

Higgs Boson Particle Accelerator

How do I begin to describe this prayer? It was the Sunday after the Higgs Boson Particle Accelerator had been successfully turned on. I am not a scientist, I do not know if there is such a thing as a god particle, but this is a wondering prayer that attempts to reflect on a major scientific event in the context of our worship.

Dear Particle

I feel a bit daft, praying to something smaller than the smallest speck of dust, but the newspapers call you the 'God particle,' so I suppose I had better get used to it!

You were certainly there, a long time before me. You were there a long time before human beings. Or cave dwellers. Or dinosaurs.

You were there before the earth grew, fragmenting off the sun, trapped in its gravitational orbit.

You were there before the solar system exploded into being, and before the universe stretched out its carpet of beautiful stars.

In that blink of the eye, when the first matter exploded into being, when the big bang – which can't have been very big actually because particles are so small – when the big bang cracked, you were there bringing mass into being.

So dear particle...

Perhaps soon we will find you, observe you. Perhaps one day, we'll be able to answer the questions about how you brought this wonderful world into being.

But not why.

There are so many questions which science cannot answer.

A particle cannot explain why the universe exists.

A particle cannot explain love.

Or hate

Or generosity

A particle can be beautiful

but it cannot speak of why beauty exists.

Why would a man willingly die for someone he hadn't met?

That is beautiful

and stupid.

It makes no sense.

It serves no practical purpose.

Perhaps you haven't taken away all the mystery of the universe.

Perhaps we should keep on praying together...

© Clare McBeath & Tim Presswood