

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

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Time and space.

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On October 31st, 1960, this Rotary Club sponsored a world famous violinist, Dave Rubinoff, who entertained both schools and gave a public performance at the old central school auditorium. Mr. Rubinoff gave me an autographed copy of a poem which I am taking the liberty of quoting once more. "The clock of life is wound but once - And no man has the power - To tell just when the hands will stop - At late or early hour. Now is the only time we own (May I emphasize this line) Now is the only time we own - So love, live, toil with a will - Do not wait until tomorrow - For the clock might then be still".

Dave Rubinoff's clock stopped in 1986. He was 89 years old. I have quoted this poem just for something to think about.

Here-to-fore, I have spoken only of things that I have experienced or observed in the past. Now I am going to express some thoughts of which I know little or nothing. I will begin by telling you a story.

A colored preacher was extolling to his congregation on the subject of eternity. This is the story. "A little sparrow take one drop of water in his bill from the Atlantic ocean and he take one hop a day to the Pacific ocean and he put that drop of water in the Pacific ocean. Then he hop one hop a day back to the Atlantic ocean for another drop of water which he take to the Pacific ocean in the same way. He do this until the Atlantic ocean am dry and all of the water am in the Pacific ocean. That, brothers and sisters, would be only early dawn in eternity".

That is an introduction to my topic today "TIME AND SPACE" of which I know little but is open for much speculation. Any facts or figures that I give you have been gleaned from books, newspapers, radio, TV etc. As I understand it; all recorded history, hieroglyphics included, if placed upon the clock of time, would amount to only a few minutes.

I read where diggings just south of the Dardenelles in Turkey have uncovered not only one but of two or more evidences of past civilizations buried on top of each other. We are told that dinosaurs dominated the earth for millions of years during a period between 100 million and 200 million years ago. Remains of dinosaurs have been found on every continent except antarctica. Knowing that the arctic is a floating ice pack, I did a little checking and found that, indeed, antarctica was a continent of 5,100,000 square miles. That is larger than Australia, Europe or the United States. During their winter, the sea water freezes several hundred miles out forming ice three times the area of the United States. Evidences of past civilizations are found in both North and South America. There is much speculation as to what catastrophic event or events that may have caused the demise of the dinosaurs and following life on earth. Could it be that one or more of the 20,000 or 30,000 asteroids, or minor planets, that orbit circle the sun, strayed from it's orbit and struck the earth causing a shift in the earth's axis and cloud the sky with debris making the earth uninhabitable for a period of time. Are we to believe that history will not repeat itself? Or to put it more directly, Is there anyone here that believes that history will not repeat itself? Something to think about.

Our scientists have developed, and are using, much more deadly means to destroy ourselves than any civilization had at their disposal in the past. The manufacture and excessive release of fluorocarbons are causing holes to appear in the ozone layer which protects us from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. This danger may be already getting out of control. These holes are appearing over the poles and may cause excessive melting of the ice caps. The arctic ocean has an area of 3,662,000 square miles and, as stated before, the antarctic is much larger.

The statement was recently made that the mean temperature of the earth is rising two degrees each 15 years. If this warming trend continues, the ice caps could eventually melt causing the oceans to rise as much as 20 feet. This would play havoc on all of the coastal regions of the world. Some scientists are already discouraging long term investments in coastal properties. There are reports of huge icebergs, the size of, or twice the size of Rhode Island, breaking off of the antarctic icecap. The area of Rhode Island is 1,212 square miles or about 30 by 40 miles. The Des Moines Register of Feb. 20th, 1988 carried an article stating that an iceberg, about 22 miles wide by 90 miles long, had broken off the antarctic ice cap and was drifting west-northwest at two or three miles per day toward the shipping lanes. When this huge iceberg hit the water, it is estimated that the world's oceans raised about the thickness of 10 playing cards.

Another thing to think about is the world's supply of heat and power for the future. Fortunately, science has discovered the atom, fission, fusion, nuclear source of power. However, the powers that be will hinder or delay their safe domestic use until the fossil fuels are almost depleted. And what are fossil fuels? Mostly coal and oil. How were they formed? By the decomposition of vegetable and animal matter buried deep in the soil by the earth's natural evolution over eons of years. Where do we find these deposits? From the equator almost to the poles, to the north slopes of Alaska, in Siberia, below deserts, mountains and places barely habitable today. During the ice age much of the ocean's water was contained in the huge land glaciers which may account for our off-shore oil strikes on the continental shelf and the Gulf of Mexico but how about the North Sea strikes or Alaska. Can you imagine forests, vegetable and animal life growing in all of the regions where vast amounts of oil are being pumped today? There must be an explanation for this.

My conclusion is that the earth, over it's billions of years existence, has wobbled and not moved in the precise manner that we have observed in the last few minutes on the clock of time. I also note that the spinning of the earth is slowing down; that time was adjusted one second recently. Since time is infinite can we not then conclude that, at some time, far into the future, the earth will stop revolving. Something more to think about.

