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God's Infallible Word

A Defense of the Truthfulness
of God's Word

Radio Sermons



by

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Introduction

"Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

For centuries critics have attacked God's Word. In our day challenges to the truth of the Scriptures have intensified. Men have had ample opportunity to "break" or discredit the holy Scriptures, and to try to show them to be internally inconsistent and therefore in error.

All attempts to discredit Scripture fail. And when "the day of man" is over and "the Day of the Lord" begins, all will have to acknowledge the truth of God's Word and the fact that "Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Until that Day, attacks on the Bible will continue. False teachers and apostates are going to present "problem" texts, hoping to destroy Biblical faith by casting doubt on the reliability of the Bible. These challenges will go beyond the pastor and confront the people in the congregation.

This brief study seeks to be helpful to the sincere inquirer, and to the knowledgeable believer who wants to heed the Lord's command to "occupy till I come." Space limitations rule out a comprehensive study of the doctrines of inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures. But sufficient detail will be given to show the nature of the attacks, how God vindicates His Word and the subtle shift in basic premise that underlies much unbelief.

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1.

Scriptural "Problems"

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." II Peter 1:21.

Students of Scripture eventually discover that there are perplexing passages in the Old Testament. Although such passages are relatively few in number and, in the main, have little — if any — impact on cardinal doctrines; critics in past centuries nevertheless have been only too eager to attack the doctrines of Biblical infallibility and inerrancy by pointing to these isolated "proof texts."

This is "the day of man" and all knowledge is not yet revealed. Just because some "problem" passages do not lend themselves to solutions with currently available knowledge, one should not for a moment be led into believing that there are errors in God's Word. All Biblical problems have a solution. Interestingly, many such "problems" gleefully flouted by enemies of God's Word in the past have, in our day, through the availability of new information in the fields of archaeology and science, become some of the most powerful proofs of the truth of God's Word.

"Problem passages" in the Scriptures, then, are not proof of the fallibility of Scripture. Rather, they demonstrate the fallibility and inadequacy of God's fallen creature, man.

2. Inspiration, Infallibility and Inerrancy

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Tim. 3:16-17.

What is "inspiration?" Edward J. Young defined inspiration as follows: "According to the Bible, inspiration is a superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures, as a result of which these Scriptures possess divine authority and trustworthiness, and, possessing such divine authority and trustworthiness, are free from error."

Although Young's definition is concise and accurate, he perhaps does not sufficiently emphasize the fact that inspiration extends to the very words of Scripture. The definition of Benjamin B. Warfield brings this point out more clearly: "Inspiration is the extraordinary, supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the writers of our sacred books (or passively, the result of it) so that their words become the very words of God, and so perfectly infallible."

What is "infallible?" This word means "an indefectable authority"; that is, Scripture can never fail in its judgments and statements. What Scripture teaches is of unimpeachable, absolute authority and cannot be contravened or contradicted. Scripture is unfailing, incapable of being false, erroneous or mistaken. Though heaven and earth should pass away, the Word of Truth will stand forever. It can neither be changed nor destroyed.

Closely related to infallibility is "inerrancy." This word means, when applied to the Scriptures, that they are completely free from error. In all their teachings, they are in perfect accord with the truth.

It should be noted that the doctrines of inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy apply only to the original autographs (original handwritten manuscripts) of the books of the Bible. We do not maintain that present copies and translations of the Scriptures are totally inerrant, but many of them are very close to the original autographs. As such, these copies and translations are authoritative.

Caution must be exercised in applying the terms "infallible" and "inerrant" to Scripture because some preconceived ideas, as to what inerrancy and infallibility should be, lead to less than satisfactory results. The best method to follow is to turn to Scripture itself to see what "infallibility" and "inerrancy" are.

Why is it necessary to hold so tenaciously to the doctrines of inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy? Warfield has answered this question quite effectively: "We do not hold it on sentimental grounds, nor on deductive grounds, nor on any other type of grounds. We adopt it because it is taught by Christ and His disciples in the Scriptural record of their teachings."

3.

Objections to Inerrancy

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matt. 5:17-18.

It cannot be denied that there are some difficulties in the Old Testament for which clear-cut solutions are not presently available. However, there are no difficulties that preclude the development of possible solutions. There's a vast difference between admitting that a particular solution is not known and conceding that a problem is of such a nature as to defy any solution.

For a critic of Scripture to charge successfully that an error exists, he must first show that there is no possibility of resolving the suspected item. But no critic has ever been successful in showing the impossibility of resolving such an "error." Our Lord said, "The Scripture cannot be broken," and no matter how hard unbelieving man may try, he cannot achieve the critic's ultimate purpose — to present an irreconcilable "problem" that discredits God's Word.

There's little overlap between today's difficulties and those of a few decades ago. The passing of time has brought attacks on different aspects of Scripture. These attacks relate to seven general categories of Biblical truth.

1. Creation and subsequent world history.
2. Internal discrepancies.
3. Old Testament quotations in the New Testament.
4. Secular history versus Biblical history.
5. Miracles and the fixed laws of nature.
6. The low state of morality depicted in the Old Testament.
7. Criticism of the text of the Bible itself.

Several categories represent objections that obviously come from unbelief and from a general misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of God's revelation. Other categories, however, represent objections that have come from apparently sincere critics who do not openly challenge the fundamental truths of Christianity nor deny that the Scriptures represent God's revelation to mankind.

4.

Creation and Flood Accounts

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."
II Peter 3:5-7.

Perhaps no portion of Scripture has been subjected to more ridicule than the first nine chapters of Genesis. Conservative believers in the doctrines of verbal inspiration and Scriptural infallibility and inerrancy have been perplexed and bewildered by the criticism. These chapters, which are God's initial revelation of the truths of Creation and the Great Flood, have been charged with being contrary to modern "scientific" knowledge.

Since the days of Charles Lyell (1797-1875), the "father" of modern historical geology, and Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the popularizer of biological evolution, critics have become increasingly dogmatic in their assertions that Genesis is in error. The mainstream of modern "scientific" thinking leaves no room for Special Creation. Contemporary textbooks, purporting to deal with the geologic history of our planet, do not even allow for the possibility that a universal catastrophe such as Noah's Flood could have occurred.

Many conservative students of Scripture have felt compelled to modify their stands because they were "confronted" by such an overwhelming amount of scholarly opinion, backed by so-called irrefutable data. This has resulted in compromises either on literal interpretation in its ordinary sense (resulting in weak and unconvincing harmonization theories) or on Scriptural infallibility. Modification of the stands of many conservative theologians in both of these areas has been of primary importance in producing the chaos that is seen today, within

both professing Christendom and the world.

In the minds of many today, the discrepancy between the apparent teachings of the Bible and the dogmatic assertions of the "learned" scientific world is the foremost "problem" of the Scriptures. One body of information must be in error. Either the prevailing "scientific" body of knowledge is wrong, or the teachings of Scripture *can* be broken, contrary to our Lord's words.

5.

Reasoning From False Premises

"Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding oppositions of science falsely so called." 1 Tim. 6:20.

A major reason why false teachings on the Creation and Flood narratives of Genesis have gained such headway during the past two centuries is because (relatively speaking) few scientists are students of the Scriptures and even fewer theologians are scientists. The more significant reason, of course, is that the world wants to accept these teachings because they are an alternative to belief in God.

