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Sir Isaac Newton as Religious Prophet, Heretic, and Reformer

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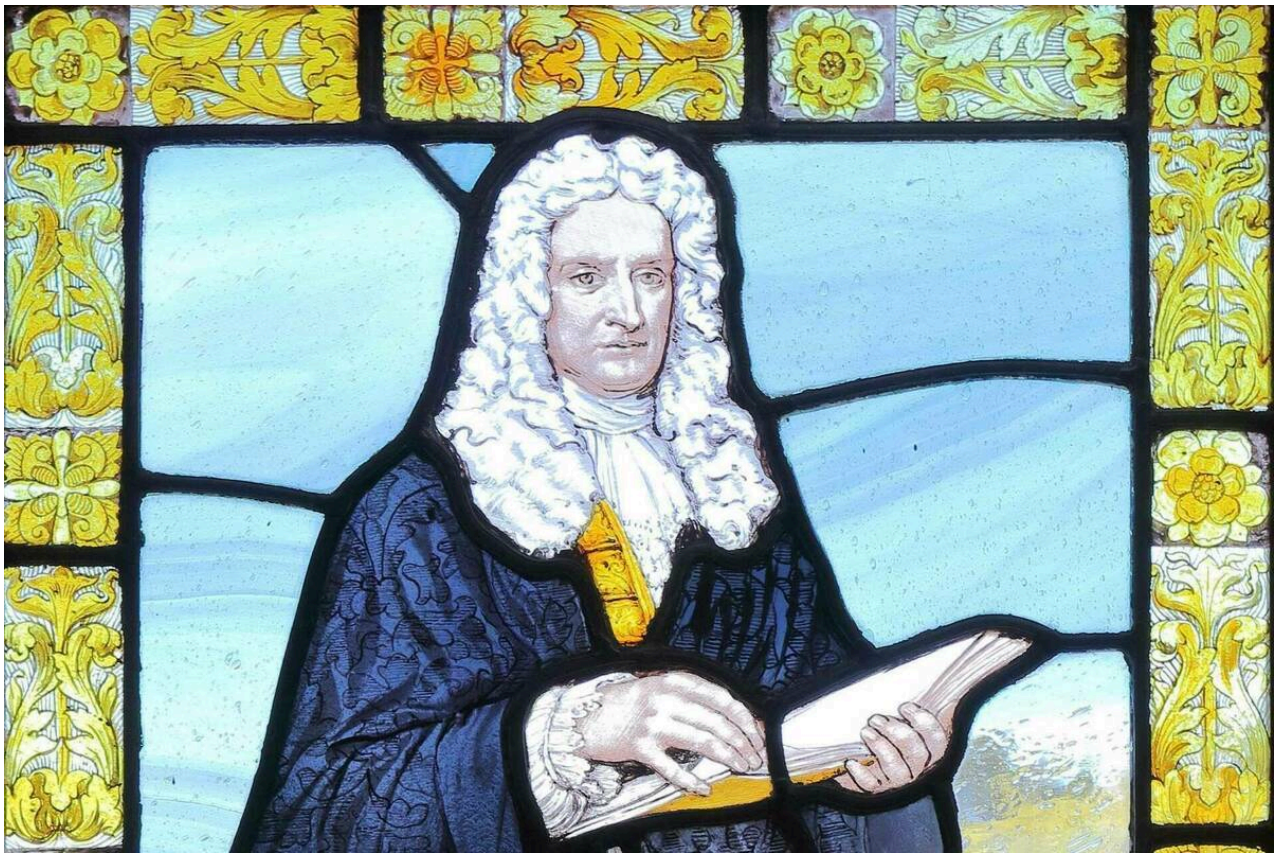

In 1674, Isaac Newton (1642–1726) informed German theologian Henry Oldenburg that he had "long since determined to concern [himself] no further about ye promotion of Philosophy."[1][link:#_ftn1] This admission seems strange, given that his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* would be published a decade later in 1687. But again, in 1679, Newton expressed to Robert

