



# ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 8, Issue 4

## The History of the Universe, Chapter 1.

Let's keep it understandable.

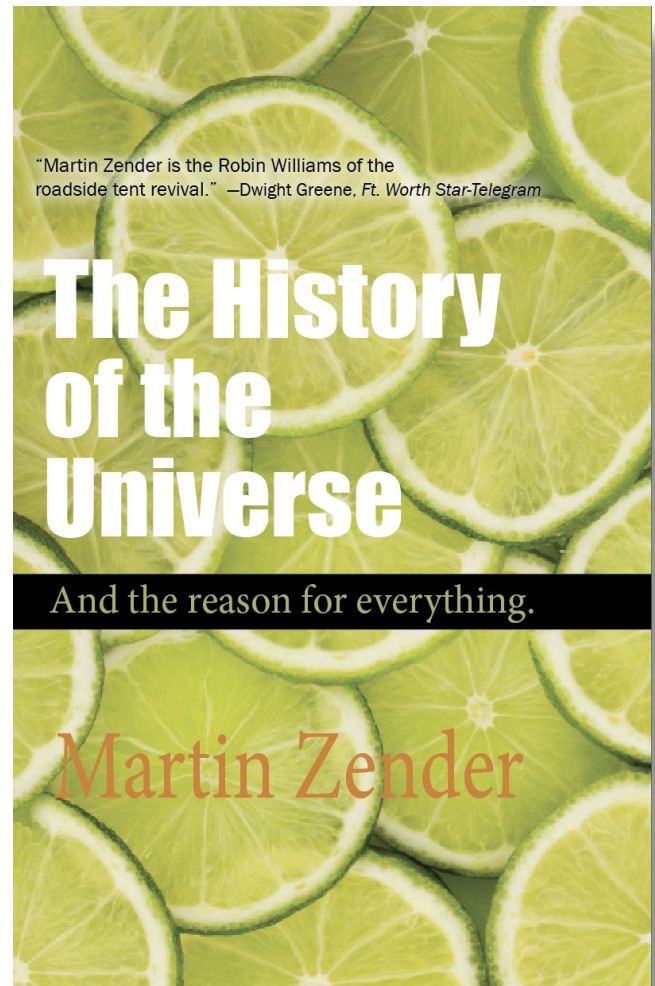
I am beginning a new book today—or attempting to. I began a novel not long ago here on these pages called *The Evil Empire*. I abandoned it because God pushed me into a hole where I hadn't the energy to create fiction. The project I am beginning today is non-fiction, in which I will explain the universe and give an answer to everything. I now consider *The Evil Empire*—an account by Jesus Himself of His life and times—to be on temporarily on hold. I think the current project holds greater promise for the time being.

A man named William W. Bentley Jr. wrote a book (I don't know how many years ago) called *The Simple Story of the Universe*. I read it sometime in the nineties and it blew my mind. It was so beautiful. It made me realize, for one thing, that God created the Earth to be a stage for the showdown between good and evil. Bentley went on to explain the reason for the creation of Adam, going so far as to intelligently hypothesize why the human body has arms and legs.

(For a link to the online version of the book, see below.)

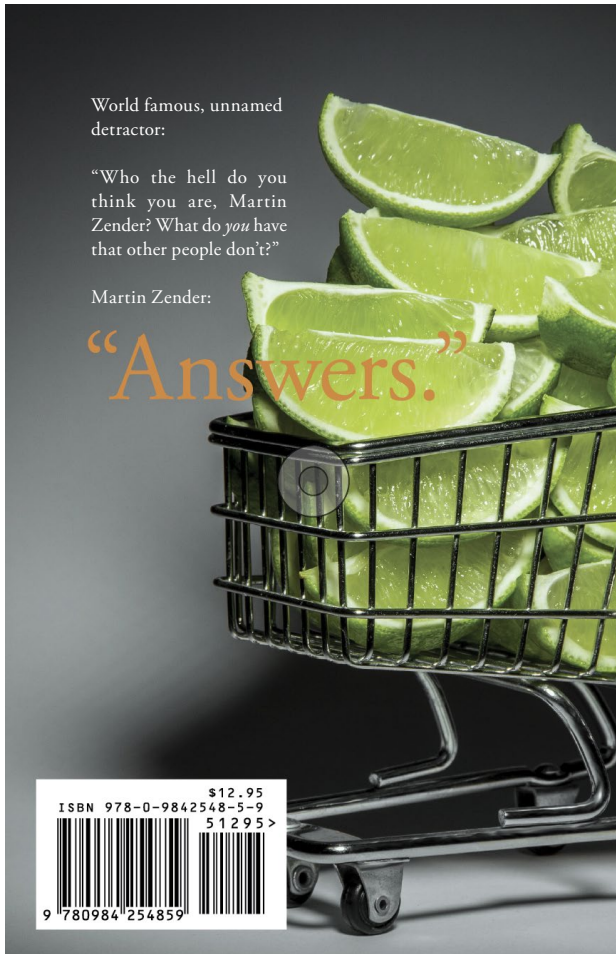
It occurred to me shortly thereafter that I wanted to write a similar book. Or, I would Zenderize Bentley's book for those enamored of my writing style, giving him full credit for the original idea and plan. Twenty years on, this is what I have decided to do. My book is called *The History of the Universe*, subtitled, "The reason for everything." I shall publish it in installments here in the ZWTF. A bold title and undertaking? I don't mountain-climb, so I have decided to do this.

