
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

Is it possible to be at once a religious man and a rationalist? Mr. David GRAHAM says it is quite possible. More than that, he holds that the only truly religious man is the rationalist.

Mr. GRAHAM is the author of *The Grammar of Philosophy*. His new book, to which he has given the title of *Religion and Intellect* (T. & T. Clark; 7s. 6d. net), is just as unswerving in attitude and unmistakable in aim. There are no secrets in science, and there are no mysteries in religion. No word has the least authority added to it by being found in the Bible or adopted by the Church. Every statement must be tested by the individual intellect, and by it declared to be truth or falsehood.

'Given a man who is determined to think to the best of his ability, and sooner or later you will find him arriving at sound conclusions. Ever shall judgment "return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it." Should you wish to hold that the majority of mankind are incompetent to think correctly about what chiefly concerns them, it would necessarily follow, let me point out, that they could not be justly amenable to Judgment. I demand the unanimous consent of intelligent beings to this proposition. Thus the responsibility of each person before God seems to be personal and untransferrible. The individual is and must be the unit of moral or religious authority and responsibility as far as he himself is concerned; and thus it will be found that there is room for the exercise of the noblest powers and the loftiest wisdom in the humblest human Life.'

How does the Bible come out of this test? The New Testament comes out of it well, the Old Testament very badly. There are many passages in the Bible, says Mr. GRAHAM (but he finds them all in the Old Testament), 'which Reason rejects as utterly immoral, irreligious and intolerable. The Scripture says—"He that sacrificeth unto any God, but unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed" (Ex. xxii. 20). "And they entered into a covenant . . . that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. And they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath" (2 Chron. xv. 12–15), Accept such laws and doings as Divinely authorised and you set up the most damnable warranties for religious persecution. It was such passages as these that, being received uncritically and irrationally, entangled even the noblest minds among the Reformers, and to some extent—nay, to a disastrous extent, blighted the Reformation.'

How does Faith come out of the test? Mr.

GRAHAM has no more trouble with Faith than with the Bible or the Church. He first discovers its meaning. 'As used by many people the word Faith is synonymous with sheer credulity. With the Romanist and the Ritualist, for example, it signifies a blind assent to ecclesiastical dogmas—the dogmas of what they are pleased to call the Catholic Church. The late Cardinal Newman, for instance, when he buried his doubts and difficulties in the Popish Temple of Infallibility, supposed that he had accomplished an act of Faith, whereas this most luctuose proceeding was not an act of Faith at all, but a most baneful act of nerveless credulity.'

Faith is not credulity. Nor is it mysticism. 'Your true born Anglican, with his easy indifference to logic and sound sense, will look upon The Thirty-nine Articles or "the Apostles' Creed" as the Faith without putting himself to the trouble of attaching any definite meaning to the words. Your Calvinist of the strictest sect will call it Faith to look upon the whole Human Race as lying naturally since "the Fall," in a state of Reprobation and Damnation. The region of Faith has become the region of mysticism—of intellectual Fogland.'

'What then,' he asks, 'is the true meaning of this tremendous word?' And answers: 'Faith might be properly defined as action inspired by love of moral principle and in conformity with a rational hope.'

For once the idea is not expressed in language of perfect lucidity. But its meaning is unmistakable. Faith is action, or at least a disposition to act, in accordance with knowledge. And the knowledge on which it acts is of course obtained by the exercise of the intellect. But there is an element of uncertainty in the act. For the knowledge is not complete. If the knowledge were complete, Faith would be indistinguishable from sight.

If we knew for certain that we should receive a full reward for our act of Faith, it would be no more Faith, even though it involved some considerable self-denial. 'If it were a *verifiable fact* that the Martyr immediately goes to Bliss, there would probably be a great many candidates for martyrdom. If it were a *verifiable fact* that the Hero perishing in battle goes straight to Valhalla, few soldiers, probably, would seek to avoid the mortal shock. But the existence of Valhalla is not verified: *i.e.* not positively pressed upon any man's consciousness; consequently, when the Hero and the Martyr voluntarily perish, it is in the way of rational self-sacrifice—devotion to moral principle under the shadow and the pains of death, intermingled with more or less hope in the Unverified Hereafter.'