Hooke that natural philosophy had become more of a distraction than a pursuit, diverting him from what he deemed more critical research.[2][link:#_ftn2] Historians now largely recognize that Newton's time was devoted not only to science but, perhaps even more so, to church history, theology, biblical studies, and even alchemy.[3][link:#_ftn3]

Indeed, long before figures such as Hermann Samuel Reimarus, Gotthold Lessing, and David Strauss advanced historical-critical studies of the Bible, Newton and his contemporaries were already promoting early forms of such scholarship. Newton's profound biblical knowledge earned praise from his peers; for example, John Locke once lauded Newton not only for his skill in mathematics but also for his deep understanding of the Scriptures.[4][link:#_ftn4] Yet, as studies by James E. Force, Richard Popkin, Scott Mandelbrote, and Stephen Snobelen show, Newton's religious beliefs leaned toward anti-Trinitarianism.[5][link:#_ftn5] While he never publicly rejected the Established Church, Newton was nevertheless an archetypal heretic.[6][link:#_ftn6]

I want to situate Newton's hermeneutics within the broader theological landscape of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly examining how emerging biblical criticism shaped his skepticism toward traditional readings of both nature and Scripture. To fully understand Newton's approach to these "two books," we must review how this reinterpreted trope influenced his work and resonated with earlier figures of the scientific revolution. Ultimately, Newton's distinctive reworking of nature, Scripture, and history led him to redefine the boundaries between science and religion.

Deciphering the Cryptogram Set by the Almighty

Isaac Newton grew up in a time fraught with religious controversy. Following the Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia (1648), religious conflict in Europe moved off the battlefield but left questions about theological authority unsettled. In England, the Restoration of 1660 marked a subtle shift towards a moralist and rationalistic Anglicanism, with Newton's religious views reflecting what some have called the "decadence" of eighteenth-century English faith.[7][link:#_ftn7] Yet Newton's immersion in Protestant theology was deep. Raised in a household steeped in theological texts, Newton reportedly had access to a trove of Protestant works, including Calvin's *Institutes* and Beza's *Annotations*.[8][link:#_ftn8] Ironically, this grounding set the stage for his later, more iconoclastic interpretations of Scripture. Indeed, as Stephen Snobelen and Scott Mandelbrote have noted, Newton's scriptural skepticism is, in a sense, a radical extension of the

Reformation's call to rely on Scripture alone, suggesting that his anti-Trinitarianism was not a departure from Protestant ideals but an intensification of them.

At Cambridge, Newton's appetite for knowledge quickly extended to the "new mechanical philosophy," eagerly studying Descartes, Boyle, and others.[9][link:#_ftn9] His notebook, *Quaestiones quædam Philosophiæ*, reveals that his theological and philosophical inquiries developed side by side, already reflecting a skeptic's eye toward established doctrines. By the 1670s, Newton's unconventional views began to surface—particularly his anti-Trinitarianism, which only intensified under the influence of similarly unorthodox friends like John Locke and William Whiston.

Newton's rare public theological contributions, such as *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* and *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse*, reveal his profound distrust of the traditional text, echoing figures like Richard Simon and Baruch Spinoza, key thinkers in the rise of biblical criticism.[10][link:#_ftn10] Newton, like Simon and Spinoza, became convinced that central biblical texts had been deliberately altered.[11][link:#_ftn11] He argued that corruptions entered the Bible as early as the fourth century, particularly by the hand of Athanasius, whose metaphysical interpretations Newton saw as distortions of the "plain language" of Scripture. In his *Observations*, Newton outlined how various Old Testament texts were "confused" or "corrupted" over time, tracing these alterations to reinforce his anti-Trinitarian stance. Here, Newton joined Simon and Spinoza in scrutinizing the text's historical integrity—a radical approach that placed him at the forefront of early biblical criticism.

