

“A Myopic and Blinkered View of Reality”

Economic Prospect

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How old is the universe? The answers have changed wildly since 1800; now it's about 14 billion years judging by the distance to the farthest galaxies. However, 100 years ago we did not even know there was a universe. *That's not crazy talk.* Even when Albert Einstein had figured that $E = MC^2$ he did not know that there was more than our own immense galaxy. Smudges found by old telescopes were not recognized as other galaxies until 1925.

As *Discovery Magazine* put it, “...until then astronomers had a myopic and blinkered view of reality. This happened so often to even the most brilliant minds, they could see great things, but they could not comprehend what they were looking at. The crucial piece of evidence was plainly seen. All across the sky observers had documented an intriguing spiral nebula, swirls of light that resembled ghostly pinwheels in space. The most famous one, the Andromeda nebula, was so prominent that it was visible to the naked eye on a dark night. The significance of those ubiquitous objects was, however, a mystery.” (*Discovery Magazine*, Corey Powell 1/2/17).

“Some researchers speculated that the spiral nebula were huge and distant systems of stars, ‘island universes,’ comparable to our Milky Way galaxy. But many others were equally convinced that the spirals were small nearby clouds of gas. Or perhaps there were no other galaxies at all, and our Milky Way was all there was, a single system that defined the entire universe. The dispute between the two sides was so intense that it prompted a famous Great Debate in 1920...which ended with an unsatisfying draw. (Powell, Jan 2, 2017)

“The correct picture of our place in the universe arrived just a few years later through the work of one of the most famous names in astronomy: Edwin Powell Hubble. Starting in 1919, Hubble had established himself as one of the most patient and meticulous observers on the Mt Wilson observatory in California. Mt Wilson, in turn, had just established itself as the premier outpost for astronomical research, home of the just completed 100-inch Hooker Telescope -- then the biggest in the world.” He even ate his meals at the nearby Monastery.

“Using that telescope plus very good film and his ability to adjust the telescope to the movement of the earth, Hubble took sharp pictures of Andromeda that revealed large swirling Cepheid stars like those in the Milky Way.” Hubble refused to publish until he was positive not wishing to appear to be a fool.

“On January 1, 1925 Hubble remained in splendid isolation at Mt Wilson while noted astronomer Henry Norris Russell read Hubble's revolutionary paper about the existence of other galaxies to an enthusiastic crowd. His paper ended the Great Debate and did much more; it quickly increased the size of the known universe by a staggering factor of 100,000. *If any date can be said to be the birthday of modern cosmology, this is it.*”

My point in this lengthy story is that in less than 100 years we have decided that we know just about all we need to know about the scope and origins of the universe so that further discoveries, no matter how immense, will only add to our basis of knowledge. If in 1925, Hubble changed everything, it could happen again.

Today we too have “a myopic and blinkered view of reality.” We too can see great things without understanding what we are looking at even though the answer is in plain sight. By relying on a fully materialist view of reality we have driven ourselves into a dangerous and despairing corner. We can't see hope or God.

We face the prospect of global disruption and hunger following the evil invasion of Ukraine. We see an immense number of people suffering depression and anxiety. There are over 3,700 suicide attempts by high school students daily (Jasonfoundation.com). We see our nation and many others torn apart by immense political differences. Faith in God has been replaced with faith in...what? Science?

When we were confident that the church was too corrupt to be relied on to help society (1700s), we placed our faith in governments. But they too became centers of power and corruption and even long streaks of war and death. Public service has devolved into electioneering and so on and so on.

Our souls are starved, and we seek answers found in Jesus. “Be astonished, Wonder! Because I'm doing something among the nations in your days you would not believe if you were told.” (Hab 1:6). It's not too late. We all need to adjust our worldview to match reality. Blinkers off!