

274 “Many Infallible Proofs”

In last week’s Reflection we started to tackle the puzzle of why a man as brilliant as Stephen Hawking could calmly set aside any meaningful belief in the existence of God, and died believing that physical death is “the end”. We saw that, for a start, such assumptions wilfully reject the clear evidence before our eyes of the Creator and His handiwork, as explained in Romans Chapter 1. Instead they depend entirely on the notions of a no-God Big Bang at the beginning, followed by no-God Darwinian evolution, both of which are scientifically impossible.

This time we consider what further evidences have to be set aside by people like Stephen Hawking to justify their God-denying beliefs, namely those concerning the nature and contents of the Bible itself. Such folk assume that the Bible is just one more book among others that falsely claims divine authorship and authority for itself.

But how wrong they are. The Jewish and Christian Faiths, as made known to us within the Holy Bible, are supported by a Mount Everest of evidence demonstrating the utter reliability of all that we are told within its pages. As mentioned occasionally in previous Weekly Reflections, a basic working knowledge of these “evidences” on our part is a great help in our standing against the strong secular falsehoods of today. Putting “Christian Evidences” into a search engine can be helpful, and we also particularly recommend “Many Infallible Proofs” by Henry Morris, and the two-volume “Evidence That Demands a Verdict” by Josh McDowell. Knowing even a few of such facts means we can, at the very least, wrong-foot the God-deniers who are so used to having things their own way.

We bear in mind that such evidences will not on their own produce spiritual conversions, which are of course the precious work of the Holy Spirit Himself (eg., John 1.12-13 and 3.3,5 / Romans 8.1,5-9 / I Corinthians 2.14 and 3.5-7). But these evidences do serve to “clear away the clutter”, showing the God-denier that his or her current rejection of the Bible is a matter of the will rather than of the intellect. Their next step, of personally accepting that “Jesus Christ is Lord”, is truly in response to the facts rather than in spite of the facts. If this truth was more clearly demonstrated today by Christians like us, evangelism would greatly benefit.

As we prepare to mark again this year the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is timely to use the evidence underlying Jesus’ resurrection as a brief example of why we can believe the Bible with confidence, especially as the resurrection is the ultimate “evidential bedrock” of the Christian Faith (eg., I Corinthians 15.1-20), Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances resting on “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1.3).

There are three objective facts about the resurrection which anyone attempting to dismiss the whole thing as a fairytale has to deal with: Fact One, the tomb was empty; Fact Two, the claimed appearances of the risen Lord; Fact Three, the total transformation of the disciples from cowards to martyrs – (only John died a natural death).

Limited space means we can deal in detail here with only one of the six most common efforts to dismiss the resurrection, while mentioning the others for your own weighing-up in the light of the three central facts should you wish.

So as an example, Effort 1, “the women, tearful and upset, went to the wrong tomb, an empty one, but Jesus’ real, still-occupied tomb, was down the path”. The Weighing-up: this effort explains AN empty tomb, but ignores the appearances and transformation, and the women’s mistake would have been quickly discovered anyway. Verdict: this Effort is ridiculous!

The other most common Efforts are these. Effort 2: “Jesus only swooned on the cross, so they nursed Him back to health, naturally assuming, with Jesus, that He had risen from the dead” ... Effort 3: “the claimed appearances of ‘the risen Jesus’ were just hallucinations prompted by His followers’ wishful thinking” ... Effort 4: “the disciples stole Jesus’ body and announced His ‘resurrection’” ... Effort 5: “the authorities stole His body to stop any talk of His resurrection” ... Effort 6: “it wasn’t Jesus on the cross at all but an unfortunate substitute”.

Praise God, the Bible’s trustworthiness is demonstrated beyond question by the wealth of “Christian evidences” that exist, evidences which gifted men like Professor Hawking choose to overlook. As we have briefly shown this time, our simply asking such people how they explain away the resurrection is as good a place to start as any: no wonder Jesus’ resurrection has been described as “the best attested fact in history”.

So we can confidently join afresh in the great resurrection cry, “Christ is risen! – He is risen indeed!” – the bold proclamation of plain, simple, vital, life-changing Fact.

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