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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.

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 4¹⁵⁻¹⁹, 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

the interpretation of history by its moral standards. Here was the true representation of Yahweh which made any resort to the material emblem an impertinence as well as a corrupting influence. It had not always been so. We know little of the religion of Israel in its nomadic period, but there is no evidence that the use of images as representative of Yahweh belonged to that period (this is the most serious argument against the Mosaic authorship of the commandment).

The large amount of idolatry which is traceable in Israel after its settlement in Canaan was in all probability developed under Canaanite influence. In this period there can be no doubt that Yahweh was represented at the local sanctuaries by the form of a small bull (1 K 12^{28ff.}). We get an instructive glimpse of the part taken by idols in private worship through the well-known story of Micah (Jg 17). Against all such practices prophets and psalmists imply with scorn that the maker of an idol is himself more than the idol (Is 44^{9ff.}, Ps 115^{4ff.}). In the exilic and post-exilic periods, the very associations of idolatry would have been enough to condemn it; as Moore says: 'Idolatry was the universal concomitant of polytheism, and the Jews made no difference between them' (*Judaism*, i. 362). But there is more than this in the condemnation uttered by prophets and psalmists; there is implicitly the positive principle from which the higher prophecy springs, namely, that God must be known and worshipped through the highest capacities of man, spiritual rather than physical.

(2) The significance of this attitude as a preparation for the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation should not be overlooked. The true argument from prophecy is indeed to be found along such lines of spiritual continuity rather than through the casual coincidence of a phrase or an incident. If the consciousness of a Jeremiah can be made the adequate vehicle of the revelation of God, and if Jeremiah himself can turn from the visible temple to the invisible God whom he has come to know in the travail of his own soul, then we already have the Biblical principle by which to approach the Incarnation. Jesus was in the eyes of His disciples a prophet mighty in word and deed before they were constrained to recognize in Him the Messiah. So also in later days, whatever elaborations of Christology were formed, theologians had always to work on the data of the prophetic consciousness as they were exemplified in Jesus. His disciples have repeatedly been led to use the highest categories they knew in trying to explain His unique personality.

But in every recognition of His divine nature, their knowledge of Him must be based on a human nature so surrendered to the will of the Father as to present itself not only as the highest point of our humanity, but also as God manifest in the flesh.

The divine is known in and through its image, though this image is not in the physical, but in the spiritual characteristics of Jesus. This is in full accord with the cardinal distinction between man and God drawn by Isaiah: 'the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit' (31³), a distinction between flesh (*basar*) and spirit (*ruach*), which, as Duhm rightly discerned, forms the *motif* of the subsequent religious development to 1 Co 15. This distinction is not an unbridged dualism, for the Spirit of God can work and does work in the hearts of men, and thus the Spirit makes the flesh its sacramental unfolding, if its partial disguise. So also the manner of the deeper and fuller revelation of God in Jesus Christ itself provides a moral challenge and test (since the response to the spiritual must be itself spiritual), and also offers a significant example of the trust placed by the Father of spirits in the human spirits whom He has created. Here Canon Lilley's words may usefully be quoted: 'That God should tabernacle with men without ever declaring Himself openly, that He should to the last as it were jealously preserve His incognito, and yet trust men to recognize Him for what He really was, is surely an instance of belief in the spiritual capacity of man such as man himself would always shrink from claiming.'¹

St. Paul uses the same word (*εἰκών*) of man as being made in the likeness of God (1 Co 11⁷ 15⁴⁹, Col 3¹⁰), in accordance with Gn 1²⁷ (LXX), as he does of Christ, the image of God (2 Co 4⁴), the manifestation of the unseen God (Col 1¹⁵), into the image of whose glorified being the believer is eventually to be transformed (Ro 8²⁹, 2 Co 3¹⁸).

