

THE GOLDBLOCKS SYNDROME

Or...

When all else fails, read the
instructions!

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Preface

I have been led to write this by 2 observations about today's western society.

The first is that it is commonly believed that science has explained the things that people in the past believed God had done, so now we know how science has explained it all there is not only no need to believe in God or a god or gods but only rather naïve and superstitious people do so.

Not only does this attitude prevail among people of science and others with tertiary education but it is also to be found in people generally, including those who actually have a faith which is all too often undermined by this erroneous belief.

The reality is that science is in no way in conflict with knowledge of, belief and faith in God. Atheism is actually a rampant, aggressive and intolerant religion and one of its most commonly used weapons is derision of those with a faith.

I have felt called to redress this and show the overwhelming evidence for the God of the Bible.

In attempting to show the incredible complexity of creation I may have put in too much illustrative scientific data. If the reader has any difficulty in understanding some of the detail, this is not a problem. My point is to illustrate the enormity and complexity of the world in which we live. That is the issue to understand.

The second observation is that today's society has little or no knowledge of many things that were taken for granted even in relatively recent times. For about 2 or 3 generations now folk have not had a basic Sunday School education so although spiritual hunger persists, as is shown in our society by the popularity of astrology and the greater than realised influence of eastern religions, even a basic knowledge of what the Bible is about is lacking despite the principles of the Bible being the very foundation of our culture and society.

I have tried to address this. Although I start at the beginning the fact is that so much of what comes later in the Bible is foreshadowed, implicit and inherent in the first few chapters. I have therefore interrupted the narrative here

and there with prequels and references to what comes later so the reader can get some idea of where it is all heading. There is a risk that this will make it all a bit disjointed but maybe that will avoid monotony!

Chapter 1

The Goldilocks Syndrome and Other Stories

Fairy tales are for children, right? Well, I'm not so sure. I have always been an avid reader, even as a child. I read all the fairy stories that were popular at the time, and then some. I greatly enjoyed the usual stories in the Little Golden Books, which I discovered to my delight are available to this day.

But are these stories really for children? When I was a child the Little Golden Books were fine, but I well remember a beautiful edition I was given of Grimm's Fairy Tales, printed on fine paper and leather bound. These were not "sanitised" a la Little Golden Books, they were the originals and they were true to the authors' name. I couldn't finish a story without crying. And you can say the same even for Hans Christian Anderson. Have you compared the Walt Disney production with his original version of "The Little Mermaid"?

Apart from being sad many of these stories contain important lessons and illustrations of what life is like.

One of my favourites is the story of Goldilocks and the three bears. We all remember the story of how little Goldilocks goes for a walk and discovers the bears' cottage while they are out while their porridge cools, how she samples their porridge and their beds.

But wait a minute. What did she think she was doing? She saw the cottage and as the door was open she went in. Didn't it occur to her that it might be someone's home? Did she ask herself whether it was right to just walk in? Did she not realise that the porridge obviously was someone else's breakfast and the beds someone else's property?

Isn't this how people behave though? Don't so many of us wander unquestioningly through life, accepting it all as it comes? Although we know we will all die at some point, how can so many people just carry on through life without a thought as to how such an incredibly complex world could just happen, with nobody having made it? So many folk are not in the least bit concerned even as age gradually brings the inevitable closer. And it's the proverbial ostrich that sticks its head in the sand?

The other fairy tale I love is Hans Christian Anderson's story of the king's new clothes, one

the best versions of which is Danny Kaye's delightful interpretation from the 1950s movie Hans Christian Anderson. It can still be found on youtube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLNhlbr oC4s>

Isn't this a wonderful illustration of how we so often think? If everybody, especially if the "everybody" concerned are influential, gets on a certain bandwagon don't we all just follow?

We do this with our language. How is it fashionable to speak today? I remember when back in the '70s it was trendy to say, "No way!" Now it's "As good as" or "Back in the day..." or "as you do," not to mention "whatever" for the teenagers and bureaucratspeak is legendary. Basically, we can't talk about that unless, at the end of the day, when we have a meeting of all relevant stakeholders we drill down so deep... the way forward is via Key Performance Indicators and benchmarks...

If it's a hot day you mop your brow and express concern about global warming but conveniently nobody says anything if the northern hemisphere has more than its share of snowstorms and blizzards and has the coldest winter for decades. I think you get the picture.

We follow the crowd so long as where they are going is the current fashion, all the while pouring often quite vitriolic and hostile scorn and contempt on those who may not follow the crowd, e.g. global warming “deniers”.