I was sitting outside here in Ft. Lauderdale at 4:30 a.m., smoking a cigarette and contemplating the project



and its prospects. Out of the blue came a cover concept. Credit it to madness or genius (the two are closely correlated), but I saw limes on the cover. Yes, limes. Ten minutes later I was buying the rights to an image on my favorite photo-purchasing site—an image of limes.

I see now why God gave me limes. The title and subtitle are so weighty that only a fruit of the citrus variety could add the needed whimsy and the friendly invitation to open the book. The shopping cart of limes on



the back cover (also purchased on the aforementioned site) suggests to the potential reader that the author will do the hard work of cutting the product into bite-sized (or squeeze-worthy) pieces, and will cart them to his or her door.

The writing style in *The History of the Universe* might be a little different than what you are used to from me. I enjoy stream-of-consciousness writing. With such writing, the editor in me takes a back seat to the mad scientist. While the scientist pours smoking substances into test tubes, the editor sits gagged, tied to a chair in a corner. Only later, after the “Eureka!” moment has burned a hole in the laboratory table, is the editor untied to clean up whatever unforeseen accidents threaten the usefulness of the new product.

This kind of writing is oddly easy for me.

To show you the extent to which I am re-making Bentley’s book, I have taken his opening 91 words and expanded them into 4,080 words and God-knows-how-many more syllables. It is the opposite of summary. It

is an expansion of points into a novelesque undertaking that, in spite of itself, presents facts. Some like it holy; others like it fun. Why not turn a few somersaults on the way to the temple?

Here is Bentley’s opening paragraph, expanded by yours truly into what I would call my opening chapter. Enjoy. Or duck.

MANKIND HAS BEEN imbued with a compulsion to philosophize as to the origin, purpose, and meaning of life and to theorize about what, if anything, occurs after death. Scientists, philosophers, and theologians (intellectuals) have written books numbering in the thousands on these subjects. A lay person might venture a humble opinion that, for the most part, the experts have merely made complex matters unfathomable. In contrast, perhaps simple explanations for everything, based primarily upon the Sacred Scriptures (the Word of God) would be more readily understood and accepted by ordinary people.

—William W. Bentley, Jr.

*The Simple Story of the Universe*

## *The History of the Universe* And the Reason for Everything

—by Martin Zender

### POLITICS AND PARTY HORNS

Humanity likes to invent philosophies about why things are the way they are. This may or may not involve mind-altering drugs. For certain it involves rich imaginations in combination with caffeine, nicotine, and left-wing politics. A very popular question is, “Why are we here?” Another popular question is, “What is the meaning of life?” Another popular question is, “When I take my dog out for a walk why doesn’t he poop right away?” When it comes to death, many people wonder, “Why do I have to die?” People in denial of death have invented the Samba. The Samba only lasts so long, however. Even people who do the Samba eventually die.

Watch people on New Year’s Eve blow party horns. This, too, has its limitations. Approximately 40,000 people blowing party horns on New Year’s Eve will be dead before the next ball drop at Time’s Square. This is a total embarrassment, which is why few people like to talk about it. I will be criticized for merely bringing it up.

