

**PROLOGUE**  
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Thank you for accessing this Prologue and for taking the trouble to read it.

I find things and then I try to describe them. When I was a kid I thought that finding things was difficult: Now I think it is the describing part that is tricky.

I write because I must. The cost of failure may well be madness. I speak of God, to borrow the immortal words of George Mallory, delivered to a different audience in a very different context, "Because It is there".

I am limited by my shortcomings of intellect and character, but more generally there are semiotic or Gödelian limits to the code configurations that render the storage and communication of information possible. All symbolic structures are inherently finite, even something as protean as the English language. Beyond, and independent of, even that are the limits to the possible resolution of physical objects: A Heisenbergian limit to the extent to which a body's material and positional status may be defined. None of these four factors may be overcome by technological advances: Merely, and only perhaps, ameliorated.

So. I am sixty-one. I do not know what to think. I think because I must, and I know I cannot know.

I cannot think the things I need to think or say the things I want to say. This is not because I fear the authorities or because I fear God. It is no longer even because I fear myself. It may be because the emerging truth is just too stupendous for me to get my head around.

Like many old men I spend a lot of time in sentimental remembrances of my youth. Often my mind drifts back to university days. I remember the strong women and fine men; the masters; and people who like those new x-ray guns could analyse rock without actually touching it: Shepherds loved them like goats. And I remember the great geniuses with their flaws and foibles; and most of all my kind friends and gentle masters now dead whose noble souls fitter grace a Better Place.

A few days ago a newspaper article by an old friend sent me on a long and tearful reverie. Forty years ago we sat together in fossil laboratories where we were invited to study and draw the pathetic rock-bound relics of tiny creatures. If I drew a dog you would probably think it a piano, and the creatures, often of exquisite mathematical beauty, looked to me like lice or clams. My friend must have paid more attention than I for she became an eminent micropalaeontologist and is now the vice president of a major British petroleum company, which must of course remain nameless.

What the tutors seldom made clear was that these fossils were not the creatures, nor yet the altered remains of the creatures, but were the impressions of the outward forms of creatures long departed. And it was the same as if they were six thousand years old or six hundred million or six billion.

The staff of course alleged that they had arrived at a precise age for these little animals. They had analysed the ratios of potassium and argon isotopes in the relevant rock and whilst well aware of the fugaciousness of the gaseous decay product had allowed for its leakage from the crystal lattice in the thermodynamic environments they assumed. What is more they had checked this using the ratios of

actinide decay products in similar strata. And, predictably, they invited us students to work through the calculations and draw our "own" conclusions.

They did not always emphasise other aspects of provisionality, or the ultimate fallibility of our best efforts. As God chided Job: "Where were you...".

The decades seem to light up, shuffle and tumble like the illuminated panels on an old-fashioned gaming machine.

Too often I find myself in the toddling nonage of a quite alien past. Wallabies far taller than I bounce up to greet me. I am delighted, and they seem reasonably pleased to have bothered. Or starlit cinema seats sit beneath a sultry colonial sky as "Cherry Pink" plays from the proscenium. Back in Blighty, steam roils and rolls the roads, even in Sussex. On a sair South wind the harbour sawmill screams across the miles. Even indoors it is cold and crepuscular. The dim yellow light of the Swan lamps contrasts with the cold blue of the mercury arcs in the carless road. My Father carries me along The Causeway to the Arun not so much illuminated as delineated by the ghostly green glow of the gas standards that quietly hiss and harl in the riparian mists along our way.

And what historians seldom make clear is that this country is not that country, nor even the decayed remains of that country, but is a travesty of the inward forms of a nation long departed. And it was the same as if it was sixty years ago or one hundred and sixty years ago or for all the gyring sky cares three hundred and sixty million years ago.

For none can restore what has gone as all that conjoined has departed and only He that created time itself can restore the decayed and dispersed.

When we remember that the neurones with which we remember these memories are not the same neurones we had in those days long departed we wonder how we may wonder at the wonders we pondered then.

