

This month is strange: Christmas is over (ended recently with Candlemas), Lent won't start until March. Although little seems to be happening, time itself hasn't stopped. Yet.

Time always fascinates me; we cannot talk about anything without reference to it. There are a few places in the Bible where there are hints (eg, Psalms and Ecclesiastes) of timelessness, which is an amazing concept - like being a deep sea fish and having the idea that there is such a thing as an eagle.

But then, every moment that passes ceases to be. (The word "temporary" comes from Latin for time.) So what is left after? "In the beginning," opens the Bible. In Hebrew it is a single word which has been studied by scholars and mystics throughout the ages.* Many things have been said about it, but the most revealing is that this thing that God has started is a completeness and therefore is bound by limits - including an end. So where do we come from; where do we go?

Well, the markers of our existence - our bodies, graves, records, civilisations - all change beyond recognition, or simply fail, crumble and are forgotten. Yet we can and do think of the unthinkable; we are, metaphorically, the deep sea fish thinking, knowing, that there is an eagle.

For Christians, the eagle has dived into, and swam around, the deep sea of time - to our great surprise that all hopes of something greater and better are real.

The hope of our time is that it will end and we shall be set free - but not before the apportioned time.* This is not predestination (in which I do not believe, for the record*); this is the only conclusion that makes sense of *everything* we know or of which we are conscious.

I'm the vicar; trust me: try to swim now like an eagle flies, and one day* you will soar like the king of all heavens!

Think about it. Not much else to do this February.

(*ironies!)