Funerals are cry-fests, as well they should be. No one brings party horns to a funeral. All the furniture is of the living room variety; what an oxymoron. When you sneak-



approach the corpse to pay your last respects, the corpse never answers. This shakes a lot of people up, and they go away to do the Samba and blow party horns.

### SOUNDING SMART

Unfortunately for those who truly hate death, there are other people in the world known as philosophers whose chief claim is to provide answers to life's seemingly most perplexing questions such as "why is there death?" but whose chief desire is to sound smart to their peers and to make statements that are so generally unfathomable that the general populace assumes the philosopher to be a genius—even though the populace comes away from the philosopher knowing not a single thing about what the philosopher said. The more confusing a statement, the more genius is behind it—so goes the theory. Multisyllabic words certainly help. (See?)

Philosophers guess about things for a living—even better if the philosopher is a physicist. If philosophers/physicists are restricted to wheelchairs and have debilitating diseases, all the better. Then they must surely be geniuses. Everyone knows that a person in a wheelchair with a debilitating disease is automatically aligned with the mystical gremlins granting humanity wisdom. Apparently, Gremlins of Wisdom love spines that don't work. Gremlin-touched individuals go into the ether of the mind and emerge from their dark caves with equally dark, nihilistic sentiments and sentences such as—

I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven of afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy tale story for people afraid of the dark —*Stephen Hawking*

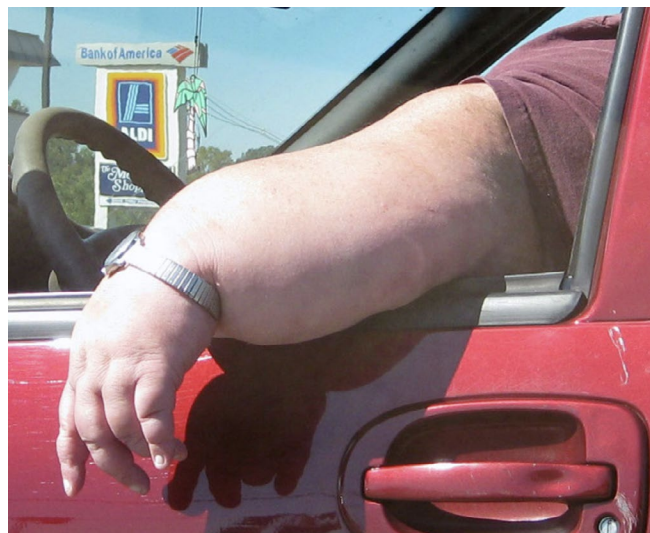
As well as the following, by the same physicist—

What I have done is to show that it is possible for the way the universe began to be determined by the laws of science. In that case, it would not be necessary to appeal to God to decide how the universe began. This doesn't prove that there is no God, only that God is not necessary.

### MY ADVANTAGE

I enjoy what appears to be a disadvantage in the "explaining the universe" department (but it's really an advantage) in that I am a healthy person not in a wheelchair (it's not my fault) whose post-high school education amounted to five months at a technical college (Hocking Technical College in Nelsonville, Ohio) to study emer-

gency medicine. I quit when I couldn't find the blood pressure of a woman on the floor of her apartment who may or may not have been a creamstick donut eating champion before this. It was my first real emergency outing as a student. "I can't even hear a heartbeat," I said to the chief tech. "I think she might be dead." "You have to put the cuff around her arm and inflate it," said the tech. "But her arm is already inflated," I said. "Put the stethoscope over a vein in the crack of her arm," said the



tech. I said, "I don't think she has any veins, and furthermore I have just come to an important realization." "What is that?" "I don't want to be an EMT." "What do you want to do instead?" "I want to discover the secrets of the universe." "Are you kidding me? You can't even find the blood pressure of a woman who is passed out on the floor." "But I believe in God. I believe that God has communicated to us in the Scriptures, but that these Scriptures, to be Scriptures, must be translated correctly. This is the key to everything, Joe. Otherwise, you're just dealing with a bunch of versions of God's so-called word that are biased in favor of whatever organization pays for the translation." I took a breath. "This is not an ordinary woman," I continued. Joe said, "I'll admit that she's large." "Are they all this big?" "No." "Even so, I think I'm going to quit." "Okay. But do you mind if we try to save this woman's life first?" "No, I don't mind. I think we should. I think we must."

Joe found the blood pressure (it was a lot over a lot), then put something under the woman's tongue that revived her.