Mr. GRAHAM ends with a definition. 'Faith is the disposition and determination to act in the moral field to the best of our ability in strict accordance with our knowledge and belief, and against difficulty and danger. More shortly—our Faith is our practical adherence to our principles. The amount of our Faith seems to be the amount of our practical adherence to our principles in all kinds of circumstances.'

'Dr. Denney's Theology' is the title of an article in *The Constructive Quarterly* for March. The author of the article is the Right Rev. W. P. PATERSON, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh and Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

The article contains an introduction and four divisions. The introduction describes the theological atmosphere of Scotland when Dr. Denney began to write. The first division touches upon his personal fitness for the writing of theology. The second brings out the main characteristics of his creed. The third takes the various items of that creed separately and estimates their worth for modern theology. And the fourth contains a criticism of Dr. Denney's theological position and consistency as a whole.

'Dr. Denney had brilliant gifts as well as varied and solid learning. An accurate classical scholar, a New Testament expert of the first rank, and adequately if not minutely versed in the history of doctrine, he was also thoroughly familiar with the spirit and the problems of modern philosophy, and he was withal a life-long student of great literature. As a stylist he is in a very high class. He had unrivalled command of pithy and picturesque English—his phrases seemed to have eyes, hands and feet, and it would not be easy to cite a better illustration of Masson's dictum that style is thought. His pages sparkle with felicitous and epigrammatic sayings.'

He was essentially an apologist, not a theologian. 'It is true that he resented being called an apologist. "The writer," he says in one of his books "disclaims any 'apologetic' intention. There is no policy in what he has written either in its matter or its substance. Nothing, so far as he is conscious, is set down for any other reason than that he believes it to be the truth." What he repudiated was, however, merely an accidental association of the term, and it is no injustice, but rather to his honour, to say that he was more than anything else an apologist whose chief purpose was to make the faith of the gospel intelligible, to maintain it by weighty argument, and to combat groundless prejudices and specious objections.'

He was not a systematic theologian. 'In some respects he had not the typical mind of the systematic theologian. The latter is a virtuoso in drawing distinctions, and Dr. Denney was constantly denying or blurring distinctions which are commonly taken for granted.' Thus he denied the distinction between biblical and dogmatic theology. 'They may be taught in separate rooms in a theological school, but except to the pedant or the dilettante the distinction between them is a vanishing one.' But the distinction, says Professor PATERSON, is quite sound. 'New Testament Theology is a historical discipline which reports upon the teaching of Jesus and His disciples. Dogmatic Theology is a positive discipline which undertakes to unfold and defend a system of absolute truth.'

Professor PATERSON even thinks it possible to divide Dr. Denney's writings into the two classes of biblical and systematic theology. To biblical theology he would refer 'the famous monograph on *The Death of Christ—its Place and Interpretation in the New Testament* (1902). Dogmatics would be represented by the early and very notable *Studies in Theology* (1897), the posthumous Cunningham Lectures on the *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (1917), and the supplement to the *Death of Christ* entitled *The Atonement and the Modern Mind* (1912).' The reason why Dr. Denney denied the distinction was that while his writings consisted mainly of New Testament theology, by personally appropriating and vindicating it he transmuted it into dogmatic theology.

Dr. Denney was not and did not desire to be a systematic theologian. He felt no call to fashion his theology into a complete architectural structure. He chose certain topics and aspects of doctrine because they seemed to him vital and interesting. For his interests were overwhelmingly religious, 'and he was rather impatient of problems which were wholly or mainly raised by the scientific and speculative instinct.'

He did not reach his conclusions by reasoning, but largely through intuition and feeling, 'and he trusted to commending them, less by laboured trains of reasoning, than by vivid and trenchant utterance of what he believed and knew to be true. As a fact he was apt to suppose that when he had delivered himself of a decisive and scornful judgment, it had all the finality of a reasoned refutation.' Professor PATERSON ends the first division of his article with the words, 'In a general estimate one would say that, while he was above all a great apologist, he was at least in essentials a notable dogmatic theologian—possessed of the rare and invaluable qualification of religious genius and

theoretical insight, and employing an intellect which, if not markedly systematic, at least had a powerful grasp of principles, applied them with great consistency, and made every chapter and paragraph to live and thrill with searching and energizing thought.'

