

A newspaper cartoon shows two sailors coming out of church. Obviously they had heard a sermon on the 10 commandm, for one was saying to the other: "Well, as least I haven't made any graven images".

Well, I guess nobody makes golden calves anymore. But it may be that this ancient teaching - that we should have but one God - is relevant to our time.

Henry Fairlie has written:

People are inventing gods for themselves, with what I have elsewhere call their "Do-It-yourself God Kits". But they are gods who do not demand much of them, and they certainly are not gods who punish, although they are allowed to reward. On the contrary, their gods absolve them from conflict and doubt, massage them, pat them on the head, and ... tell them to run along, get stoned if they will, pick marigolds, and love. So easy it is to love. But above all they are gods who do not trouble them with the fact of evil. The problems of evil, suffering, and death are not confronted, but evaded and dismissed..."

Allowing for some cautious exaggeration in Fairlie's words, let us acknowledge the truth of the proposition that people are worshipping gods other than Yahweh, the Lord God. And so, these words of Moses speak to our time: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and

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when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon
thine hand, and they shall be frontlets between thy eyes. And
thous shalt write them on the post of thy house, and on thy gates".

What practical instructions for us. "The Lord our God is
one God . . . and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all
thine heart, and with all thine soul, and with all thy might".

Aristotle once said it was absurd for a man to love God.
The greek and roman pagans did not love their gods. One has
to come to the Bible, with the God who lovingly created
the earth, and fashioned man in his own image: one has to come
to the Bible, with its revelation of God in Jesus Christ, to
see a God who can be loved.

Note now what we are to do about this God we can love.

1. We are to teach it - "and thou shalt teach them dili-
gently. That is our responsibility as we acknowledge our
love for God, to teach it to the children. Often fathers need
to heed that word. We honor Mary ~~1/2~~ as the mother of Jesus but
may overlook Joseph's contribution to Jesus' early training.
In our day, with more and more mothers involved outside the
home, a lot of parents have turned their responsibility over to
the church and/or the school. Indeed, the church must do a
better job of assisting children to grow in faith. But the
truth is we can't do it all. We can't compete with the world.
It is estimated that by the time a child reaches 15 he has

watched 15,000 hours of TV. But if he goes to SS every Sunday from the day he was born he would only have 440 hours of formal Christian education. 400 hrs compared to 15000. How grateful we are to those men and women who work with our children and youth. How much more we need.

Campbell Morgan once observed: " A child may forget what you have said in 30 minutes, but he will remember it in 30 yrs" No greater work can be done for God's kingdom than to be teacher of children. If you have a child in our church school, be shure to tell your children's leaders how much to appreciate them. But paretn dare not abicate their home responsibility.

"These words I command thee this day shall be in thine heart and you shalt teach them diligently unto thy children".

2. Teach them, and then secondly: "Thou shalt talk of them at home, allong the way, when you relax, and when you get up. Howard Grimes said: "The person who hasv responded to the love of God in Christ has no alternative except to seize every means available to reach out his hand to his broth"

Talk of his words "when thou sittith in thine house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up" What important words for our time. Many of us are bashful about sharing our faith. We can talk about everythi else under the sun...but our faith. Everyone has come out of the closet today...except many who have life's most vital news to bhare...the news that God loves.

Some claim that the most devastating disease in our scotity today is loneliness... loneliness...just plain loneliness. And medicine won't heal it. We who are Christian have the right medicine however. love, compassion, caring. We can share the love our God in what we do and in what we say.

Even animals bet lonely. Zoo keepers have found that in transporting animals it is better to ship at least 2. A Zoo had a real problems with a rino they wanted to move. They put a goat with him and that made all the difference. In 1967 a leopard was sent to a zoo and was givn a live chicken to eat en route. But the Loepard needed companionship more than he needed food, and the live chick made the journey intact.

Animals cannot live by bread alone . . . nor can humans. We need people to care about us, But we need more than good caring neighbors, we need to talk it ws well. People need know who we are and what we are about.

"All these words ... and shalt talk of them when thou sittist in thine house, and when thou walkest along the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"

3. We are to teach the Word, to talk the word and the scritpura says to take it. "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them on the post of thine house, and on thy gates". We are to take the words of God wherever we go They are to live in our hearts. We are never to forget them, or

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leave~~d~~ them behind, regardless of what kind of situation we may be in. We are His and He is ours "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand".

You can see that, can't you. The picture, the mental image. When we want to remember something we tie a string on our fingers. That is the formula being suggested here in the scripture. "Bind them upon your hand" says this passage about remembering the words of God. Or perhaps in other words, have the words of God so etched in your memory and experience that you naturally do that which God wants. The gospel hymn writer puts it this way: "Take the name of Jesus with you..." Write them on the posts of your home and on your gates.

Let us note the abuse which happened. Some of the Jewish people, as some do today, took passages of scripture and wrote them on bits of parchment and wrapped them around their foreheads, tied them to their arms, or nailed them to their gate posts . . . not as a testimony to God, but more like an amulet to keep evil spirits away...much like putting a horseshoe over the door or a four leaf clover in the pocket.

That is no unlike those who keep the Bible on the coffee table, seldom reading and seldom applying its truth. God's word is not a good luck charm, god's word has no power to magically protect us. We are instructed to take the word with us...as a declaration. It means that we are to remember who we are and what we are about.

Leonard Sweet says in his book NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT:

"When I feel especially squeezed by the gates of the world = which, by the time one gets thru them, end up be narrowed and straighter than the gates of faith - I have kind of a mantra which I repeat 'Christianus Sum' I am a Christian. These words first came alive during a chat I hade with a pastor in his office before I was to speak to an adult education class. I noticed a plaque on the wall inscribed "Christianus Sum" and a name and the dates '167-1977'. I was interested in the story behind the plaque, having named our youngest son after Justin Martyr, the early Christian saint who was behead in AD 65 after be examined by the Roman prefect Rusticus. Justin's difiant declaration 'Christianus Sum' carred with it the sentence of death. The pastor related that the plaque had been given to him by the parents of a ten year old boy whi died of cancer. As the boy's mother was rushing him to hospit- al for what would prove to be has last admission, a car darted out in front of them. Slamming on her brakes, and in her fear, she shouted to her son "Why didn't you curse that car for me" "I Can't, mom" he replied, "I am a Christain"

Christian us Sum

That is what we are to teach our children and to talk wit our neighbors and to take wherever we go. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and ~~for~~ thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thine soul; and with all thy might".