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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE is in the churches a growing demand for purely expository preaching. So many people know so little of the Bible, and the religion of multitudes is so indefinite, that the very first duty of the pulpit, it is held, is to expound the actual content of Scripture. A service like that of the Church of England, with its fixed lectionary, lends itself easily to this. But in forms of worship in which the choice of lesson and topic is left to the minister the temptation is to preach from 'texts,' the more striking and unusual the better.

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As an aid to the better way, a recent book by the Rev. H. F. B. MACKAY would be difficult to surpass. It is called *Some Studies in the New Testament* (Centenary Press; 6s. net). MR. MACKAY has a considerable amount of expository work to his credit already, but his new book is outstanding as an example of the way in which a fresh mind can find and disclose interesting and suggestive things in narratives that are old and familiar. One excellent example is his treatment of the story of Ananias and Sapphira. They died, he contends, from shock. They were not supernaturally executed. They had not realized how horrible their sin was in the estimation of the early Christian community. It was the sudden revelation of this that overwhelmed them. They were suddenly up against the moral atmosphere of a body exalted by the spirit of Christ.

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The exposition which suggested this note, how-

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ever, is one with the heading 'The Christ of Experience,' based on 2 Co 5<sup>14-17</sup>, and we summarize it because it raises certain points of importance at the present time. St. Paul is sketching the ideal Christian community. He is showing the Corinthians a picture of their church as it ought to be and as it might be. And the notes, as he shows them in succession, are these. First, 'One died for all,' that is the first word of the gospel, acceptance of which is the first step towards the Christian life. But, secondly, this means a decision by the disciple, 'then all died.' The only meaning of the acceptance of the gospel message is that we die to the old way of living. Nothing else matters. The ideal Christian community has killed self as a motive and installed Christ in the centre as the motive and power for everything.

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Therefore, thirdly, we don't think any more of 'Christ in the flesh,' the 'Jesus of history.' If any of us have known Jesus Christ in the old external way as a carpenter in Galilee, as a teacher in Jerusalem, we no longer think of Him as such. In Christ there has been a new creation, and the members of the ideal Christian community no longer judge at all after the flesh, do not any longer judge one another so, with an eye to idiosyncrasies, or race, or birth, or capacity, or station, or means, but solely as new creatures in Christ.

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Think what this means. It shows how Jesus Christ was preached in the earliest church. Re-

member, this letter was written twenty-five years after the Ascension, and exhibits a Christian Church which has been founded and equipped for years, and has had time to get into difficulties. The earliest of the written Gospels was not written until fifteen years after this. There are hardly any biographical details about our Lord in the letters of Paul. This is deliberate. The heart of the Church's life was the crucified and risen Christ and the consequent reign of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Baptismal Gate was the dying and rising again in Christ into a life in God.

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The late Dr. Burkitt, Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, asserted that the earliest picture of Jesus Christ, the picture which in the order of time precedes the Four Gospels, is not unfairly summarized in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. Then later come the written Gospels with their reminiscences of our Lord's adorable characteristics. Let nobody have a suspicion that Christianity developed out of an original Unitarianism into a belief in the deity of Christ. The criticism of the New Testament has made it clear that the history of Christianity is the exact reverse of this. The original Christian idea was that no title was too high to give, no homage too high to pay, to the Son of God. Those who became Christians experienced Jesus Christ in His Church.

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That is why it became necessary towards the end of the first century to emphasize the full and true humanity of our Lord. Most of the converts were Gentiles who had been polytheists; this new doctrine of God made Him seem very awful to them. It became difficult for them to think that the Divine Son was really and truly Man. This was the providential moment for the emergence into universal prominence of the Four Gospels, and they are stamped with the Church's imprimatur as enshrining the true account of the manifestation on earth of her Divine Lord.

