

Wrington and Lynch Chapels

Minister's Website Article July 2021

There's a nature reserve near Malvern called the Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve. I love it. I could talk about the peace, beauty and scenery, until you're convinced it's the place to go. I can tell you the stream babbles gently, woodlands rustle, pheasants call. But if you don't go there, it doesn't matter what I say.

It's the same with the Christian faith. There are some things you can't know until you've tried them. There are truths that are not immediately apparent to the passer-by. I say this because I hear people rubbish the Christian faith when they haven't tried it. They haven't investigated. They haven't read reasons to believe. That's like saying a Mars bar tastes terrible (other chocolates are available) when you've never tasted one. So, if you're not a Christian, take seriously the truth of the Christian faith. If you can't verify its truth for yourself, then become an honest sceptic. Anything less, and you just won't know for sure.

The truth of the Christian faith doesn't come from the genius of humans but from the generosity of God. Christianity is revelatory. That means somebody had to tell you about it. You didn't dream it up. It was revealed. The truth of the Christian faith can only be understood as revealed by God to humans because God wanted humans to know about it.

The gospel of Matthew, in the bible, was written by someone who knew Jesus well. In chapter 16, the disciple called Peter has a revelation and realises that Jesus really was son of God, God in the flesh. Jesus said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.' In other words, what Peter knew about Jesus didn't come because he was smart, or because he read books. It was revealed. That's what the Apostle Paul talks about elsewhere. In other words, God is different from us. Anything God wants us to know about himself, he must tell us. Otherwise we won't know it.

In the 20th century, two influential theologians were Emil Brunner and Karl Barth. When Karl Barth wrote his important commentary to the book of Romans, somebody said Karl Barth had thrown a bomb into the playground. He and Brunner had a major disagreement. Barth felt that everything was revelation, and Brunner thought that if you looked at the stars and mountains you can find God. Then Barth wrote his famous book: 'Nein'. In other words, God is God, and you're not. He's everything and you're not. If God decides to let you know anything about him, he's got to tell you. You can't look at the stars to work it out. He's got to reveal it. The Christian faith is one of revelation.

Of course we must use reason, we must study and try to ascertain God's hand. But I agree with Barth. If you say, 'God's everywhere, and I found him in the leaves!' I'll say, 'Nein! God reveals himself to those he loves. 'And God loves you. That's a great start if you're searching for truth.

If you want to know more, make contact through this website.

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