Regarding the New Testament, Newton adopted an even more critical stance, asserting that certain early Church Fathers—particularly the fourth-century Archbishop Athanasius—had deliberately altered the text to align with their doctrinal agendas. Privately, Newton arrived at radical conclusions about the history of Christianity, including a strong conviction that the doctrine of the Trinity was a post-biblical corruption. After his appointment to the Lucasian Professorship in 1669, Newton embarked on a meticulous study of the Bible that led him to view Athanasius as a charlatan, a manipulator of Scripture who introduced metaphysical "subtleties" that, in Newton's view, compromised the Bible's original message.

Newton's writings detail a sense of betrayal by both ancient Israelites and Christians, whom he believed had muddied true worship by mixing in "heathen" metaphysical ideas. In a manuscript on 2 Kings 17:15-16, he charged that both groups corrupted the worship of God by "mingling their own inventions with it." By the turn of the century, Newton's massive "Drafts on the History of the Church"

illustrated his views on the Trinity's development, culminating in a rejection of Trinitarian doctrine in favor of "one true God" as the Father alone. Though he acknowledged the power of Christ, Newton maintained it was derived entirely from the Father and exercised in full subordination—a hierarchy, he argued, inconsistent with claims of Christ's equality with the Father.

For Newton, divine revelation extended beyond Scripture to the Book of Nature. Just as he distilled nature to its simplest principles in the *Principia*, his "Rules for methodising the Apocalyps" advised a similarly minimalist approach to biblical prophecy. Newton's enduring vision was one of restoration—a "dual reformation" of religion and science. For him, science was not a departure from faith but a rediscovery of ancient wisdom. As he noted, "The Priests anciently were above other men well skilled in ye knowledge of ye true frame of Nature." In Newton's view, his mathematics and theology represented the *prisca theologia*—the wisdom of the ancients—resurrected for a new age.

Newton's conclusions were selective, stressing passages that emphasized Christ's submission to the Father while rejecting verses supporting the Trinity as textual corruptions. Ultimately, he believed Christ merited reverence for his obedience unto death rather than for any intrinsic divinity. As Rob Iliffe observes, "Newton's protracted historical critique of Trinitarian Christianity marks him out as a radical anti-Trinitarian," with Newton's Christ portrayed not as God's equal but as a mediator fulfilling the Father's will.[12][link:#_ftn12]

The Remnant and Revival

During Newton's lifetime, the emergence of numerous English anti-Trinitarian treatises reflected a growing movement questioning the scriptural basis of the Trinity. This trend gained momentum following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and by the early eighteenth century, biblical interpretation influenced by libertine, pantheistic, and anti-Trinitarian perspectives began appearing across Europe. Many Latitudinarian divines, progressive Anglican clergy linked to the earlier Cambridge Platonists, showed sympathy for these heterodox views, often hailing scientific progress as a sign of a new "age of light."[13][link:#_ftn13] Newton, both a student and friend of Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, along with Latitudinarian Isaac Barrow, naturally aligned with this emerging rationalist current. As Frank Manuel noted, in Newton's time, one could be both an Anglican and an Arian—a curious reflection of the conciliatory latitudinarianism within the Church of England.[14][link:#_ftn14]

Indeed, critics accused the Latitudinarians of encouraging Socinian tendencies, fostering an environment where deist and heterodox ideas could flourish under the guise of "rational religion."[15][link:#_ftn15] Yet, the most profound link between Newton and the Latitudinarians was their shared reverence for science.[16] [link:#_ftn16] Latitudinarian churchmen, alongside Royal Society members (where Newton served as President from 1701 until his death), saw in the new mechanical philosophy a unifying "Erasmian" tool to combat both religious skepticism and fervent enthusiasm. As Barbara Shapiro suggests, this shared interest highlighted science's potential to merge non-dogmatic piety with profound erudition.[17] [link:#_ftn17]

