

A Symptom of Spiritual Sickness

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Jack Walsh is not the first man to take a knife to the Bible. Jehoiakim, King of Judah, was the first to do so, 600 years before Christ came (Jer. 6:20-23). Now Walsh, an editor for Reader's Digest, has cut 40% of the material of the Sacred volume away. He may as well have cut it all up and thrown it in the fire, as his predecessor did. How could unmitigated gall and sheer audacity be better illustrated than to hear Walsh say that he had improved God's feeble attempt in producing the Scriptures so that they are now "smoother, more inviting, more readable"?

Walsh spoke of discarding 15 percent of Mark and 25 percent of Luke. He not only took away 10 percent of Jesus' words, but he added 5 percent of his own to "make transitions." A whopping 70 percent was excised from such Old Testament books as Exodus, Deuteronomy and the Chronicles. The rule followed by this irreverent knife-wielder was to eliminate the three R's: Repetition, Rhetoric, and Redundancy. Such is a not-so-subtle accusation that the Holy Spirit was guilty of repetition, rhetoric, and redundancy in His original delivery of the Bible to man. It might be interesting to know what kind of qualifications enabled Mr. Walsh to know what to take out and what to leave in and even what to add. If he was quoted correctly in one newspaper story, he referred to the King James Version as the "St. James Version." Now, whatever qualifications might be argued as necessary to edit, censor, and condense the Bible, it seems rather obvious that a man who doesn't know the difference between "King James" and "St. James" could hardly be qualified.

Walsh's only qualification for the work is his long experience in condensing works of fiction by uninspired men. Here is seen the problem of which this condensation of the Bible is merely a symptom. The great majority of those who claim to be scholars and at the same time, believers in Christ, do not believe the Bible's claim about itself. To them, as to Mr. Walsh, it is just another book that contains some truth, but that is no more divinely inspired than the works of Shakespeare or Milton. Therefore, why not handle it as any other book? As more infidel teachers in the theological schools and seminaries have produced more and more infidel pulpiteers (I will not call them "preachers"), the man in the pew across our nation has been driven ever further from God and his Word.

But is the man in our own ranks who strongly contends that he believes in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture any more orthodox if he soft-pedals or omits parts of it for convenience or popularity? The symptom is bad enough, the real problem infinitely worse.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, October 7, 1982, of which I was editor.]

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