I just came across this example, a response by someone to a book published by a distinguished academic who disputes climate change. It illustrates perfectly what I am trying to say: “Yes Xxxxxx is renowned - for being an idiot. For those who like to follow this mining geologist who represents the 1% of 'scientists' who dispute climate change...”

Whatever the truth about climate change, last time I checked calling someone an idiot and questioning their standing in the scientific community does not constitute valid scientific process. Nor does it answer the point this “idiot” made, that a single volcanic eruption had put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than had been saved in several years of human endeavour.

Still using the example of climate change, I just read a newspaper article in which the columnist says, in explaining her stance as a “warmist,” that today more people than ever before believe in global warming. This is as good an example as any of what in modern parlance is called by various names such as

vox populi, argumentum ad populum, or in plain English, the bandwagon fallacy. It is not an argument supported by evidence either for or against climate change.

We need more little boys like in Hans Christian Anderson's story.

Today it's fashionable to say that God is dead because we don't need Him any more as science has explained everything. That's what everybody says, but is everybody right? Does it matter? Does science replacing God fill the needs in people's hearts or minds or spirits the way God used to for our parents and for those poor benighted superstitious science-ignoring simpleton idiots who still believe in Him today?

Can it be that people were happier and more secure, with longer marriages, less divorce, fewer single parent families, less teenage suicide and fewer drug problems when they believed in stupid superstition, than today when we believe in scientifically proven truth?

Not quite the same thing as fairy stories but still dear to my heart are the cartoons on the theme of some poor wretch arduously climbing a mountain to reach its very peak to find a wise little guy with a white loincloth, white hair and long white beard so they can

ask him, "What is the meaning of life?" We keep seeing these cartoons because we don't believe there is an answer to that question. Too many of us are like the lady with whom I was speaking once who kept repeating with a worried expression, "We can't really know, we can't really know."

Do we really want to know, do we really need to know and does it matter? Come with me on a little journey of exploration and let's find out. Before you protest, yes, it actually is important.

You don't see the need for God? What do you mean when you say that? Do you mean you're doing OK without Him or do you mean that you don't feel you need God to explain the world in which we live? Or both?

Well, you can't get the right answer to the wrong question. It's not a question of whether or not you see a need for Him, it's a question of, if He exists, does He want something from you, and if so, what?

It is very, and I do mean very, convenient to not believe in God because God is, well, God. If He exists it means He, not you or I, is the centre of the universe. If He is God then maybe we have some obligations to Him. You

may say, "No thanks, I'd rather be an atheist so I can be my own boss." Yes, sure, we all have the right to believe as we will but one of my favourite quotes is from Aldous Huxley, who incidentally was an atheist, who said, "Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored."

If God does exist we had better be sure whether or not He is relevant to us before we find out the hard way. Being human of course many of us will be rationalising like hell to maintain a belief that He does not exist.

So let's have a little rational thought process here. Actually, hold it right there while we define "rational." All too often when using that word people who don't believe in God want to find "rational" explanations... for things such as miracles etc. By "rational" they mean explainable without the need for any spiritual or divine explanation. I put it to you that that is an abuse of the word "rational." The dictionary definition of rational is "agreeable to reason, reasonable, sensible." It is not "excluding any spiritual element."

I was quite distressed and frustrated as an 18 year old student when, starting university in 1960, I found that the old "science vs. God" argument was still going on. I thought it went out in the 1890s as there is no conflict between the two, and numerous people of

science have a firm belief in God. Still the argument dragged on more than half a century later then and to this day.

“Science vs. God” is of course a red herring. The true conflict is between people who want to keep God out of their thinking vs. people who believe in God. There are true scientists in both camps but those who want to exclude God try to do so by delegitimizing those who believe differently.

So let's have a reasonable look at things here. But just before we do, let me explain that I may use the odd Bible verse here and there. So many people, especially those who love to criticise, deride or dismiss the Bible have never read it and have no idea what it is or what it actually says. We'll come to that in due course if our ratiocination, (good word that!) leads us that way but in the meantime bear with me while we start on our journey.

Also just before we start our journey please do realise that it is a challenge. If you are an atheist or agnostic ask yourself whether you are prepared to face the truth if it's different to what you thought? Or, being brutally honest, what you want to think?

When looking at evidence it is really very difficult to not be influenced in one's

interpretation of it by one's preconceived ideas, one's mindset. Keeping an open mind is a greater challenge than most of us realise. The evidence available to both believers and atheists is the same. Can you interpret it impartially?

Just to define where we are going, the subtitle of this little opus is "When all else fails, read the instructions." That's the manufacturer's instructions of course, so the questions are, is there a manufacturer and has He, (or She,) left any instructions?