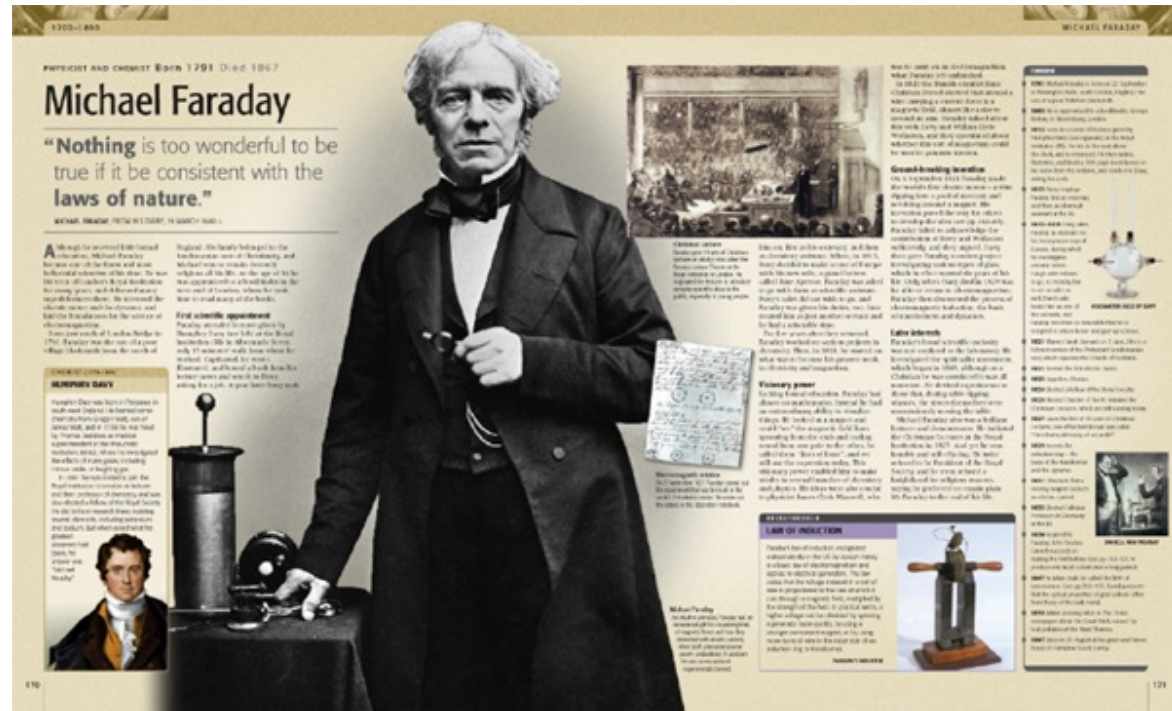


Michael Faraday

How would you like to be so brilliant that you were considered one of the most important persons on the entire planet? Imagine if you were so brilliant that you were considered one of the most important persons in this century? Suppose you were so brilliant that you were considered one of the most important persons *who ever lived*? (OK, now, let's get back to reality.) Such was the man we are looking at tonight. Almost every list of the "100 Most Important People of all Time" includes this humble Christian, Michael Faraday. Three portraits of scientists adorned the walls of Albert Einstein's study—Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell (it is interesting to note that **all three** were Bible-believing Christians!) Einstein said that, "*Faraday made the greatest breakthrough in physics since Isaac Newton.*"

How important is he to your life and to our world today? Start making a list of the things that run on electric motors – automobiles, fans, clocks, airplanes, pumps, the vacuum cleaners all you husbands dutifully run, etc, etc, – and you begin to get a hint of what Faraday's work produced. Then add to the list generators, transformers, electrolysis devices, and electromagnets just to name a few, and Faraday's prodigious contributions to the history of science and technology are seen to be massive. His discoveries of magnetic lines of force and electric lines of force were the impetus for the emergence of electronics, which has given us the television, telephone, fax machine and radio. Faraday is also credited with the invention of a primitive electric motor. This motor was the first device that used an electric current to make an object move. The president of the Institution for Electrical Engineers (IEE), at the unveiling of a Michael Faraday statue in 1989, said, "*His discoveries have had an incalculable effect on subsequent scientific and technical development. He was a true pioneer of scientific discovery.*" In 1931, 64 years after Faraday's death, Lord Rutherford said: "*The more we study the work of Faraday with the perspective of time, the more we are impressed by his unrivalled genius as an experimenter and natural philosopher. When we consider the magnitude and extent of his discoveries and their influence on the progress of science and industry, there is no honor too great to pay to the memory of Michael Faraday—one of the greatest scientific discoverers of all time.*" His successor, the physicist John Tyndall, said: "*I think it will be conceded that Michael Faraday was the greatest experimental philosopher the world has ever seen; and I will add the opinion, that the progress of future research will tend, not to dim or to diminish, but to enhance and glorify the labours of this mighty investigator.*"



Yet through all this fame and all these accomplishments, Faraday remained a humble man whose faith in the Lord Jesus and the Word of God were foundational to his life. One has written, *“He never suspected, as Mr. Wilfrid L. Randell observes, that he was bringing into existence our immense modern power-houses, making it possible for men to fly round the world, and laying the foundations of all wireless communication. He electrified the industry and commerce of the world, and made less fuss about it than some men would make of a creditable round of golf.”*

He was not born with wealth or title. As a boy Faraday began by cleaning boots, washing bottles, and rebinding old books. That he would end up becoming the most eminent scientist of his time, and one of the greatest of all time, is indeed remarkable.

Faraday and his wife belonged to a non-denominational group of Christians who met in a very non-descript building in London. Faraday was an elder in that group and often read the scriptures and spoke to the congregation. His addresses have been described as “a patchwork of texts cited rapidly from the Old and New Testaments; and they were always extempore, though he prepared careful notes on a piece of card beforehand.” We have the record of his first discourse after being recognized as an elder. It was on Matt. 11:28-30, expounding on Christ’s character and example. Faraday emphasized the words of Christ, “Learn of Me.” He said, *“The ground of humility of Christians must be the infinite distance between them and their Pattern.”* He quoted 1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21; Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 11:1; and 1 Cor. 15:1.



*Michael Faraday statue
by the entrance to
Savoy Place, London*

One day Faraday was introduced to Cardinal Wiseman. In the frank interview which followed, the Cardinal asked Faraday whether, in his deepest conviction, he believed all the Church of Christ, holy, catholic, and apostolic, was shut up in the little group in which he (Faraday) was officially an elder. *“Oh, no!”* was Faraday’s reply; *“but I do believe from the bottom of my soul that Christ is with us.”*

In his only public address involving science and religion (with Prince Consort Albert in the audience) he taught,
“The book of nature which we have to read is written by the finger of God.”

His confidence in the Word of God was unshakeable. When asked if he had any speculations about the afterlife, he replied firmly:

“Speculations? I have none. I am resting on certainties. I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”