

## THINKING ABOUT LIFE

The story is told of how the Russian authorities asked the first astronaut, Yuri Gagarin, on his return from space, 'Did you find God up there?', expecting the answer 'no'. If so, this would, I believe, have been a poor answer. Had they asked, 'Were you able to think up there?', they would probably have received more illumination. For to me, the very ability to think is to experience the gift of God.

This is perhaps why St Paul quoted to the Athenians the Cretan poet and prophet Epimenides, who wrote of God that 'In him we live and move and have our being.' (Acts 17:28) Our very thought lives inhabit God.

Hence,

WHEREVER WE ARE, GOD IS.

The psalmist picks this up:

Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

He continues,

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
Were I to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand.

(Psalm 139:7-8, 17-8, NIV)

What is fearful to many people about death is the prospect of losing the ability to think. Even in this life to be conscious but unable to think is hell. LIFE on the other hand may helpfully be equated with the ability to think. It is a gift from God. So if we deny the Giver, we risk losing the gift. What confidence do we have that when we pass through death we will continue to be able to exercise it? What provision has God made for any of us, come that day?

'I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE', said Jesus, as he set about raising the dead.  
(John 11:25)

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B/W 23.6.5, am.