"What is this?" she said when she came to. "A student?" I must have looked the part. I was mortified.

I resented that she looked at me first as a thing—What is *this*? I felt I was being objectified. Because of this, I averted the gaze of her one good eye. Joe said to her, “He’s presently an *ex*-student, as of about fifteen seconds ago. He’s quitting this business to find the secrets of the universe.” The woman laughed. This cut me to the quick. “I just saved your life,” I said, “and you are laughing at me?” “What makes you special?” she asked. I said,



“You’re telling me that you’re an independent thinker. My name is Susan. Are you the one who found my blood pressure?”

“This is what might surprise you. I am *not* in a wheelchair, I *don’t* have a degree in anything and thus I have never been pressed through a prefabricated system in order to become a prefabricated thinker in the manner of the system that wants to push me to be what it thinks I should be.” “I think I’m following you,” said the woman. “You’re telling me that you’re an independent thinker. My name is Susan. Are you the one who found my blood pressure?” I looked toward Joe. “Yes, he is the one,” said Joe. “He found it. It was a lot over a lot. He saved your life.” I blew Joe a private kiss. “I am a prophetess,” said the woman. “They call me The One-Eyed Prophetess. And I would like to propheteer right now and say that you indeed *will* find the secrets of the universe because you will have dodged formal training in the matter of something so large that, if ever there could be such a thing as formal training in something so large, it would

*disserve* more than serve. I assume that you’re quitting *all* formal education.” “Yes, I said. “Starting today.” “Good,” she said. “It was good enough for Steve Jobs.” “And for Bill Gates,” said Joe. “And for the Wright Brothers,” I said. “And don’t forget Hitler,” said Susan. “How could we forget Hitler!” said Joe and I together.

#### BACK TO HAWKING

Whenever I thought of Stephen Hawking I thought that he was so smart that he didn’t know anything. This was because of the previous quotes. But then I found quotes from him that were fine examples of common sense. They were quotes that anyone could have uttered who were common humans with common thoughts. I will quote you some of these inspiring sayings, but first I must print another confounded quote from the man who I think sometimes suspected that other people expected him to try to *explain* the universe, seeing as how he was a physicist and all. These same people mistakenly assumed that because a physicist is so smart about physical things, that this automatically qualifies him or her to comment on the higher aspects of universal truths. But it doesn’t. Brilliance pertaining to physical things no more qualifies a person to probe the source and meaning of the physical things than a philosopher probing thoughts is qualified to find any meaning or source behind thoughts. So here is another forced, whacko quote from Hawking, who is performing like a trick monkey for the entertainment of people who expect him to know more than he does. (The relief will come after this.)—

So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a creator. But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be. What place, then, for a creator?

Try to forget that for now, and enjoy the following quotes that could very well have come from Madge the Manicurist in the old Palmolive commercials. But since they come from Stephen Hawking, we add unnecessary and unearned weight to them—

☑ “Life would be tragic if it weren’t funny.”

☑ “My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn’t prevent you doing well, and don’t regret the things it interferes with. Don’t be disabled in spirit, as well as physically.”

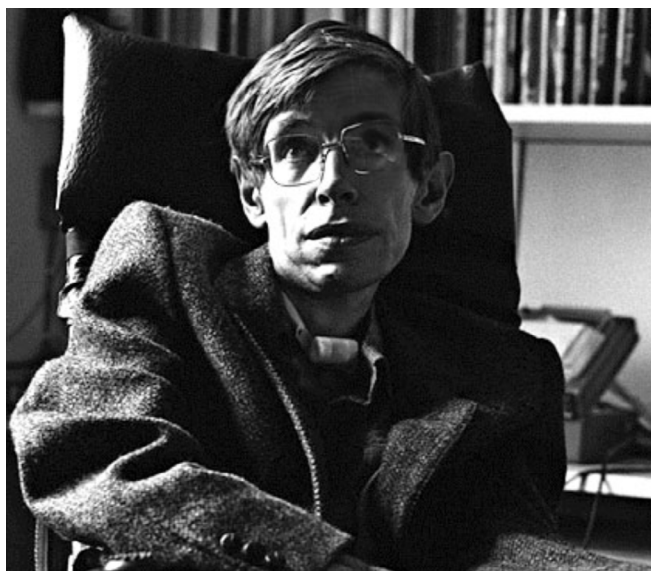
☑ “Just because I do a lot of thinking doesn’t mean I don’t like parties and getting into trouble.”