The second division gives an account of the contents of Dr. Denney's theology. But first of all of its foundation. 'Instead of reaffirming, in the old Protestant fashion, the absolute and exclusive authority of the Scriptures, he roundly declares that "the basis of all theological doctrine is experience."' For this was the inheritance into which Dr. Denney was born. Professor PATERSON sketches the history of it in his introduction.

When the time came in Scotland that men could no longer believe in verbal inspiration, and the infallible authority of Scripture, two paths lay open before them. The one path was taken by the leading theologians of the Church of Scotland, the other by the leading theologians of the United Free Church. The one led to a philosophical type of theology, the other to an experiential.

Christianity, said Professor Caird and Professor Flint, is essentially a body of truths concerning God and His relations with the world and man; and it has a claim to be accepted on the ground of its essential reasonableness—as seen in part in its coincidence with the tenets of a sound philosophy, in part in its contribution of additional truths of impressive sublimity and power towards a final system of religious philosophy. It is a system, says Professor PATERSON, which would be fairly described as Rationalistic Supernaturalism. The other way was taken by Professor A. B. Davidson and Professor Robertson Smith. These men were repelled by any form of rationalism and based belief on the data and the witness of Christian experience. They said that whatever else one doubted 'there remains the inner life of the man who has tasted the grace of God in Christ; and in the convictions with which that inner life is inextricably bound up there is an assurance, at least in regard to the capital doctrines of Christianity, which is independent of or supplementary to the witness of Scripture or Church.'

This, then, was the inheritance into which Dr. Denney was born. He was not born a Free Churchman, it is true. But the Church into which he was born—the Reformed Presbyterian Church—held rationalism in as much abhorrence as could any Free Churchman. And Dr. Denney was just twenty years of age when his Church became united with the Free Church.

The believer in Christ who builds his belief on the facts of experience is often charged by his opponents with disregard of the facts of history. And sometimes he is justly so charged. But not so Dr. Denney. 'The experience which he had in mind was one which is inseparably bound up with the historical revelation of God in Christ. "Religion," he says, "can no more be simplified by making it independent of history than respiration would be simplified by soaring beyond the atmosphere." His position was that when he interrogated the typical Christian experience, and especially his own evangelical experience, he found its essential content to be the possession of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and an assurance of the reign and grace of the living Lord, accompanied by a willing and joyful acceptance of the recorded facts of His life, death and resurrection, and of the divine claims made by Him in the days of His flesh.'

Thus it was that the Scriptures possessed for him a priceless value. 'Upon them we are entirely dependent for our knowledge of the historical events without which there would be no Christian salvation available; by them the knowledge of Christ and of His Gospel is lodged in the mind; and further, if experience be the basis of theology, we inevitably reverence as the most precious of all documents, that express and interpret Christian experience, those writings which embody the

testimony of the Christians of the Apostolic Age.'

Such being the foundation of his faith, what were the contents of it? One sentence is sufficient to indicate all that he considered essential. He believed in the mediatorial work of Christ as including an atonement for the sins of the world.

In that sentence there are two things. First, Christianity is a mediatorial religion, the blessings of which are dependent on the work of Christ. Christianity, said Dr. Denney in his earliest book, entitled *Studies in Theology*, 'is a life in which faith is directed to Him as its object, and in which everything depends on the fact that the believer can be sure of his Lord. The main argument of the book is directed to show, "firstly, that from the very beginning Christianity has existed only in the form of a faith which has Christ as its object," and "for which everything in this life, especially in the relations of God and man, is determined by Him"; and, secondly, that the Christian religion, as the New Testament expounds it (*i.e.*, setting forth Christ as object of faith and mediator), "is sufficiently sustained by the underlying facts, and supported by the mind of Christ about Himself!" The central position and mediation of Christ is also the leading idea of the short creed propounded at the close of the book—"I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord and Saviour."'

