

yield. A finite knower cannot logically guarantee that he has considered *all* the relevant data with regard to even a mundane truth-claim. Moreover, a finite knower cannot logically guarantee that he has correctly *interpreted* the data that have been considered.

"So Harold, here are two finitudes. Call the first, *the finitude of partial perspective*, and the second, *hermeneutic finitude*. Both are simply creaturely limitations. What is vital to recognize, it seems to me, is that 'reasonable doubt' about religious claims (or any other kind of truth-claim) must be cast in a context of finite knowing. Finite knowing *is* reasonable knowing for our species.

"The alternative, which is utterly self-defeating, is to pursue apologetics under the maxim: 'Knowing entails knowing that you know,' or, 'First-order knowledge entails second-order knowledge'. Humans, it seems to me, are inherently *first-order knowers*, and can defend first-order knowledge claims only with the assistance of other first-order knowledge claims. But the caveat is always that second-order *guarantees* either that we have sampled *enough* data, or that we have *infallibly* construed the data we *have* sampled, are impossible."

"Then you're saying that nobody *really* knows anything," said Charlie.

"Not at all," replied Linus. "I'm insisting that we are *first-order knowers*; within our epistemic skins we *do* know quite a lot. We often sample all the relevant data, and we often interpret that data very well. What I'm denying is that it makes sense to say that we can go on *from there* by means of some philosophical esoterica in order to *logically guarantee* either accomplishment. We are only knowers; not in that rarefied sense, knowers that we know. Is that so disappointing?"

"Okay," said Lucy, "but what becomes of Charlie's Gospel once we concede that we are *only* knowers?"

"Make that my Gospel too, Lucy," said Linus. "First let me say that the Great Pumpkin fares very poorly without the transcendental skyhook I had been using. To repeat what Harold said earlier, we have been epistemically suited to *this* environment. To hang on to the Pumpkin, I had