

ADVENT REVIEW

AND SABBATH HERALD

"Here is the Patience of the Saints: Here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus." Rev. 14 :12

VOL. 64, NO. 28

BATTLE CREEK, MICH., TUESDAY, JULY 12, 1887.

WHOLE NO. 1723.

"THE BIBLE – NO.8 - ITS SUPPOSED "SELF CONTRADICTIONS." (Page 434)

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"GOD is his own interpreter, And he will make it plain."

The so-called "contradictions" may be classified as real and apparent. The real contradictions are very few in number, and in every case can be attributed to causes heretofore expressed; viz., errors in translation or transcription. Two only of these real contradictions need be noticed.

2 Kings 8:26 vs. 2 Chron. 22:2. "Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign," says 2 Kings; but Chronicles says, "Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign." Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram. By observing 2 Chron. 21:20, it will be seen that Jehoram was only forty years of age when he died, and Ahaziah took the throne. According to 2 Chron. 21:2, this would make him two years older than his father, which of course is an absurdity. Even skeptics must admit that the record is a mutilation. Dr. Clarke says: "I am satisfied that the reading in 2 Chron. 22:2 is a mistake. It should read *twenty two*, instead of *forty-two* years." "When numbers were expressed by single letters, it was very easy to mistake the character (mem), forty, for (caph), twenty." The Arabic and Syriac are usually regarded by critics as correct, and they each have "twenty-two."

Few books are even now printed without some *errata*; yet authors do not disown them, nor are errors of the press attributed to the authors. Wisdom will make the same allowance for the Bible, especially when one takes into consideration the great number of times it was of necessity transcribed before reaching the age of printing.

Matt. 27:9 offers another "contradiction" for the skeptic; for it is credited to the wrong author. It reads: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet," etc., but it is found in Zech. 11:12,13. Several solutions are offered: 1. The abbreviation of names used in various manuscripts give rise to mistaking *Zou*, Zechariah, for *Jou*, Jeremiah; 2. Matthew quoted from the prophets without mentioning the name of the prophet, as in chap. 13:35; 21:4, and some careless copyist inserted the name of Jeremy. This is verified by the fact that in many of the ancient manuscripts the name is wanting, and is also omitted in several modern translations; 3. Dr. Lightfoot makes the statement that the Jews were anciently accustomed to divide the Old Testament into three parts; the first, beginning with the law, was called the law; the second, commencing with the Psalms, was called the Psalms; the third, beginning with the book of Jeremiah, was called Jeremiah. Thus all the books of that section, including Zechariah, would go by that name.

The apparent contradictions in the Bible are more numerous, and, in fact, depend largely upon the mind and purpose of the reader, "How readest thou?" Every point should be carefully considered. If the principle designed to be taught is well understood, and a careful comparison of scripture with scripture is made, it will remove many difficulties, and erase even every apparent "self contradiction." We will note a few of those most frequently met with:-

1. Gen. 32:30 vs. Ex. 33:20. In Gen. 32:30, we read: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved," and in Ex. 33:20 we find the following: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." Although the Lord is the author of the Bible, it does not necessarily make him the author of every saying in it. In the very beginning we have an expression from the Devil, recorded in his own words, "Ye shall not surely die;" which the author of the Bible inserts, although they are just as void of truth as if recorded in any other book.

So there are many other sayings of wicked men and of good men recorded in the Bible, which are their own expressions according as their thoughts and feelings gave utterance. Jacob supposed he had seen God, but in Hos. 12:4 we are told that "he had power over the angel, and prevailed," which clearly implies that it was only the angel that he saw face to face. No violence is done to the record to have it record it as Jacob was at the time impressed. "But," says the objector, "no man hath seen God at any time." John 1:18. "Whom no man hath seen nor can see." 1 Tim. 6:16.

The word "god," as first used in the Bible, is in the plural form. That Christ was with the Father before the "world was" is implied by many passages of Scripture. John 1:1-3; 17:5; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3. Christ is and has been the one that has ever declared the Father. See John 1:18; 14:9,10. He is declared to be God (Heb. 1:5-8; Isa. 9:6.), yet is distinct from the Father. 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3. It was Christ that guided the children of Israel in their wanderings. 1 Cor. 10:1-4. It was Christ that spoke to Joshua. Josh. 5:13-15. In short, the general proof of the Bible is that God the Father has, ever since the fall, been invisible to man, and that Christ only was visible, and spoke to the people as God spoke to him.

