

Every-day Helpfulness of Religion.

- what is in religion that makes ^{hand} ⁱⁿ ^{head} ^{with} ⁱⁿ ^{of} ^{strength}

1. What is religion?

Before we can consider what religion does for us, it's necessary to make clear what I mean

by religion. What I mean is religion for you and me - ordinary people - not saints or theologians or philosophers or priests or preachers or professional propagators of religion, but those of us who are chiefly pre-occupied with secular thoughts and activities.

Real religion, as we should understand it, is

is not the mechanical practice of acts of worship or ritual; neither is it the devoting of oneself to any secular cause or object - work, social service, ~~a~~ schemes for political or social reform, etc. - but it has to do with an

unseen spiritual order resident in the universe.

Prof. William James says in his "Varieties of Religious Experience": "The life of religion in the broadest & most general terms possible . . . consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting

ourselves thereto. This belief and this adjustment are the religious attitude in the soul" ~~Of course no definition of religion is really adequate.~~ This may not be a definition that appeals to all of you, and no one should be as presumptuous as to pretend to define religion adequately; but I prefer to use the word religion in this sense in the remarks I shall make.

Q. ~~What~~ ^{Whatever} the grave defects of institutional religion in the past and present -

whatever the ~~unwholesome~~
 some alliances religion
 has made, however
 much it has been
 betrayed by its professed
 adherents, not even
 the atheist, if he is sin-
 cere, will say that it
 has not done good
 fruit. Religion has
 certain tremendous
 values ~~which~~ ~~it~~ ~~dynamic~~
~~is~~ that have enabled
 it to live and that
 make it dynamic in
 men's lives today. ~~For~~
~~if~~ ~~you~~ ~~can't~~ ~~get~~ ~~it~~
~~out~~ ~~of~~ ~~its~~ ~~old~~ ~~form~~
~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~dead~~. As a college
~~first~~ student I was
 much troubled by
 the phraseology and

catch words used
 by those ^{who} taught us
 and preached to us.
 They tried to interpret
 religion and God's relation
 to the universe ^{and our need of religion} by means
 of terms - beautiful in them-
 selves, but ~~unfamiliar~~ ^{unfamiliar} and
~~clear in their application~~
~~to our lives~~ ^{and not} without a
 clear meaning ^{enough to carry} and
 as message to which
 one could immediately
^{& easily} respond and which would
 make religion ^{the} living relig-
 ious life ^{as the normal}
 natural life ^{to live - as}
 long as we use un-
 natural and sententious
 terms - ^{a spiritual} pretic though the
 may be - to interpret God

just so long ^{as there is danger that} well religion
 seem something unreal
 and mysterious, and
 the average person
 will, after ineffectual
 efforts to ^{see through} penetrate the
 cloud of words ~~and to~~
 symbolic words ^{of formulas} and
 and to find the key to the
 mystery that ^{others}
 seem to possess, become
 irritated and bored and
 confused ^{by their mere repetition} and worse
 still, reach the point
 of identifying religion
 with this ^{terminology} ~~terminology~~ ^{unnatural}
^{rather than to formulate} terminology. We need to
 have clear thoughts regarding
 religion so much as
 regards a new words
 that will help to clarify

our thought along
 religious lines just
 as much as we
 do for ~~any other~~
 for the understanding
 of any scientific or
 social problems. Does a
 jumble of such words as
 sacrifice, atonement,
 King of God, faith,

tell us how to make
 religion ^{can} play a vital part in
 helping us to be better
 teachers, ~~merchants~~ men-
 as teachers, merchants,
 bankers, - useful citizens.
 Cleared of all this
 those wordy vapourings
 and entanglements what

some of ^{practical} ~~practical~~
are the fruits of
religion - means obedience
of the harmonious
adjustment to God's
laws - that are self-
evident have made
religion the greatest thing
of the universe for ages
and which bestows
~~us~~ ~~practical~~ ~~benefits~~ give
help us to be better and
more useful & happier,
every whether at work or
at play, every day of our
lives.

3. What R. gives us.

1. Religion gives us a ~~supreme~~ guiding ideal.

Men, individually and socially ^{more than ever before} need a vision - a picture ^{of} what they might be - to live for. Without such a vision life is wasted and frittered and perhaps entirely ruined.

Of course there are good and bad ideals. A really noble ideal - one that inspires to highest achievement - must have at least three things: it must be social, strong, and true. It must be social in the sense that it leads us to live for others more than for ourselves; and these others should not be a narrow

circle of ones learning and friends but must include ones neighborhood, ones associates in school or business and fellow countrymen and in the end the whole human race. The ideal must be strong, to exhibit over deepest emotions & instincts and win out over lower impulses and passions. It must be true - correspond with reality - be in line with what is not impossible.

Are there experiences other than religious ones that have given men ideals? of course. Patriotic and humanitarian enterprises without number. But the reason that the Christian religion gives is equal or stronger than any other, and more

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worthily fair for.

