

Bible. Others say there are no contradictions in the Bible. Now it depends on what you are talking about. If you are talking about the original MSS that God gave through the writers that were inspired, and if you are speaking of what these mean carefully interpreted, there is certainly no conflict. But there is verbal contradiction in the Bible, and there is definite contradiction in some of the MSS that have come down to us. And so the question is, What do we do when we find a contradiction in our English Bible? Well of course what we do is to look back to the evidence of MSS, and to see if there is evidence that an error has come in. We look also to see the exact meaning, to see if there is a reason for a difference. We look to see those things, and here you ask, Is there a reason for the difference? Well with a little ingenuity you can think of a possible reason of course. Maybe at 25 they become apprentices and do work under other people's direction. Maybe at 35 they become full workers in the temple. It is easy to think of that or of other ^{possible} ~~apparent~~ reconcilings of the apparent contradiction here, but there is no such statement here. And that it may be true, but it seems to me we also have to recognize this fact that the Scripture has been copied and copied and recopied and the early copies have been lost, and in the course of copying errors in copying creep in. I defy any one of you to take the whole book of Num. and make a copy of it either by hand or by typewriter and not have at least one mistake in your copying and probably a good many mistakes. It is a most humbling experience to send a MSS to the printer and get it back and find that every second line has got a typographical error in it, and when you read it over and over and over and correct all the errors of spelling that have come in you're so occupied with little errors of spelling that you don't notice some big error of thought and when it comes out in print you find that actually you have said the very opposite of what you meant to say. In the course of the copyings and copyings and recopyings there is no question that some errors have come in. But of course it is true that in relation to the Bible we have far more material to compare MSS and to get back nearer the original than we have of any other ancient MSS. And it is really disgusting to see scholars sometimes take some classical work of which we have only one copy perhaps and