Now, a few thoughts about another of earth's phenomena. The volcano. Most of you have observed volcanos in one form or other. Like the extinct Punch Bowl at Honolulu, site of a national cemetery. or active Mauna Loa, the world's largest, on the island of Hawaii. I was up on the west slope of Mauna Loa many years ago and observed fiels of coffee plants and the drying and grading process where the coffee was bagged for shipment to the roasters. This giant volcano is more than sixty miles wide at it's base and rises 30,000 feet to it's summit 13,677 feet above sea level. Mauna Loa has erupted several times since I was there. Another volcano, Little Kilauea, is located near it's base. It is a short distance from Volcano House where tourists can observe it's steaming crater the year around. And we have our own Mt. St. Helens, a relatively small volcano in the State of Washington, which blew it's top a few years ago and created much destruction and excitement. It flattened many square miles of forests, changed the course of a river, and scattered ash over a large area. I have a newspaper article showing and describing some of that destruction. History tells us of the surprise eruption of Vesuvius, in Italy, which buried the city of Pompeii over 1900 years ago. The greatest eruption of all was Krakatoa which exploded in 1883. Krakatoa, in Indonesia. between Java and Sumatra, had been inactive for 200 years. In 1883, a great explosion . . . blew out more than four and a half cubic miles of ash leaving a hole five miles wide.

The whole top of the mountain disintegrated. It had been 2600 feet high and ended as a hole 1,000 feet deep and five miles wide. Krakatoa created a 120 foot tidal wave that killed about 35,000 people in Java. The eruption sound was heard as far away as Australia, a distance comparable to from Seattle to Miami. Some decibels to think about. Now a few thoughts on astronomy. Time and space being closely related, both infinite, are subjects for much study and speculation. We are told that, on a clear night, about 2,000 stars can be seen on our half of the earth. But that is only a tiny fraction of the number of individual stars that are actually out there in space. Astronomers tell us there are more than 200 billion billion stars. That number is a two followed by 20 zeros. Stars are gigantic balls of glowing gas. The earth's sun is a star and it is the only one close enough to look ball-shaped. The smallest of all stars is about the size of our earth. The largest is so gigantic that it would more than fill the space between the earth and our sun. Distances between stars are unbelievably wide. For example, the star that is closest to our sun ~~is more than~~ is more than twenty five million million miles away from the sun. And that distance is about one-billionth the distance from the sun to the most distant star. Stars are in groups or galaxies rather than being spread out evenly in the universe. Our earth, the sun, and all the visible stars and planets belong to a galaxy called the Milky Way. Astronomers tell us there are more than 200 billion stars in the Milky Way. Altogether, there are more than a hundred million galaxies out there in the universe, many of them much larger than the Milky Way. A nova is a star that suddenly increases in brightness by thousands or millions of times its original intensity, then decreases in brightness over several months to what, I believe, astronomers call a "black hole". I read of such an occurrence in February of 1987. Astronomers accidentally discovered a nova where no star had appeared before.

They calculated that this nova receded into a dead mass about the size of our earth. Can we not then speculate that the earth may be a former nova or burned out star? Pressures from remaining fires within are finding vents through our present day volcanos.

Our sun, about 93 million miles from earth, is a nuclear furnace. It's internal temperature may be as high as 25 million degrees F. and the surface temperature about 11,000 degrees. The size is said to be over 109 times the width of the earth. The star nearest the earth, not including our sun, is Proxima Centauri. It is 4.3 light years away. The distance between stars is measured in light years. One light year is the distance light travels in one year, five thousand eight hundred eighty billion miles (5,880,000,000,000). So when you look at a star you only see the light that was emitted ^{many} ~~billions of~~ years ago. That star may already ^{have} burned out and disappeared. Astronomers tell us that most stars are between one and ten billion years old, with some of them being as old as 20 billion years. The age of the earth is said to be 4.6 to 5 billion years and the age of the sun to be 4.6 billion years. Therefore, as you can see, by all scientific or mathematical calculations. at some time far, far in the future, the sun will burn out and the earth will become a dead mass floating in the universe. Something to think about. Although many civilizations may come and go before the end, the ultimate result will be the same. We are depleteing our natural resources much to rapidly. The burning of fossil fuels produces CO₂, or carbon dixoide, the forests, which we are burning and cutting in enormous quantities, converts the CO₂ into oxygen. We may even run short of oxygen. This would ^{release} develop a race of big chested, high lung capacity, individuals. On April 12th, 1988, there appeared an article in the Des Moines Register from which I will quote a few exerpts as follows.

"Astronomers have found the oldest and most distance galaxy ever seen, an object ten times the size of the Milky Way, that formed when the universe was less than two billion years old. So this pushes back the time at which galaxies formed in the early universe. This discovery could force a revision in astronomer's conception of the universe".

I believe that those of you who are students of science will agree with me in concluding that astronomy today is not yet an exact science.

Some of you may subscribe to the Readers Digest. I suggest that you read the second article in the November 1988 issue entitled "what's wrong with our weather? This article does not agree 100% with what I have said but we are shooting down the same alley. The sun will be with us a long, long time so relax and enjoy the minute or two that you have left on the big clock of time. Just something to think about.

That is the end of my random thoughts for today. I will close by telling you a story. Like other stories that I have told; this story is clean without a single bad word. Ma and Pa, an elderly couple, were sitting in their living room one evening. Pa had had the hic-cups for a week and every attempt had been made to cure him, to no avail. Pa, said Ma, we have tried and failed to cure your hic-cups. Why don't we call in that nice young man who is on the porch courting our daughter? He may be able to help. They agreed and the young man was called in and the situation was explained. He admitted some experience and was persuaded to try. He approached the old man and said lay your head way back. He then carefully got hold of and jerked a whisker out of each nostril. Much to the old Man's relief, and surprise to everyone, the hic-cups stopped immediately. Ma said to Pa, that's wonderful, this young man should be a doctor. Pa said to Ma mebbe, mebbe so, but from the way his fingers smell, I think he should be our son-in-law.