(3) This is one great, indeed the greatest, application of the positive principle involved in the prophetic consciousness of which the negative is the second commandment. But it is evident that the principle applies not only to the Incarnation, but to every means of worship. At some periods of Christian thought it has been urged that the Incarnation justifies the use of images, or that the use of images is a visible confirmation of the truth of the Incarnation. Here of course we must distinguish between the image and the idol, whatever be our personal or ecclesiastical attitude to the use of images at all. One outcome of the icono-

¹ *Religion and Revelation*, 110.

clastic controversy was the distinction made at the Second Council of Nicæa (787), a distinction confirmed in 1563 at the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent, between a legitimate veneration of images and an idolatrous worship of them. This distinction should be kept in mind more carefully by Protestants. These may feel that there is danger in the use of all material emblems, but this is quite a different thing from identifying images with idols. The idol may be regarded as an extension of the fetish when power is ascribed to it, or when, as in primitive times, it is regarded as part of the very nature of the superhuman power with which it is connected, as a man's shadow was then felt to be a part of himself. But our attitude to the use of *images* is a matter of expediency rather than of principle, since we can none of us dispense with some kind of representation of the God we worship even though it be but the mental image. Bunyan's experience, in his 'dark night of the soul', is the more suggestive because of its *naïveté*. He tells us (*Grace Abounding*, § 108), 'when . . . I have laboured to compose my mind, and fix it upon God; then with great force hath the tempter laboured to distract and confound me, and to turn away my mind, by presenting to my heart and fancy the form of a bush, a bull, a besom, or the like, as if I should pray to these.' The passage is instructive, because it helps us to see the genesis of the concrete image in the mind of the primitive worshipper. In Bunyan, of course, it simply illustrates a morbid twist of that imagination to which we owe his masterpiece.

Religion cannot dispense with 'imagination', and there is no difference of *principle* in the vivid imagination of God as the Ancient of days, or of Jesus Christ amongst the golden candlesticks, and the statue or picture which embodies such imagination, without being identified with deity. As a matter of fact, the Orthodox Church differs from the usage of the Catholic by employing pictures and rejecting solid statues, whilst the Protestant nowadays often accepts a cross where he would repudiate a crucifix. In this present tendency of Protestantism the impartial judge may discern the consciousness that the more sensuous imagery of catholicizing types of religion has a power over the ordinary man which the more puritan type of worship does not possess. Again, it is a question of expediency rather than principle, even if common practice draws more or less definite limits. Many reverent Protestants would sympathize with Sir Thomas Browne's words: 'At the sight of a Crose or Crucifix I can dispenche with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour. . . . I could

never heare the *Ave Marie* Bell without an elevation . . . whilst therefore they directed their devotions to her, I offered mine to God.' This may remind us of an incident in the life of Stephen Grellet, the Quaker. When he was visiting an Italian convent, he passed some girls who were kneeling before an image of the Madonna, but showed no signs of reverence as they talked and laughed to one another. When he was given an opportunity of speaking to them a little later, he took occasion to rebuke them for their irreverence, though he abhorred their images.

(4) It need hardly be said that the second commandment raises the great question of the relation of art to religion and of the place of æsthetic values in the Kingdom of God. Perhaps the only art which was really native to Israel and achieved a unique success was that of the religious lyric as we see it in the Psalms, itself largely influenced by the prophetic use of poetry. It might be debated whether the prophetic attitude to image-making fettered or destroyed the artistic capacities of the Jew, or whether, on the other hand, the rooted religious passion of the Hebrew which flowered into prophecy was itself alien from artistic achievement. But we certainly must not show any sympathy with Renan's famous sneer at St. Paul at Athens when 'his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols.' Renan apostrophizes the sculptures of Athens—'True gods and true goddesses'—with the remark, 'the mistake of this ugly little Jew will be your death-warrant.' The question here, of course, is whether St. Paul's attitude to images of gods and goddesses was such a mistake after all. At least we may say in justice to the puritan spirit that it surrenders something good in itself in order to achieve a greater good. The law of achievement is concentration; the Bible would not be the supreme book of religion if it had not concentrated on the moral approach to the spiritual even at the cost of the æsthetic. Every religious community must ask itself to-day, how far that attitude ought to be, or can be, maintained. But the question cannot be properly answered unless we go back to first principles and see clearly why the prophets and the prophetic legislators abjured the tangible and visible image in the worship of God. It may be urged with some truth that the danger then was of association with heathenism, a danger which in its ancient form no longer exists. It may also be urged, and again with truth, that there is a very real approach to the true by way of the beautiful as well as by way of the good, and that our worship of the God of Truth ought to include both. But worship

