

Space, Time and Ascension



In the risen Jesus ... creaturely space and time, far from being dissolved are confirmed in their reality before God. On the one hand then, the ascension must be thought out in relation to the actual relations of space and time. On the other hand, however, the ascension must be thought of as an ascension beyond all our notions of space and time (c.f. 'higher than the heavens', Heb. 7:26), and therefore as something that cannot ultimately be expressed in categories of space and time, or at least enclosed within categories of this kind....

We have heavens that are appropriate to human beings, the sky above the earth, the 'space' beyond the sky, but these are all understood anthropocentrically.... But God in his own nature cannot be conceived in that way – God utterly transcends the boundaries of space, and therefore because he is beyond them he is also everywhere, for the limits of space and time which God transcends are all around us.

Calvin was also right when he said that the Biblical writers never thought of the presence of God or of the ascension simply in terms of our space and time or in terms of earth and heaven. What does ascension to the right hand of God mean? he asked. What else is the right hand of God but the power of God, and 'where' is that but everywhere 'where God is'....

Jesus Christ, the man Jesus, is the place in this physical world of space and time where God and man meet, and where they have communion with one another.... When, therefore, we come to speak of the ascension of Christ from man's place to God's place, we make a statement which is ... bounded by the nature of man and his space at one end, but a statement which at the other end is 'bounded' boundless nature of God....

In the nature of the case, statements regarding that ascension are closed at man's end (because bounded within the space-time limits of man's existence on earth) but are infinitely open at God's

end, open to God's own eternal being and the infinite room of his divine life....

The ascension of Christ is thus an ascension to fill all things with himself, so that in a real sense he comes again in the Ascension ... leaving us in the mode of man's presence to man and returning to us in the mode of God's presence to man.

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