Newton's Latitudinarian sympathies also emerge in his manuscript *Irenicum,* likely written in the early eighteenth century. Here, Newton argued that "love the Lord thy God" and "love thy neighbor" were foundational tenets—"milk for babes," with "stronger meat" reserved for the more discerning. In Newton's view, these "riper" Christians should avoid condemning others or dividing over disputable doctrines, closely echoing the Latitudinarian doctrine of adiaphora ("things indifferent").[18][link:#_ftn18] Reflecting on the universal "Precepts of the sons of Noah," Newton believed true religion required only essentials, without additional "Articles of communion" not present from the beginning. It is fitting that Latitudinarian Bishop Edward Stillingfleet, in his own *Irenicum* (1659), argued for moderation and hoped that the Church of England might one day return to the "pristine moderation" of the early church.[19][link:#_ftn19]

Rising Anti-Trinitarianism

Newton's anti-Trinitarian arguments closely paralleled those of contemporaries such as Samuel Crellius, Thomas Emlyn, William Whiston, Hopton Haynes, and Samuel Clarke.[20][link:#_ftn20] Whiston, Newton's successor as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, shared Newton's critical views on the Trinity and Athanasius. Unlike Newton, however, Whiston voiced these beliefs openly, leading to his dismissal from Cambridge. Around 1705, Whiston discovered that Clarke, too, refused to read the "Athanasian Creed" in his parish, and later, Whiston reported that Newton himself was "hearty" for the "Arians."[21][link:#_ftn21] Encouraged, Whiston went on to publish his own Arian treatise, *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd* (1711–12), while Clarke published *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712), promoting a "moderate Arianism." Voltaire once cheekily described Clarke as a "reasoning machine," yet even his views were tempered compared to Newton's increasingly radical anti-Trinitarianism.[22][link:#_ftn22]

Newton's correspondence with John Locke in 1690 reveals the depths of his reformist, even heretical, agenda.[23][link:#_ftn23] In a series of letters, Newton detailed two "notable corruptions" in the Bible—1 John 5:7 and 1 Timothy 3:16—passages he argued had been altered to support the Trinity. According to Newton, these corruptions originated when "ye Latines interpreted the spirit water & blood of the Father, Son & Holy ghost to prove them one." Later, Jerome allegedly reinforced this by inserting the Trinity into his translation, allowing the disputed text to spread widely. Newton's confidence in exposing these interpolations reflected his belief that, when purged of "things spurious," Scripture would reveal an unadulterated truth.

This history also shaped Newton's view of Christ. In a letter to Locke, he argued that Christ "did not assume [honor] before his incarnation," but rather "humbled himself," only receiving exaltation from God after his death. Newton's Christ was not worshipped for inherent divinity but for his obedience—a view that positioned Newton's theology closer to Nestorianism than to orthodox Trinitarianism. Ultimately, Newton's assessment led him to conclude that the Church had corrupted Scripture to serve Trinitarian doctrine, leaving him convinced that "ye Catholicks" had more often corrupted the text than the heretics they denounced.

Rediscovering Ancient Knowledge

Newton had also immersed himself in the study of comparative mythology and the history of idolatry—an increasingly popular pursuit among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars. His extensive library included annotated histories by Walter Raleigh, Samuel Bochart, Gerardus Vossius, and others, which traced the origins of religious idolatry across Jewish, Christian, and pagan sources.[24] [link:#_ftn24] Among these, Dutch theologian Gerardus Vossius's *De theologia gentili* held special significance for Newton. Vossius argued that even false religions bore traces of divine origin, as God reveals himself not only in Scripture but also in nature and history. For Newton, these "false" religions retained glimpses of "true religion," rooted in both knowledge and worship of God.[25][link:#_ftn25]

In the mid-1680s, drawing on Vossius and other influences, Newton wrote one of his most enigmatic works, *Theologiae Gentilis Origines Philosophicae* ("The Philosophical Origins of Gentile Theology").[26][link:#_ftn26] Here, Newton outlined his view of a pristine, "Noachide" religion—an original faith descending from Noah and preserved in the Temple at Jerusalem, with traces even in pagan temples like those of the Roman cult of Vesta. He suggested that these temples, oriented around central fires symbolizing the sun, mirrored an early acknowledgment of the

heliocentric cosmos. As Newton put it, “One design of ye first institution of ye true religion [was] to propose to mankind by ye frame of ye ancient Temples, the study of the frame of the world as the true Temple of ye great God they worshipped.”

