**“The way things are --- how the world works”**

**PREFACE**

Why this little essay? What’s behind it?

Among other attitudes, we encounter the following ideas and opinions in our world today, such as:

1. It is said, “**We** **live in a post-Christian age**”. If we didn’t know it or appreciate it before, our global travel and our global news carriers have made us see that the world is full of religions and faiths and believers of all sorts. And there is no shortage of people willing and eager to explain and defend that fact by saying that one idea, one system, one tradition, one faith, is as good or valid or valuable as any other. Take your pick. This essay does not share such a view. It should not take much to find credible examples to disprove such a conclusion.

2. It is said, “**We live in a post-denominational age**”. In our USA, at least, the historic roots of Christian groups are more and more seen as causes of disunity, as passé, as irrelevant, or at least confusing to a non-churched pedestrian. “We simply need to believe in Jesus who died for us”. Or, at least, “He is a good example to follow”. Keep it simple. Doctrines are hair-splitting details, academic games of the mind: you’ve got to believe this, or that, or something else, lots of “elses”. This essay makes the case that what we believe (doctrines) really does matter if the Gospel is to be heard and preserved.

3. It is said, “**Our ‘spirituality’ satisfies whatever religious dimensions we need in our lives**”. We tell ourselves we really don’t need the institutional church of whatever historical roots. We tell ourselves we don’t want religion to be “unreasonable”. We don’t need to be “fanatics” about it. Therefore my “spirituality” is built on what I think is acceptable to me, mostly within my comfort zone, where I have some control on how things work when it comes to religion. This essay seeks to point out how inadequate this approach is, and why it can’t stand up to reality.

4. It is said, “**You must believe the Gospel**”; “**Salvation depends on your acceptance of the Gospel**”. **“You must make a decision for Christ”**. Although faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior is what we are meant to arrive at, this essay seeks to prevent us all from making the Gospel into another Law to be kept: “You must believe this’. “You have to accept that”. No matter how sincere or pious we want to be, being religious is not the goal of life.

With this very brief introduction, it is important to understand that this essay is in no way an attempt to cover all the bases of Christian faith and life, not even all the fundamentals. It is not meant to address all the many very important elements of a Christian’s life in this world, elements which at some place and time rightfully should be addressed. Neither is it meant to avoid them. It is, however, one attempt to identify and describe our place in our world as creatures, within the Biblical context and framework so as to know a bit more about who we are and where we’re at.

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