

PRECEPT AND PRACTICE

THE EDITOR

THE twin poles of principle and of the human action in which principle is embodied mark the limits of every moral debate. Both are necessary, but principle precedes practice; and the facts of the case are never all of the case. It is important that a Christian judgment on marriage or war or a living wage or anything at all should indeed be seen to reflect the unalterable truth that is the Law of God. Equally it is important to see beyond the ethical abstraction; true and tremendous, but apart from the agony of human decision. It is not Aristotle's famous rational animal who longs and suffers; it is a man with a name and a need. And the truths he lives by, the truths he betrays, are revealed in action that is modified in all its moments by circumstances that range from the weather in the streets to the infinite empire of his mind and will.

A double responsibility, then, belongs to judgment, and neither part is the whole. If it be true that the world about us judges too usually in the light of the facts and the pity of them; if loss of faith has too easily banished the eternal law to the waste land of causes lost and forgotten, it may yet be true that the moralist's judgment can seem remote: a matter of principles that speak little of the pitiless fire of human action as it is. This issue, containing as it does two contributions on what may seem two very different themes by distinguished lawyers, one English, one German, may be a reminder that the enunciation and defence of Christian principles have never been so needed; and never were men's failure and folly so plainly the legacy of their loss. But it is men who fail and are foolish, and the Eternal Truth himself became man that men might come to know the truth and to serve it in loving it.

From July 1st the yearly subscription rate for 'Blackfriars' will be One Guinea (U.S.A. 3 Dollars), single copies 2s. While recent increases in paper and production costs necessitate these new rates, future issues will contain more pages and additional features.