

## Bermudian Church of the Brethren

### **WEDNESDAY's WORD** – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler

to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week

January 29 in the year of our Lord 2020 - #820

## Bibliolatry

Have you heard this word? “*Bibliolatry*.” It’s a word I’ve been seeing show up more and more in the great, sad divisions that are unfolding so many places within the Body of Christ. Those on the “left” side of arguments hurl the term “*Bibliolatry*” at those of us on the “right” side of things. Anyone who holds to Biblical inerrancy and infallibility may today be labeled as guilty of Bibliolatry. And when they call us that ... well it isn’t a kind name they are putting upon us! Kind of like those who called the early believers “*Christian*” ... a mocking name meaning “little christs.” Or those who watched the early Brethren with their strange immersion baptism and labeled them “*dunkers*.” When the liberal, progressive leaning folks say that those of us who are more conservative Biblically are persons who are guilty of Bibliolatry ... it’s a slam ... a put down ... an incrimination!

The word “*Bibliolatry*” comes from two words meaning “*book*” and “*worship or idol*” ... by implication it means that we “*worship*” the Bible. That we’ve made an “*idol*” of the Bible. In that line of thinking, we put the Bible itself before God Himself. Is this accusation really true?

I do love the Bible! Not the book ... but the words ... and the One behind the words. Oh sure I can say I “love” my old 1978 NIV (on its second binding); Grandma Steerman’s large print KJV (sometimes on our worship center), the RSV given to me by Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren in 1959 and signed by Sunday School Superintendent, Wayne Tritt; the wonderful pulpit Bible donated to Bermudian in memory of “Elder G.W. Harlacher” in 1949 and slashed with a razor knife by a late night church intruder some years ago. These physical books are important to me. Each represents something special to me. But I don’t worship them. But I do worship & praise the Lord God Almighty, and I cherish the words He has given us in His Word.

There is an essential unity between our Most Holy God and His Word. While the Bible does not contain everything that there is of God, (our human minds could not contain that greatness), it does contain everything that God has chosen to reveal to us. Everything! There can be great value in the study of science, medicine, language, culture, politics ... but this study will reveal nothing of new truth or revelation. And if any “*learning*” presents itself as giving us “*new insight*” or “*better understanding*” than the Bible ... it reveals in that claim that it truly stands against God’s truth.

When I open my Bible, the pages are warm with His breath. This Book unlike any other book is my rule of faith & practice. And without apology I claim that I believe that God’s Word is **inerrant** (without any error or mistake or inaccuracy in the original manuscripts by the original Holy Spirit inspired authors); and **infallible** (it will never fail me if I follow its commands and guidance for life.) If that makes me guilty of “*Bibliolatry*” then I guess I’m guilty! And just as the early believers adopted the name “*Christian*” as a proper title to be proud of; and the early Brethren grew to wear the name “*Dunker*” with pride ... I’ll wear the handle “*Bibliolatry*” with no shame.

Professor S.M. Baugh in an article, *"Is Bibliolatry Possible?"* written for Westminster Seminary writes; "...what some call bibliolatry is not always – indeed is rarely such. Let us truly love the Lord our God with all our hearts and worship Him only. But to 'reverently esteem' the Book, 'the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole ... is to give glory to God.'"

(quoting the *Westminster Confession of Faith*)

The old Sunday School song says it well enough for an old "*Bibliolatry*" guy like me!

***"The B-I-B-L-E, Yes! That's the Book for me,  
I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E!"***

***"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your Law."*** Psalm 119:18 NIV

***"As for God, His way is perfect; and the Word of the Lord is flawless."*** Psalm 18:30 NIV

***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."***  
John 1:1 NIV

***"All Scripture is God-breathed...."*** 2 Timothy 3:16 NIV

This year, at Bermudian Church of the Brethren, we are studying the wonderful passages of Psalm 119, verse-by-verse. The longest chapter in the Bible. One-hundred seventy-six (176) verses ALL about God's Word. It is a treasure mine. And we are digging for treasure! Please join us if you can, but If you need to miss a Sunday make sure you ask for a DVD.

Your Brother & Servant of the Word, Pastor Larry <><