



Our Pulpit.

THE MUTILATED BIBLE.

Jer. 36-23

Sermon by the Rev. F. Allison Currier, M. A., preached in the Woodstock Free Baptist Church, Sunday, January 1st, 1905.

When a man reads his Bible he had better have his knife in his pocket.

Judah had sinned as deeply as Israel and had less excuse for it; Jeremiah had preached to them in vain, and as a last resort God commanded him to write out his sermons, and have them read at the feast gatherings of the people with the hope that constantly hearing they might at last heed. So Jeremiah dictated God's message to Baruch, the scribe, who wrote it as dictated, all that long train of calamities that was to befall them if they did not repent.

On a great feast day in Jerusalem, Baruch read the book to the assembled people, and the princes heard of it and he had to read it again to the princes, and then the king heard about it and he sent for it and had his servant Jehudi read it to him. It was winter and the king was sitting before his fire place and he listened as the scribe read the message of God to him and to his people; but the scribe had read but three or four pages when the king angrily snatched the scroll from the hand of his scribe and with his knife began to cut the leaves apart and throw them into the fire. It had been read to a great many people, but he would see to it that it be read no more.

Poor fool to think that the hand that wrote the book once could not write it twice. The ashes were scarcely cold in the hearth of king Jehoiakim before the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah commanding him to write again, word for word, the message which had been burned, and to add this additional threat—that because the king had burned the first message, therefore no son of his should ever sit on the throne of David, and his dead body should be left unburied in a field, like the carcass of a dead animal, exposed to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. That is the punishment God sent upon one man who used his penknife on his holy word, because he did not like what it said, and one would think that one such warning should have been enough, but not so, it seems almost to have become a fad—this using the penknife on the Bible and cutting out everything that does not suit. And I am sorry to say that some ministers, who are supposed to be the preachers and defenders of God's holy word, are getting very reckless in the way they use their knives.

The Babylonians came over from the Euphrates valley fierce as hungry jackals, and like a scourge of African locusts for number; they tore down the walls and burned the city into ashes and carried away the men who were not too feeble to work and the girls who were not too old to weep, and the murdered carcass of the wicked king who had burned the sacred word was dumped out in the field, outside the ruined walls, and left there exposed to the heat of the day and the frost of the night until the offense of it became too great; then they tied a rope to it and dragged it to where they had dug a hole, and there, to use the words of Scripture, "they buried him, with the burial of an ass." All because he had

dared cut out one book from the Bible—and what do you think shall befall these men to-day who have cut out the Pentetuch and Joshua, and Judges and Kings and Chronicles and Job and Psalms and Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and Jonah, and half of the rest?

In face of them and glaring at them like a flaming sword stands that warning of God, almost the last words that God spoke to man:

"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Now I have something to say about this Book upon which these critics are using their penknives. I always feel like apologizing to this Book in undertaking to defend it, it always seems to me too much like a man bracing himself against a mountain to hold it in place. But I was moved to prepare this sermon from the fact that there are a good many persons in this town who never read their Bible without their penknives in hand. (God have mercy on the men who taught them how to use them), and from having read an address by the late Dr. Hastings, some statements of which I have incorporated into this sermon.

There are a good many Christians who have so far lost their faith as to declare that what they call the "new doctrine" will eventually overthrow the Bible.

New doctrine. That must be a joke. Why, I can take you back nearly 3,000 years to the days of Anaxamander and Haeraclites and Anaxagoras, and others, and give you the modern higher criticism and the same evolutionary theories we have to-day. If you don't believe it, read them for yourselves.

A hundred years ago we had a revival of the same thing in Tom Paine's "Age of Reason." An eminent divine delivering a lecture before a society of Free Thinkers, not long since, said, "Gentlemen, I want to know if I understand the theories of Higher Criticism rightly. I will state what I think you mean by it." After reading for about a quarter of an hour, he said, "Gentlemen, are those the views you hold?" They said they were.

"Well," replied the speaker, "do you know what I have been reading? I have been reading word for word out of Tom Paine's 'Age of Reason.'" That Book that Paine tried to recall and suppress, when he was brought face to face with eternity and God revealed to him the terrors of the judgment he tried to suppress that book, but he could not, and that is the doctrine that has been rigged up in a new suit, and called the New Doctrine. Surely it is a joke.

And Christians are afraid that this old ghost that appears every few hundred years dressed up in a different kind of garb, so that the church won't know her, and shakes her head at the church and mutters a lot of senseless moonshine about the Bible not being God's word, and that the miracles never were

performed, and that our foreparents were monkeys, are afraid that these mutterings of the old Wizard are going to upset the Bible. It will have just about as much effect on it as shooting boiled peas at Gibraltar.