In Newton’s view, his own scientific discoveries were a rediscovery of this ancient theology, or *prisca theologia*, which held that the study of nature was integral to monotheistic faith. Ancient priests like the Persian magi and Chaldeans of Babylon were, in Newton’s view, both astronomers and theologians, and their knowledge was later corrupted as idolatry crept in. Just as Judaism had been compromised after the prophets, Newton believed Christianity had been misled by Trinitarianism. Yet, he was confident that God periodically raised reformers, notably Moses and Christ, to restore this primitive faith. For Newton, this “veneration of secondary effects” confused the essence of faith with its outer forms —a metaphorical kernel lost amid the husk.

Rescuing the Scriptures

But not all was lost, according to Newton. He believed there was a way to recover the pristine religion of Noah, envisioning a divinely sanctioned natural philosophy capable of returning humanity to a prelapsarian state. Newton saw himself as part of “a remnant, a few scattered persons which God hath chosen,” those few who “can set themselves sincerely & earnestly to search after truth.” For Newton, it was this dedicated “remnant” that preserved or rediscovered the ancient unity of natural philosophy and true religion—an effort to which he devoted his own life’s work in science, theology, and history. As Frank Manuel notes, Newton’s *Origines* is an apocalyptic narrative of decline and revival, highlighting the pivotal role science might play in overcoming religious and philosophical corruption.[27] [link:#_ftn27]

In his *Origines*, Newton argues, “there is no way to come to ye knowledge of a Deity but by the frame of nature.” The idea that nature itself held the blueprint of divine wisdom, as far back as Noah, echoes the Renaissance ideals of *prisca theologia* (ancient theology) and *prisca sapientia* (ancient wisdom).[28][link:#_ftn28] According to Manuel, Newton felt a closer kinship with this philosophical tradition than with his contemporary English mechanists. He was not alone in this reverence for ancient wisdom; his drafts for a second edition of the *Principia*, known as the “classical” Scholia, drew heavily from Greco-Roman philosophers. [29][link:#_ftn29] Swiss mathematician Nicolas Fatio de Duillier noted that Newton believed ancients like Pythagoras and Plato had already discovered the true “system of the world,” even anticipating his own inverse-square law.[30][link:#_ftn30] Scottish mathematician David Gregory recounted that Newton “spread himself in

exhibiting the agreement of this philosophy with that of the ancients," insisting that "the philosophy of Epicurus and Lucretius is true and old" but was misinterpreted as atheism by earlier thinkers.[31][link:#_ftn31]

Prophet and Reformer

Newton's conviction that ancient religion and natural philosophy were closer to the truth drove his vision of a "dual reformation."[32][link:#_ftn32] To him, the Noachide faith, a pristine monotheism tied to scientific wisdom, was degraded over time, first by Egyptian superstition, then by later Christian Trinitarian doctrine, which he deemed a corruption initiated by Athanasius. His goal was to "rescue" the New Testament from the Trinitarians, returning it to its original, unadulterated message—an effort he approached with the same critical precision that Renaissance scholars applied to expose forgeries in church documents.[33] [link:#_ftn33]

Newton saw himself as both prophet and reformer, called to decipher and restore the "two books" of God: nature and Scripture.[34][link:#_ftn34] As Manuel observes, Newton's religion was "charged with emotion as intense as the effusions of mystics who seek direct communion with God."[35][link:#_ftn35] Driven by an intense desire "to know God's will through His works in the world," he pursued both scientific and theological truth with prophetic zeal, convinced he was "a chosen one of God, miraculously preserved." Newton's radical anti-Trinitarian stance and his dedication to unveiling "pious frauds" echoed a broader post-Reformation intellectual struggle to reconcile divine revelation with the discoveries of nature.

