

## 454 A Cause To Pause

Under the sovereign will of Almighty God we are now living in challenging times. The Lord God our Maker is allowing this situation for His own good reasons: as He steadily works through His promised purposes for His creation; as He lets it become crystal-clear, for the “n”th time, that God-defying, sinful Man, despite delighting in his own cleverness, always messes things up; and as He graciously provides this “cause to pause” for those “with eyes to see and ears to hear” - a time to stop, to take stock, and above all, to receive and apply the gift of faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ (egs., John 4.24-26; 5.24; 6.35-40, 44; 8.12; 11.24-26; 14.6; 20.26-29).

When that is done the blessings flow in abundance, summed up in - “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5.1, KJV). Truly, then “all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ [is] God’s” (I Corinthians 3.22b-23), and – “[nothing] ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus or Lord” (from Romans 8.37-39).

What precious God-wrought, Christ-achieved truths are these, for all humanity in this sinful, foolish world! This is the Gospel we are to proclaim as effectively as we can by life, deed and word. We know its utter truth for ourselves, firstly from our own subjective faith and discipleship experience: we just find and “know” that this is God’s truth, and nothing will ever wobble that knowing. So with grateful hearts we join with Simon Peter and the others that day, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6.68-69. KJV).

This brings us to an important point. This personal, experience-based belief that the Bible is true, no matter how vital, well-founded and fixed that belief actually is, is only ever SUBjective Factual Truth. As such it can be dismissed by the Christ-deny-er as being just that - a belief with no genuine substance to it, which someone clings on to just because it suits, whether it is genuinely true or not, thus akin to the man who chooses to believe, come what may, that God lives in a big house on the Moon.

But thanks be to God, this is where those “Christian Evidences” or “truth credentials”, mentioned in last week’s Reflection, have their place. Our having even a limited knowledge of some of these evidences is helpful when it comes to our Gospel witnessing, for the simple reason that these

are OBjective, rather than SUBjective, factual truth. The simplest and central evidence to use is Jesus' resurrection itself (\*see end), along with, where possible, at least a basic knowledge of the Lord's extraordinary use of Time and Number within the Bible. Such evidences, being OBjective Factual Truth, are demonstrable to anyone who is interested, undeniable by any fair-minded person, and acting as an irrefutable testament to the divine authorship of the Holy Bible.

These OBjective "truth-credentials" do not, of themselves, bring someone to personal faith in Christ – that step is the work of the Holy Spirit alone (egs., John 3.3,5 / Romans 8.5-8 / I Corinthians 2.14). But they do succeed in showing that "faith in Christ" is a wholly reasonable response to the overall evidence before us – a response taken BECAUSE of the evidence not IN SPITE of the evidence. In fact, such is the weight of evidence in favour of the Judeo-Christian Faith, both subjective and objective, that far less actual "faith" is needed to believe IN Christ than to believe NOT in Christ. Indeed for someone to hold on to a belief NOT in Him, once informed as to the truth-evidence that exists, is seen to be a matter of the will alone, which clings on to a "No, and don't bother me with the facts".

We need to bear in mind that Secularism, now the well-entrenched Faith of the western "opinion-formers" in politics and the media, has spun its own false narrative in these matters of Truth, which goes like this: the world has several "Great Religions"; each one must be respected, irrespective of the strength or weakness of its "truth-credentials" and irrespective of its "fruits" within society. In this way the Judeo-Christian Faith, the unique vessel of God's ultimate Truth and with its unrivalled truth-credentials to prove it, is reduced to the level of its various threadbare rivals, including Secularism itself. One of the ironies of this process is that Jews and Christians receive far more persecution and far less respect than members of others Faiths, suggesting Satan's particular attention.

The results of this global folly are plain to see, but thankfully the Lord God is well-advanced in His task of exposing and reversing this folly. We can be confident that Christ's two-stage return, for His Church and then for believing Israel, is drawing nigh. Meanwhile this current God-given "cause for a pause", prompted by the increasing global turmoil, gives us good opportunity to hold forth God's Cause while there is still time.