

Some treat the bible as magic

TREATING THE BIBLE AS MAGIC

"Bibliolatry," who will define it? Seemingly, the dictionary is not interested. Apparently, it is a composite word made up of the words "Bible" and "idolatry." The dictionary does define idolatry, declaring it to be "the worship of idols." It would seem then that "bibliolatry" is to worship the Bible or to give it the status of an idol.

That such can happen, has happened and is happening is beyond dispute. The Lord Jesus Christ virtually accused the Pharisees of such practice when He challenged them about searching the Scriptures in John 5:39-40. "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life.

These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." Clearly, the Saviour was not chastening them for the practice of searching the Scriptures, both for thinking that in so doing, they qualified for eternal life.

They were staking their all on the fact that they were in possession of the Scriptures and had a head knowledge of them. This, declares Jesus, is self-deception because the Scriptures speak of Him as the only Saviour, and they would not receive Him.

They had a head knowledge, but not a personal relationship with the One the Scriptures consistently declared to be God's way of salvation. This is a form of bibliolatry.

In essence then, bibliolatry is the divorcing of the Written Word from the Living Word and ascribing to it — the Word — that which is found in the person of Christ alone. In other words, it is to attach to the Bible an aura of magic. It is to treat it as a fetish. It is to put it in the same category as a good luck charm or sacred medallion. It is to regard the mere physical possession of it as sacred.

This, unfortunately, can and does happen. The swearing on

From the Pulpit

Dr. Ray Reed
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a Bible in court is a case in point. Using it for instant guidance by prodding a page with a pin or treating it as an astrologer's horoscope to predict or interpret political development are further examples.

This kind of thing is not only deceiving, but damning. Paul, in II Corinthians 3:6, states that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." This we realize related to the Law of Moses, but the principle can be applied. Having the Scriptures in ones possession, and either by design or default rejecting the One of whom they speak will testify against that person on the Judgement day.

Such an attitude toward the Bible is, however, a far cry from the position of the believer who accepts the Bible as the divine, written revelation of God. To accuse him of being guilty of bibliolatry, solely on these grounds, is nonsense. To believe that the Scriptures are the divine, written revelation of God and to regard them as such is tantamount to worshipping God. As Packer put it, "Against is held that to regard the Bible as the written revelation is bibliolatry, diverting to Scripture honour that is due only to God. But the truth is rather, that we honour God by

honouring Scripture as His written word."

In conclusion, I would suggest that whilst evangelicals must repudiate the charge of bibliolatry, we must also be careful not to be inconsistent in two ways. Firstly, we must not practice a subtle form of it by never reading what we so dogmatically declare to be the inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God.

Secondly, we must be careful in our repudication not to go to the other extreme and downgrade Scripture by treating it as an ordinary book. The fashionableness of new translations, modern versions and never ending paraphrases is, in my opinion, the other extreme of bibliolatry. It seems that anyone can now clarify the Scriptures, even apostates. This is deplorable and should serve as a warning to all true Bible lovers. Let us not idolize the physical form of the Bible, but, on the other hand, let us even be careful to afford it the respect, reverence and sacredness it rightly demands by virtue of its intrinsic character.

Baxter puts it well when he writes: "A right approach to

the Bible is of utmost importance. There is a movement today to popularize the Bible simply as literature. It is our careful opinion that such a movement has in it more harm than good.

The Bible — as a whole — claims to be the Word of God, and its claim is substantiated both by the nature of its contents and the history of its influence. If, then, this book is the Word of God, it cannot simply be read as literature — not without forcing the mind to an artificial or evasive or dishonest attitude which must prove harmful. In studying it, therefore, we must seek to learn, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the mind and the truth and the will of God."

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9:45 A.M. - Sunday School Hour
11:00 A.M. - Rev. Ray Priddle from E.B.C.
6:30 P.M. - Evening Service
WEDNESDAY SEPT. 9
7:30 P.M. - Adult Bible Study & Youth Elections
FRIDAY
7:30 p.m. Youth "Sardines" and Corn Roast

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Sun. Sept. 6th, 1987
Pastor Calvin Stone
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10 a.m. - Sunday School
11 a.m. - Morning Worship
Wed. 7:30 P.M. Prayer Meeting

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Saturday 5 p.m.
Sunday 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

WIDEMAN MENNONITE CHURCH
Hwy. 48-North of Major Mackenzie
Phone 640-1227
Pastor James R. Shantz
Sun., Sept. 6th, 1987
9:45 a.m. - Sunday School
11:00 a.m. - Worship Service
1:30 p.m. - Evening Service

BAKER HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
On Hwy 48
2 mi. north of Hwy 47
Pastor Dana Struve
9:50 - Sunday School
11:00 A.M. - Morning Worship
WEDNESDAY
8:00 p.m. Prayer & Bible Study
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Rev. Howard Minaker,
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11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship
7:00 p.m. - Evening Service
Saturday, 7:30 p.m.
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Evening Service 7:00 P.M.
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Bible Study & Prayer Hour
7:45 P.M.
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stouffville pentecostal church
460 MAIN ST., STOUFFVILLE, ONT. 640-5696

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education
11 a.m. - Morning Worship
6:00 p.m. - Evening Rally
Rev. Craig F. Pitts

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Morning Worship

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11:00 A.M. - Morning Worship
Wed. 8:00 P.M. - Bible Study

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10:00 a.m. - HOLY COMMUNION

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11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship
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