One of the first things that these gentlemen of the sharp penknives have cut out is:

I. The Miraculous!

Pierson says: The foes of Christianity have wit and wisdom enough to see that they may as well give up the fight, unless they can break down the evidence of miracles. Let them allow that but one miraculous work has been wrought, and there is a fatal breach in their wall of defence, for if one miracle has been wrought, others may have been—if miraculous works, why not miraculous words; and where is the use of attacking a religion that is buttressed at one end with prophesy and at the other end with miracles? So all the ingenuity of infidels, with all the weapons of wit and wisdom, and science and ignorance have been directed against the miracles.

No one doubts but the idea in trying to disprove miracles is to prove that Jesus was not divine.

If Jesus had lived on this earth 33 years and performed no miracles, they would have said that he was not divine or he would have performed miracles, and now that he has performed miracles, they say that he was not the Son of God. Consistency surely.

If Jesus did not work miracles, then he was not the Son of God, for the prophets declared that when the Messiah came, he would work wonders and miracles. So if you reason away the miracles, you at the same time reason away the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

II. Scientific.—Another handful of leaves which they have cut from the Holy Book is the scientific part. They say the science of the Bible is incorrect.

I wish some one would point out to me one of these scientific errors. They tell us the Bible is full of them. Why don't they point out at least one of them?

One hundred years ago the French school of science had sixty scientific errors against the Bible. They rubbed out one after another until they have rubbed out the whole lot.

Remember that Moses wrote more than 3,000 years ago, and he did not set out to write scientific books, and yet it is strange that although he dealt with scientific subjects he made no mistakes.

Go to the Hindoo and he will tell you that what makes it rain is a big elephant, squirting water through his trunk, that the earth rests on the backs of elephants with their tails turned out, and their feet rest on the shell of an immense tortoise, and the tortoise on the coil of a great serpent, and that earthquakes are caused by the elephants shaking themselves. Go to the Chinese and they will tell you that an eclipse is caused by an immense sea dragon, swelling the water of the ocean, and they beat on old drum heads to scare him away lest the moon would be drowned. There is science for you—lots of science, if you want it.

Suppose the Bible had taught such science as Plato and Kepler, the mightiest scientists of their time, who hath taught that the earth was a living creature; or that the milky way was only the road across which the great sun god drove his furious steeds. Suppose the Bible had taught that there were fishes in the sea with horses heads,

or that thunder was caused by Jupiter, or that the tides were caused by a mighty sea monster, who twice every day swallowed down the sea and twice every day threw it up again?

Who was it that kept such science as that out of this Holy Book? I'd like some higher critic to tell me that. If the Bible is not a scientific book, I would like to ask with Hastings, why is it that we have no science except when we have the Bible? There is not a scientific book, worth two cents a pound at the paper mill, except where the Bible has gone.

Not scientific, because it says that the human race began in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, whereas science teaches that we started from monkeys, and have progressed until we have gotten to where we are to-day. Well, a monkey ought to progress about as fast in one place as in another. Forty years ago you could buy a man in the Fiji Islands for seven dollars, and you could work him as hard as you liked and beat him to your heart's content and then kill him and eat him, if he was not steeped in tobacco.

Now it has been just as long since they were monkeys as it is since we were monkeys. You go to the Fiji Islands now, and you can't buy a man for seven million dollars, and if you could you would not dare kill him, nor ill treat him. What has made the difference? One thousand churches in which the Book is taught has made the transformation, and half a century ago the men who could tear human flesh in pieces and devour it are now preaching the gospel. It is not evolution that has done it, but regeneration, and it does not take a million, million years to do it, either.

It was no harder for God to make a man and a woman at the first than it was to make two monkeys.

These evolutionists have just as hard a time as we to account for the beginning of things, and a little harder. One says birds begin with the eggs. But where did he get that first egg to start with? There must have been two birds before that egg! We have something to go back to—"In the beginning God created."

Science has been the laughingstock of the ages, the second century laughed at the science of the first century, the third laughed at the second, the twentieth at the nineteenth, and the twenty-first will laugh at us. To my mind he is a very unwise man who rejects the Bible because it does not harmonize with some nebulous scientific theory that will live about as long as he will himself.

And here is another great fall of leaves.

III. The Historical Records.

The Bible is an "Old Curiosity Shop" to a great many people. They say its historical statements are not accurate. Here is one of their mighty arguments. In Isaiah 20-1, it tells us that Sargon was the king of Assyria at the time that Ashdod was taken, and for a thousand years historians have declared that there never was a king in Assyria with any such name, and therefore the Bible statement was not true. We hear nothing about it now. We might wonder at the silence if we did not know that quite recent excavations have told us that Sargon was king of Assyria from 721 to 722, that he was the father of Senacherib, and that he carried on great wars for fifteen years, his conquest extending from Babylon in the east to Armenia in the north, and as

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