

# WAY OF RELIGION IS FOUND IN PASSIVE FIGHT ON EVIL

Dean Ramsey Declares That Biblical Knowledge of Critics Is as Wrong-Headed as Their Interpretation of Modern Needs Is Superficial and at Variance With Progress.

BY DEAN H. M. RAMSEY.

St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral.  
Let all things be done decently and in order.—I Cor. 14-40.

IF ONE could accept the position of some writers at the present time, Christians of all people, and historical Christianity, of all forms of that religion, know least about the Christian religion. We are given to understand that it has been an error to speak of the virtues of Christianity—theological, cardinal, or any other kind—for the simple reason that there is just one virtue which sums up the entire teaching of Jesus and that may be described as passivity of spirit.



The most positive attitude a true Christian, follower of Jesus could assume would be one of passive resistance. The purpose of this kind of opposition of the Christian religion is to present it as a weak, fanatical phenomenon in human history. To substantiate their claims, these writers know how to quote certain expressions of our Lord, insisting that the method of teaching in other lands and among different types of people shall be interpreted according to the literal standards of the Western mind. And they understand the value of suppressing other aspects of the doctrine of Christ.

These critics of our belief, whose knowledge of the history of religion is as wrong-headed as their interpretation of modern needs is superficial, have concluded that the teaching of our Lord with its insistence on the cross, on humility, and patient endurance is hopelessly at variance with the wants of a progressive generation. Instead of the literal standards of the Western mind, as St. Paul to determine the meaning of the paradoxes of Jesus, they picture the Christian saint in subdued light, unwilling and afraid.

Teaching of St. Paul Cited.

Christianity, then, must be to fit the Froreitan bed of our opponents' preconceptions. As a matter of fact, the Christian theory is that the love of Christ so far from extinguishing selfhood and personality heightens and emphasizes it. The method, so little understood, is that which is found everywhere in human experience. To gain something, you must take a risk. To find your true self you must give yourself away. Self is destroyed that it may be received back from the Master broadened and ennobled by the splendor of his life who has become his Master.

It was St. Paul, whose words I have quoted, who first gave literary form to the Christian teaching and who is, therefore, in the best position to give us a truer conception of the attitude of the Christian to life. He is himself one of the most vigorous and efficient characters in all history. Indeed, it would be difficult to instance a man in whom those elements of success—en-

thusiasm for humanity and living, energy in the realization of his ambition and efficiency—were more splendidly manifested.

The keynote of his life may very well have been: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." He knew how to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. He had made the great renunciation and found himself a new man in insight and power. Henceforth his life was to be a gambles an adventure, anything but the drab tedium of those lives untouched by the love of God. Through the discipline of Christianity he had himself in hand. He was a little impatient of dull wits. Those who oppose the work he had to do he would withstand to the face. If he was meek, as he undoubtedly was, it was with the meekness that inherits the earth.

His eye spanned the Roman empire for strategic places to plant the principles which would turn the world to Christ and fuller life. His success is a matter of record. If he knew how to be obedient unto death he understood, no less, how to abound unto life.

Experiment Tried in Corinth.

In the city of Corinth, a business center of that part of the world, the Christian experiment was being tried in a congregation of very human people, with very doubtful success. The particular events which drew from St. Paul the words I have taken for a text had to do with the kind of worship in the church. There were certain adherents of the cause who arrogated to themselves certain gifts which were spiritual. They were very proud of them, and they all apparently desired to exercise their individual gifts at one and the same time, just someone should appear to excel them in endowments.

It was a rather bald and unlovely exhibition of individualism. The result was very confusing, as you can easily imagine. St. Paul laid down the principle that such services should be for the edification of the church rather than for the exaltation of the gifted people. The gift of tongues, for instance, seems to have been exercised for the purpose of astounding the outsiders.

Whatever it may have been, happily it fell into disuse, only to be revived in assemblies where the type of decorum seems to be an exact revival of the unreformed Corinthian model. In closing the subject in his authoritative communication to that church, St. Paul sets forth the fundamental law of worship and the principle there enunciated made liturgical worship the normal service of Christian people. "Let all things be done decently and in order." The word which is translated decently is explained by Meyer, a Protestant commentator, as "in a seemly way, denoting ecclesiastical decorum."

