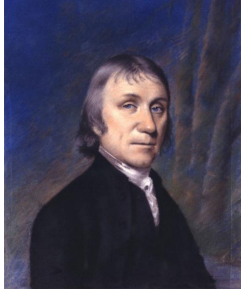


CREATION MOMENTS

Proclaiming Evidence for Truth

THIS WEEK'S CREATION MOMENT

Discoverer of Oxygen



For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. – Hebrews 3:4

Joseph Priestley was brought up in a chapel that believed the Bible to be completely true, but Priestley began to develop ideas that rejected the divinity of Christ and the Virgin Birth. In adulthood, he was, therefore, a Unitarian. Indeed, he was one of the founders of the Unitarian Church in England and eventually became a minister of a Unitarian chapel.

In 1765, he met the American statesman and scientist Benjamin Franklin, and this inspired Priestley's love of science. Not very interested in theory, he was fascinated by experimental technique, and he developed many of the chemical apparatus, especially for measurement, that have been used until comparatively recently.

It was just such an experiment that led to the discovery of oxygen. Prior to Priestley, most people had thought that fire actually caused materials to emit a substance called phlogiston. Having experimented on burning solids in known quantities of air, Priestley noted that the resulting "dephlogisticated" air had less volume than normal air. Comparing his own results with those of the French scientist Lavoisier, it was realized that actually air contained a gas which supported combustion rather than combustion itself being a material. We now know this gas as oxygen.

While his religious views were unbiblical, it should be noted that he ascribed all the order that he noticed in his experiments to God's design and purpose, believing that nothing he noted could have come about by random chance.

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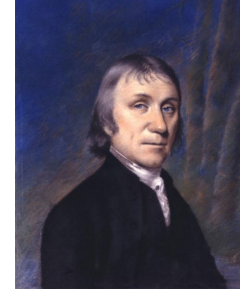
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