

China and of his experiences there. This was distributed and eventually there were as many as 200 copies of it made by hand. But for over 100 yrs. not many people paid much attention to it. It was a absurd sort of a story. It contained ridiculous things. It ~~sax~~ said the Chinese had a substance that you could put under a pile of rock, and you could hit it ~~xxxx~~ and that there would be an exploding and the rocks would fall apart! What a silly thing! Nobody in Europe had ever seen gunpowder. What a crazy idea Marco Polo had. He said that over in China people ~~would not weigh out heavy metals~~ could buy stuff not by weighing out heavy metals, but by giving them a piece of paper. Paper money! Nobody in Europe had ever heard of it but it was common in China. This paper money was easy to use because it didn't have the amount written on it so that the writing would be different on every one, but it was stamped, and printed on it so that each piece of money was identical with each other. People said What a silly thing!

So it was over a century before many people paid much attention to what Marco Polo wrote, quite a different book appeared. A book appeared of Travels in the Orient by Sir John Mandeville. Mandeville told fantastic stories about travels through the Bible lands and on into China and different regions around. A most interesting account in the story, and 100 yrs. after Marco Polo, there were probably 1000 people who were familiar with the writings of Sir John Mandeville to every one who had ever heard of Marco Polo. Today the situation is exactly reversed. I would venture to say that today there are 100,000 or maybe a million people who have heard of Marco Polo to every one who has heard of Sir John Mandeville. Why is that? It is because people began to question Sir John Mandeville's statements and found them untrue. People found that Sir John Mandeville had simply copied from the accounts of travellers, and in copying he'd made mistakes. He got things twisted. And we have found the documents from which he copied and can see the mistakes he made. Today John Mandeville is a museum piece. I never heard of him until last week. In fact, last week I was looking up Marco Polo in the Encyclopedia and I found this statement: A century after his death Sir John Mandeville was far better known everywhere than Marco Polo was. That led me to look up Sir John Mandeville in the Encyclopedia.

What is the Bible like? Is it like Marco Polo? Written by someone who tells us what he has seen and you can depend upon? Or is it like Sir John Mandeville -- a gathering together of different contradictory sources, giving us the ideas of thousands of people of a few centuries ago and not all dependable? Now that view is taught today in just about every university in the world where anything about the Bible is taught. It's a view that is taught in just about every theological seminary that is over 40 years old. It is a view that, as I said, is contained in 15 rather scholarly books published just within these last 15 years and a great number of popular books like this one and S.S. literature of different types. All these books have them! (They say) we must apply the same methods of literary criticism to the Bible that we apply to other books. And I say Amen but do it. Don't say that's what you are doing and then do something else. What they are doing is applying to the Bible a method of criticism which was widely used a century ago. It was applied in relation to the writings of Homer and all other ancient writings practically but which today is practically given up except a as applied to the Bible!