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There is much sorrow to-day over the weakening of Christianity in England and over the fact that the English are ceasing to go to church. This is the result of the fact that the majority of English

children are not taught Christianity as the earliest Church was taught it. English schools do not focus the attention of their pupils, as the Apostles did, on the cardinal facts of the Creed, keeping back, as a second course, the captivating stories which survive of the sweetness and charm of our Lord's personality. It is a striking fact that, working from a purely historical and scientific standpoint, Professor Burkitt should have demonstrated in effect that the Apostles would have refused to put the Gospels into their pupils' hands until they had mastered the substance of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.

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We English fail to teach Christianity. In every congregation there is a large majority of adults who require to be taught the elements of Christianity from the beginning. 'This is the fault of the preachers. We have failed to exhibit the facts of Revelation to the people in proper scale and proportion. We have found it easier in our scrappy Sunday morning sermons to emphasize the charm and beauty of the earthly ministry than to emphasize the great saving facts. It is easier to speak of the application of wine and oil on the road to Jericho than of the application of the Precious Blood to sinners fallen by the way in daily life.'

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The result is that it is the Jesus of the past who inspires the English, His moral beauty which captivates them, His noble sufferings which nerve them to nobler ways of living. But if this had been the earliest Christianity we should all be pagans to-day. The world was not converted by any of these things. The world was converted not by the Christ of yesterday but by the Christ of to-day, by finding and knowing a living Master who reigns to-day and all days in His Church, who gathers His children into His arms and in the Eucharist feeds them with His own life. At this moment fathers and mothers who are earnest Christians themselves are quite satisfied if they find that at the horribly expensive preparatory school to which they have sent their little boy he is given occasional 'Bible lessons.' These are the people who are destroying English Christianity.

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Preaching from the credal text, 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate,' the Rev. James Alan MONTGOMERY, D.D., Ph.D., Professor in the University of Pennsylvania, considers the subject of *The Christian Creed and History*. His sermon is one of the Hale Memorial series published by the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois (25 cents).

The question is asked at the outset: What is the place of this purely secular, political statement in the Christian Articles of Belief? The answer is that it is indicative of the truth that Christianity is an historical religion. We might have expected an expression of religious rancour, like 'betrayed by the Jews.' But no, the Passion of Christ is stated in terms of world-history.

Of course, all religions are objectively historical in the sense that they are phenomena of history. But on examination distinctions emerge. On the one hand, there are religions without a history, ranging all the way from the so-called primitive religions down to religions like that of Greece, whose history is mythology and the gods the *dramatis personæ*. On the other hand, there are religions tracing back to an historical founder, based on and propagated by sacred books. But these again separate into those without and those with a historic consciousness.

Gautama Buddha was an historical character and can be dated with fair exactness; but, like his India, he possessed no historical consciousness; and his religion, like all of India's thought, belongs to timeless eternity. Zoroaster developed indeed a panorama of historical cycles; but he was concerned with the eternal conflict of good and evil, and it is perhaps significant that there is wide divergence among scholars as to his date.

Of the three religions of historical character that remain, Islam is also unhistorical in its fundamental consciousness. The Koran is as history a jumble of odd historical facts, legends, and fables drawn from all quarters. It is not accidental that the Arab traditionalists and historians began their

dating with the year one of the Flight (A.D. 622); for them there was no history prior to that date.

The Jews, on the other hand, dated and still date from the creation of the world. A current English Jewish journal published in New York is dated 5695; and only very slowly did the Christian Church begin to date by years of the Lord. Thus, over against its peers and rivals in religious history, the Bible, with its Old Testament as the sacred book of Judaism, with the Old and the New Testaments authoritative for the Christian Church, is primarily a historical deposit. And this deposit is the basis of its belief.

The doctrine of the Incarnation as climax of an historical process is the new thing in the Christian religion. But notice that the Word which became flesh is linked up with the Creation story in the first chapter of Genesis: 'In the beginning was the word; all things were made through him.' The Word is the key to the history of Creation and the human race. If we date by *anno domini*, we do so because there has now been revealed the key and explanation of all that came before.