☑ “People who boast about their I.Q. are losers.”

☑ “You cannot understand the glories of the universe without believing there is some Supreme Power behind it.”

### HAWKING BASICALLY COMMISSIONS MY NEW BOOK

The quote that follows acts as though Stephen Hawking himself were begging for the book that I am now writing. Were he still alive, I would send him the published result. And I think he would like it. The more I think about Stephen Hawking, the more I like him. I recognize his



“Today, we still yearn to know why we are here and where we came from.”

debilities because we all have them, but not all of us can read Scripture properly translated and realize that the origin and the road map of creation and the answer to everything is here, and need only to be believed by faith, just as Evolution is believed by faith, and the Big Bang is believed by faith—

Ever since the dawn of civilization, people have not been content to see events as unconnected and inexplicable. They have craved an understanding of the underlying order in the world. Today we still yearn to know why we

are here and where we came from. Humanity’s deepest desire for knowledge is justification enough for our continuing quest. And our goal is nothing less than a complete description of the universe we live in.”

That fact that Hawking said, “today we *still* yearn to know why we are here and where we came from” is proof that Hawking himself—for all his thinking and writing—does not consider himself to have provided any of these answers.

I’m happy to pick up the slack, Mr. Hawking.

### ANSWERS LIKE SNOWFLAKES

Philosophizing as to the origin, purpose and meaning of the universe and information about what happens after death is a compulsion of humanity. There are 1,546,098,775 competing answers. No two answers are the same. Now you know why philosophy degrees are so expensive. It is the “no-two-snowflakes-are-alike” syndrome, only in a completely negative way. The result of the madness is no answer to anything, but the philosophers get invited onto talk shows. Beer sales go through the roof in television land because no answers are forthcoming, and people invent new dances to try to forget what they heard/didn’t hear on the talk shows. Party horn factories go into overtime. No one learns anything, but we can all sleep better knowing that there are no answers and that nothing really matters.

Really? No. I was totally kidding there. No one sleeps better. Because of a universal disquietude concerning the future (and even the present) of the universe, sleeping pill companies become Fortune 500 business models. People want answers to large, important questions, but they just don’t think that answers exist. This would keep many of them awake were it not for the sleeping pill companies.

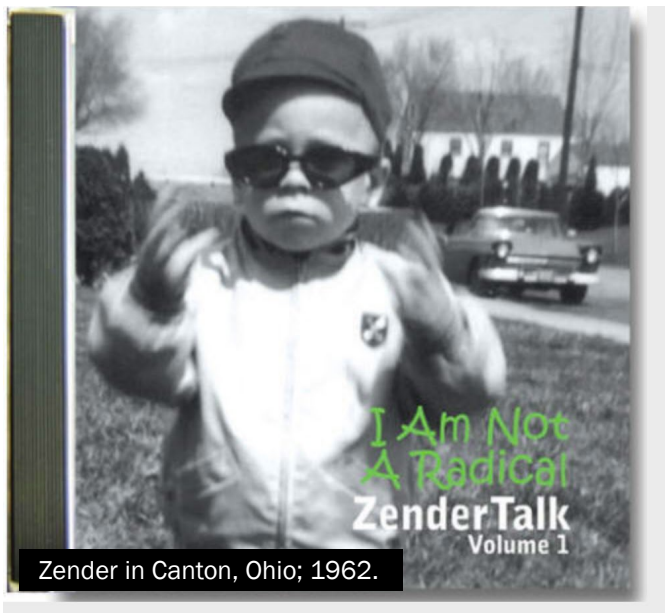




But what if I told you that answers *do* exist, but that none of these answers requires a philosopher or even a *philosophy*? What if I told you that all the answers were written down. And I mean, *all* the answers?

I hear a collective sigh in some camps. “Oh, my God. This author is going to bring out the Bible.” Ha, that’s where you’re mistaken. Nice guess, though. Can’t blame you for thinking that. I’m not going to bring out the Bible, but rather the Scriptures. There is a difference. All Bibles are translations, but the Scriptures are what God actually wrote.

“Oh my God, Harold, this guy thinks that God wrote the Scriptures.”



“Wait just a doggone minute. You’re telling me this book you’re reading is written by a kid?”