Man in his natural state is in rebellion against God and does not want to recognize any facts that bring him to the realization that the God of Creation exists and that every person is subject to His sovereignty. "There is none that seeketh after God." Rom. 3:11.

An unconverted man of science, no matter how great the number of degrees after his name, will become just as illogical in his thinking as a less-learned person if logic is leading him to the admission of the existence and sovereignty of God.

The very thought processes behind the theories of biological evolution and historical geology (which, incidentally, provide

mutual support for each other) represent a misapplication of the fundamental laws of science. It is easy for a regenerated believer to detect the deceitful hand of Satan in the subtle shifting of the implications of the physical laws of our universe. From the false foundation so laid, a massive structure of "scientific reasoning" leading to totally incorrect results has been erected.

A Pseudo-Scientific Structure

Satan subtly acts upon the mind of man to cause him to distort his technical foundation and thus erect a structure of false knowledge. The father of lies does this by getting him to accept as basic premises at least two foundational "building blocks" that are utterly at variance with true scientific procedure.

First, man is led to use the techniques of scientific investigation in areas where this method cannot be applied legitimately. By definition, the scientific method deals only with observable phenomena. Deductions must be made from observations subject to verification by experiment.

Therefore, the scientific method involves observation of events that repeat themselves. Events that happened in prehistoric times are not subject to scientific investigation for the simple reason that no man observed them when they happened, and they will not repeat themselves for observation at the present time. When a scientist turns to an investigation of prehistoric events, he leaves the bounds of science and enters the realm of philosophy and religion. His scientific method is no longer applicable.

Second, a basic misconception underlies most secular scientific thinking regarding the *time rate* at which energy exchange processes affecting our planet have occurred. The basic laws of physics describe how the energy exchange processes of our universe proceed, but they tell us nothing of the time rate of these processes. Time rate is always variable in any energy exchange phenomenon (that is, in any physical process), and it is a variable under control of a large number of factors.

A Contradiction of the Scriptures

Therefore, when Charles Lyell's disciples in our present day continue his basic teaching and make the assumption of time uniformity in the physical processes of our planet ("the present is the key to the past"), they have immediately made an assumption that is in violation of the observed laws of the universe. Yet this assumption is the foundation on which the entire system of historical geology is erected. This same assumption of uniformity of time rate in physical processes during all the past is the major point that contradicts the Biblical revelation.

The early chapters of Genesis tell us of at least two periods in early history when the time rates of physical processes were greatly modified by God. The first was Creation itself. The second period was the 371-day duration of the Great Flood, and during this event of judgment the Lord greatly accelerated the time rates of many physical processes. Much of the physical phenomena etched in the rocks of our earth's crust (relegated to billions of years by the scientists) could have taken place during this event.

No evidence has ever been uncovered that can explain away the impact of the Flood. On the contrary, there exists an abundance of technical evidence that cannot be accounted for by the secular theory of uniformity in geologic processes (physical processes are now operating in the same manner as they always have). This is subtly admitted by secular geologists, who are constantly proposing new "theories within theories" to explain away discrepancies in their theories, as anyone will discover by reading readily available technical literature on the subject.

6.

Confirming the Biblical Account

"A wise man is strong, yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." Prov. 24:5.

In our day, the opening chapters of Genesis can no longer be considered as Scriptures humanly labeled "problems in respect to Old Testament inspiration." God has vindicated His Word, and now these opening chapters are "proof texts for Old Testament inspiration." Twentieth-century technical knowledge interpreted legitimately within the rigorous boundaries of true science proves (to the extent of man's capacity to prove anything) that:

- (1) The Genesis account of a Special Creation is the only hypothesis yet advanced that can explain the existence of our universe and
- (2) The Genesis account of a Universal Flood occurring in relatively recent history is the only reasonable hypothesis for explaining the evidence both in the strata of rock making up the crust of our planet and in our biosphere.

The fact that these proofs are not widely known or accepted in scientific circles does not in any way detract from their validity. An acceptance of Biblical hypothesis and an attempt to fit all geologic evidence into a system of historical geology based on this hypothesis has been accomplished. John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris have done essentially this in their book *The Genesis Flood*. The results of this work are rather startling to one prone to accept the secular theory of historical geology simply because he knows no other system. The scientific method in reality shows that the geosphere, atmosphere and biosphere of our planet have been operating for less than 10,000 years. These facts destroy the hypothesis on which secular geology is based.

When geologists say, "The present is the key to the past,"

they assume that the "past" has been at least several billion years in duration. But chapters 7 and 8 of Genesis tell of a universal Deluge in the days of Noah. By His omnipotence, God broke up the "foundations of the great deep" (the seas and reservoirs of water below the surface of the pre-Flood earth) and brought down the "waters above the firmament" in 40 days and 40 nights of intense rainfall. This reverted the surface of this planet to the great universal sea that had existed before God's work of separation on the second and third Creation days.

Tremendous destruction was brought down upon the surface of the pre-Flood earth. All biological life of the land and much of the sea life was washed away with the scoured-up material of the surface of that former world. The remains of the pre-Flood life were buried with the inorganic surface materials by the action of the Flood waters. This action produced the stratified layers of sedimentary rock with the myriads of preserved fossils that are so characteristic of this present world.

Newly-discovered fossils are not the result of billions of years of evolutionary "struggles for survival." Rather, they are God's record of a great judgment brought upon a wicked world, testifying to the accuracy of the Jewish Scriptures.

The Flood in the days of Noah did not take place billions or even millions of years ago. Rather, it happened in the relatively recent past. This great judgment occurred not more than 6,000 years ago. The structure of our earth bears witness to the reality of the Flood. God has given us new scientific tests that act as "time clocks" to determine the very "time schedule" of earth's history.

Carbon-14 dating techniques, once considered strong corroborating evidence *in favor* of the secular scientific view of uniformitarianism, now lie at the heart of the scientific proofs *against* the evolutionary view and rather *confirm* the Biblical account. For a more detailed discussion of the way carbon-14 dating corroborates the Bible's account of the Great Flood and its view of the earth, see Appendix I: Carbon-14 Dating: New Evidence From Science.

The laws of physics regarding the exchange of energy are very important "starting points" for scientific reasoning. These are based on two great laws governing the exchange of energy. Scientists who believe God's Word have been able to use these two universal laws of the behavior of energy to support their deductions and proofs. Appendix II contains more comprehensive information on the laws of the transformation of energy, how they point to the creation of the earth, and where they are paraphrased in Scripture.

In our day, one of the sections of the Scriptures that has previously been considered the foremost problem associated with verbal inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy has now become one of the foremost proofs of these doctrines. We can have confidence that God will similarly vindicate other "problem Scriptures" by bringing to light new knowledge as it suits His purpose.

7.

So-Called "Contradictions" in Scripture

Some of the problems in Scripture involve apparent discrepancies between parallel passages. Problems of this nature are a challenge to the conservative expositor and can be devastating to one not well grounded in the Word.

Several examples of such apparent conflicts could be cited. However, upon careful examination, in most every case it is possible to synthesize one or more solutions to resolve the conflict. But such solutions may not represent the true explanations of the problem passages. That solutions can be suggested, however, illustrate that these problems do not defy reconciliation. Two statements of fact cannot be considered in contradiction if there is any conceivable way both could be simultaneously true.