The other thing is that this mediatorial work of Christ is accomplished through an atonement for the sins of the world. 'Whether we call it a fact or a doctrine, the Atonement is that in which the differentia of Christianity, its peculiar and exclusive character, is specially shown; it is the focus of revelation, the point at which we see deepest into the truth of God, and come most deeply under its power. For those who recognize it at all, it is Christianity in brief; it concentrates in itself, as in a germ of infinite potency, all that the wisdom, power and love of God mean in relation to sinful men.'

Now it is here that Professor PATERSON finds not only the central fact in Dr. Denney's own faith, but also his most important contribution to the study of theology. Schleiermacher had already recognized the mediatorial work of Christ as that which distinguishes genuine from spurious or emasculated Christianity. Schleiermacher had even gone beyond that and seen the necessity for some atonement. But while Schleiermacher is content with an atonement which secures redemption, Dr. Denney insists upon an atonement which leads to reconciliation. What does that mean? It means that while to Schleiermacher redemption was essentially a change of religious attitude and spirit, to Denney reconciliation was a most solemn transaction on the part of a personal and transcendent God. It means that 'while Schleiermacher limited the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice to its moral influence on the believer, Dr. Denney insisted that an objective Atonement enters into the substance of the Gospel, and that reliance on it is a condition of a living Christianity.'

Where does Professor PATERSON stand here? He stands beside Professor Denney. He says truly enough that it would be absurd to speak of 'men who have held a purely subjective theory of the Atonement, from Abelard to Bushnell, as having forfeited their title to rank as Christians, or to say that as a consequence they imperilled their eternal salvation,' but he holds it true also that 'Christian thought has from the beginning ascribed to the atoning work of Christ an independent value for God, and that when faith in the forgiveness of sins is grounded on a finished work of Christ, Christianity more decisively fulfils its promise of speaking peace to the troubled conscience.'

But the fact of the atonement is one thing, the method of its operation is another. Was Christ in His death a substitute for man and for every man, or was He a representative of mankind, or had His death merely a certain moral value, sufficient to weigh with God against the weight of human sin? Here Professor PATERSON finds himself at a loss.

'Dr. Denney's view,' he says, is 'not easy to grasp, if indeed he held a consistent view from the beginning to the end of his teaching ministry. He sometimes used language which was easily interpreted to mean that he championed the so-called orthodox theory—that sinners of mankind had deserved extreme and everlasting punishment, that Christ took their place and was punished in their room and stead, whereby satisfaction was made to the divine justice, and that it was thus rendered possible for God, on their fulfilment of the annexed conditions of faith and repentance, to accept and treat as righteous the members of our guilty race. But upon this scheme Dr. Denney passed criticisms which, in spite of his expressions of sympathy with it on important points, had the effect of removing the key-stone of the old arch. He could not bring himself to say that Christ was punished, and that there was a transference or imputation of guilt or merit as between the Saviour and the saved, and without these principles the whole orthodox theory loses its coherence and stability. The truth is that Dr. Denney, while refusing to admit the distinction between the fact and the theory of the Atonement, made a laborious search for a satisfactory theory of the *modus operandi* of Christ's sacrifice in procuring the boon of reconciliation, found none which he could adopt in its entirety, and ended by proclaiming that no theory showed so deep spiritual insight as that of MacLeod Campbell, which even Professor A. B. Bruce had spoken of most disrespectfully, and which had been combated by Crawford and Hodge as a fantastic and pernicious novelty.'

It is amazing that we do not understand the Sermon on the Mount even yet. It is more than amazing, it is humiliating. But that we do not understand it yet is one of the things that the war has made perfectly plain to us.

Many attempts at interpretation have been made. But it can scarcely be said that two of them agree together. It might, however, be possible to gather them into two classes, the one (a large and indifferent class) holding that it leaves the Christian open to engage in war if he chooses, the other (a smaller but much more earnest band) vehemently asserting that it makes it utterly and for ever impossible for the follower of Christ to take any part in war.

Both classes cannot be right. Both are probably wrong. But it does not follow that the truth lies somewhere between them. It may be above them, right above them both. Perhaps we shall see that it is so.

The interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount has been attempted by some of the acutest intellects in the history of the Church. But we need not recall their efforts. We ourselves are the heirs of all the ages, and if any light has been thrown in the past on the meaning of Christ's wonderful words, it may be counted certain that we have inherited it. What we shall consider is the contributions which have been made to its interpretation by the theologians of our own day.