The idea is that in the universe, which is God's revelation of certain aspects of his character, beauty and harmony prevail; and that the same things ought to be made the basis of public worship. "In order" is said to be a military term, expressing precision and discipline. It is apparent that St. Paul's approval could hardly be cited in favor of slipshod methods of worship, which have in some unaccountable manner usurped the adjective simple.

The principle which is here applied merely to the worship in the church is one which admits of broader application. It would make an admirable motto for life in general, and expresses excellently the way of success in Christian living. For that success is the result of a due proportion in things. Failures in that life are to be traced to a wrong emphasis. The whole uni-

verse is the artistic production of a God who is the king in his beauty. That proportion, which is one of the elements in artistic production, must be felt and expressed in the beauty of human character. And to create, one must have the ideal before the mind.

The difficulty with these Corinthian was that they had so stressed certain manifestations of the spirit that the balance of the spiritual life had been upset and eccentricity, bordering on anarchy, ruled in their church. Sanity was to be restored by the wholesome recollection that their gifts, so highly valued, were subsidiary to the common good; that a contemplation of the nature and works of God would restore the balance and furnish the pattern for their devotions.

St. Paul understood very well that in the composite nature of man as spirit and body there lay the possibility of failure. It was in the due subordination of bodily powers to spiritual

ends that the true way of living lay.

The division of life's duties and privileges must be accomplished with that fact in mind. The smallest upset in balance would, if continued, be disastrous. Life must be regarded, St. Paul would say, in principle as an athlete's training or a soldier's experience. There must be positive rules of life stringently adhered to if failure is to be avoided. It is no child's play.

The spirit must predominate the body. It must be taught and trained and ruled. The will must assert itself. It must have its instruction. Man must be brought in relationship to God. The religious exercises must be conducted on the pattern of the training which gives the soldier and runner control of themselves. Back of all effort and in the symmetry or no word there was model for man's development of himself.

The value of the principle here enun-

ciated is often partially demonstrated in various sides of human nature. The hard thing is to force ourselves to make it thoroughgoing. That order and law are the first rules of success is a commonplace of ordinary life. Systems are indispensable to business achievement. Why should it be so hard to realize that on the same process the value and success of our religious aspirations depend. It is a matter of everyday experience that men have learned to devote themselves with abandon to the working out of systematic plans which are looked upon as prerequisites to success. Military precision could not surpass the way in which some men's time is divided and their work arranged. There is no question as to the order of many a man's business affairs, but how about the condition of that part of his nature which we term religious? Is there no question as to there? Just take a man whose business methods are above reproach for efficiency and who is showered with unstinted praise for it. Is his life decent in the Pauline sense? Is it becoming in the nature of things that there should be such devotion exclusively to temporal ends on the part of one whose being is not only related, through his body, to the world we see; but also to the being of God, through his spirit? From the Christian standpoint there is something essentially absurd about such an existence, even if generosity may find expression there. Is it common sense to cultivate certain aspects of life which every artifice and leave others, no less important, to chance or in entire neglect?

The spiritual side of man's being is frequently treated as a thing to which system and care can have no vital relationship. Is it even ordinary decency to go through life with a right regard for business duties and a fair respect for one's obligation to man and then to leave out of consideration our duty to our own better nature, to our eternal welfare and to our God? Such a position leaves man maimed and crippled.

Nor can it be asserted, as it sometimes is, that, at any rate, anyone injured in the matter it is merely the man himself. Humanity is bound together by a thousand chains and every man has his influence which proceeds from him whether he will or no, and every man's example counts. When we succeed, however unimportant we may be, the world and humanity are better for it, and when we fail the whole world suffers.