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[1][link:#_ftnref1] Newton to Oldenburg, 5 December 1674, in A. Rupert Hall, Laura Tilling, J.F. Scott, and H.W. Turnbull (ed.), *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, 7 Vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959–1978, vol. 1, pp. 328–329. In the below notes, this edition of Newton's correspondence is referred to as: *Correspondence*.

[2][link:#_ftnref2] Newton to Hooke, 28 November 1679, in *Correspondence*, vol. 2, pp. 300–303.

[3][link:#_ftnref3] See, e.g., classic studies such as: Frank E. Manuel, *Isaac Newton, Historian*, Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1963; Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974; Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980;

B.J.T. Dobbs, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy, or "The Hunting of the Greene Lyon"*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975; B.J.T. Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. More recently, see, e.g., Andrew Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Rob Iliffe, *Priest of Nature: The Religious Worlds of Isaac Newton*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017;William R. Newman, *Newton the Alchemist: Science, Enigma, and the Quest for Nature's "Secret Fire"*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019. See also the helpful survey by Rob Iliffe and George E. Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Newton*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
[4][link:#_ftnref4] This letter appears in Lord [Peter] King, *The Life of John Locke, with Extracts from His Correspondence, Journals, and Common-Place Books*, 2 vols., London: Henry Colburn, 1830, vol. 2, p. 39.

[5][link:#_ftnref5] See, e.g., the collections of essays in: James E. Force and Richard Popkin (eds.), *Essays on the Context, Nature, and Influence of Isaac Newton's Theology*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990; James E. Force and Richard Popkin (eds.), *The Books of Nature and Scripture: Recent Essays on Natural Philosophy, Theology and Biblical Criticism in the Netherlands of Spinoza's Time and the British Isles of Newton's Time*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994; James E. Force and Richard Popkin (eds.), *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999. See also Scott Mandelbrote, "'A duty of the greatest moment': Isaac Newton and the Writing of Biblical Criticism," *British Journal for the History of Science* 26 (1993), pp. 281–302; Scott Mandelbrote, "Early Modern Biblical Interpretation and the Emergence of Science," *Science & Christian Belief* 23 (2011), pp. 99–113; Stephen D. Snobelen, "Isaac Newton, Heretic: The Strategies of a Nicodemite," *British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999), pp. 381–419; Stephen D. Snobelen, "'God of gods and Lord of lords': The Theology of Isaac Newton's General Scholium to the Principia," *Osiris* 16 (2001), pp. 169–208; Stephen D. Snobelen, "To Discourse of God: Isaac Newton's Heterodox Theology and his Natural Philosophy," in Paul Wood (ed.), *From Science and Dissent in England, 1688–1945*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp. 39–65.

[6][link:#_ftnref6] See Maurice F. Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism through the Centuries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, esp. 77–93.

[7][link:#_ftnref7] See Hebert Schlossberg, *The Silent Revolution and the Making of Victorian England*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000, pp. 13–27.

[8][link:#_ftnref8] Westfall, *Never at Rest*, p. 58.

[9][link:#_ftnref9] Ibid., p. 89.

[10][link:#_ftnref10] See the collection in William Whiston, *Sir Isaac Newton's Corollaries from his Philosophy and Chronology in his own Words*, London: J. Roberts, 1729.

[11][link:#_ftnref11] See discussion in Richard H. Popkin, "Newton and Spinoza and the Bible Scholarship of the Day," in Margaret J. Osler (ed.), *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 297–311.

[12][link:#_ftnref12] See Rob Iliffe, "The Religion of Isaac Newton," in Iliffe and Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Newton*, p. 490.