“Ha ha, Maude. That’s a good one. This guy thinks that God inspired people to write so that there would be a record of what actually happened so that people could have an anchor of information—whether they decided to believe the information or not? Ha ha, this guy is pretty funny.”

“I know he’s funny, Harold. He really is. So far, he has said some funny things. Things about party horns and the Samba. But something bothers me about this guy in a good way. He seems to be like that kid in the story of the Emperor’s New Clothes who calls the

emperor naked.”

“What has that got to do with anything, Maude?”

“He seems like the kind of kid who would sit on Jesus’ lap.”

“Wait just a doggone minute. You’re telling me this book you’re reading is written by a kid? And he still believes in Santa Claus?”

“I said that it seems that he’s sitting on *Jesus’* lap. He *seems* to be a kid. A kid with a vocabulary. So far, he has dissed Stephen Hawking.”

“The man in the wheelchair with the debilitating disease and the synthesized voice who is now dead? How dare he!”

“I know. No one does this. It is impossible to survive criticizing Stephen Hawking. Hawking will haunt him from his grave. But he recovered from it, the kid did. He ended up complimenting Hawking, in a way. Ended up liking his ordinary, human quotes. He likes the quotes void of starry bullshit. But the kid says that Hawking is dead. For all of Hawking’s quacking about life and death, Hawking is no longer with us, or with anyone. And the kid means—*dead*. He is not communicating with anyone any more, Hawking, not from Oxford, not from Harvard,



not from across the chasm of death—so says the kid. I’m on page 106. The kid says that death is the opposite of life. Doesn’t that make sense, Harold? *Doesn’t* it? That the dead are not alive? This is only one thing. What if death *is* the opposite of life? That makes sense, doesn’t it? But the kid says that there is a resurrection in the future for everyone and that God is good and that the purpose of the universe

is to bring billions of beings into it—God likes the fellowship, you see—so as to eventually make all created beings happy through the contrastive experiences of good and evil once they are all resurrected to immortality.”

“God is *good*? Is that what I thought I heard you say? Is that what the Jesus kid is saying?”

“Yes. I’m on page 212 now. The kids says that the existence of flowers, ants and cats proves that God is good. This is where he’s starting. He looks to creation. He’s not looking to Christianity and he’s not hauling any rocks down from Mt. Sinai. The kid is oddly not a Christian, even though he believes in Christ. He says he finds a record of creation in the Scriptures, but not the Bible.”

“Oh Christ, what’s the difference.”

“Exactly, Harold. Good question. Is it possible that wisdom could reside in a sandbox?”

“What the hell are you talking about? Did you just say ‘sandbox?’”

“Just listen to what the kid says next. He’s telling a sandbox story that involves a turtle.”

“What the—”

“I know, it seems irrelevant at first, but I see the kid’s point now.”

“Read it to me if you have to, Maude, but only if you have to. And get me a beer, if you would.”

## MERTLE AND YERTLE

I was with my kid sister Kelly (I was also still a kid) in a sandbox in Canton, Ohio, and we let our pet turtle out because we thought that maybe our turtle would appreciate a desert adventure. The turtle seemed at first to like the desert adventure. It flapped and fumed across the sand with great purpose, to reach the other side. This was so different from its plastic-bowl existence. Here was a substance of earth rather than a laboratory fabrication of Lucite.

But our mother called us in for popsicles. I did not mention that it was a hot day. Mine was cherry (the popsicle, not the hot day), my sister’s popsicle was grape. But by the time we got back out to the sandbox, Yertle was dead of heat stroke. We cried and cried. Who knew?

I funeraled him. We both did. We stroked him and put him in a box which had been a Matchbox car box. I talked to Yertle. I told him that we were of a common mortality and that he only went first, but that we would follow and die as well. God had brought him into existence, and God had taken him out. We had not meant to kill him. We loved him.

