

The Eternal Now

by Ernest O'Neill

God's perspective is not limited by human understanding, and He has a plan for humanity that is based on His love and sovereignty.

Scripture: Galatians 6:14, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:15, Revelation 13:8

Topics: "Predestination", "Redemption"

Description

Ernest O'Neill preaches about the misconception of God playing 'catch-up' with His creation, emphasizing that God's plan for us was not a reaction to our choices but a predetermined path of love and redemption. He explains how God, through His Son Jesus, created us for good works and holds us within Himself despite our desire to be independent, allowing us to experience life apart from Him while still receiving His protection and mercy. O'Neill highlights the importance of accepting and believing in Christ to experience true reality and the life that God intended for us.

Transcript

Playing Catch-Up?

Many of us think of Our Creator as playing "catch-up". We imagine his creation of the world and us in terms of our own small minds. We can grasp that He wated children whom He could love and enjoy; we can even understand that they could not be His children unless they had freedom of will like Him. But then we begin to see reality as if He were as limited as we ourselves are.

We think He was surprised and taken off guard when we refused to depend on Him and obey Him. We then imagine He had to frantically devise a rescue operation in which His Son somehow allowed us to be destroyed and made over again in Himself. Thus we now have the chance to start again and live the life that God originally planned for us.

This, of course, is based on the belief that God could not possibly forsee what we would do with our free wills. Besides, if He could forsee what we would do, He surely could not hold Himself back from arranging other people and circumstances that would force us to do eventually what He wanted. Somehow, we cannot imagine that even our Infinite Creator could forsee everything we would do or say in our lifetime, arrange all kinds of circumstances and events to draw us to Himself, and yet be so fair and true that He would not cross the line that would restrict our final exercise of our free wills.

Yet that is exactly what God in His love has done!

Only One Human Being

God conceived of you and me when He conceived His only-begotten Son, Jesus. Christ was not only God's unique Son: He was also the "firstborn of all creation" (Colossians 1:15) and in Him all things were created - all things were created through him and for Him (verse 16). "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (verse 17).

Christ is so wonderful and infinitely varied that He could only express His nature through the lives of many other human beings that were truly part of Him. Only in such a body (1 Corinthians 12:27) could He be on the earth what His Father wanted Him to be! But both His Father and He knew what we would all do: thus we are "His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them(Ephesians 2:10).

But more than that, they knew the disaster we would create in our own lives and the very body of Christ Himself through our desire to be on our own. Yet instead of letting us cease to exist (because apart from Christ we had no life or breath of our own), Christ resolved to hold us inside Himself and bear our kicking and murdering and hatred until we had a clear view of what life on our own would be like. This is why He is called the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8) -- the moment in eternity that He and His Father saw what would happen, that moment they bore the consequences of their love for us.

This World and Reality

This present fallen world is a foretaste of what life apart from Christ will be like. Yet it is not wholly apart from Christ because He still holds us within Himself so that we continue to receive the protection that His life affords. So, disease is still counteracted by the healing power of His own Body, the international economy is still moderated by the built-in laws of correction that are maintained mercifully in Him, and the impending social and technical chaos is held in check by the corrective action of His infinite wisdom. So we have been given an incredibly fair choice because we stare daily at life without God, yet we exist in a life in His Son while we live on earth.

The present world is like the replay of the world that was "crucified" (Galations 6:14) in the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world: it's the unreality that is past. Our own situation in Christ is reality -- but cannot be experienced by us unless we accept it and believe it. Meanwhile, Christ, who made us and all things, waits humbly and mercifully for us to stop bleeding Him from within. He waits to begin living in us the life that He cannot live in anyone else!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-o-neill/the-eternal-now/>

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