And when we remember that they are dying by the cohort every hour how do they cope? And though we know there are millions of neurones and they have thousands of mutual connections and we can do the maths and compute there are gigabytes there, we still wonder how we can store all that detail all those twenty-four frames in every sighted second for two eyes over sixty years and the hisses and harls too, white noise remember with how many hundreds of frequency, intensity and phase combinations analogue in real time remember I cannot imagine. And the subtle smells of the sea and the asphalt and the ethyl mercaptan and the latex and the loam and leather and the Coty eau-de-cologne and chlorine and Cardinal wax and everything.

In 1985 I calculated, using combinatorial principles I had derived, and the neurological knowledge of the day, that the typical adult human brain would have a data capacity of 14.3 gigabytes. This turned out broadly to agree with professional estimates, which was of course not necessarily a validation. It also turned out that you would literally need a brain the size of a planet to define the snapshot Newtonian status of the then known universe to even a sketchy degree of precision. Now in 1985 14.3 gigs was an awful lot of recording capacity so everyone turned their backs and walked away thinking they had cracked it. I mean everyone but a brave someone who thought we all wrote nonsense.

In 2013 we think that 2.5 petabytes ( about two-and-a-half million gigabytes ) is nearer the mark, but of course this does not explain how a baby remembers the gaslight of another century and his progress beneath it.

The point is not that advances in science and technology bring us nearer the truth, because even the goalposts shift when someone asks "What is

memory?", or, even more alarmingly, "What is data?". The point is we do not and cannot know the answer and cannot say. Even Pilate had his uses.

So after all that learning and after all that care and expense and worry, by friend and enemy alike, by several states, and by whole maniples of sorry men who only wanted to pick up their pay and go, the result is I know nothing.

I have tried to know and have failed.

I have tried to understand The Will of God and have failed.

Thank you for bearing with me thus far.

So if I know nothing how can I believe in God?

Note that I am evading the question of whether I can *know* God.

The grand paradox is that it is *because* of essential incompleteness that God exists. This is very difficult to explain and it sounds ridiculous stated in the way I have put it.

Because our universe is incomplete all narrative programmes and all historical sequences terminate in contradiction. This is why things seem so paradoxical. This has nothing to do with people getting their sums wrong; explorers not yet finding things; or natural selection.

For sure, all these corollaries are made possible by essential incompleteness, as is the theological phenomenon of Free Will, but they are no more explanatory in and of themselves than that the pelican crossing is a necessary outcome of octane oxidation.

God is not a social or cultural conception. Voltaire asserted that if God did not exist we would have to invent Him. This is a bit like saying that if the tapir did not exist we would have to invent him. The compelling objection is: Why? God is not a convenience or a corollary. Like the tapir He is a self-subsistent feature of the natural world. I was tempted to say He should be viewed as such, but it is in the nature of independent agencies that they do not care how they are viewed, especially by a rather unpleasant race of terrestrial apes.

The incompleteness is symptomised by the fact that there are several different types of infinity; no exact method for the specification of certain small numbers; that there are several very satisfactory ways of describing the atomic nucleus; and that no one has been able to account for action-at-a-distance, despite the best efforts of our best workers.

If the universe is incomplete then there is obviously something outwith it.

And yet that very externality permits that something's ubiquity. If it were *within* our universe it would be located ( in a specific position ). Because it is external it can be, and is, everywhere. Or to borrow physical mathematicians' jargon, it is dimensionally independent of the dynamical constraints that dictate natural behaviour. If we are willing to entertain the theory of the relativistic space-time continuum, the corollary is that this thing, or class of things, is also everlasting.

Ordinary folk like us describe such phenomena as supernatural, but they are only unnatural to the extent that they mostly operate outside our universe, and confute the canon of scientific law as developed by post-Medieval Western intellectuals.