Thus history is not only a part but the peculiar *differentia* of the Christian Creed. That Creed begins with some general theistic statements about the one Creator-God; it concludes with beliefs and hopes common to higher religions concerning divine inspiration, religious fellowship, and life after death. But the great central portion of it deals with a phenomenon in history, namely, the birth, life, death, and triumph of a man who was Son of God Incarnate. It is not an idle or superfluous statement that declares Him to have 'suffered under Pontius Pilate.' It integrates Him into the very chronology of human history.

An unusually frank and courageous treatment of the difficulties raised by the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is supplied by Principal H. Maldwyn HUGHES, M.A., D.D., in his valuable book, *The Christian Idea of God* (Duckworth; 5s. net). Even

more welcome are the tentative suggestions he puts forward to meet perplexities widely felt, but not often confessed as such.

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Dr. HUGHES thinks that perhaps the main solvent of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity is 'the prevalent uncertainty as to the meaning of the Holy Spirit.' He reminds us that many to-day tend to identify the Spirit with the Living Christ, and that 'it is becoming increasingly clear that there is room to doubt whether in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is regarded as a distinct hypostasis.'

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Some, he says, who repudiate the traditional doctrine of the Trinity are Trinitarians on philosophical grounds; others are content to accept the Trinity of Revelation, without further inquiry; others, again, claim that the doctrine can be confessed because it safeguards the Christlikeness of God, without necessarily accepting the traditional distinction of persons. Besides these three classes there are the orthodox and those who interpret the doctrine in a Tritheistic or a Sabellian sense.

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That Dr. HUGHES has correctly diagnosed the existing situation can hardly be denied. How has the position come about? The answer can only be that the need for formulating a doctrine of the Holy Spirit was not at first realized, and that, when it was realized, the New Testament data were found to be difficult of interpretation. Of the difficulty there can be no doubt, for sometimes the Spirit appears to be spoken of as a Person and sometimes as a manifestation of God or of Christ.

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Dr. HUGHES sees the need for constructive thinking, and he knows where the process should begin. It should begin with the conception, clearly presented by Augustine, of the Holy Spirit 'as the indwelling Power of God in the genesis, maintenance, and consummation of the Christian life.' 'May it not be,' he asks, 'that speculatively the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as the Godhead (Father and Son) immanent in or indwelling men?' 'To the Christian (and only to the Christian),' he adds,

'this means God immanent with all the meaning and moral content of Jesus Christ.'

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Dr. HUGHES does not object to the adjective 'personal' as applied to the Holy Spirit, or to the use of *homoousios*, but he doubts if the Spirit can be called 'Person' in the same sense as the other Two. He thinks, however, that 'this is simply a matter of words,' and that 'without straining the truth' we may still speak of the Holy Trinity, 'for the immanent activity of the Father and the Son is an essential element in the Christian doctrine of the Godhead.' 'On this line of interpretation, the Godhead consists of the Father and the Son, whose personal indwelling in men is known as the Holy Spirit. It would seem therefore that those are right who speak of the Holy Spirit as "proceeding from the Father and the Son," or "from the Father through the Son."'

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Not so very long ago, as years count, such boldness of statement would have called for disciplinary inquiry. Earlier still, it would have meant prison and perhaps the stake. To-day, however, we are less certain that truth is advanced by violence. We believe rather that blows prove nothing and that violent words are a confession of defeat. It follows, therefore, that readers who do not like Dr. HUGHES' views must meet them by solid argument.

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We must confess that opponents of such views face a stern task. Little is achieved by a mere insistence on the traditional teaching of the Church, important as this undoubtedly is. It is necessary to come to terms with the New Testament. What is the meaning of the Synoptic data, and how are we to estimate the evidence supplied by the Acts of the Apostles? What are we to make of St. Paul's approximation of the idea of the Holy Spirit to that of the living, indwelling Christ? How are we to interpret the sayings in Jn 14-16? It is for the objector to say.

