Dear Friends,

The Book of Proverbs has much to say about restraint, speaking personally I would say that keeping one’s own counsel can be a hard lesson especially when emotions are running high. The book of Proverbs has much to say on this subject:

*Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding but one who has a hasty temper exalts folly. (14:29)*

James Allen wrote:

*"How many people we know who sour their lives, who ruin all that is sweet and beautiful by explosive tempers, who destroy their poise of character, and make bad blood!” (As a Man Thinketh 1903)*

In that famous poem, If, Rudyard Kipling listed the necessary virtues of the ideal man or woman. One of the virtues celebrated in the poem is self-containment:

*‘If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you…’*

Self-containment can be manifested in staying cool and in not allowing oneself to be unduly influenced by others, but rather in trying to see things objectively. We should bear in mind that much of what we are exposed to are simply other people’s opinions and quite often such opinions have been formed by the media, but for all that, they are only opinions.

We do not know for example, if the Lockdown that we have been subjected to has been entirely the right thing to do. We do not know what the real cost to the fabric of our lives and the cost to human life has been as a consequence of this containment strategy; not yet anyway. The shocking murder of George Floyd, in the USA by a white policeman has rightfully been condemned by all sections of American society. This breach of the law is being dealt with through due process. There is little evidence these days to show that either contemporary America or Britain is institutionally racist and the destruction taking place in American cities does not constitute legitimate protest.

The faculty for critical thought is essential if we wish to stay clear of ill-informed opinions and attitudes. In the aftermath of the events in America, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby recently tweeted that ‘white Christians should repent of their own prejudice’. Was he right to say this, or we should challenge the assumptions behind that statement?

My best wishes as always,

Bob