is not necessarily deprived of beauty because a self-denying ordinance is passed against the use of images. The beauty of a great literature is already there in the Bible, and still gleams through the muddy vesture of the usual manner in which it is publicly read. Architecture may express the sublimities of religion, without constraining and confining them. Music is so ethereal in its structure that it runs no risk, at any rate when it is music, of overlaying the heavenly with the earthly. Intelligent devotion will recognize that all these things are but symbols of something too great for their expression, and religious sympathy will leave room for many types of worship to make their appeal to the many types of worshippers. The ground of decision will be practical rather than theoretical, and may vary for different individuals and in different circumstances. The one essential Christian rule is, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,' whatever may be added thereto.

(5) Finally, the second commandment bears on that most subtle and elusive of all forms of mediation—the use of words and particularly of metaphor. This has been partly indicated by Bacon in his famous classification of the four great classes of 'Idols', namely, those of the Tribe, of the Cave, of the Market-place, and of the Theatre. It is the third class which here concerns us—those of the Market-place, *i.e.* those that spring from the use of words in human intercourse: 'men believe,' he says, 'that their reason governs words; but it is also true that words react on the understanding' (*Novum Organum*, lix), and he gives, as one kind of idol so imposed, the 'Prime Mover' of his *bête noire*, Aristotle. We may take the phrase as a type of the metaphor which has had so great a history in theology. Perhaps there is no line of doctrine

which has not suffered in this way, by the erection of a system upon a name, without regard to the fact that in such high matters the human name can express, and only imperfectly express at most, but one aspect of the whole reality, even if it corresponds to some reality. Think, for example, of the doctrine of the Atonement, the most notorious instance, and how the figures of ransom, sacrifice, penalty, satisfaction, and all the rest have been expanded into systems of soteriology. The metaphor can in this way easily become an idol which tyrannizes over the understanding and narrows the whole outlook. Even in that highest of all examples, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the names Father and Son and Holy Spirit have been used in forgetfulness that they are only human metaphors, however great and essential they may be for religion. Fatherhood and Sonship have become only too often the basis of a binitarian theology, with the Third Person reduced to a mere relation between them. The metaphor of fatherhood has the highest consecration in *religion*, but the theologian does well to remember that even this is a metaphor drawn from human relations, and not a metaphysical basis for speculation.

These last examples will serve to remind us how difficult it is to obey the second commandment. In a different way, it was difficult, very difficult for the ancient world, which stood amazed before the spectacle of an imageless religion, the hard-won trophy of prophetic witness and martyrdom. But for us, as for the Jew, obedience to the commandment is the essential condition of a truly spiritual religion. It is a command to us Christians to endure as seeing the invisible, and to worship Him who is Spirit in spirit and in truth, whatever be the media of our worship.

Religion and History.¹

BY THE REVEREND PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER R. NORTH, M.A., HANDSWORTH COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM.

IT is significant that the only religions which conceive of any meaning, not to speak of a redemptive purpose and activity of God, in history, are those which originated in a Semitic environment, namely,

¹ Part of an address given before the Oriental Society of the University College, Cardiff, on February 10th, 1936.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is significant, too, that these are the only genuinely monotheistic religions. Of them, the conception of a religious philosophy of history is less prominent in Islam than it is in Judaism and Christianity. In so far as Islam has such a philosophy it is due to its Jewish-Christian antecedents, rather than essential