintain godly conduct and show love to my neighbour. I will be judged in the same way that I judge others, so showing mercy and understanding is very important.

14. Money

I believe I must avoid loving money, but be content and responsible with what I have, relying on God to provide for my needs. I must be generous, giving willingly and cheerfully to those in need.

15. Law and Violence

I believe that I must obey the laws of the country where I live, provided they do not contradict the commandments of God. I refuse to participate in politics, industrial action, violence or war.

In summary, my aim is to be like Jesus, and to try to follow him throughout my life. I recognise that I may not live up to the ideals of my faith and realise my constant need for the mercy and forgiveness of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of my awareness of my need for God's mercy, I know that I should not condemn others, but forgive them as I have also been forgiven, and try to show them the same love which the Lord has shown to me.

Sarah Joiner

Contact 'Glad Tidings' if you would like the list of Bible references which show these truths.

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