

ETERNITY IS ALL THE TIME

It's a pity that some Christians have such a distrust of science. I suppose they feel that the sum of the scientist's achievement is to invent Evolution to do away with God, and the H-bomb to do away with man. But science, of course, is simply the study of nature, God's nature.

Thus it was that, as I walked the dog the other day, and was idly thinking about Einstein's view of the Universe, I suddenly learned something new about the nature of eternal life. At the heart of Albert Einstein's work was the idea that the universe is not simply a collection of separate objects following a course through time, but rather a complete, interdependent system called the space-time continuum. Roughly speaking, space and time are the same sort of thing, and if you do something to one, it affects the other. This leads to all sorts of surprising possibilities, for example, the possible existence of points in space through which, if you passed, you'd suddenly find yourself halfway round the universe somewhere else. It is similarly suggested that certain sub-atomic particles actually travel backwards in time. All this is somewhat marvellous, and almost mystical in itself, but the point is that it all refers to the physical creation in which we live. The Lord tells us that it will all be swept away, as the saved finally inherit full eternal life. But eternal, of course, does not mean everlasting in the sense of an infinite number of years. It means dispensing with time altogether; Jesus said "Before the world was, I am." God exists at all points in time at once, which explains why His plans work out so well - He experiences the results at this moment, just as at this moment He is involved in the original creation. It is only we plodding humans who are stumbling along, trying to catch up, and unable to see even the next bend in the road. But when we are with God, we shall be like Him - that is, free of the space-time continuum which keeps our feet on the ground in this life.

Expanding on this, you can see, for example, how the nostalgia we sometimes feel for past things - be they old friends, childhood memories, or dinosaurs - is unnecessary. Nothing is ever lost, and apart from meeting those old friends in heaven (if not the dinosaurs) shall we not be equally free in time to witness what the passage of time prevents us from doing now? The concept also disposes of any nagging doubts you may have had (well, I've had them!) that Heaven might be rather boring. Boredom is to do with the passage of time, and in Heaven the only time is 'Now', not because you forget the past or future, but because you're in them both. This would not, of course, make us equal with God, as only He has the power to create and change, but what a broad horizon to look forward to! Amazing how a little Relativity teaches you more about God.

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