William Whiston Encyclopedia Article

William Whiston

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William Whiston

1667-1752

English mathematician whose *New Theory of the Earth* (1696) sought rapprochement between Newtonian science and the Biblical account of Creation. According to Whiston, Earth was originally a comet whose eccentric orbit was made circular by God; until the Flood, Earth possessed no diurnal rotation and its poles were perpendicular to the ecliptic. Finally, a comet guide by God penetrated Earth's surface, causing the waters of the abyss to overflow, shifting the poles, and imparting axial rotation.