Sometimes it is better for the student of Scripture simply to

admit that he cannot resolve the conflict within the limitations imposed by presently available knowledge and rest in the assurance that God will bring to light additional information if it pleases Him to do so.

“Contradictions” in Genesis 1 and 2

It has been charged that the first two chapters of Genesis are “parallel passages” and that there are contradictions between the two accounts of Creation. Those who make this charge believe the two accounts go back to different origins and that when the book of Genesis was finally put together, these two accounts were placed side by side. But are these charges justified?

The charges are not correct! There are not two “Creation” narratives. If there were, it seems extremely strange that whoever finally “put the book of Genesis together” did not recognize this. No one else noticed any such problem until the advent of “criticism” in the 18th century.

Critics charge that in the two chapters the order of creation is different. In chapter 2 the order is man, vegetation, animals and woman. Obviously this differs from chapter 1, and therefore we are told the two conflict.

If one reads chapter 2 of Genesis carefully, he will note that there is no contradiction. Genesis 2 makes no attempt to describe the works of Creation in chronological fashion. To insist that it does makes the chapter teach nonsense. It would ask us to believe that God created man (v. 7) before he had created any place to put man. The view would also insist that God twice placed man in the garden (see vv. 8 and 15). The order of events in this chapter is for emphasis, not chronology.

Critics further maintain that there is a difference in style. In this they are correct. However, a difference in style does not necessarily imply contradiction. The difference in style is dictated by a difference in subject matter and method of treatment. Genesis 1 is colossal and wide-sweeping in style. Chapter 2 deals in a quiet way with the lesser details. It speaks of the formation of the paradise garden, the planting of its trees and the placing

of the created man in the garden. The style of writing does differ, but this certainly does not bring about contradiction.

Critics also maintain that there are divergent conceptions of God in these two chapters. In Genesis 2 God is said to be conceived as acting as a man, whereas in chapter 1 this is not the case. In Genesis 2 God fashions, plants, takes, breathes, builds and walks. On the other hand, in Genesis 1 God is the majestic Creator who by the Word of His mouth brings into existence what He desires.

This is entirely true. In Genesis 1 the reader is introduced to the Triune God in all His majesty. It is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune Godhead, who majestically brings all things into being. The Father speaks, the Son brings into existence and the Holy Spirit orders and inspects. But in chapter 2 it is the LORD God, Yahweh Elohim, God the Son, the preincarnate Christ, who performs those detailed acts of Creation. Thus He is seen acting as a man. He is that Perfect Man who one day was to take on the flesh of humanity. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was not anything made that was made . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* John 1:1-3, 14.

The key to understanding the proper relationship between the first and second chapters of Genesis is found in the phrase of Genesis 2:4. "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth." This introduces the subject of Genesis 2. It means "These are the things begotten."

What follows the introductory phrase - "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth" - therefore, does not deal primarily with the heavens and the earth but rather with what was begotten of or generated from them, namely, man. Here the reader is told plainly that Genesis 2 (instead of being a second account of Creation) deals rather with the creation of man. Everything in the chapter focuses on the very fact that man is

the center of Creation. The garden is prepared for him, the animals are to be his helpers and the woman is to be his helpmate. Genesis 2 tells of the preparation of the Garden of Eden so that man could live in it. At the same time it paves the way for the account of the temptation and the fall, which are described in Genesis 3.

When one sees the proper relationship between Genesis 1 and 2, it becomes clear that there are no contradictions between them. These are not parallel passages. Genesis 1 is the account of Creation. Genesis 2 is the account of the preparation of the Garden of Eden and the formation of man and woman, who are to dwell in that garden. The chapters do not contradict but complement and explain. God's Word is perfect . . . and inerrant.

The Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah and Micah

Two very similar prophecies are found in Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3. However, a careful comparison of these passages shows that there are minor variations between the prophecies.

Isaiah writes, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."*

Micah's words are as follows: *"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go*

forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries. However, there are good reasons for believing that Micah's prophecy predates that of Isaiah. It has been charged that Isaiah is quoting the passage Micah had originally written. If this is true, why didn't Isaiah give a verbatim copy? Why did he take the liberty of making slight variations? Do we, indeed, have a case of "contradiction" in these parallel passages?

It is obvious that minor differences are present. Why these exist we may not be able to explain completely with our present state of knowledge. However, it is not a proven fact that Isaiah was attempting to quote Micah. Both these servants of God wrote their prophecies under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is only man's speculation that Isaiah was even attempting to quote from Micah. It may not have been God's purpose to have each of these men deliver identical prophecies. There are no contradictions in the things prophesied. There is just not precise agreement in the exact wording of the two predictions.

Even if it is conceded that Isaiah was attempting to quote Micah, there is still nothing here that conflicts with the doctrine of inerrancy. We should note that in many respects the writers of the Bible wrote in accordance with the customs and practices of the day. In the days of Isaiah and Micah, it was not the common practice to give verbatim repetition every time something was written out. For example, several copies of the records of the Assyrian king Sennacherib exist. These records are not written down on paper or parchment but on stone. The parallel records relate the same events; yet in spite of this there are small differences in the various copies.

The inspired authors of the books of the Bible likewise were not always led to give a word-for-word copy of materials they quoted. There were often minor differences. The doctrine of

inerrancy does not demand absolute identity in parallel passages. The fact that minor variations can be found is in perfect harmony with inerrancy.

King Asa's Removal of the High Places

One apparent contradiction that fits this category of objection involves I Kings 15:14 and II Chronicles 14:5. The passage from I Kings states, "*But the high places were not removed.*" The passage from II Chronicles states, "*Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images.*"

Since both of these passages refer to the reign of Asa, king of Judah, and what took place during that time, it would certainly appear that this is definitely a contradiction. But is the conflict of such a nature as to render reconciliation impossible? No! There are several alternative solutions, any of which could be considered valid.

The first solution suggests that the verse in I Kings is speaking of the removal of legitimate altars or high places built for the worship of the LORD God of Israel, and the statement says, "These were not removed." The passage in II Chronicles, then, would have had reference to the high places built for pagan worship. This solution is only speculation, and it should not be taught dogmatically as the true solution to the problem.

Second, it is possible that Asa did indeed abolish the altars on the high places but did not carry through these reforms with thoroughness. He had good intentions but did not complete the task. Thus two different viewpoints are presented by the respective narratives, which fits well the view many Bible scholars have expressed concerning the relationship of Kings to Chronicles. Kings is thought to present the "manward" concept of historical events, while Chronicles presents the "godward" or priestly perspective.

There is a third view that may be of some validity. The I Kings passage simply mentions that the high places were not removed, and apparently this refers to the whole land of Judah. The II Chronicles passage specifically states that the high places

and images were taken out of the *cities* of Judah. Perhaps there were rural places of pagan worship that remained after the purge, but the cities were completely cleansed of these abominations.

It is probable that other valid solutions could also be suggested. Facts contained in the two passages of Scripture are inerrant. "Corroborating" information is insufficient at this time to allow a final solution to be stated. The Lord may choose to reveal additional information, pointing to the final solution, at a later time.

8. Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14.

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1:23.

It has been charged that the doctrine of an inerrant Bible is destroyed by the manner New Testament writers quote the Old Testament. If the Bible were truly inerrant, critics charge, wouldn't the New Testament authors give verbatim quotations from the Hebrew scrolls? But it is a fact that they do not. Therefore critics feel clear evidence exists to contradict the doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy.

The practice of quoting, even in modern writing, is very interesting. There are several methods by which this is accomplished. The most common is the direct quote. We used this method earlier when we quoted Edward J. Young's definition of the doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy.

In this method, in order to set off the exact words of Young, quotation marks are used. Thus the precise words have been given without any change or modification. When this method is used, the reader expects to find a word-for-word reproduction of the original author's words.

A second way of quoting Young is to assert that he believes that the Bible itself teaches that God the Holy Spirit supervised the writers of the Scriptures so as to produce a record of divine authority and trustworthiness that is completely error free. By this second method, Young's actual words are not repeated verbatim, but the substance of what he believes about inspiration is correctly presented.

A third method by which the thought of Young's words may legitimately be conveyed is as follows: The question is asked, "Does Young believe that the Scriptures are without error?" In answer to this it may be asserted, "Young certainly does so believe!" In this reply Young has been accurately represented. The substance of his belief on the subject of inerrancy has been stated; yet the actual words have not been given.

Each of these different methods of representing the thoughts of an author is recognized as legitimate. All these various methods are used even in this day. This should be kept in mind as we consider an example that is charged to be contrary to the doctrine of inerrancy.

Matthew's Use of Isaiah's Prophecy

The very first quotation of the Old Testament Scriptures found in the New Testament is in Matthew 1:23. Here Matthew quotes the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. These two passages are compared at the beginning of this chapter.

It is obvious that Matthew's quote differs slightly from Isaiah's. Let's notice the major differences as they appear in the original languages. Isaiah has "is with child" whereas Matthew, substituting the future tense for the present, has "shall bear in the womb." Isaiah furthermore says, "She shall call his name," whereas Matthew says, "They shall call his name." How are

these differences to be explained within the limitations of the doctrine of inerrancy?

The ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), which was in widespread use in Matthew's day, renders the verse from Isaiah: "Behold the virgin shall have in the womb and shall bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel." A look at this translation makes it apparent what Matthew has done. Writing in Greek rather than Hebrew, Matthew followed the Septuagint translation of Isaiah's words. Matthew also substituted "shall have in the womb" for the present tense of the original. In addition to this, he made the subject of the verb indefinite. Instead of the "she shall call" of the Hebrew or the "thou shalt call" of the Septuagint, Matthew has rendered it "they shall call."

Now why has Matthew made these changes? Since he was writing in the Greek language, he considered the Greek version to be more suitable for his purpose than the Hebrew. Under the superintendency of the Holy Spirit, he also regarded the indefinite "they" as a satisfactory expression of the thought of the passage. The Spirit of God evidently wished Matthew to present this particular prophecy in a form slightly different from the original Hebrew of Isaiah.

No "One-to-One" Equivalence

Because Matthew was writing in Greek, he was compelled to translate. Therefore, he could not use the exact wording of Isaiah's original prophecy. Translation does not allow such because there is not a one-to-one equivalence between any two languages. The accuracy of Matthew's translation was superintended by the Holy Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit permitted him to use the general form of the Septuagint translation. Because Matthew's words are as truly inspired as were Isaiah's, no error has been introduced. The changes brought to the original prophecy actually constitute a divinely inspired commentary upon it.

From our consideration of Matthew's usage of Isaiah's prophecy, there are several conclusions that can be reached

charges of error in the Scriptures can be classified in this category. The points that have been proven through archaeological discoveries have been so devastating to the critical position that historical error in the Bible is no longer a major debating point.

The King of Babylon

Chapter 5 of Daniel declares that Belshazzar was king of Babylon instead of Nabonidus at the time the city fell to the armies of Darius the Median. Based on cuneiform records available to the secular historians, Nabonidus was held to be king at that time. There was no record that any Babylonian king by the name of Belshazzar had ever existed. So it seemed that this was certainly an error in Scripture. This type of "error" played right into the hands of those who advocated a second century B.C. authorship date for the book of Daniel.

This so-called error disappeared with the discovery of the Nabunaid Chronicle in the ruins of Babylon at about the turn of the century. This record not only mentioned the name Belshazzar (Akkadian: Bel-shar-usur) but indicated that he was a coregent of Nabonidus. Records found also offered positive proof that Nabonidus had entrusted his kingdom to Belshazzar before leaving on an expedition to Teima. Nabonidus was not present in Babylon the night the city fell.

Not only was Scripture vindicated by these archaeological discoveries, but the meaning of the expression "the *third* ruler in the kingdom" found in Daniel 5:7, 5:16, and 5:29; was clearly evident. This accuracy of detail in the book of Daniel, verified as it is by archaeology, struck a heavy blow against those who advocated a second century B.C. writing date for the book. How could a second century B.C. author, writing 400 years after Belshazzar had disappeared from the secular records, know the name of this man who was coregent to Nabonidus? Only one who was very familiar with the history of the fall of Babylon (that is, an eyewitness) could possibly have known the details recorded in Daniel's historical record.

Sargon, the King of Assyria

"In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it; At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and bare-foot." Isa. 20:1-2.

The other case in point is that of "Sargon, the king of Assyria." This man is mentioned in only one place in the Bible, and that is the parenthetical reference found in Isaiah 20:1. There is no other place in the entire Bible that such a king is mentioned, and at the beginning of the 19th century there were no secular records that such an Assyrian king had ever lived. Here again, critics felt, was an error in the prophetic book of Isaiah.

In 1843 an archaeologist by the name of Paul Emile Botta discovered Sargon's palace at Khorsabad. In the palace were found the written records of his reign. Now he is virtually the best-known king of ancient times, and the records he left have been of great value in clearing up many other vague points of history corresponding to the time of his reign.

Sargon was one of the most powerful kings of the 8th century B.C. world. His name had been forgotten by secular historians. He was so inconsequential to the Biblical record that his name was mentioned once in Scripture and that was only in a parenthetical record used to correlate a revelation of God to a specific historical time. Yet in the 19th century A.D., a thorough history of this man was brought to light by the archaeologist's shovel. A point that had once been considered to militate against the inerrancy of the Jewish Scriptures now has become one of the greatest proofs of the doctrine.

There are still critical charges of error in the historical records presented by the Law and the Prophets. However, as more and more archaeological information is brought to light, more and more of these charges are disappearing. Even the authenticity of the account of the Great Flood in the days of Noah seems to be vindicated by 20th century sightings of the

remains of an ark on the upper slopes of Mount Ararat.

10. Miracles

"Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel." Joshua 10:12-14.

Even the miracles spoken of in the Old Testament have been labeled as problems in relation to the doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy. When Moses opened the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21), and when the sun and moon stood still on the long day (Joshua 10: 12-14) Scripture has reported facts that cannot be harmonized with the inflexible laws of nature as we know them. To certain critics, these incidences represent errors and thus the doctrine of inerrancy cannot stand.