Of course we like to explain things and stick labels on things. We affect to understand and explain the things that happened to us or to our forebears: The failure of socialism; the fall of the Roman Empire; the discrediting of Lamarckism. We can attach glib formulas to these processes such as "The sustentation of community is impossible in the presence of Evil" or, siding with Gibbon,

"Christianity killed Rome". I am one of the tendency who think that the failure to industrialise technology extinguished ancient civilisation in the Occident. But if you employ slaves the deployment of machines, or, astonishingly, the use of donkeys is uneconomic. The Jews used donkeys. A contradiction begins when, as you try to follow Christ's teachings you find it impossible to treat slaves harshly. If you don't treat slaves harshly you get no work out of them. And if men don't work civilisation founders. And if men don't work, mechanisms are not developed and as technology atrophies an entire socio-historical structure goes the way of the ammonites.

A civilisation, like an ammonite, tries to defend its posterity with complexity. But of course the complication only leads to the proliferation of absurdities, and before you know where you are you have people computing the behaviour of the universe in the second trillionth of a second after an event that took place 13.798 billion years ago, but scratching their heads about the next trillionth. And even more wonderfully you have governments paying them to do it.

This is not an argument for the much-mocked doctrine of the God of the Interstices, squeezed like some metaphysical regulus into ever tighter corners as knowledge advances: No that would be absurd and Jim Warren would not insult you with that. This is not about wishful thinking one way or the other.

The Romans and their slaves thought the landscape alive with spirits who endued every rock, tree and spring with a tutelary genius. Before I cry "Idolaters!, Heathens!" I should remember their lives and those of today's animist votaries were and are hard. Their lives are not my life, their thoughts are not my thought, and their sorrows are not my sorrow. To view my God I use an apparatus bequeathed to me by Greco-Roman theoreticians long departed, and colour my narrative with the commentary and cadence of Semitic heroes. But this does not of course make God a cultural construct any more than St Hilda's fossils were or are a cultural construct. Zoroaster said something, but it was God who spoke.

God exists because the world is indescribable *in principle*.

I turned to Christ when I became aware of my own dreadful wickedness. I came to Christ when my alternative was suicide. I literally had nowhere else to turn. No man or woman can be Christian as a matter of convention. You can't say "Oh, I was christened" or I must be Christian because mum was or "I go to Church". Christianity is a matter of conviction, both moral and intellectual. You are a Christian because you are evil and inadequate and you know it. It is not about fear of Hell. I do not believe in Hell, and I never have. Unless Hell is knowing you are spent and warped and not knowing what to do about it. No, I positively wanted Christ. I wanted his counsel, his forgiveness, and above all salvation whatever that is.

I am a lover of scholarship. Of course I am willing to listen to historians and archaeologists who think that they have evidence that Jesus Christ was actually the illegitimate son of a Roman auxiliary soldier and a Semitic woman; that his actual name was Joshua Ben Pantera; and that he may well have been more confident speaking Greek rather than Aramaic. I am happy to walk with Germans who think they can show me the grave of Christ's father. All such is very tenuous, but perhaps not impossible.

I do not think a supernatural force can inseminate a living animal or would want or need to. The point is that God wished to rescue Man, presumably from a psychic peril. God chose a man as his Agent. One is tempted to say He could have chosen anyone and chose someone, but the reality is that careful selection would have been at play. If I thought that I could discern the motives of God I would not be writing this, but maybe He thought that here was a man with the intellect and

linguistic skills to convince, and who looked as if he might reach death without committing an act of cruelty.

The New Testament authors and modern researchers agree that many would-be messiahs arose in that place and time. Certainly the Romans took these developments very seriously and were sufficiently intimidated to kill any Judaic supposed prophet they found.

No, we are speaking here of metaphysical acts committed by intelligent and self-subsistent Agents who or which operate ( with immense difficulty ) from a different plane of existence, and who are free from the constraints of time and space as we understand them. Such acts are not, as such, manifest to humans. They are experienced only as existential crises, up to and including the raising of the decayed dead. The Ancients took all this for granted and mentioned it, if at all, in passing. Somehow we have lost the knack.

Remember, if you are not a Christian it is okay. There are plenty of excellent atheists, Buddhists and Muslims. Few men would punish you for holding an honest opinion, and certainly no one is going to step in from "another dimension" to spite you.

