

112 "What is truth?"

"What is truth?" Pilate asked Jesus, perhaps with a sneer or a shrug or a longing, (John 18.38) - that famous little question which lies at the heart of human existence. So many dreadful situations we are aware of today, whatever their nature or their scale, spring from people's very different understandings of what truth actually is.

The members of the so-called Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq justify their vile deeds by appealing to what they tell us is "the truth", to be found in the Koran. In the face of terrorism, western leaders appeal to their version of "the truth" - involving "secular values" such as democracy, tolerance and freedom of expression. In the media we are subjected to a ceaseless tide of "the truth" of Darwinian evolution, a belief now taken as "a given" and undergirding any matter of debate.

So how do we choose? How do we sift the many conflicting claims to have found "the truth"? Perhaps we can never know?

We can most certainly know. We sift by examining the credentials of each claim to truth. What are the credentials for anything that claims to be the holder of ultimate truth? Belief in any of these truth-claimants requires a step of faith on our part, so which of all that are on offer has the strongest credentials, and hence requires the least amount of faith to believe in it?

Here are one or two extracts from a fine old book "A Lawyer Examines the Bible" by Irwin Linton - a meaty read yet filled with wonderful encouragements concerning the "Christian Evidences", that is, the extraordinary credentials demonstrating the truth of the Holy Bible and hence of the Christian Faith itself:

" (any) uncertainty as to which is God's Book and who is God's Son is only possible to one who carelessly neglects to examine (largely as a result of criminal neglect on the part of Christians to advertise) the proofs which God's forethought has provided Has anyone ever heard a reason which would convince any rationally sceptical man that the Koran or the Book of Mormonare to be regarded as anything more than normal or subnormal productions? Could not everything to be found in any of these books be readily duplicated and bettered? Is there known a single indubitably supernatural thing about them? Mohammed declared that he was God's inspired prophet in giving the world the Koran.....a shred of proof was never offered Joseph Smith (founder of

Mormonism) never proved his assertion. Not so with the Christian. He is offered "many infallible proofs" - which would stand in a court of law.... The one religion that has any proofs at all has all conceivable proofs while it is received by faith, it is proved by evidence and logic".

These extracts come from the author's chapter concerning biblical prophecy, the existence of which in itself proves the divine authorship of the Holy Bible. There are many more chapters, so there is no shortage of truth-demonstrating credentials within the Bible! Irwin Linton's book is merely one in a long line of classic works on the "Christian Evidences", each one brim-full of unanswerable evidence and logic in support of the Holy Bible being God's Word, the Lord Jesus Christ being God's Son, and hence the Christian Faith, seeing off all rivals, being the location of "the truth".

Christians have absolutely nothing to fear in the "battle for truth", and part of our armoury these days is to have a basic knowledge of these Evidences for use in casual conversation. Very few people, within the Church and beyond it, know of the Evidences today. May we play our part in making them known, and a good start is simply to "google" "Christian Evidences" and go from there. The main rival claimants for "the truth" today, (thus in direct opposition to the Holy Bible), are, first, inside the Church, the belief in Darwinian evolution in some shape or form (* see below); then, beyond the Church, come Islam and the ASH family - Atheism, Secularism and Humanism (those three elderly, ugly sisters, given so much encouragement by Darwinism).

"What is truth?" they ask. Thanks be to God, the cheerful Christian answer boils down to - "Let's go to the Bible and start finding out"!

(* "Six Days, Darwin or Both?" is a "beginners' guide" I have written on this vital topic, free to download, print and distribute, from fsmins.org / publications)

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