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Meantime, Dr. HUGHES claims solid advantages for his line of approach. It 'meets the philo-

To say the least, the tenth series of 'Problems of Peace' is as good as any of its predecessors; and that is saying a good deal. It is entitled *Anarchy or World Order* (Allen & Unwin; 7s. 6d. net) and consists of thirteen chapters based on lectures delivered to the Geneva Institute of International Affairs by such well-known publicists as F. P. Walters, R. B. Mowat, W. Arnold Foster, J. B. Whitton, C. K. Streit, C. A. W. Manning, and others of the like calibre. The subjects are such as International Anarchy, American Neutrality, The Elements of World Order, The Future of the Collective System. It is all very convincing and reasonable, but the present pitiful international situation is apt to make some of it sound academic and unreal.

A few recent papers by Professor Max Planck have been translated by Mr. W. H. Johnston and published under the title of *The Philosophy of Physics* (Allen & Unwin; 4s. 6d. net). The title may rouse expectations which so small a book is hardly able to fulfil. Of course everything that Planck writes is characterized not only by scientific accuracy but by ripe wisdom and a finely balanced judgment. To those, however, who are at all familiar with his previous work this little book will bring nothing new, while to those who are not already familiar with the ground it covers it will perhaps be somewhat obscure in its brevity. It deals mainly with the problem of causality as affected by the emphasis now being laid on the Indeterminacy of the atom. Planck, as is well known, takes sides against the Indeterminists, and argues in favour of strict causality when properly stated. At the same time, unlike Einstein, he firmly upholds moral freedom. 'In my opinion there is not the slightest contradiction between the domination of a strict causality in the sense here adopted and the freedom of human will.' The arguments by which he maintains this position are penetrating and impressive. Two or three closing pages on Science and Faith leave the reader with a feeling of regret that Planck did not write much more on this great topic.

An interesting little essay in psychology is published under the somewhat unattractive title of *Selves and Their Good*, by Helen Wodehouse (Allen & Unwin; 3s. 6d. net). The general position taken is that the self is not an enclosed or isolated unit whose needs are in sharp opposition to the non-self, but the two are in close contact along a boundary not easily to be defined. Problems discussed are

the meaning of a man's own good, the relation of self-realization and self-transcendence, and the possibility of conflict between self and the common good. These topics are discussed with competence and care, but much too briefly to be of any great value.

In the re-issue of the famous 'Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges,' *The Gospel according to St. Luke* is done by the Rev. H. K. Luce, B.D., Headmaster of Durham School (Cambridge University Press; 6s. net). The Introduction includes essays on 'The Study of the Gospels' and on the authorship, date, and sources. In the former a brief but exceedingly clear and intelligent account is given of 'Form-criticism,' which will be useful to beginners. In the appendices there is a thorough treatment of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus as well as an account of contemporary Judaism. The commentary is full and scholarly. There is, in short, a complete apparatus furnished to the student for the understanding of the text and the background, and the reputation which this series has long enjoyed will be deservedly sustained by the present volume.

In these days when not merely Christian doctrines but the Christian standard of morality is assailed on a wide front, it is well that the Decalogue should be studied afresh and its precepts interpreted in their application to the modern world. *Do the Ten Commandments Stand To-day?*, by Mr. J. Parton Milum, B.Sc., Ph.D. (Epworth Press; 3s. 6d. net), is an excellent treatment of this subject. A chapter is given to each of the Ten Commandments under such titles as Modern Idolatry, Leisure and Worship, The Revolt of Youth, The Marriage Vow. The exposition is simple but quite admirable. At the outset some interesting information is given about laws and law-givers of the Mosaic Age, as revealed by recent archæology, and an epilogue is added dealing with the question of How Does God Speak?