You cannot will your belief. The choice is not yours. Faith is born of suffering and humiliation and the self-knowledge these bring. I really hope you don't have to go through that. Even Christ asked that the cup be taken from him. But if you go through the ordeal and survive you will emerge better than you went in. Of course I am still the same old Jim with the same old vices but somehow I am existentially different. It is a matter of knowledge instilled into a man who could never know. Knowledge is humanly impossible. It is an existential, not an intellectual, condition.

Sorry if I am preaching to the converted. You probably appreciate these things much better than I do. In fact as someone with the audacity to claim quakerhood I should apologise for preaching at all.

By all means read Holy Scripture as art. The ideas and the language in which they are expressed are of transcendent beauty, and their figures inimitable. The words were written, not of course by God in Person, but by mortal men and women who were willing to die in agony for what they believed, and did.

The Bible is a tale about freedom, and mankind's inconsumable quest for it. Scripture's most powerful passages were written by slaves and outcasts. Free men are incapable of prophecy because they think with their brains not with their souls. Freedom is an existential condition. But no man is truly free in any phase of his biological life, for all are captives of their contracts and class, and their state and skills.

Technically, a Christian is someone who believes in the corporeal restoration to eternal life of a dead Jesus. The central concept is resurrection. I believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as a historical fact. But clearly this idea of resurrection has figurative and symbolic value as well as the literal.

No, sorry, that is wrong.

I owe it to you who have borne me this far to be candid.

I do not believe in the Resurrection.

I *believe in* the Higgs Boson and that the *Asaphida* died out in the Silurian four hundred and eighteen million years ago. And I shall cleave to such opinions for as long as the experts assure me that they have performed their calculations correctly, and that the physicochemical bases of their analyses have not been revised.

I *know* that Jesus Christ was Resurrected, otherwise He could not have addressed me, not audibly of course, but through my spirit. This is knowledge: All else is conjecture.

It is very tough for the soft-living men and women of today's West to appreciate such concepts. For the Roman slaves of the Principate the concepts were easily grasped and their impact total.

Those poor people thought that they must ever have a master, but they yearned for a Master who was tender, true and merciful: Not a master who was exploitative, indifferent, or who literally lashed out in fear of his own captives, or, worse, in fear of loss of income. And those were the normal ones.

Put yourself in the place of a slave.

You have lost your father slain; you have lost your home and field; wife, children and siblings are you know not where, suffering what you can only imagine or prefer rather not. You have lost your name and nation, and even the very trousseau that your mother bequeathed to grace your bride. You are even bereft of the clothes that you might have stood up in had, perchance, fire or flood taken your home.

When you have nothing you have God. And yet God is not nothing.

You want to be Somewhere where the gentle zephyr cools but not chills your naked frame. Where the brand warms but does not sear. Where iron binds your thatch but not your neck. Where labour is love and the lash is for your loom. Where the Sun cheers up but does not beat down. Where the rain blesses but does not batter the everlasting grass. Where the font springs pure and plenty where the ravished and raped are cleansed.

Such a place is conceivable.

America? Schiller's Elysium? A socialist utopia? Or maybe the quotidian landscape of an extragalactic planet.

Our freedom and plenty were purchased with the lifeblood of millions. Our Resurrection to Life without longing was purchased by the Blood of The One.

Paradise is unimaginable.

But what is it about?

It is about the shining dawn that never darkens. It is about the splendor of hope in the light of the new and incorruptible perfection of that eternal. It is about the defeat of time and the rehabilitation even of the Agents of Darkness. It is about arrival in the Sanctuary after a stormy and stony path. It is about reprieve and forgiveness. It is about understanding without striving. It is about wonder without sorrow.

To such our conception of Elysium can be but a starlit coast.

As some evangelicals put it "Once Saved: Always saved".

Christ, however, saved *all* men.

Remember that if goodness or probity were the conditions of salvation *none* would be saved, for as Christ reminded His auditors all men are evil.

God is trying to open a line of communication with us. If you can hear Him now, great. If you cannot, you will have to wait.

Thank you for your patience and for sparing me your time.

Enjoy this site.

Whoever you are out there, may God cherish and comfort you always and build your love of His world and His creatures. Be good.