

Review and Summary on the 2nd Commandment

Introductory Matters

- 1) Numbering the Ten: we should not combine the first two and problematically split the last. The 1st is in Ex. 20.3 (Jewish tradition includes 20.2 as part of the 1st). The 2nd is in Ex. 20.4-6 (vs. Catholic/Lutheran: 3-6; they split 20.17). Note: correct numbering shows that the *use of statues in worship* is prohibited.
- 2) A good use of “images” when it comes to portraying Jesus to children in SS: 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 (Clowney).
- 3) Praying to Mary –to get to God- while bowing before a statue of her violates both 1st & 2nd

1A. The Regulative Principle

- 1) What is the regulative principle in the history of reformed theology?

In general, the regulative principle of worship means “that for all the modes and elements of worship there must be authorization from the Word of God” (Murray, *Collected Writings*, I, 168). In particular, Murray says, “The Reformed principle is that the acceptable way of worshipping God is instituted by Him, and so limited by His revealed will that he may not be worshipped in any other way than that prescribed in the Holy Scripture, that what is not commanded is forbidden. This is in contrast to the view that what is not forbidden is permitted.”

- 2) How does the regulative principle key into worship?

God is jealous regarding how we are to worship Him (cf. the ground, Ex. 20.5, **for I the LORD your God am a jealous God**). He must tell us how to worship Him in a way that pleases Him.

Bottom Line: we need God’s regulation regarding everything we do in public worship.

Per Hart (*Reverence and Awe*): RP is not a Puritan invention; it has roots deep in reformed theology; it is not being hyperscrupulous and narrow-minded; it wisely takes total depravity into account; and it promotes Christian liberty (worshippers are not bound to men).

2A. On the Regulation of Singing Psalms (hymns & spiritual songs): Q of Exclusive Psalmody

1B. Things that bring EP into question

- 1) To sing psalms is not a command to sing the Psalter (the 150)

It is not a command to sing psalms exclusively, but it is a command to sing psalm-like praises to God; these praises have new covenant revelation as their content.

- 2) To sing hymns is to sing praises to God; it may be the praise expression of a Psalm.

- 3) To sing spiritual songs is to sing poetry intended for song.

The content is to reflect the newness of fulfillment as Spirit-given divine revelation.

4) EP involves the people of God in not only uninspired interpretation, but in private interpretation that is in the mind and not codified in writing for inspection, sifting, and correction. This correction is the way to the best kind of singing in relation to the preached word that singing serves in public worship of the church as the pillar and ground of the truth.

2B. EP argument fails but what supports the use of uninspired songs?

1) To obey the command to sing the gospel of Christ (Eph. 5.19), we must now go to the product of that singing and those revelatory gifts that we have in the NT form of the apostolic oral tradition that gradually became the written foundation of the church. We do that by good interpretation of the new covenant gospel, which means by uninspired composition.

2) The words that many Psalms command for singing are not the words of the Psalm but uninspired words that will reflect future deliverance (cf. Ps. 9; 105). Psalms are not necessarily self-referring.

3) Imprecatory Psalms reveal that some Psalms are not appropriate for NT singing: if not for praying [per Jesus in the Sermon], then they are not for singing. But we can *fallibly* interpret, codify in composition, and sing them in light of the newness of our place in the history of redemption.

3A. On the Regulation of Instrumental Accompaniment

Ephesians 5.19 directs us back to the Psalms but not to those marked by poetic exaggeration; from applicable Psalms we get either singing without IA or singing with stringed IA. What we find of God’s regulation is that if singing has accompaniment it is stringed. The HR move, OT to NT, is to simplicity; additions beyond strings go against the grain of progress in the history of redemption.

4A. On the Regulation of Public Reading and Prayer

The Westminster directory of worship appears to go beyond biblical warrant (and God’s regulation) in its claim that public reading of Scripture and prayer is restricted to ministers/elders only. The command is that men, not just elders, pray with holy hands or clean lives. If women could prophecy in apostolic times *and thus read in post-apostolic times*, then men can also read as well as pray. By good and necessary inference, we have God’s regulation that accords with the priesthood of all NT believers.