

# Arthur Eddington

## Quotes

*Science, Stars, Theory, Nature, Knowledge, Thinking, Math, May, Law, Men,  
Book, Believe, Learning, Results, Writing, Atoms, Physics, Understanding,  
Found, Statistics*

There once was a brainy baboon, Who always breathed down a  
bassoon, For he said, It appears That in billions of years I shall  
certainly hit on a tune.

~Arthur Eddington

If an army of monkeys were strumming on typewriters, they might write  
all the books in the British Museum.

~Arthur Eddington

The idea of a universal mind or Logos would be, I think, a fairly  
plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory.

~Arthur Eddington

Whatever else there may be in our nature, responsibility toward truth is  
one of its attributes.

~Arthur Eddington

An ocean traveler has even more vividly the impression that the ocean  
is made of waves than that it is made of water.

~Arthur Eddington

The pursuit of truth in science transcends national boundaries. It takes  
us beyond hatred and anger and fear. It is the best of us.

~Arthur Eddington

You cannot disturb the tiniest petal of a flower without the troubling of a  
distant star.

~Arthur Eddington

Whether in the intellectual pursuits of science or in the mystical pursuits  
of the spirit, the light beckons ahead, and the purpose surging in our  
nature responds.

~Arthur Eddington

It is impossible to trap modern physics into predicting anything with perfect determinism because it deals with probabilities from the outset.

~Arthur Eddington

The physical world is entirely abstract and without actuality apart from its linkage to consciousness.

~Arthur Eddington

We used to think that if we knew one, we knew two, because one and one are two. We are finding that we must learn a great deal more about 'and'.

~Arthur Eddington

Do not put too much confidence in experimental results until they have been confirmed by theory.

~Arthur Eddington

I ask you to look both ways. For the road to a knowledge of the stars leads through the atom; and important knowledge of the atom has been reached through the stars.

~Arthur Eddington

It is reasonable to hope that in the not too distant future we shall be competent to understand so simple a thing as a star.

~Arthur Eddington

In Einstein's theory of relativity the observer is a man who sets out in quest of truth armed with a measuring-rod. In quantum theory he sets out with a sieve.

~Arthur Eddington

We are bits of stellar matter that got cold by accident, bits of a star gone wrong.

~Arthur Eddington

The electron, as it leaves the atom, crystallises out of Schrodinger's mist like a genie emerging from his bottle.

~Arthur Eddington

Every body continues in its state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line, except insofar as it doesn't.

~Arthur Eddington

Oh leave the Wise our measures to collate. One thing at least is certain, light has weight. One thing is certain and the rest debate. Light rays, when near the Sun, do not go straight.

~Arthur Eddington

So far as physics is concerned, time's arrow is a property of entropy alone.

~Arthur Eddington

Time is the supreme Law of nature.

~Arthur Eddington

If your theory is found to be against the second law of thermodynamics I give you no hope; there is nothing for it but to collapse in deepest humiliation.

~Arthur Eddington

The mathematics is not there till we put it there.

~Arthur Eddington

Falling in love is one of the activities forbidden that tiresome person, the consistently reasonable man.

~Arthur Eddington

Probably the simplest hypothesis... is that there may be a slow process of annihilation of matter.

~Arthur Eddington

Proof is an idol before which the mathematician tortures himself.

~Arthur Eddington

Asked in 1919 whether it was true that only three people in the world understood the theory of general relativity, [Eddington] allegedly replied: "Who's the third?"

~Arthur Eddington

Shuffling is the only thing which Nature cannot undo.

~Arthur Eddington

We often think that when we have completed our study of one we know all about two, because 'two' is 'one and one.' We forget that we still have to make a study of 'and.'

~Arthur Eddington

Events do not happen; they are just there, and we come across them.

~Arthur Eddington

It is a primitive form of thought that things exist or do not exist.

~Arthur Eddington

Something unknown is doing we don't know what-that is what our theory amounts to.

~Arthur Eddington

Science is one thing, wisdom is another. Science is an edged tool, with which men play like children, and cut their own fingers.

~Arthur Eddington

Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of Nature is repugnant to me ... I should like to find a genuine loophole.

~Arthur Eddington

In any attempt to bridge the domains of experience belonging to the spiritual and physical sides of nature, time occupies the key position.

~Arthur Eddington

A hundred thousand million Stars make one Galaxy; A hundred thousand million Galaxies make one Universe. The figures may not be very trustworthy, but I think they give a correct impression.

~Arthur Eddington

For the truth of the conclusions of physical science, observation is the supreme Court of Appeal.

~Arthur Eddington

Never accept a fact until it has been verified by theory.

~Arthur Eddington

The quest of the absolute leads into the four-dimensional world.

~Arthur Eddington

It is also a good rule not to put overmuch confidence in the observational results that are put forward until they are confirmed by theory.

~Arthur Eddington

In the most modern theories of physics probability seems to have replaced aether as "the nominative of the verb 'to undulate'."

~Arthur Eddington

I don't believe any experiment until it is confirmed by theory. I find this is a witty inversion of "conventional" wisdom.

~Arthur Eddington

What is possible in the Cavendish Laboratory may not be too difficult in the sun.

~Arthur Eddington

Don't believe the results of experiments until they're confirmed by theory.

~Arthur Eddington

Human life is proverbially uncertain; few things are more certain than the solvency of a life-insurance company.

~Arthur Eddington

Electrical force is defined as something which causes motion of electrical charge; an electrical charge is something which exerts electric force.

~Arthur Eddington

The word reality frightens me.

~Arthur Eddington

We have found that where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind put into nature.

~Arthur Eddington

An electron is no more (and no less) hypothetical than a star. Nowadays we count electrons one by one in a Geiger counter, as we count the stars one by one on a photographic plate.

~Arthur Eddington

Schrödinger's wave-mechanics is not a physical theory, but a dodge - and a very good dodge too.

~Arthur Eddington

Who will observe the observers?

~Arthur Eddington

There was a time when we wanted to be told what an electron is. The question was never answered. No familiar conceptions can be woven around the electron; it belongs to the waiting list.

~Arthur Eddington

There is no space without aether, and no aether which does not occupy space.

~Arthur Eddington

What we makes of the world must be largely dependent on the sense-organs that we happen to possess. How the world must have changed since the man came to rely on his eyes rather than his nose.

~Arthur Eddington



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