

RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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Godless Religions

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Grace and Sanity Ministries, June 2007

The most miserable people in the world are those who have religion but not God. They have their do's and their don'ts but no lasting comfort. They have to maintain their efforts in good works, but it's never enough. And it's not that God is not accessible, but that the way to God is very narrow and exclusive. Anybody can come but nobody will get through without the blood of Christ. It's a thing of take it or leave it. If you want a free passage into heaven and the absolute assurance you will not go to hell after you die, you take it. If you don't believe in any of that, that there are such places as heaven and hell waiting for us to go one way or the other, you leave it. The arguments on morality, or that this other religion says something different and why should Christianity be more truthful or more desirable than any other, those are legitimate, if totally superficial, arguments. Why should Christianity be more desirable than any other religion? Well, as religions go, in as much as Christianity has become a religion of good works much like the heathen religions, no, in that sense, no, Christianity is just another way to express social justice, care for the poor, you know the standard things that any conscientious liberal, even agnostic in religion, would want to see as well. Any Buddhist, any Green, any Muslim, any Jew, who would want to leave the world a better place than how he found it would, by that definition, be the equal or better than a Christian. Even the heathen can do good works. The motivation is usually guilt, the karmic debt, the sense of owing something, the awareness of deserving punishment. There is nothing to being a Christian if social justice and good works, and of course the purity in behaviour, were the aim of his life. Big deal. What? Some goody-two-shoes is going to show me the way to heaven? That's as stupid as it can get. You couldn't catch me with your behaviour as an example. I don't care. If my way to salvation were dependent on imitating somebody's example there would be absolutely no possibility for me.

The 1949 Webster Dictionary describes the word "cynical" as: One who does not ascribe purely altruistic intentions to any good action or work. Man, that fits me to a tee. I suppose I am as cynical as they come, particularly when it comes to preachers of the Gospel. What can I say? I am suspicious, I don't believe anybody's good intentions, I am deaf to good advice anymore. That's terrible, isn't it? Not to be able to trust anybody? Well, no, not if you are not looking to trust anybody in the first place. If you wanted to trust somebody, but couldn't, that would be bad. But if you are not looking for a person to trust, then, you're O.K..

And it's not that I don't listen to anybody, no, that's not it. I listen very closely to what is being said in Christian churches, on Christian TV, on Christian radio, in some Christian printed media. I hear dribble and muck and distortions, opinions, inventions, imaginations. This is where my cynicism comes from. Information given with distortions of a passage or a text in the Bible to make a specific point.

Today, the atheists, leftists, unbelievers, and mockers are making a lot of noise in their battle against the Bible, but many are losing their audience because they are too superficial. But to be fair to the atheists, the present day churches are also extremely superficial. It is never clear what they are saying. Most of the time they just preach against sin, or give motivational speeches on how to succeed in life, or in marriage, or in business, or have better self-esteem. Many have very good advice and make some excellent points, but leave the basics regarding Christ unclear. And the most important basic they leave unclear is that without the blood of Christ as total and full payment for all our sins, past, present and future, without claiming to ourselves the covering of his blood, we will surely go to hell. And conversely, by claiming this payment that has already been made, we completely avoid the remotest possibility of going to hell. So, the heathen are losing their audience but the churches are not doing any better. I don't know, something happened to me when God, out of his own volition mind you, interrupted me on my way to hell. My cynicism changed direction. Everything in me changed direction. What I worshiped before I despise now, and what I despised before I worship now.

The world and the ideas of men have been shown to me to be false and superficial. Anybody can question the existence of the God of the Bible, there are several books circulating nowadays, whose authors know without a doubt that the God of the Bible does not exist. One of these books is titled "The God Delusion." Of course, there is a lumping of other religions as well, just to make the pretense that he is not setting himself against Christianity only. But it is Christianity he is after, really. It is the God of the Bible, and Christ in particular, he is really after. Discredit Christ and the work is done. But to say that there is no hell, or after life, or any of the things the Bible talks about is just as delusional. At best, for the argument that God does not exist, one would have to admit that there is no way to know one way or the other, for sure. But when we are exposed to both the curses and the blessings of the God of the Bible, I think it is extremely prudent to pay very close attention. All we know for sure is that we will die, and beyond that we know nothing. Speculations are aplenty, but nothing can penetrate the curtain of death, from a human standpoint. What none of those wise guys will deal with, are: 1) The utter futility and uselessness of life if this life is all there is, and: 2) what to do about the possibility that hell may really exist. Either this life is all there is, or it is not. And if this life is not all there is, the next stage could be either good or

bad. Rejoicing or lamenting is what awaits if there is life after death. If there is no life after death everything we do, everything we build, everything we study for will be swept away by the storm of life. The winds of time will ravage what little is left and by the third generation there will be only ashes to be trampled underfoot and ground to powder. That's about the extent of my direct knowledge. We grow like a tender grass, we wither and die, too quickly, as it is. But if the promise of the God of the Bible is awaiting, we can enjoy the awareness of being alive, we know we are surely rescued by him all together.