

204 "Post-Truth" and Permanent Truth

You may have heard a phrase now being bandied about in public debate - that of "post-truth". This is the belief that these days public opinion is no longer guided by appeals to objective truth, but rather to emotions, feelings, and "gut instincts". The result of the UK referendum concerning membership of the EU, and the election of Donald Trump to be the next American President, are given as examples of this "post-truth" phenomenon in action - two significant outcomes taken against expectation, and, in the eyes of some, against common sense based on factual truths.

For major decisions affecting millions of people to be based on such shifting sands is neither sensible nor encouraging. Not surprisingly the Bible still stands firm and strong against such post-truth errors, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself settling the matter with His simple statement, "Thy Word is truth" (John 17.17).

So, as so often, we come across a clash between "the world and its ways" and the Lord and His ways. But perhaps we Christians are just "whistling in the dark", hanging on to the Bible against all common sense, simply because of our own "post-truth" emotions?! Perhaps we are only disciples of Christ because we get a "feel-good buzz" from this?

Not so. "The Christian Faith stands or falls upon the objective reality of gigantic supernatural events in history and the evidences for these. This fact in itself is an evidence for its truth". So writes the late Henry Morris at the start of his famous book, "Many Infallible Proofs", a title taken from Acts 1.3, where the Holy Spirit through Luke refers to the unanswerable evidence shown by the Lord Jesus in support of the truth of His resurrection.

It is because Christians find ourselves in the current bear-pit of debate, along with everyone else, that we need to speak, courteously and clearly, of the permanent truths underlying the Bible, the Lord and the Gospel. When all is said and done, it is these facts, far more than any passing emotional reactions we may have, which justify us, and anyone else too, being Christians. (We will hope to use the next few Weekly Reflections to emphasise some of these facts, that we may be better informed in these matters).

Now we are not primarily trying to win arguments, but souls. Our words about the "many infallible proofs" undergirding the Christian Faith will not in themselves convert people, but they do demonstrate that the response of Christian discipleship is made in the light of the facts rather than in the face of the facts. The subsequent step of conversion to acceptance of Christ then becomes a

matter of the will for our hearers, and rests under the authority of the Holy Spirit, aided by our prayers.

So we fear not over this talk of a bear-pit! Everyone is in there whether they realise it or not, and Christians have far, far stronger evidence to speak of than anybody else does: fact! So, in our prayers we can ask the Lord to give us opportunities this day in the bear-pit, and to uphold us with the right words said in the right manner when the time comes. A good starting point - easy, friendly, courteous - is simply to react to someone's God-ignoring views on any matter with, "That's interesting - why do you believe that?", and take things on from there. You can then use further simple questions to guide the discussion, bringing in for example the Ten Commandments, and the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will find that most people have not given these matters a moment's thought, but please God, now, with your help, they will.

We live in confused and turbulent days. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith " (I Peter 5.8-9a). Yes, the adversary the devil is in that bear-pit too, roaring out his latest lie - "THERE IS NO TRUTH! POST-TRUTH IS FINE BY ME!".

But by God's grace we know that the Bible is true, which means that the devil is just plain wrong. May we do our job in exposing the devil's post-truth Falsehoods - by pointing out God's permanent-truth Truths!

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