

THE STEWARDSHIP PAPERS

The Point in Question

Here's a "line" for you to ponder; it's as straight as it can be.

It starts at something called a "point" and goes from "a" to "b."

I did my best to measure it; it's roughly one inch long,

But someone with a more precise device could prove me wrong.

I gave it to a friend of mine. She looked at it and said,

"The only thing with which I have to measure it is thread."

"How long is it to you?" I asked. She answered with a laugh,

"With my device for measuring, it's three knots and a half."

"That doesn't seem to help," I sighed; "I've asked a dozen friends the same,

And each of them has called its length a slightly different name."

"So, why not try the same device for measuring it, instead?"

To 'measure' needs a common rule, a 'starting point'," she said.

It seemed a good idea, so I brought my ruler 'round

And asked my friend to measure it and tell me what she found.

"But, where's the 'starting point'?" she asked. I answered, "Don't you see?"

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It starts at 'a' and goes along until it comes to 'b'."

"But you can't see a 'point'," she said. "A line is something else;

For points are 'places,' not just 'things,' and relevant to 'self.'

A line is made of lots of them (it's called 'infinity'),

But, even so, how can you measure something you can't see?"

"I see a line!" I shouted; I was getting quite perturbed.

"It has a set 'beginning' and an 'ending'," I observed.

"It has no set beginning you can measure," she replied,

"For no two points on anything can be identified.

No matter where you start, today, no matter what you 'see,'

The next time that you measure it, your figures won't agree."

I threw my hands up in disgust, the meaning somehow masked;

"Is...it...so...difficult to measure something obvious?" I asked.

"You're at a different 'point' than I," she answered quietly.

"I can no more take measurement of you, than you can me."

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