First of all, it has been pointed out that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed to Orientals. That point was made most emphatically by the late Principal T. M. LINDSAY of Glasgow. Its best expression will be found in the volume of *College Addresses* published after his death. 'Jesus was an Oriental teacher,' says LINDSAY. 'Oriental teachers make large use of short parables, proverbs, and what are called apopthegms or wise sayings—familiar to the people whom they are trying to instruct, and throw their teaching into that form. Oriental peoples can scarcely understand our direct and definite Western teaching. They are not accustomed to it. It is not familiar to them. The words fall on their ears—words quite plain and intelligible to us—and yet fail to make any impression on their understanding. So much is this the case that many a missionary has failed to make his hearers understand what we should call the plain truths of the Gospel till he has learned a collection of Arabic or Hindu or

Chinese or Swahili proverbs and wise sayings; and when he has illustrated what he has to say by these familiar sayings, he has then been able to make the people understand him.'

Now the thing to observe about a proverb or popular saying is that 'it is seldom or never universally true, and does not hold good in every case. It is often an extreme instance of the universal truth which it teaches. So much is this the case that you may have wise sayings which are almost contradictory. You have an example in the Book of Proverbs (xxvi. 4): "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him"; and verse 5: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."'

Well, says LINDSAY, 'the precepts about non-resistance belong to this class of wise sayings. They are all true. In most cases it is neither wise nor Christian to resist an ill done to us, or to go to law, or to refuse to help a neighbour. But what we have are extreme cases—instances in the extremest form to be imagined of the general principle of Christian love to our neighbour.' And with that interpretation Principal LINDSAY is satisfied.

But it is not sufficient. Entirely true as it is, it does not go all the way. Let us try another.

It has been said that the Sermon on the Mount is addressed to individuals. And so, no doubt, it is. But what is meant is that it is addressed to individuals as individuals and not as members of society. This is the point which Dr. James MARTINEAU in his *Essays and Addresses* attempts to make. 'Christ,' he says, 'demands the renunciation of revenge, which is personal, but does not interfere with the application of retribution, which is social. And this is no fanciful or unintelligible distinction. If the offender strikes me on the right cheek, I am to turn to him the other. But suppose he strikes my mother on the right cheek, am I to look on while he strikes her on the left? Does the precept contemplate any such case? Does it prohibit the generous interposition which flings back insults directed against the innocent, and stands between the defenceless and their oppressor? Not in the least; and if it did, no argument could be heard to prove that such a religion was divine. No; these are simply maxims of *self*-renunciation; not renunciation of our brother's rights, of all struggle for the just and good, of all practical vindication of God's will. They suppose the case when only two persons are present on the scene — the *aggressor* and the *aggrieved*; and teach simply how to deal with the mere *hurt* inflicted on the sufferer's self-love; to suppress the resentment which promotes retaliation; to make no claim *on his own account* against the offender; but in the presence of higher ends to surrender himself to even further harm, and leave the award to a fitter tribunal than his own anger.'

This interpretation is accepted by Canon STREETER. He deals with the subject in the 20th number of the series entitled 'Papers for War Time.' Canon STREETER accepts Dr. Martineau's interpretation and applies it directly to war. '"Love your enemies," said Christ. How can I be said to love those whom I will to bayonet? Is there not a confusion here? "Your enemies," in the text, means those who have done you a personal wrong. The individual soldier has no personal grudge against the individual in the trenches opposite. On occasion he will even fraternize with him. In war opposition is usually —there are, of course, exceptions — quite impersonal. It is the cause, not the individual enemy, that is fought against. If an innocent individual is acting as the instrument of an evil cause, it is better that he should die than that the evil cause should triumph—at least if the evil is on a sufficiently large scale. It is better that some thousands of Germans should die, fighting nobly for what *they* believe a just cause, than that millions of Belgians and Frenchmen should live for generations under a degrading tyranny. And the soldier

who causes their death does not act in hate. Soldiers rarely hate, they normally respect, their enemies, and respect is the beginning of love. "To-morrow," said a Saxon to an Englishman on Christmas Day, "I fight for my country, you for yours."'