*The Measure of a Christian*, by the Rev. Arthur Simmons, B.A. (Epworth Press; 2s. 6d. net), is a study of the Beatitudes in which the writer seeks to show what they mean in terms of the life of to-day. The chapters originally appeared in 'Groups' as a series of monthly articles, but reference to the Group Movement is not obtruded, and nothing will be found in these pages to which even the keenest critic of the Groups could take exception. The treatment is clear and simple, the teaching

very wholesome and Christian, while the pages are lit up with a profusion of apt quotations.

We would direct attention to a volume of sermons published by the Epworth Press (3s. 6d. net). The title of the volume is *The Terrible Meek*, and the author the Rev. Charles Kellett, who is already known by his earlier work, 'The Transfigured Commonplace.' These are a few of his subjects: 'The Christian Art of Forgetting,' 'The Real Self,' 'Apocalyptic Life,' 'Simplicity of Life,' and 'Love Banishes Fear.' We have given the last in an abridged form in 'The Christian Year.' It will be seen from this sample that this is a volume which the preacher would do well to procure.

We have received a copy of 'Inter-Varsity Papers,' No. 3, being a publication of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions, Chalmers House, London. It is entitled *Inspiration and Authority* (3d.), and is from the pen of the Rev. T. C. Hammond, M.A., Trinity College, Dublin. It is a thoughtful study in the character of inspiration and the problems of authority. The author is convinced that much of the objection to verbal inspiration arises from a wrong employment of words.

*Vita Christi*, by Mother St. Paul (Longmans; 5s. net), contains a series of about thirty simple Bible readings dealing with incidents in the closing days of our Lord's earthly life. It is the last of five volumes of similar meditations issued under the same title and covering the whole of Christ's public ministry. The book is full of wholesome Christian teaching and its spirit is warmly devotional. At the close an index to the five volumes is added, together with a list of the meditations arranged in the order of the Christian year.

In 1918 L. V. Hodgkin wrote a charming 'Book of Quaker Saints.' We are not surprised that there have been requests for a cheaper edition. And so now the first half of the earlier volume has been reprinted in the 'New Eversley Series' with the title *A Little Book of Quaker Saints* (Macmillan; 3s. 6d. net). It is no common gift to be able to make the stories of these earlier Friends living, but she has done this, and indeed has had to omit the actual sufferings of children, because a young critic could not bear to read of them, and said, 'It does not matter so much what happens to grown-up people, because I can always skip that bit; but if anything

bad is going to happen to children, you had better leave it out of your book altogether.'

In *Robert Grossetête, the Defender of our Church and Liberties* (S.P.C.K.; 5s. net), Mr. B. C. Boulter has given a scholarly and most readable account of the life, ideals, and work of one of the most interesting of English Churchmen. Grossetête was a devout son of the Church and at the same time a typical and patriotic Englishman. He aimed at Reform, not revolution; he strove to secure ordered liberty; he disliked dictatorship whether in king or pope; intelligent study of the Bible was to him fundamental, and he laboured to place in his parishes clerics who should be both learned and truly pious.

The story of the peasant's son who rose to lead Parliament and be Chancellor of Oxford is well told; and we congratulate the author on an excellent handling of an excellent subject.

*A Magic Casement*, by Mr. Frederick H. Haines, F.C.I.B. (Pure Thought Press; 6s. net), has for its sub-title 'The Book of Love,' and this sub-title is descriptive of it in so far as it can be described. The theme is love, human and divine, with a considerable amount of attention given to sex and family life. The aim of the writer is to purify thought on these subjects and to emphasize love as spiritual. He writes with an impetuous rush of feeling, but his thought is somewhat vague and formless throughout. While flinging out jibes at dogma he is himself exceedingly dogmatic, and unless the reader is prepared to surrender his judgment and let himself be carried along with a flood of rhetoric, he is not likely to find the book convincing.

