

9:19-20). Now where is the contradiction? These accounts are not *contradictory*, but *supplementary*. It is altogether likely that the whole superscription was: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." No one of the Gospel writers gave the whole of what was written on it, but each one gave the essential part, i.e., that it was "The King of the Jews" who was put to death.

The same kind of observation could be made about the accounts of the resurrection given by the Gospel writers. *Each writer tells us something that the other writers do not tell us, but no writer contradicts the others in any detail.* Thus, in order to get the whole story, we must read all the accounts of the resurrection and put all the facts together.

Change in Circumstances

Men sometimes take random statements from the Bible and set them in opposition to each other in an effort to prove that the Bible is self-contradictory. *They fail to take the historical setting of the statements into account.* For example, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." "And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." When those two statements are placed side by side there appears to be a contradiction. But if one takes the time to examine them closely, he sees that there is no contradiction at all. The former statement, recorded in Genesis 1:31, was made concerning the created world before the entrance of sin. The latter, recorded in Genesis 6:6, was made over a thousand years later when man had reached such a level of spiritual degeneracy "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5). Each of the statements was perfectly correct at the time when it was spoken. We might well compare this supposed "contradiction" in the Bible to the following situation. A mother dressed her little girl in clean, carefully ironed dress and sent her off to school with the loving observation, "You look prettier than you ever have before!" At the close of school the little girl, who accidentally spilled a tray of finger paints on her dress that day, walked into her house and heard her mother exclaim, "What a mess! You look awful!" Now the mother may have been perfectly correct in each of her statements; but there had been a great change in circumstances from the time of the first until the time of the second.

Blind Prejudice of the Critics

Finally, let it be pointed out that *many people simply do not want to be convinced that the Bible is the Word of God.* Therefore, regardless of how much proof we produce in support of our contention, they will not believe. On the other hand, let any heretic make a false and totally unsubstantiated charge against the Bible's historical accuracy and these people will rise up to acclaim him a scholar of the first rank and will put complete confidence in the false charges he is making! To put it very simply, blind and dogmatic prejudice against the Bible is the motivating force behind much of the criticism directed toward it. Therefore the attitude of these radical critics often appears to be: "I will either find an error or contradiction in the Bible or I will make one up."

Men would not dare treat any other book with the obvious prejudice which they exhibit in their approach to the Bible. Fair-minded men would cry out in horror at such a sight. Yet the Bible can be mishandled and unfairly criticized and only a relative few will show any sign of dismay!

The Christian does not ask the unbeliever or skeptic to blindly grant his contention that the Bible is the Word of God. He simply asks him to be fair with the evidence which is presented about the Bible. And if men will be open minded and fair with such evidence, they will inevitably be led to the conclusion that the Bible is everything that it claims to be!

Conclusion

The Bible is not a book of myths, fables and fantastic absurdities. The Bible is a book of absolute truth about many subjects. For, while the primary message of the Bible is to the hearts of men concerning spiritual matters, it is totally accurate even in its historical, geographical and scientific statements. This could not be true of a book written by mere men. It would only be true of a book written by men under supernatural guidance! We therefore make a confident reaffirmation of our faith in the Bible as God's inspired, complete and all-sufficient revelation to mankind!

We need not expect unbelievers to stop their railing against the Bible. They will not. They have allowed sin to blind their eyes to the truth. Satan has caused them to close their ears against the evidence which believers present in support of their case. The Bible contains teachings which rebuke their sinful ways of living, therefore they will not believe that the Bible is true. Such evil men will continue to search for things to criticize about the Bible. But God's Word stands true regardless of man's belief or unbelief of it! And all men, both the believers and the unbelievers, will be judged by the things written in it. In that day the unbeliever's ravings will be hushed!

Do not be alarmed, therefore, when men assail your faith in the Bible. The Bible will stand the test of investigation. In the face of criticisms and charges of errors and self-contradictions in the Bible, stand in confidence that investigation will show that the Bible is right and that the critic is in error!

"For ever, O Jehovah, thy word is settled in heaven." (Psalm 119:89).

"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever." (1 Pet. 1:24-25a).

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDY

True or False:

1. One of the best ways to silence one who claims that the Bible is filled with errors is to challenge him to produce specific examples.
2. Paul and James contradict each other in their teaching about faith and works.
3. The Bible says that the earth is the center of our universe.
4. Some people are too prejudiced against the Bible to give the evidence a fair hearing.
5. The Bible is always correct in its historical, geographical and scientific statements.