2. 1 Sam. 24:1 vs. 1 Chron. 21:1. The passages read as follows: "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." To say that God was angry with David before he did the deed would be absurd. The apparent contradiction arises from inferring that the pronoun "he" refers to Jehovah instead of to Satan, who, we are informed in the other passage, was the tempter. The marginal reading says "Satan." Dr. Boothroyd, as quoted by Mrs. H. V. Reed, in "Bible Triumphant," translates the passage thus: "The anger of the Lord was excited against Israel because an adversary stood up and moved David," etc.

3. 2 Sam. 24:9 vs. 1 Chron. 21:5. These two passages vary in that the first makes the number of the fighting-men of Israel 800,000 and of Judah 500,000, while the second passage gives the number at 1,100,000 and 470,000. This "apparent contradiction" is much used by skeptics as irreconcilable. But the following from Jameson Faust, and Brown's commentary, sets the matter in a clear light:-

"The difference in the numeration of Israel was 300,000. By comparing 1 Chron. 27 it will be observed that there were twelve divisions of generals who commanded monthly, and whose duty it was to keep guard on the royal person, each having a body of troops, consisting of 24,000 men; which together formed an army of 288,000 men, and as a separate detachment of 12,000 was attendant on the twelve princes of the twelve tribes mentioned in the same chapter, so both are equal to 300,000. These were not recorded in this book, because they were in the actual service of the king as a regular militia. But 1 Chron. 21:5 joins them to the rest, saying, 'all those of Israel,' . . . whereas the author of Samuel only reckons the 800,000, and says . . . 'Israel were,' etc.

"It must also be observed that exclusive of the troops before mentioned there was an army of observation on the frontiers of the Philistines' country, composed of 30,000 men, as appears from 2 Sam. 6:1, which were included in the number of 500,000 by the author of Samuel; but the author of Chronicles, who numbers only 470,000, gives the number of that tribe exclusive of those 30,000 men, because they were not all of the tribe of Judah; therefore he does not say, 'All those of Judah,' as he had said, 'All those of Israel,' but only 'And those of Judah.' Thus both accounts are reconciled."

4. 2 Sam. 24:24 vs. 1 Chron. 21:25. These two passages read as follows: "So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." "So David gave to Oman for the place six hundred shekels of gold." By a careful examination of these two passages, it will be seen that the writer of the book of Samuel mentions only what David gave for the threshing floor, a place six or eight yards in width, and for the oxen, and the instruments of wood. Verse 22. But the writer of the book of Chronicles informs us what David gave for the *whole place* (verse 25), that is, the land upon which this threshing floor stood. History informs us that this "place" was actually that upon which Solomon's temple was afterward built, known as Mt. Zion, being about nine hundred yards in length, and six hundred in width.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW.

5. Judges 11:30-39 and Deut. 12:30, 31 are arrayed against each other as contradictory, trying to prove that God does and does not accept human sacrifices. It cannot be proved that the rashness of Jephthah was acceptable with God; hence the "contradiction" here, as in many other such statements, is only assumed. "In the margin of Judges 11:31 Jephthah's vow reads: 'Whatsoever cometh forth . . . shall surely be the Lord's, *or* I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.' Hence as human sacrifices were not allowable, Jephthah's daughter might have been devoted to the service of the Lord in a virgin state. 1 Sam. 1:22, 28; 1 Cor. 7:24. The virgins bewailed not her death, but her virginity; this, as she was an only child, involved the extinction of Jephthah's house, and hence was an occasion of great grief to him. Verse 40 in the margin reads: The daughters of Israel went yearly to talk with the daughter of Jephthah.' If this be correct, she was still living. The Scripture nowhere says Jephthah slew his daughter, nor is it certain that Israel would have permitted him to do it."—*Bible Triumphant*, p. 110, foot-note by Hastings.

Every objection to God's word is removed by the clear light of honest investigation. For eighteen hundred years the Bible has been exposed to the keenest criticism. In every age there have been those who sought to impeach its veracity and question its authority. "The mythology of the Iliad has passed away; the fables of the Shaster, the Talmud, and the Koran have fallen before the lights of science and civilization; but the Bible lies before us to-day, unscathed and untouched by man's puny efforts. It is still the glorious day-star of eternal truth, guiding the feet of wandering humanity through the wilderness of time. It is the 'pillar cloud' to the marching columns of God's dear people, guiding surely to the haven of rest, to peace and gladness that are secure in the kingdom of God."