*Churches, Sects, and Religious Parties*, by the Rev. G. W. Butterworth, Litt.D. (S.P.C.K.; 3s. net), is a popular little book containing a deal of useful information about various branches of the Christian Church and semi-Christian parties, but it cannot be ranked high for historic accuracy and balance of judgment. It is written from the standpoint of the Church of England. That Church is placed in the centre, and all others deviate from it by way either of excess or defect. A curiously illogical division is made between the Historic Churches (which include, besides the English, Roman, and Greek Churches, Protestantism, Evangelicalism, and Modernism) and the Free Churches such as Presbyterian, Congrega-

tional, and Baptist, as if these had no history. The tone throughout is kindly but at the same time, no doubt unconsciously, patronizing, and the happy state of things portrayed in the Church of England must be judged to be the product of fond fancy.

Probably it is hopeless to try to correct the hoary old slander that Servetus was 'burnt at Calvin's instigation.' As a matter of fact, Calvin was not a member of the Court which condemned Servetus, and he used every effort to have the sentence altered, but being at that time out of favour with the authorities in Geneva he met with no success.

It is not often that a writer describes his book as 'comments and quotations,' but that is how the Rev. Huw Edwards, M.A., describes in the sub-title his book *Jesus Christ the Word of God* (Stockwell; 7s. 6d. net). It deals with such great themes as the Pre-existence of Christ, the Incarnation, the Personality of Jesus, the Atonement, Resurrection, and Exaltation. For the exposition of these the

writer has diligently collected statements of leading theologians and religious writers, both ancient and modern, and has very skilfully dovetailed them together. The book accordingly is little more than a catena of quotations, but it may serve a very useful purpose, for the quotations are carefully chosen and the whole exposition proceeds very closely on Biblical lines. An index of the authors quoted would have been a welcome addition.

Dom Bernard Clements, O.S.B., has issued in book form the talks which he gave in 1935 over the air on Prayer—*When Ye Pray* (S.C.M.; 2s. 6d. net). They are very simple and practical. Directions are given for the cultivation of the habits and spirit of prayer, and the commonest difficulties are discussed, at least all the difficulties that arise from experience, like unanswered prayers, wandering thoughts, and 'dryness' of soul. The author is direct and unconventional, and takes nothing for granted. These talks must have helped many when they were heard, and the impression will be deepened by their literary form.

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## The Second Commandment.

BY THE REVEREND PRINCIPAL H. WHEELER ROBINSON, M.A., D.D., REGENT'S PARK COLLEGE, OXFORD.

FOR most of us the second commandment has passed into a metaphor, such as that of Cowper's hymn:

The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be;  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
And worship only thee.

This means that the commandment ceases to have much, if any, direct or practical bearing on life. But a deeper realization of the meaning of the commandment will show us that the principle involved does clearly affect religion of every type as much to-day as ever. The principle is that of mediation. The quality of a religion and its chief characteristics are usually decided by the quality of its media. The conception of God and the conception of man held at any one time and in any one area are often common to a number of different types of religion. But the links between God and man, the ways in which contact is established, in which man approaches God, and God approaches

man, may be very different. It is these which give the characteristic colour to any particular type of religion; that is why sacramental theory is so often the battleground of opposing types.

(1) The second commandment forbids the making of a carved image in the form of any creature as an object of worship. The principle underlying this command may be seen in Dt 4<sup>15-19</sup>, where it is said that Israel saw no manner of form on the day that God spoke out of the midst of the fire in Horeb. Any form, that is, would be unworthy of the God of Israel, the God who is known by what He does, and who is defined in the introduction to the Decalogue as the God who brought Israel out of Egypt. This statement of the principle, and indeed this commandment itself in all probability, go back to the work of the eighth-century prophets, notably Hosea and Isaiah. Their opposition to idols is no mere incident of their attack on religious abuses. The great prophets of Israel had come to find the supreme revelation of God in their own consciousness and in