

In this universe that God has created there are probably thousands of important phenomena of which we know absolutely nothing.

Fifty years ago a certain chain of restaurants always placed on its menus the number of calories in each item. It was commonly believed that if a person planned his diet so as to contain the right number of calories and the correct proportion of proteins, carbohydrates and fats, he would be sure to receive a proper diet. The index of the 1910 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica does not even include the word vitamin. In subsequent years a whole series of vitamins were discovered and their importance for human nutrition established. One could conceivably have planned a diet that would have completely fulfilled the requirements of all that was known about nutrition in 1900, and still have died of malnutrition. Discovery of these vital elements provided important knowledge that could hardly have been suspected before the facts were brought to light.

THE DUTY OF OPEN-MINDEDNESS

It is sometimes useful to make guesses and evolve theories in areas where we have little knowledge, provided we label them as such. The most fanciful guess may occasionally be a means of stimulating valuable research. In the absence of sufficient evidence it is wrong to say that one must decide for or against a theory. There should always be three alternatives: (1) we find convincing evidence that a theory is correct; (2) we find convincing evidence that it is wrong; (3) we find that the evidence available at present is insufficient to prove it one way or the other.

When we adopt as fact such an idea as the theory of evolution, and seek to twist the available evidence to fit, we are apt to overlook very important facts that we might otherwise discover. It is our duty, in every field of science, to maintain an open-minded attitude on all matters on which there is not yet sufficient evidence for a firm decision.