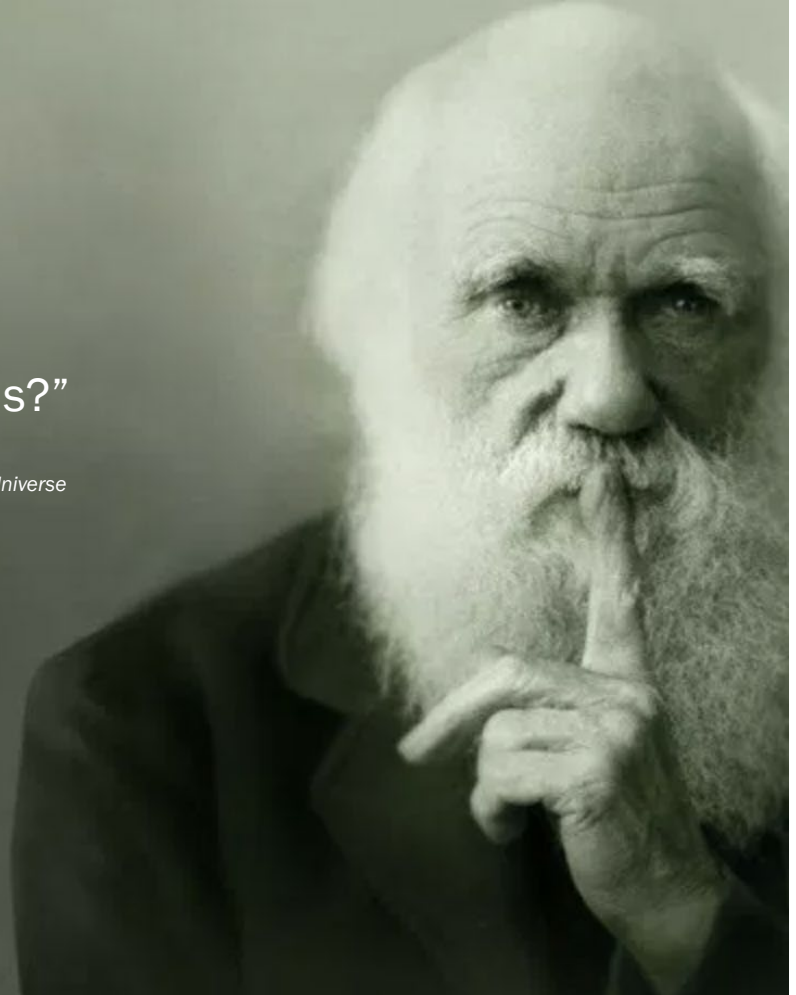
We cried and cried. We had an American flag on a stick, the kind that could fit into a pencil holder and could be had at a drug store. We unstapled the flag from the stick and draped that flag on the Matchbox box, dug a hole on the northeast corner of the house and put Yertle in it. Kelly wrote his name and an epitaph (“Here lies Yertle the Turtle”) on a wooden marker. He is still there, Yertle is, but there is a resurrection coming. Does God forget? Could God possibly forget a life as precious as Yertle’s? *I can’t even forget, and I’m not nearly God.*



I accidentally stepped on Mertle, the remaining turtle (Yertle’s twin) on August 22, 1965. I had my shoes on. We had let him out to walk down the hallway, from Kelly’s room to mine. We should have turned the hallway light on. Why didn’t we? I will ask God that when I see Him. I will never forget the sound of the death of Mertle. It sounded like the tiny, silent implosion of a wet jellybean. I had destroyed his shell home, then him. The carpet stain had to be rubbed out with Ajax. My grandfather had been over for dinner and I ran to him and cried into his lap. His lap and heart were large, and his hands were magnificent and soft. One of his great hands came to my head to pet me in my heaves. I realized then that there was nothing I hated more than death.

“Why are no two snowflakes alike? Did Evolution do that, or is a Great Mind winking at us?”

—Martin Zender  
*The History of the Universe*



I wish I'd remembered what I said. I only remember the tears. And the large, soft hand of my grandfather. If I could have said then what I think now, then I said, “Why does God bring things into existence, only to take them out again? Is this a cycle? If it is, then there must be a resurrection. But the resurrected life must be better than the life prior to death, or there is no reason for it, for only insane people keep repeating cycles that prove to be useless, and I cannot bring myself to think that God is insane. How could an insane Being have created turtles?”

Grandpa Lloyd said, “Sure. Otherwise we'd be talking about reincarnation.”

“Exactly,” I said. I was six years old. Then I asked, “Grandpa? What are turtles made of?”

Without hesitation, he said, “Turtle material.”

It was the best answer I could have ever heard because it suggested that there was plenty more where *that* came from. But I also wanted to think that both Mertle and Yertle were special to God. Because, if turtles were special and *not* forgotten, then what could we say about human beings? It made me stop crying.”

