

Search or Solution?

The search for truth is an idea that has occupied my thinking a great deal. As a thinker, it is important to me to understand the basis for different individuals' views (including my own), and as a Christian, it is equally important for me to have a solid foundation for my beliefs.

Now, some may consider the terms "thinker" and "Christian" to be antithetical; that is, that to subscribe to the narrow view of Biblical Christianity is an end to thought and investigation, and a refuge from reason. I would like to address that misconception.

I will grant that for many, Christianity is a substitute for thought. But bear in mind, many people outside Christianity also lack ability and interest in critical thinking. No ideological group has a monopoly on shallow minds.

So, assuming those involved in the quest for truth are not counted among the shallow, what is it about conservative Christianity that many find philosophically distasteful?

Religion instructor Bill Briare, quoted in last week's issue of *The Print*, made a statement that may be relevant. Briare said, "Faith means that you are still willing to search, and you are trusting that there is something worth searching for. If you found the answers, and you stopped looking, then I think that would be a loss of faith."

First, I must emphasize that I do agree with Professor Briare—to a point. It is dangerous for an individual to start believing he or she has it all figured out. One characteristic of intellectual life is that it is a constant journey, never coming to rest, at least in this life.

But I must question Briare's statement at the point when this lack of surety, this fundamental "un-knowing" is seen as the basis for all open-minded and sophisticated thought. This is also the point at which many people find Christianity distasteful, for it is a body of belief that claims not only to be true, but to be unequivocally true, in the sense that beliefs that contradict it are false. This claim of absolutism seems ugly and oppressive to our modern pluralistic minds.

But if absolute truth is indeed stifling, then I must ask, to what purpose is truth seeking? Is actual truth the goal, or is the eternal, agnostic search an end to itself?

C.S. Lewis' beautiful book, *The*

Great Divorce, describes a meeting in the Next World between two spirits who had known each other in life. The first has gained Heaven, while the second, without even realizing

it, has found Hell. At one point, they have the following exchange: "For me there is no such thing as a final answer. The free wind of inquiry must always blow through the mind, must it not? 'Prove all things'...to travel hopefully is better than to arrive."

"If that were true, and known to be true, how could anyone travel hopefully? There would be nothing to hope for."

"...Listen!" said the White Spirit. "Once you were a child. Once you knew what inquiry was for. There was a time when you asked questions because you wanted answers, and were glad when you had found them. Become that child again: even now."

I must insist, with Lewis, that the search for truth has meaning only in the value of the thing sought. I really do ask questions because I want answers. Caution is warranted before deciding those answers have been found—"now we see through a glass, in a riddle"—but the hope we hold is for a real thing—"but then face to face."

It is quite correct that we have faith because we do not see. But we will see someday, and each step we take on earth is either farther or closer to that goal than the last. As Lewis' Spirit says, "Thirst was made for water; inquiry for truth. What you call now the free play of inquiry has neither more nor less to do with the ends for which intelligence was given you than masturbation has to do with marriage."

Christianity has a unique place. It claims to be the missing key to life's puzzle, and we must judge it on those grounds. As C.S. Lewis says elsewhere, "I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen: not because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." *I show you a more excellent way.*

THE ALTAR OF AN UNKNOWN GOD

JOEL P. SHERPERT
Copy Editor



Dr. Spew and Adam Corona
Present... **LOVE WHINE**

1) *I just started dating a girl and found out she's a stripper. What should I do?*

—Cliff, 19

Adam: Enjoy the free shows! I don't see a problem here.

Spew: Why don't you talk to her about it? But remember, she was a stripper before she met you, and the purpose of dating is not to change the other person, but to find a compatible mate. If it bothers you that much, break up with her.

Adam: Yeah, and most guys don't like a girl who flashes her stuff around anyway. At least not for more than two hours.

2) *I'm a sophomore at CCC and not yet close to reaching my transfer degree. Just recently I have met a wonderful man who happens to live in Southern California. I am thinking about transferring to UCLA to be closer to him. Am I making a mistake transferring now and starting over at a new college?*

—Deb, 20

Spew: OK, first of all. I just want to know what people are going to college for these days. Are you looking for an education or just a

dating service? I'd also like to know where your financial support for college comes from, and finally—do you believe in love at first sight?

Adam: Hey, love at first sight is total B.S. You just met this guy; do you really want to turn your life upside down for him? You've got to do what's right for you. But if it's for a noble cause, like great sex—go for it!

Spew: Now, just a minute! If your only goal is sex, stay home! I'm sure you'll find someone local to fill the bill. If, on the other hand, you're looking for a serious, committed relationship, then it's worth the wait—so again, stay home. You need to make sure before you jump out that there's a limb there. If he doesn't return your feelings, you don't want to wind up as some sick, obsessive stalker.

Adam: Yeah—and quit watching "Felicity!"

3) *My fiancé doesn't let me go out with groups of college friends that have guys in them. He works full-time and doesn't go to school. Before we were engaged he had no problem. I love him. What happened, and where do I go from here?*

—Samantha, 19

Adam: Let me ask you a question: is that dog collar stuffed with diamonds yet?

Spew: Hold on, Adam. You're forgetting that the collar works both ways. Both of these people have to be more committed to each other than they are to anyone else.

Adam: Yeah, well, it sounds like this guy's committed to clubbing his mate and dragging her off to his cave. Which is, of course, OK if she's into that, but is this guy really a healthy person?

Spew: Now, we don't know where this guy's coming from. He could have a history of being cheated on. These are college guys, so maybe he feels inadequate, or jealous because they're spending more time with her than he is, and besides, he doesn't even know them. Relationships need trust, but it is not the job of the beloved to test that trust every Friday night. Samantha, if you persist in seeing those guys regularly, you're basically choosing them over your fiancé.

Adam: I get what you're saying, Dr. Spew. There may not always be a right and wrong in a relationship, but partners can build up or tear down. I still say you should dump him—and give me a call.

A cynical Valentine's Day is not so simple!

SHELBI WESCOTT
Staff Writer

When asked if I would write a 'cynical view on love' for *The Print's* Valentine's Day issue, I obliged. I thought, "I'm a writer. This should be easy."

However, after hours of typing, deleting and re-typing, I realized that my task was not so simple. I came to the conclusion that my

original opinion was wrong. My view on romance was skewed and needed fixing.

Yet, in accordance to my assignment I submitted a cynical piece on romance. Now I would like to write a rebuttal to my own column.

Romance should be cherished, loved and (most of all) appreciated. The time and energy a guy or girl spends showing love for someone is not something that should be spat upon or laughed

at. These gestures are from the heart. They mean something.

There are two elements needed in order for a romantic display to be worthwhile. First, it has to be from the right person. Buying roses for a person who doesn't like you probably won't score many points.

Second, it has to be for the right motives. Romance should say, "I love you," "You mean a lot to me," "You are special" or "I care about

you more than anyone." It shouldn't say, "I expect something in return."

I spent too many years receiving romantic gestures from the wrong people who had wrong motives.

When I am in a relationship that is right and meaningful—when I am in love with someone I want to spend the rest of my life with—I will want romance. I'll want long walks on the beach at sunset, flow-

ers, surprises and poetry. I'll want him to declare his love on a mountaintop and make me feel wanted and special.

It took time to come to this conclusion and set my "romance hatred" aside. Now I am ready to experience what romance feels like.

I apologize to the other cynics out there who applauded my declaration of dissatisfaction. I am now a convert. Life is better on this side of the road.