Of the same mind is Dean Hastings RASHDALL. In his volume entitled *Conscience and Christ*, Dr. RASHDALL argues, with Martineau and Streeter, that the Sermon on the Mount is addressed to individuals, and he carries the argument a step further. He carries it into politics. He says that the Sermon on the Mount applies to individuals in private life, and has nothing to do with politics or government.

But while Dr. RASHDALL holds that Jesus was never thinking of political problems—the people whom He was addressing having nothing to do with government or the administration of justice—he will not allow any one to draw the conclusion that the follower of Christ now has nothing to do with politics or social questions. 'The principles of ethics,' he says, 'whatever principles they are that we adopt, must necessarily be applicable to all spheres of life. Those who have accepted Christ's principles of conduct must necessarily, when they find themselves in power, regard them as their rule of action in their official or civil capacity as well as in their business life and their private affairs.'

And this at once enables us to see that it is not sufficient as an interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount to say that it is addressed to private individuals. There are no such individuals. In the time of our Lord it may be that those whom he addressed had no votes and could not be summoned to sit on juries, as Dean RASHDALL puts it. Yet they were living in a society just as we are, and could no more keep themselves isolated and apart from the claims of that society than we can. The question of war itself arose very soon. But from the very beginning there was the question, 'Who is my neighbour, and how am I to behave towards him?'

A more important point is made by Mr. C. W. EMMET in the volume of essays entitled *The Faith and the War*. 'The Sermon upon the Mount,' says Mr. EMMET, 'is addressed to those who are, or are understood to become, Christ's own followers. And it calls for considerable progress in Christian right living.' His argument accordingly is that outside the bounds of true Christianity you cannot apply the Gospel of the Sermon on the Mount, you must still be content with the Law. The Law, he says, 'must come before the Gospel in the sense that the principles of justice, honesty, truthfulness, and regard for the fair claims of others must be consistently applied before it is possible to think of non-resistance or a surrender of rights. To attempt to begin with these is not only futile but ethically wrong, since it is building without the necessary foundation.'

This position is taken also by Mr. H. L. GOUDGE in *The War and the Kingdom*. 'The world very naturally finds an occasion of stumbling in our Lord's command not to be anxious about the morrow, but to imitate the insouciance of the birds and flowers. This teaching has been described as some of the most foolish and pernicious teaching ever given by a moralist. And so it would be were it addressed to all the world. But it is not addressed to all the world; it is addressed solely to His own followers, and it is bound up with the special relation in which they stand to God. Like Himself, they are to seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness; they are to be entirely devoted to God and to His service. They are not to be anxious about the things of this life, because, while they live wholly for God, He Himself will provide for their lower needs. But His teaching has no bearing either upon the individual or upon the corporate life of those who do not share His devotion to God, and He Himself implies this: "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal

shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek."'

All this is undeniable. But even this is not enough. Let us turn to a book written by one of the most suggestive thinkers and clearest writers of to-day, Mr. Oliver Chase QUICK. The volume is entitled *The Testing of Church Principles* (Murray; 5s. net).

In the second chapter of that book Mr. QUICK touches on the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. He touches it and no more. For his method always is to throw out a suggestion and pass on. His book is not on that account difficult reading. It can be read easily enough and quickly enough. But the reading of it is of no use; it must be studied. He does not mention any of the proposals for understanding the Sermon on the Mount which have been noticed here. He states at once, and in the fewest possible words, what he understands the true interpretation to be. And this is what he says.

'Christians,' he says, 'have been obstinately slow to understand that the Sermon on the Mount means the substitution, not of one code of rules for another, but of principles, which require thought to apply them, for rules, which appear to carry a self-evident application with them. The command to give alms seems to settle the question whether a particular beggar shall receive a shilling or not. The command "Thou shalt not kill" seems to settle at once the legitimacy of war, though few have been found to interpret it in its obvious sense. But the commands "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself" in themselves settle no such questions; there is no one kind of action which they enjoin in all circumstances. They are principles which must issue in everything we do, but their appropriate expression in act requires thinking and planning in addition to mere goodwill. Hence Christian freedom from bondage to outward commandments really makes a more exacting demand upon effort; for it incorporates into the task of good living, not merely the obedience of the will, but the reasoning powers of the mind.'

