

Getting it Straight

In following the dialog between the editor, Stan Dalton, and Ian Glass, and Mr. Rahman, I made the following observations. So far the "dialog" is rife with varying degrees of both conceptual and verbal poverty. If Mr. Dalton feels justified in presenting his ideas to others, then he must have at least hoped those listening or reading are open minded and intelligent enough to consider his ideas. Therefore it seems just as reasonable that Mr. Dalton be himself just as open minded. And if he expects them to consider that they might be wrong in their ideas, then he should intertain such a possiblility about himself, too.

Confusion in the issue on the logical and rational basis for a religion, or Christianity in particular rests on Mr. Daltons use of the words KNOW, BELIEVE, AND FAITH. As he uses them so vigorously, to fail to define the terms is asking for ambiguity and misinterpretation. How can one agree or disagree with some thing so unclear and ill-defined? The Randon House dictionary defines KNOW as to mearely apprehend something as a fact or truth, or be cognizant or aware of the existence of something. To know is the first step to COMPREHENSION, or to know something thoroughly and its relationship to

other ideas; and finially to UNDERSTANDING or to know both meaning and implications, limited possibly to really understanding the thing-in-itself. To BELIEVE is to be confident in the truth, existence or reliability of something, although without absolute proof that one is right in doing so. FAITH is belief without (any) proof.

Mr. Dalton asserts that to know or believe is an either-or situation (a false delemma). His as-assertion would logically read something like: "One cannot be cognizant or aware of the existence of the confidence of the truth, existence, or reliability of Christianity."

Which is an absurdity. He also states "To know is to have sensual access, whereas belief admits no such access. First, he means sensory in place of sensual, unless he's an optimist. Again he fails to clearly define his terminology. Does he mean the five senses, or the six senses, or does he include Plato's (and others) Universal Pool of knowledge? To claim that knowledge is impossible except through the five senses is arrogant belief. He also fails to realize that the very nature of various phenomina precludes absolute proof. And this includes many phenomina of physics (the

Heisenburg Principle of Uncertainty, etc.) This does not mean, as Mr. Dalton suggests, that it therefore cannot be known. Nor does it even mean that it cannot be true. A lack of data collected by an observer does in no way alter the existence of something observed. Some phenomina lend themselves to scientific scrutiny and absolute proof (doubtful) while others have the audacity to thwart all such efforts (the religious experience, UFO"s, etc.) We must not fall to the temptation at classifying something as knowable or truthful by virtue of the ease with which data can be gathered on it or by virtue of the media for its expression to us. A car may pass by me, yet I could be unable to present absolute proof that the car did indeed exist, or did what I said it did. I would still know it did, but the extent of data renders it as a belief to others.

The general deplorable state of affairs in man's world is easily predictable by observing the chaotic and befuddled state of his communications. Can we reasonably expect man to straighten out his abhorrent society when something so much easier, his communications, is as confused as ever?

-Michael T. Klewin

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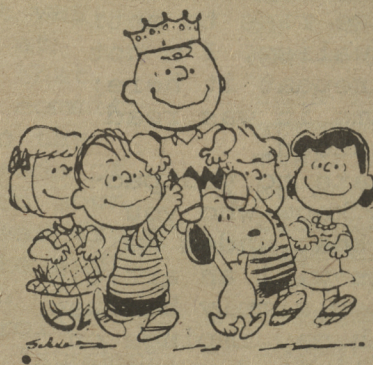
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