One reason for the neglect of the spiritual training of our higher natures is the fundamentally false doctrine of conversion which has been promulgated and has wider influence than you might suppose. According to this teaching everything in one's religious life depends on a cataclysm in the individual existence which is supposed not only to make a new man of one but to do everything for one and demand little but passive acceptance. If that were true, you need neither the copula, nor the church, nor Christian example to guide you nor any other assistance. The whole business of your religious experience is taken out of your hands and you become a law to yourself alone. You cannot bring the day of your conversion forward nor can you very well retard it. Under the delusion of this form of fatalism one can go on misarranging his nature without any particular responsibility for it.

So religion is removed from God's world and placed in a new unreal light unrelated to man's experience or God's revelation of his own nature or of man's. There is some kind of law in every other department of God's activ-

ity and man's endeavor; but in religion there is no coherence with life in general, no law, no system. The "spiritual" Corinthians were right. Let us exalt the gifts that the individual may flourish and let confusion reign. Let everything but religion be done decently and in order. Beyond question this false representation of conversion is responsible for a large amount of the criticism of Christianity as a weak and misshapen philosophy of life, and has reacted on the ordinary man's conception of religion, leading him, on the one hand, to despise it as a futile and fanatical perversion of the higher side of human nature; or, on the other, to shift from his own shoulders all responsibility for his own conduct.

One turns to Saint Paul's character, whole-hearted, energetic, efficient, manly and philosophic, with thankfulness and relief. For him there runs through all of God's creation a golden

thread of reason and law. He had climbed to the very pinnacles of spiritual heights. Everywhere he had found that there was a means of bringing man, his body, soul and spirit, into subjection to the will of God. It was the law of God, based not on the efforts of men but on the divine nature.

Let me quote one who has caught the spirit of Saint Paul in an unusual manner, the judicious Hooker: "Wherefore that here we may briefly end. Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all, with one consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

## STATE IS INVESTIGATING HOUSEWIVES' LEAGUE



Mrs. Julian Heath

A DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL of New Jersey is investigating the National Housewives' League of which Mrs. Julian Heath, of New York is the head. Charges have been made that this institution, supposed to be purely philanthropic and organized for the purpose of reducing the high cost of living and other worthy objects, was actually a semi-commercial organiza-

tion and that Mrs. Heath lent its influence for a price to a purely commercial organization called the housewives' educational committee organized under the laws of New Jersey.

Mrs. Heath is charged with getting \$50 a week for supervising the publication of a magazine for the committee. Mrs. Heath was photographed while she was engaged recently on a crusade to encourage individual marketing in New York City.

## KARSAVINA IS LIKENED TO FLAMING, FIERY BIRD



Thamar Karsavina

NEW YORK, Jan. 22.—(Special)—Hate, love, calm, fury and all qualities of human nature are depicted in Thamar Karsavina's dancing. Karsavina shares with Nijinsky the honors of being the principal dancers in Serge de Diaghileff's Ballet Russe, which arrived in America for its first tour of the United States recently. Thamar Karsavina evokes with equal skill the still beauty of old Greek legend and wild Greek orgy in "Narcisse," the shy and tender fancies in "Papillons," the barbaric fury of the beautiful, cruel queen in "Tamar," the exotic and Oriental glamour of the Sultan's favorite in "Scheherazade," the wild grace and delicate fire in "L'Oiseau de Feu." "Flaming with brilliant plumage and jewels and glowing colors, she burns into the vision of the spectators like a fiery bird with a human heart," is one critic's estimate of her.

# FIRST HALF OF OLD ENGLISH ALPHABET IS HEREWITH SHOWN

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

SATIN OUTLINE AND CLOSE CAT-STITCH DETAILS

So many requests have come in for this old English alphabet that it is reprinted. This may be used for marking table linen, bed linen, towels, and the like. It is to be embroidered in satin stitch or a combination of fancy stitches. The monogram may be made by stamping letters so that they intertwine, or if three letters are used the letter for the surname may be a size larger than the two Christian names. The detail drawing shows the method of working. In using the printed design from the paper the directions are as follows: If the material is sheer, the easiest way is to lay it over the design, which will show through plainly, and draw over each line with a sharp, hard pencil. If your linen is heavy, buy a piece of impression paper—the kind that does not rub off—place the design over it and trace with a hard pencil.