Criticism such as this is simply born of unbelief and does not merit consideration by one who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. One who has experienced the miracle of the new birth has no problem in believing the Bible when it speaks of miracles, which are of no greater magnitude than the one that has been performed within him by the Holy Spirit.

The Opening of the Red Sea

The miraculous way the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea to escape the pursuing Egyptians is recorded in Exodus 14. Verse 21 states: *"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all*

that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided."

The children of Israel had departed from the land of Goshen and had remained ahead of the pursuing Egyptian army until they reached the barrier of the Red Sea. There they encamped upon the west bank, waiting on Moses to provide the means of crossing.

The Egyptians apparently reached the vicinity of the camp somewhere near the early evening. According to verse 20, a supernatural cloud protected the Israelites during that night. When Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the LORD caused the sea to divide by means of a "strong east wind" which blew all that night causing the land under the waters to become dry. Apparently the sea was parted as soon as Moses stretched out his hand. The "strong east wind" was used for drying the exposed land area rather than for forcing back the waters. It is specifically noted in verse 21 that the waters were "divided." This verse teaches that the waters were parted and a special wind created a dry passage in the midst of the parted waters. According to verse 22, the waters of the sea were miraculously "stacked up" as "a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" as they traveled eastward.

The precise nature of this event has been the subject of considerable speculation. Critics have long denied the historicity of this event and have simply called it "mythology." Others have not denied the historicity but have explained away any miracle simply by regarding the parting of the waters as the result of the combination of a strong natural wind and the ebb tide. The fact that Scripture itself claims a miracle is regarded by these critics as "error."

Another proposal of the critics designed to remove the "miraculous" aspects of this event is that the parting of the Red Sea was brought about by some kind of volcanic action in that part of the world. Both the pollution of the Nile River and the crossing of the Israelites through the sea have been ascribed to a violent volcanic eruption that occurred somewhere in the 13th century B.C.

According to one theory, this volcanic explosion set off air waves 350 times more powerful than those of a hydrogen bomb. This volcanic explosion devastated not only the presumed continent of Atlantis, but provided associated catastrophic events such as the plagues and the separation of the Red Sea. A proposal such as this requires a great deal in the realm of the "miraculous" by way of accidental timing. Furthermore, it is very doubtful that the results described in the Bible could possibly have been achieved by such catastrophic and destructive means.

Another quite popular critical view is that the Israelites crossed in a generally shallow and marshy district, which could easily have been cleared of water and laid dry by the normal action of a strong wind. The objection to this viewpoint is that if this were merely shallow water, it is difficult to see how the Egyptians could have been drowned. See Exodus 14:28; 15:4-6. It is also quite unlikely that a purely natural wind could create "a wall" of water. If one should argue that the waters were indeed deep but were still moved or parted by a natural wind, how then could the children of Israel have crossed such an area? The velocity required of such a wind to move a considerable amount of water would have prohibited them from crossing even with the path cleared.

The only interpretation of the "strong east wind" is to regard it as a supernatural wind rather than a purely natural one. There are at least four reasons for establishing this as the only acceptable interpretation. First, it is doubtful that a purely natural wind would make a "wall." Second, if this wind came from the east, it most likely would have walled up the water in the wrong direction; that is, north and south. Third, two walls are mentioned, which indicates that the waters were divided by this special wind. When the people crossed, there was a wall on their right hand, that is, to the south, and a wall on their left hand, or to the north. Such a walled effect would be accomplished by a special wind rather than a purely natural wind. Fourth, if this were a natural wind capable of moving enough water to provide a depth to drown the Egyptians, could the people have walked through such an area, assuming that a natural wind would have come through the area with a tremen-

dous velocity?

The description of the waters standing up as a heap is interesting and may shed further light on the nature of the walling up of the waters. A similar expression is used in Joshua 3:13 to describe the cutting off of the waters of the Jordan, thus providing passage for the children of Israel to cross. How wide an area was provided for the crossing is not given in the text of Exodus. It might well be that this was a considerable passageway in view of the fact that many Israelites had to cross.

Exodus 14 does record a true miracle of God. The fact that only miraculous elements make this story conform to the words of the Scriptural record is not to be considered as error. God is omnipotent. He can, and does, perform miracles as it pleases Him. The crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel was brought about by a mighty work of God Himself. The Scriptural record is true and inerrant.

The Long Day of Joshua

The book of Joshua records several miracles, but none perhaps as noteworthy or as widely criticized as that pertaining to the prolongation of the day in which the battle of Gibeon was fought. Scripture plainly implies that God miraculously stopped the rotation of the earth on its axis to obtain the additional 24 hours of that long day. It has been objected that if, in fact, the earth were stopped in its rotation for a period of 24 hours, inconceivable catastrophe would have befallen the entire planet and everything on its surface. Critics consider this objection insurmountable. They say that here indeed the Jewish Scriptures err in reporting something as fact that could never have happened.

Several "theories" have been advanced that remove some of the "insurmountable" miraculous aspects of this event without removing all historical significance from the passage. Some have said that the Hebrew text is such that it is not necessary to hold that the planet was suddenly halted in its rotation. Joshua 10:13 states that the sun "hasted not to go down about a whole day." The words "hasted not" seem to point to a retardation of

the movement so that the rotation required 48 hours rather than the usual 24. However, this really does not greatly change the problem. Even a retardation of the earth's rotation would have produced the same catastrophes upon the earth's surface as would have a complete stop of this basic planetary motion.

Another understanding of the passage has been brought out by assigning a slightly different interpretation to the Hebrew word *dom*, translated as "stand thou still." This verb usually signifies "be silent," "cease," "leave off." Some have interpreted Joshua's prayer to be a petition that the sun ceased pouring down its heat upon his struggling troops so that they might be permitted to press the battle under more favorable conditions. The tremendously destructive hailstorm that accompanied the battle (v. 11) has been said to lend some credence to this view. Some men who are definitely not critics of the Bible have accepted it. In spite of this, it must be admitted that verse 13 does not seem to lend itself to such an interpretation. Literally, these words read, "and the sun stood in the half (or midway point) of the sky, and it did not hasten to set for about an entire day."

Another solution suggests that a miraculous prolongation of the day would have taken place if it simply *seemed* to Joshua and all Israel to be supernaturally prolonged. In other words, God allowed them to accomplish the work of two days in only one day. Their efforts were speeded up and therefore it seemed that time slowed down. It would have been very difficult for them to make an accurate measurement of time if the sun itself did not move (i.e., the earth did not rotate) at its normal rate. Along with this, some have said that God may have produced an optical prolongation of the sunshine, using the principle of refraction to make it appear that the sun did not move. The sun would have continued to be visible after the normal setting time by means of the refraction of the rays.

All these views, designed to take away at least a part of the "miraculous" elements of this incident, represent strained interpretation. Those who believe in the omnipotence of God concede that it is possible for God to have stopped the earth's rotation and prevented such catastrophes that would normally accompany such an event. The God of Creation could most defi-

nately hold in abeyance the laws of physics that would have brought the adverse events to pass. Scripture records exactly what God would have His people to understand. He did miraculously extend the length of the day on which the battle of Gibeon was fought. He did this by stopping the earth's rotation and by miraculously overcoming all those effects of inertia and centrifugal force that could wreak devastation upon the planet.

