

Clowney on the 2nd Commandment: Discussion

Introduction

Clowney begins with a quotation of the second commandment: ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments (Ex. 20.4-6).

1. What does Clowney assume about 20.4-6 *in relation to* 20.3 in contrast to the Roman Catholic position indicated in the following quote regarding the 1st commandment: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them"? We will tackle this major difference later.

Clowney assumes that the first commandment is in verse 3 and the 4-6 gives the second; whereas Rome combines 3-6 into a single commandment marking it as the 1st.

2. How does Clowney answer (on p. 28) the striking claim of a "Christian" minister (Fosdick) that we break the 2nd when we worship Christ as the image of God (23)?

Only God can make an image of Himself

See Hebrews 1, Christ as the exact image of God; God the Father commands angels and us to worship His Son whom He addresses as God on the throne.

3. What does it mean for man to be the image of God (24-25)?

Not reason, say, above animals so we are His image

Man male and female, man in his wholeness as a material-immaterial whole is to reflect God in the world in holiness of the truth (Col. 3; Eph 4); thus we are made more and more in the likeness of Christ in redemption and sanctification.

4. Clowney speaks to the danger of breaking the 2nd by worshipping images of the body of Jesus (cf. creating a mood for worship by means of a crucifix, 29). He notes that the NT does not give us a vivid physical description of Jesus that could yield a new form of idolatry (29). He suggests that attempts at realistic portrayals of the gospel story in film "may have gone overboard" (29). What good point do these misguided attempts contain over against the Docetic heresy (30)?

Docetic heresy (word for appearance as in our text today in Heb. 4.1): an old heresy, that Jesus merely appeared to have a body (some of this view taught that Jesus sat in a tree and laughed when some substitute for Him with a body died on the cross.

Good to emphasize the physicality of Jesus (as the misguided and misleading portraits and films do at least); there is no salvation for us without His bodily resurrection and ours!

5. How does Clowney explain a good use of image when it comes to portraying Jesus (to children in SS and to adults through artistic painting, 31-32)?

Portrait is the problem (trying to be exact is both impossible and wrong)

Stick figures are a good alternative that represent human shape without specificity.

Rembrandt has a striking painting of Peter's denial

6. How is a literal form of idolatry becoming more and more a contemporary phenomena (34)?

Shrinking globe with representations for reverence and worship in the malls

7. Without falling into literal forms of idolatry, how might we be idolaters and what is the answer to “Christian” forms of remnant idolatry (35-36)?

Cf. materialism is idolatry

Conclusion

Do you have any further questions or comments on this chapter in Clowney?

This may be for later work after Clowney

Deuteronomy 4:15-19 ¹⁵ "Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, ¹⁶ beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷ the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, ¹⁸ the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. ¹⁹ And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

Cf. Adam on worshipping God according to His word in Deut, 4.2 and 15-19