

[Review of *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibilities*, *The Presbyterian Journal* 5 Feb.: 18. 1969]

THE JUST WAR, FORCE AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES, by Paul Ramsey, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, N.Y. 554 pp. \$12.50. Reviewed by Dr. Gordon H. Clark, professor of philosophy, Butler University, Indianapolis, Ind.

Anyone who is concerned about World War III or the many little wars that may prevent it should study this hefty volume one chapter a wee and try to think through the arguments.

Professor Ramsey defends the doctrine of the just war, more a Protestant doctrine than Roman Catholic, against the moral obtuseness of the liberals who are not willing to sacrifice twenty-five million people to save 250,000,000; but who are willing to sacrifice 250,000,000 in a futile attempt to save twenty-five.

He recognizes (pp. 104-105) the practical difficulties of politics when no *theological* consensus remains in our nation so that decisions are haphazard and without precedent.

He criticizes the Supreme Court for trying to impose *its* theological view on the nation, so that the distinction between a religious decision and a political decision is blurred or denied.

The author sees with some clarity that human nature is sinful. He may not accept the Reformed doctrine of total depravity, but he holds up to scorn the liberal view that men are angelic and can always arrive at just agreements around a conference table.

Strangely enough Professor Ramsey wants legal protection for those who, while not complete pacifists, object to a particular war. This is strange because he explodes the liberal contention that an individual citizen can require the government to prove beyond all doubt that a war is just. Rather, after the government has decided to wage a particular war, the burden of proof lies on the objector, who cannot know more than a fraction of the evidence.

A very large portion of the book analyzes the Roman Catholic declarations on war. These seem to be aimed (in the reviewer's opinion) at disarming the U.S.A.

Catholic Pétain was defeated in France and then collaborated with Hitler. The Pope made a concordat with Hitler. He made no protest against the massacre of the Jews. He condemned the British bombing of Germany but not the German bombing of England.

Mr. Ramsey tries to correct the wording and even the punctuation of the Vatican documents to make them less dangerous than they seem to be on their face. But he exposes the muddleheadedness behind them.

The justice of massive deterrence takes up 100 pages in the middle of the volume, and is not far below the surface in many other passages. Here and throughout the volume very careful attention to every detail enables the author, and hopefully the reader, to get to the bottom of the matter.

Unfortunately, the chapters are articles that have previously appeared in different places. This results in a great deal of repetition in phraseology. At a chapter a week this will not be so annoying as it would be at one sitting.

The author's style is sometimes complex; inversions, unusual orders of words, and too many dependent clauses make the reading hard. But the subject is hard; the argumentation excellent, and the book a must for those who think about the future of our country.