“You see what I mean, Harold? You see what the kid's doing here?”

“Yes, I see what you mean, Maude. It's ridiculous but I'm having a hard time looking away. I wonder if Mertle was also an American.”

“That's what you're getting from this? Obviously, the kid hates death.”

“The greater point, yes. His grandpa Lloyd struck a nerve with the ‘turtle material’ line. I've never heard that. I wonder if he got it from *his* father?”

“Wisdom goes down the line. And if it does, then it starts with God.”

“Say that again? You seem to be siding with the kid.”

#### THE EVOLUTION OF *FEELING*?

“If wisdom does go down the line from fathers to sons and from grandfathers to grandsons, and even from generation to generation, then who is to say that the wisdom doesn't keep going back and back and back? If this is so—and it seems reasonable—then God dispenses all wisdom.



All wisdom comes from God,” said Maude.

“Does the kid mention this?”

“Does he ever.”

Evolution can’t answer love. How do things such as *feelings* evolve? How does a feeling know to develop? How does Evolution answer *nuance*? How does two plus two equaling four *evolve*? Did it evolve from two plus two equals three? Will the answer eventually evolve to be “five?” Why are no two snowflakes alike? Did Evolution do that, or is a Great Mind winking at us? How does an organism learn that it ought to put a swoosh on a shoe? From whence came the need to blend bread crumbs into ground beef, cover it with ketchup and call it ‘meatloaf?’

“The kid asks a great question, Maude. I’ve wondered that myself—about meatloaf.”

Wisdom is not transferred genetically, but by hearing. This is why God gave us ears. And what if I can nearly prove this? (I say “nearly” because no one can prove what one has ever observed.) Or what if I can at least give you a more reasonable explanation of creation than a fish decided to become a giraffe for no apparent reason? They don’t call it “word of mouth” for nothing. This is why God gave us mouths. Evolution isn’t this smart. What does “smart” have to do with Evolution anyway? What if God invented the human face so that His Son’s face could be slapped by evil men so that Jesus Christ could continue being a Lamb in the face of outrageous hate and prove to the world that He loves us no matter what, and that if *He* loves us then God must love us, because He Himself claimed to be the image of God?

“Oh, Christ, Maude. The kid’s gone off the deep end now.”

“I don’t think so. Even *you* instinctively call upon the name of Christ.”

“Christ, you’ve got a point there. Is he talking about Intelligent Design?”

“Yes. And more.”

“Would that allow for Evolution?”

“Let’s read and see.”

#### A COMPLETELY OPPOSITE ACCOUNT

The question of Evolution as the reason for everything is important because it competes with a completely opposite account, speaking now of what we read in the Scriptures. So does the Big Bang compete. People trying to explain the dawn of creation at the hand of God and make it align with the Big Bang like to say, “God created the heavens and the earth, and there was a Big Bang.”

We know that there are angels because of the many winged figurines available for sale at Christian outlets and because of more than one television series where beings from heaven come down to earth to help humans solve their multifarious problems; God knows we need the help. I’ve not departed from the Evolution question because Evolution only attempts to answer life on Earth, but cannot account for life *above* Earth, of which there is no direct evidence of course (and neither is their direct evidence for Evolution; no one has ever found the “missing link” between monkeys and humans), but which at least seems reasonable to reasonable minds in light of the vastness of space, especially in light of space photographs from the Hubble telescope proving the Earth to be but a speck in a greater world known as The Universe.



I analyzed Yertle hard in the aftermath of the sandbox incident. I looked at his little claws emerging from his webbed feet. His eyes were closed in death, but when he was alive they had blinked with an otherworldly intelligence so that he seemed to be winking at my sister and me, but probably he was adjusting himself to air, water, and whatever breezes ruffled his ability to fix a steady gaze upon a fly. He knew when to pull into his shell, and he knew it every time. But the thing is: his *neck* moved to notice things. His neck moved, with all its smooth wrinkles and fine yellow lines, because Yertle wanted things. He knew what he wanted and he went after the things as though his life depended on it, which it did.

He surrendered to being abandoned in the sandbox; he didn’t have a choice, really.

I am wondering now if humans have choices, really. I wondered *then*, but I know the answers to it now. And also to many other things—if you are willing to hold on for a little bit longer, at least to page 106. —MZ