[13][link:#_ftnref13] See Dennis G. Wigmore-Beddoes, *Yesterday's Radicals: A Study of the Affinity between Unitarianism and Broad Church Anglicanism in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1971, esp. pp. 15–27. See also classic studies by Martin I.J. Griffin, Jr., *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England*, Leiden: Brill, 1992, and W.M. Spellman, *The Latitudinarians and the Church of England, 1660–1700*, Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993.

[14][link:#_ftnref14] Manuel, *Isaac Newton, Historian*, 374.

[15][link:#_ftnref15] On the accusations, see, e.g., Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982, pp. 51ff. See also Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660–1730*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

[16][link:#_ftnref16] See Margaret Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689–1720,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976.

[17][link:#_ftnref17] Barbara J. Shapiro, "Latitudinarianism and Science in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past & Present* 40 (1968), pp. 16–41. See also Lotte Mulligan, "Anglicanism, Latitudinarianism, and Science in Seventeenth Century England," *Annals of Science* 30 (1973), pp. 213–219.

[18][link:#_ftnref18] See, e.g., discussion in John Marshall, "The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men 1660-1689: Stillingfleet, Tillotson and 'Hobbism,'" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985), pp. 407-427.

[19][link:#_ftnref19] Edward Stillingfleet, *Irenicum*, London: Henry Mortlock, 1659, "Preface to the Reader."

[20][link:#_ftnref20] See Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy*, pp. 63–164.

[21][link:#_ftnref21] William Whiston, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston. Containing Memoirs of Several of his Friends Also*, London: J. Whiston etc., 1753, vol. 1, pp. 13, 178.

[22][link:#_ftnref22] On Clarke, see, e.g., Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy*, Leiden: Brill, 1997.

[23][link:#_ftnref23] See letters in *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 82–146, which were later published posthumously as: Isaac Newton, *An Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture*, London: Richard Taylor, 1830 [1754].

[24][link:#_ftnref24] See listings in John Harrison, *The Library of Isaac Newton*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

[25][link:#_ftnref25] On Vossius, see, e.g., C.S.M. Rademaker, *Life and Work of Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577–1649)*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981; Nicholas Wickenden, *G. J. Vossius and the Humanist Concept of History*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993.

[26][link:#_ftnref26] On this text, see Richard S. Westfall, "Isaac Newton's *Theologiae Gentilis Origines Philosophicae*," in W. Warren Wager (ed.), *The Secular Mind: Transformations of Faith in Modern Europe*, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982, pp. 15–34. See also Kenneth J. Knoespel, "Interpretive Strategies in Newton's *Theologiae gentilis origines philosophicae*," in Force and Popkin (eds.), *Newton and Religion*, pp. 179–202; Snobelen, "Isaac Newton, Heretic."

[27][link:#_ftnref27] Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, p. 45.

[28][link:#_ftnref28] See classic discussions in, e.g., D.P. Walker, *Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972; and Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, esp. pp. 133–169.

[29][link:#_ftnref29] See discussion in Iliffe, *Priest of Nature*, pp. 189–218.

[30][link:#_ftnref30] Fatio de Duillier to Huygens, 5 February 1691/92, in *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 193.

[31][link:#_ftnref31] Memoranda by David Gregory, 5, 6, 7, May 1694, in *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 334–340, on p. 338.

[32][link:#_ftnref32] On Newton's "dual reformation," see esp. Stephen D. Snobelen, "'The true frame of Nature': Isaac Newton, Heresy, and the Reformation of Natural Philosophy," in John Hedley Brooke and Ian Maclean (eds.), *Heterodoxy in Early Modern Science and Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 223–262.

[33][link:#_ftnref33] See Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

[34][link:#_ftnref34] The most extensive study on the "two books" remains Kenneth J. Howell, *God's Two Books: Copernican Cosmology and Biblical Interpretation in Early Modern Science*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002.

[35][link:#_ftnref35] Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, p. 3.

Featured Image: tained glass window in one of the guest rooms at Hill Bark depicting Newton, photo taken by Rodhullandemu [link:https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Rodhullandemu]; Source: Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0[link:https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en].

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