Yes, that is the true interpretation. Our Lord laid down no rules of conduct for anybody. He offered principles of life for everybody, and for all circumstances. You may be a follower of His and you may not; the Sermon on the Mount applies to you all the same. It applies to you in private life and in public life; on the magistrate's bench not one whit the less imperatively than in the study or the workshop. Christ spoke immediately to those who were within hearing. No doubt some of them were, He desired that all of them should be, His followers. And He meant to gather them together into that great Kingdom of God which He came to this world to establish. But Christ was a universalist, the only complete universalist that ever lived, and every word He uttered has a universal application. He said, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' Yes, without exception; but before He was lifted up from the earth He addressed Himself to all men without exception.

For He uttered, not rules of conduct, but principles of life—rather one single principle of life, covering all nations, all individuals, and all opportunities of exercise. It is expressed in the one word 'love.' Have the spirit of love to your neighbour, have that in you, He said, and then exercise every faculty you possess in the application of it, as the opportunities of life appear.

But did He not give examples? Did He not tell those who heard Him how to conduct themselves if such and such circumstances should arise? Did He not say, 'If a man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also'? Did He not say, 'Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also'?

These are not examples. They are simply

restatements of the principle. As examples of conduct they are absurd. They are incredible, impossible—all the ugly things that the enemies of Christ have been accustomed to call them. They are not, as they have been taken to be, typical cases according to which a man is to regulate his whole conduct and life. They are simply, we say, restatements of the all-comprehensive principle of love. And they are purposely expressed in an impossible form in order that it might never be possible to take them as examples.

Yet it is just as examples that we have always taken them, and thus landed ourselves in our present chaos of interpretation. There is no evidence, and we do not suppose for a moment, that the early disciples took them so. John understood the law of love and universally applied it. But who has forgotten his encounter with Cerinthus? Paul understood it and applied it. But who has forgotten his encounter with Simon Peter? Peter himself understood it and exercised it as whole-heartedly as any of them. But who has forgotten his encounter with Simon Magus?

Words, words, you say. Yes, words: but words may cut as deep as deeds. And our Lord Himself did not withhold Himself from the act when it was necessary, even the aggressive act, that day He turned the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. One hour you hear His cry, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together'; the next His stern command, 'Take these things hence.' They were both the expression of the one all-comprehending principle of love.

The Christian Hope.

By the Rev. J. M. Shaw, M.A., Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the Presbyterian College, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

In these days many hearts are turning wistfully to the hope of the future life for consolation under the burden of bereavement and desolating sorrow. The secret of the consolation of this hope lies largely in the prospect it offers of reunion with those loved ones who counted not their own lives dear to them that they might secure the liberties and peace of others, and, under God, bring in a new day of truth and righteousness among the nations. What ground have we for cherishing with stablishing and strengthening assurance such a hope and such a prospect? And can we with any degree of certainty and definiteness portray the nature of this future life, its circumstances and conditions?

I.

The hope itself is native to the heart of man. It is the natural and instinctive inclination of man always and everywhere to believe that beyond the tumult and the waste of death there is a continued personal existence. This instinctive or intuitive faith of the normal human heart can be analysed into different elements or component factors with a view to showing its rationality or reasonableness. For one thing, there is the very character or constitution of man's being, his make and mould, which has stamped on it the mark of the infinite and the eternal. That which is distinctive of man, differentiating him from the brute creation—his reason, his affections, his moral and spiritual consciousness—these all imply and demand a life beyond this world of time and sense. By endowing him with desires and aspirations after truth and love and holiness which are not fulfilled in the present, God hath set eternity in man's heart. And if these ambitions and aspirations are given him only to be for ever silenced by death, then not only is human life in its characteristic attributes and 'values' reduced to a mockery and illusion, but the whole long process of evolution which has issued in man ends in an irrational anti-climax, and thereby a fatal blow is struck at our belief in the very reasonableness of the universe. No wonder a well-known scientific writer, approaching the matter just from this point of view, is compelled