God did perform such a miracle. The passage in Joshua 10 accurately records exactly what took place on that historic day. The recording of this incident places no error in God's infallible Word.

11. Morality in Old Testament Times

"And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father." Gen. 19:31-36.

Further objections to inerrancy are registered because of certain Old Testament incidents that seem incompatible with the high moral standard taught in the New Testament. The incestuous episode involving Lot and his daughters, the entanglement of Judah with Tamar (Gen. 38:13-26) and the many instances of extreme violence and brutality seem to the critics to be out of place in an inspired book.

This kind of criticism comes from a lack of understanding of the nature and purpose of the Old Testament, and an even lesser understanding of the extreme corruption of the fallen nature in even the best of us. The Scriptures record human history as it happened. The depravity of the characters is not concealed. The fact that God's Word does not cover but rather exposes this wickedness is actually an argument for inerrancy.

Let's briefly consider several examples so that we may place them in their proper perspective.

Lot and His Daughters

After their escape from the destruction of Sodom, Lot and his two daughters fled to Zoar, but did not remain there. The inhabitants of Zoar may have resented Lot and his daughters since they were the sole survivors of the destruction of Zoar's sister city. Perhaps they considered Lot a participant in its destruction. So Lot and his daughters left Zoar and went to live in a cave. It was a miserable contrast to the years of luxurious living in Sodom, but at least their lives were spared.

It is interesting that despite the loss of their possessions, these three managed to bring along a supply of wine. It was this one remaining possession that became a vehicle for Lot's further degradation. His daughters, on successive nights, encouraged their father to drink himself into a stupor; and then they each entered into a incestuous relationship with him.

The two daughters may not have been motivated simply by physical lust, although certainly their previous surroundings in Sodom had been most conducive to its full expression. They were, nevertheless, still virgins (Gen. 19:8); so at least their father's moral standards had influenced them to some degree. They had kept themselves pure for their future husbands, but now in their present circumstances, they feared they would never have husbands at all. As the only survivors of their family, neither they nor Lot had hope of future descendants.

In view of God's command to be fruitful and the universal belief that barrenness was a disgrace, this situation must have

seemed intolerable to them. With neither husbands nor sons, the daughters feared that there would be no one to provide for them in their old age. Evidently Lot's daughters decided their plan was the only thing to do under the circumstances (except to trust God, an idea that apparently never occurred to them). So they proceeded to get their father drunk and to go through with their scheme.

This sinful incestuous plot resulted in the birth of two sons, Moab and Ammon, who grew up to become the patriarchs of two ungodly nations. These nations bitterly opposed the Israelites, God's chosen people, and caused them much anguish throughout history.

We must remember that at this time the teaching against incest had not been fully formulated, and close marriages were not uncommon. However, by today's Christian standards, the sins of Lot and his daughters represent the depths of immorality. Although God's inerrant Word reports such unrighteous incidents, this does *not* mean that God *ever* approves of sinful conduct.

Judah and Tamar

"When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot, because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her; and came in unto her; and she conceived by him." Gen. 38:15-18.

Here we have another incident of man taking matters into his own hands to help God bring about what He had promised would come to pass. The weaknesses of the flesh are brought to the front, in what by Christian standards is an extreme act of immorality, in order to produce "justifiable" results.

Tamar was Judah's daughter-in-law. She had been married to his son Er. Er had died without fathering children by her. Onan, Er's brother, had the responsibility of bringing up seed for his dead brother. Because he shirked that responsibility the Lord took his life. Judah had one remaining son, Shelah, who was very young. Yet Judah promised Tamar that he would raise up seed unto her by this youngest son at the appropriate time.

When sufficient time passed it became apparent to Tamar that Judah did not intend to keep his agreement regarding Shelah. Tamar was a Canaanite, but she was aware of God's covenant promises to the Hebrew nation.

Tamar apparently knew something of Judah's fondness for prostitutes. It was this flaw in his character that Tamar reasoned would make her the mother she desired to be. Her opportunity came when she learned that Judah had gone to join his sheepshearers in Timnath. She took off her widow's clothing and put on the attire of a Canaanite temple prostitute. This attire included a veil, which would prevent her from being recognized. She then seated herself by the wayside in a spot where she knew Judah would encounter her. Her hope was that when he saw her, he would employ her as a prostitute. This would give her the opportunity to become a mother in Israel.

Tamar was careful to collect the proof that she would later need to show Judah that he was indeed the father of her expected child. Things worked out as her plan had anticipated. Thus the Judaic line was continued, just as it had been God's intent that it would. It was the line of Judah that God had chosen to bring the Messiah into the world.

God's Word records history as it happened. The actions of Tamar and Judah were immoral. The weakness of the flesh is always present. The Scriptures report true history because they are inerrant.

The Case of Jephthah's Daughter

"And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou

shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S and I will offer it up for a burnt offering . . . And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter . . . And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel." Judges 11:30-31, 34, 39.

Criticism of the low morality of Old Testament times often mentions the apparent sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter related in Judges 11. Deuteronomy 12:31 specifically forbids human sacrifice, and some expositors have held that a human sacrifice was offered without God's direct disapproval, and perhaps even with His endorsement.

Actually, there is a difference of opinion concerning whether there was a human sacrifice, or if Jephthah's daughter was simply restrained to a vow of perpetual virginity. Those who deny that a human sacrifice took place base their reasoning on the fact that she was given two months to "bemoan her virginity" not the loss of her life. Also, the statement that she "knew no man" occurs after Jephthah had fulfilled his vow and offered her. Therefore, it is alleged that Jephthah did not take the life of his daughter but only "sacrificed" her to perpetual virginity throughout her life. She could never bear children and in this sense she was "sacrificed."

There are many Bible scholars that lean toward the opposite view. Jewish tradition holds that an actual human sacrifice was made. However, nothing in the record indicates that such a sacrifice was made with God's approval. Jephthah was a rash and ungodly man, even though he was used in God's service. He had many leanings toward the immoral ways of the Canaanites. God may have permitted him to sacrifice his daughter, but God never approved of it. The rashness of this act was entirely upon Jephthah.

The Scriptural record of this event does not provide sufficient evidence for us to determine the correct interpretation. In view of this fact, it is wrong for critics to hold up this passage as an example of error. The Christian realizes that, regardless of what happened between Jephthah and his daughter, Scripture does *not* teach that the action met with God's approval. If any immorality was involved, it was on the part of man; God had nothing to do with it.

12. Textual Criticism

"And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim." Gen. 10:4.

"And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim." I Chron. 1:7.

"Textual Criticism" is that area of Biblical scholarship that attempts to recover the exact wording of the original autographs of the books of the Bible by comparing existing manuscripts and by applying logic processes in the area of language mechanics. Within the field of textual criticism, certain variations have been discovered that some critics charge to be problems in regard to the doctrine of inerrancy. Most are very minor points, but those eager to challenge the doctrine of inerrancy have pointed to these variations as evidence that the doctrine cannot stand.

There are numerous examples of these minor variations found in the Scriptures. These examples are technical in nature, and it is not necessary to present an exhaustive list in order to disclose the nature of the critical charges. The textual critics have found no problems of such magnitude that can challenge the faith of the mature believer in Christ. The doctrine of inerrancy stands.

Dodanim or Rodanim?