The notion that religion gives is capable of stirring and helping the great mass of mankind - the average man - in a way that no other can. Every day helps lives & inspiration to millions.

2. Religion gives us a sense of union with something not ourselves.

Human power is unquestionably intensified and by association. How much stronger you feel when you are standing contending for some purpose with two or three comrades than when you are standing alone. Physical pain when suffered in common loses some of its harshness. Explorers in the polar wastes

and desert wilds, man
imprisoned for holding
fast to his conviction, parents
or relatives ^{or relatives} together faced him.

Know how the product
of pain can take on a certain
glory when it is met in
company with at least one
other comrade sufferers.

How much more powerful
is our partnership with the
Divine! How much
more secure! Human
friends may prove weak,
or false, or die, or go away.
~~Especially as we think of~~
God. In our union with
God it is only we who can
fail.

Of course it's not only
good causes that have

gotten power through
 Religion; ~~now~~ it can be
 used for evil as can any
 natural force. War, extreme
 selfish patriotism, tyranny,
 persecution have gotten
 power thru religion. But
 in the long run religion
 power has proved compatible
 only with causes that are
 good. After the Great War in
 1918 punishment was the cry -
 and it was a cry with a religious
 fervor because punishment
 was certainly due in a reverse
 and this universal demand
 for a just ^{righting of wrongs} ~~retribution~~, was
~~ignited~~ boldly played out for
 the attainment of a noble end
 by religious totalitarianism.
 Today the Lord is speaking

through the hearts of
 millions of men with the
 common sense that ~~the~~ international
 justice cannot ~~not~~ cease
 to be one-sided, that a fence
 of apprehension and not of sermons
 is the only hope of the world.

Religious power can never
 for long be utilized in a cause
 that is bad.

Let us ~~not~~ remember that
 the power ^{of support} of comradeship
 and brotherhood that we grow to
 its best ^{and which we can carry out} ~~is~~ ^{is} in deservable
 if our eyes are not to be
 drawn to the beside sordid and
 selfish, pleasure-loving, and
 money-grasping.

3! Religion makes possible individual freedom and social fellowships, ^{or} a charitable way of life.

The great problem of ages has been to reconcile ^{heretofore} freedom and organized social activity. It is the great problem still. The flight of human beings struggling for freedom and fellowship has been likened to a group of porcupines huddling together for warmth, but as often draws apart because each felt him- or self struck by his neighbor's quills.

3. Religion makes possible individual freedom and social fellowships, ^{or} a charitable way of life.

The great problem of ages has been to reconcile ^{personal} freedom and organized social activity. It is the great problem still. The flight of human beings struggling for freedom and fellowship has been likened to a group of porcupines huddling together for warmth, but as often draws apart because each felt him self struck by his neighbor's quills.

The terrific and savage warfare between classes is an outcome of the conflict of these two forces of sin, freedom and necessity of organization. What is our salvation?

Jesus of Nazareth has offered us the solution. He has the secret of the reconciliation. First of all he says that every person is a child of God and has absolute worth even the lowest and most evil as a creature with a soul; and he has within him the capacity of growth to the Divine.

Thus he commands that freedom of personality be scrupulously safeguarded. Any sort of imprisonment, the use of force, or by any other method as a tool, the exploitation of one class by another, is a sin against God.

Nevertheless there must be a bond that will unite free individuals and preserve society. He offers us hope. In the summit of love alone that perfect freedom can be found, and through the bond of love that there can be a society that

will not be rans by
fratricidal strife.

Respect for the
worth of individuals and
this service of love
heartfelt interest in the
welfare of our kind
founded on love are
the only things that
can make our
daily ^{to give people glad work} ~~living~~ ^{and}
worth the living. What
can give them to us
except belief in the religion
of Jesus?

Conclusion

In conclusion let
me remind you that
the gifts of religion will
become apparent to

you some day if they
 do not now. They are numer-
 able people who at
 one time knew of
 religion only as a theory
 or perhaps a dubious
 theory. There came
 a day when this was
 changed and an
 experience overtaken
 them that made these
 gifts seem vital for
 the rest of their lives.

In Mr. Brit, H. G.
 Wells gives us a very
 description of the religious
 awakening of Mr. Brit.
 Whether God had
 been for him at the
 of the intelligence, or the
 a report, or whether

told him but not
 realized. . . . Mr Bent,
 thought about, God
 knows had been like
 someone who has
 found an empty
 house, very beautiful
 & pleasant, full of
 the promise of a fine
 personality. And
 then as he discovers
 makes his lonely,
 cavernous exploration,
 he hears downstairs,
 clear and friendly, the
 voice of the water
 coming in. . . .

"I have thought too
 much of myself,"
 said Mr. Britton,
 and of what I would

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do by myself. I have
forgotten that which
was with me."

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