An exact transliteration of each of the names of the sons of Javan as they appear in two passages of the Hebrew text are presented at the head of this chapter. The fourth-listed son of Javan as presented in Genesis 10:4 is "Dodanim." The fourth-listed son of Javan as presented in I Chronicles 1:7 is "Rodanim." (The King James Version has made I Chronicles 1:7 agree with Genesis 10:4, but this has been done without the authority of the Hebrew text.) Obviously, these two verses represent parallel passages, and the fourth-listed son is the same man in both passages.

The textual critics charge, "Here we have an error in the Scriptures. The author of the book of Genesis thought Javan's fourth son was called 'Dodanim.' The author of the book of I Chronicles thought this same son was 'Rodanim.' The name is obviously not the same; so there must be an error in the Hebrew text. And if there is an error, then the doctrine of inerrancy must fall."

What is the explanation for such a seeming inconsistency? Does this mean that the Scriptures do contain one slight error? Does such an inconsistency destroy the doctrine of inerrancy?

The fact that these names are different in two parallel passages of Scripture does not by any means prove there is an error in the original autographs. (The "original autographs" are those manuscripts written by the originally inspired authors. No "original autographs" of any book of the Bible have been preserved for us today.)

It is very possible that the variation in reading in these two passages came about because of a copyist's error. Such an error would have been quite easy to make, since it requires only a variation in one consonant. The Hebrew symbols for the two consonants in question are quite similar in character, and such a mistake could have been easily made. Whether the error would be in the Genesis passage or the I Chronicles passage is not known. Only a comparison of the original autographs would disclose the exact nature of the variation.

Conservative scholars who hold firmly to the doctrines of verbal inspiration and Scriptural inerrancy freely admit that these doctrines apply only to the original autographs. Copies and translations that we now have are not perfect reproductions of these original autographs and therefore are not inerrant. However, many copies and translations now available do faithfully reproduce the words and the thoughts of the original, and because of this they are authoritative as the Word of God. Although textual errors due to mistakes of the copyists or translators may be found in them, these errors are minor in nature and do not distort the message of God to His creatures.

It is quite possible that these particular variations in our example texts do not represent a copyist's error, however. It is entirely possible that Javan's fourth son was known by both names. It is not unusual for a man to be known by two separate but similar names even in our day. There is some evidence from sources other than the Scriptures that this man may have indeed gone by both of these names.

Javan was the father of the Greeks, and his sons founded the individual Greek nations. It is believed that the geographical name "Dardanelles" is derived from the "Dodanim" spelling of this man's name. Also, it is believed that the geographical name "Rhodes" is derived from the "Rodanim" spelling of his name. This evidence tends to indicate that both names did belong to this fourth son of Javan, and that both sacred authors are correct in spelling his name as they did.

Regardless of the explanation for this particular variation, the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Scriptures stands. God revealed to man through His prophets the exact words He would have them set down. These holy men of old wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit."

Conclusions

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

The unexplained problems in the Scriptures are not proof that because God chose human agents to pen His Word these Scriptures contain human error in addition to the divine message. Rather, they are the proof that fallible human interpreters, not always properly guided by the Holy Spirit of God, have charged to the divinely breathed Holy Scripture error that is inherent in their own fallen natures.

Because of our finite knowledge and limited sphere of experience, it is true that we cannot always fathom the mind of God in relationship to every part of His revealed Word. The Scriptures written by the prophets of Israel are God-breathed and inerrant. The Lord Jesus Christ—God manifest in the flesh—told us this was so, and we believe it. *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."* John 17:17.

Many times in the past, especially in recent years, God has seen fit to reward our faith by bringing to light new knowledge. We can rest in the assurance that He will continue to do this as long as it serves His purpose. None of the problems of which we are aware today, or which may come to light tomorrow, are of sufficient magnitude to weaken the faith of anyone who walks in fellowship with Him.

"For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." Psalm 100:5.

Appendix I

Carbon-14 Dating: New Evidence from Science

The best proof of the relatively young age of our universe comes from a technical discipline many advocates of the theory of uniformity feel is one of their strongest supporters. This discipline is radiological dating, specifically carbon-14 dating. Immediately after World War II this method of measuring the age of fossil biological material was developed. It involves the measurement of the relative portions of carbon-14 (a radioactive isotope of carbon) to carbon-12 (the common stable isotope of carbon). Calculations of the fossil age are then made from this measurement.

There is a given uniform ratio of carbon-14 to carbon-12 atoms in all living biological samples. Carbon-14 is an unstable isotope and is constantly decaying to the stable carbon-12 state.

But carbon-14 is also being manufactured in the upper layers of earth's atmosphere through the absorption of cosmic radiation by nitrogen atoms. The newly manufactured carbon-14 filters down to the earth's surface, and since it reacts chemically exactly like carbon-12, it becomes a part of the biosphere. The cells of living biological organisms are constantly using carbon to manufacture replacements for themselves, and the carbon used contains its regular portion of the radioactive isotope carbon-14.

However, when a biological specimen dies, it no longer replaces old cells with new ones. If the specimen is preserved through the process of fossilization, the carbon-14 contained in it will gradually decay to carbon-12 with the passing of time. The relative proportion of carbon-14 to carbon-12 will decrease. If the decay rate of carbon-14 is known, the age of the fossilized specimen can be determined to the degree of accuracy permitted by the experiment.

Several assumptions are made. Two of the more important ones are:

- (1). The decay rate of carbon-14 is known.

and

(2). The relative proportion of carbon-14 to carbon-12 was the same in the fossil organism at the time of its death as is present in living biological specimens of today.

The present decay rate of carbon-14 is known to an accuracy that is compatible with the requirements of the method. That this rate has always been constant might be open to challenge, but such a scientific challenge would have very little bearing on the proof being considered.

Assumption #2 is the critical issue. During early experiments measurements were made on specimens, the ages of which were known by other methods. Carbon-14 dates did not check with the known historical dates to the predicted degree of accuracy, and the error became larger with the older specimens.

Carbon-14 Cycle Not in Equilibrium

While the experimenters were worrying over these results, data became available that pointed to the source of the error. It was found that the carbon-14 cycle in our planetary system is not in equilibrium. Carbon-14 is being formed at a rate faster than it is decaying. The relative amounts of carbon-14 in our biosphere are increasing all the time. Thus there was not as much carbon-14 present at the time of death of the fossil specimens as had been assumed.

In our day carbon-14 is decaying at about 70 percent of its rate of formation. The experimenters used this additional information and corrected their calculations of the ages of the test specimens. Corrected results checked with the known historical ages, and agreement was found.

Earth's Age Limited by Carbon-14 Facts

For a long time the tremendously significant implications of the fact that the carbon-14 cycle of our kosmos was not in equilibrium apparently went unnoticed. It is this fact that sets a limit of only a few thousand years of past history for which the theory of uniformity of present natural processes can be applied. If our universe in its present state were more than a maximum of 30,000 years old, the carbon-14 cycle would have to be in equilibrium. The fact that it is not in equilibrium is known and accepted by scientists.

The reason that great age of the earth requires a carbon-14 cycle in equilibrium is quite simple. The decay rate of carbon-14, as of all radioactive material, is an "exponential" function. That is, the amount of radioactive material that decays in a given period of time is a function of the amount of the material present. Decay rates of radioactive materials are specified by a quantity known as the "half-life" of each material. A half-life is that time period in which one-half of the initial sample will have decayed. The half-life of carbon-14 is accepted as 5,700 years.

Carbon-14 is formed at a "linear" rate. The amount of carbon-14 formed in a given period of time is a linear function of the time that has elapsed. (If "X" carbon-14 is formed in one year, then "2X" carbon-14 will be formed in two years, "3X" in three years, etc.)

So the situation that exists is this. The quantity of carbon-14 formed is proportional to the total time-lapse, and the rate of formation (to an acceptable approximation) is constant. The rate of decay of carbon-14 is a function of the amount of material that exists. Thus as more carbon-14 is formed, the rate of decay increases.

If a closed system like our planet were to begin at some time in the past with no carbon-14, and if it were subjected to the processes that form carbon-14 such as our planet is, then eventually the amount of carbon-14 present would increase to the point where the rate of decay was exactly the same as the rate of formation. From that time on, the quantity of carbon-14 would remain constant, never increasing or decreasing. This is known as the "equilibrium" condition.

Notice the assumption that a hypothetical planetary system starting with zero carbon-14 initially would result in the longest possible time lapse required for the establishment of equilibrium. If a given quantity were already present at "time zero," then equilibrium would be reached sooner.

In our day it has been possible to measure not only the rate of formation of carbon-14 and the rate of increase in total carbon-14 content of our biosphere but also the rate of decay of this isotope. These figures are all that are needed to calculate the approximate time it should take for our carbon-14 cycle to reach a state of equilibrium if the planet started out with no carbon-14 present. This time period is approximately 29,000 years.

Further, the time required to reach the present situation in which the known carbon-14 decay rate is 70 percent of the formation rate can be shown to lie within the range of 6,000 to 8,000 years (10,000 years at the very most). Here is factual proof of a "young" earth, harmonizing with the Genesis account in the Bible. These facts supplied by carbon-14 dating research effectively refute the uniformitarians and evolutionists who contend that the earth must be many, many thousands, or even billions of years old.

A Major Discontinuity in Natural Processes

Our present knowledge of the carbon-14 cycle provides technical proof that some major discontinuity in natural processes has to be placed in the exact time frame in which one who interprets the book of Genesis in its ordinary, literal sense would place the two events of the Flood of Noah's day and Creation. The genealogies of Genesis 5 seem to teach that a period slightly less than 2,000 years separated these events.

At the present, there is still some question as to whether the "major discontinuity" in natural processes can be placed at the time of Noah's Flood, or at the time of Creation. Most likely the rate of increase of carbon-14 in our planetary system became significant after the collapse of the water vapor canopy around the earth at the time of the Great Flood.

While the canopy remained in place, the upper layers of the atmosphere would have been shielded from the sun's cosmic rays. Little nitrogen would have been converted to carbon-14, prior to the Great Flood.

However, when the canopy was removed, the conversion process of nitrogen to carbon-14 rapidly accelerated to the present rate. Probably our carbon-14 cycle actually dates from the period of intense rainfall at the beginning of the great Deluge.

The 6000-year minimum time lapse is a realistic measurement of the time span since the beginning of the Great Flood. This would date that event at approximately 4,000 B.C. Creation can be dated at approximately 6,000 B.C.

Appendix II

The Laws of Physics Testify to Creation

Strictly speaking, there are only two basic natural laws that hold (insofar as man can observe) throughout our entire universe from the subnuclear level up to the galactical level. These are the two laws of energy exchange, normally designated as the first and second laws of thermodynamics.

We know today that everything in our material universe is just some special form of energy. Therefore, these two laws of energy exchange interplay in all natural phenomena without respect to the particular phenomenon under consideration. Every process of our universe is governed by these two laws, which in the natural realm cannot be violated.

The first law of thermodynamics states that energy cannot be created or destroyed. Therefore, the total quantity of energy in our universe is fixed, and this quantity is never changed by any natural process. It simply changes form. This first law is known as the law of conservation of energy.

The second law of thermodynamics concerns degradation and decay. This law states that in any energy exchange process, though the total quantity of energy remains the same, a portion of the energy involved decays to a lower state of usefulness. That is, with each energy exchange that takes place, a portion of the energy involved becomes unavailable to do further useful work. This is a law of disintegration and decay. Though our universe contains a fixed quantity of energy, and this quantity never changes, the quality of this energy becomes progressively poorer.

Basically the second law of thermodynamics tells us that our universe is gradually "running down." If time were allowed to go on indefinitely, our universe would eventually reach a state of thermal equilibrium where no further energy exchange processes could take place. In other words, our universe would die. Since it is known that this could take place at some time in the distant future, then it also follows that the universe cannot be of infinite age already. If it were, the

state of thermal equilibrium would have already been reached.

Therefore, there must have been a "beginning" for our universe at some time in the finite past. The beginning can be defined as a time when our fixed quantity of energy was in a much higher state of "charge" (that is, in the terminology of physics, at a much lower state of entropy) than it is now. Highly useful energy must have been brought into existence at some time in the finite past. There must have been creation of "new" energy.

But this is not permitted in the realm of the natural for the simple reason that the first law of thermodynamics says such a phenomenon is impossible. Creation must have taken place by phenomena outside the sphere of the present laws of physics. In other words, the origin of our universe is not explainable within the realm of the natural; so it must be relegated to the realm of the supernatural.

It is totally useless for men to speculate about the origin of our world, because such an origin is impossible within the bounds of the natural law by which we are now constrained. The creation of our universe must have occurred prior to the establishment of the present laws of physics.

Anything man knows about the creation of the world in which he lives must be revealed to him by the One responsible for that Creation. The first two chapters of Genesis are such a revelation. And everything found in those two chapters is completely consistent with every observation made by man.

The Two Laws of Thermodynamics in the Scriptures

Surprisingly enough to some, the two laws of thermodynamics can be found in the book of Genesis. They are not in mathematical formulations, but the principles of these two laws are present.

The first law states that energy cannot be created or destroyed. In physics, work done is mathematically equivalent to energy expended. In other words, the technical terms "work" and "energy" are interchangeable.

If we use this relationship in retranslating Genesis 2:2-3, we read: "And on the seventh day God ended His *energy* that He had made; and

He rested on the seventh day from all His *energy* that He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His *energy* that God created and made."

Here we have the first law of thermodynamics. God rested from making energy, and Scripture does not tell us that He has ever resumed making energy. Energy was brought into existence *ex nihilo* ("created from nothing") and was formed ("made") into the various states necessary for a functioning universe.

The processes God used for this accomplishment were ended on the seventh day, and they are no longer available for man's scientific observation. So, as far as man is concerned, "energy cannot be created or destroyed."

The principle of the law of decay and disorder, the second law of thermodynamics, is found in the words of the curse that God pronounced to Adam: "*Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*" Gen. 3:17-19.

The Apostle Paul expressed the principle of the curse in technical terms that are easily identifiable with the second law of thermodynamics in Romans 8:21-22. "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the *bondage of corruption* into the glorious liberty of the children of God. *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*"

The Spirit of God has not neglected to tell us of the two natural laws that govern our universe.

The End