

10.

saved or not?

The biblical position is that regeneration, calling and conversion stand and fall together. Regeneration has no meaning apart from the truth of the gospel addressed to our consciousness. There is no biblical or theological warrant for preachers to expect a time lag between the effective work of the Spirit and the exercise of faith. Pastoral difficulties of discerning spiritual experiences should not lead us away from the clear teaching of scripture.

What, then, of infants? John Murray's position on this is safe and scriptural:

'The salvation which is of the gospel is never apart from faith. This is true even in the case of infants, for in regeneration the germ of faith (not, notice, of regeneration - IS) is implanted ... The person who is merely regenerate is not saved, the simple reason being that there is no such person. The saved person is also called, justified and adopted.'

J.Murray, 'Romans' p27

The blind man must open his eyes before he can see, but this gap between the two is not one of time. In Thomas Boston's words, *'When the Lord opens the sluices of grace on the soul's new birthday, the waters run through the whole man'*.

Ian Shaw (Cardiff)

*

*

*

THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE:

SOME OLD TESTAMENT PROBLEMS

Rev John C.J.Waite BD
(Barry)

Our belief in the inerrancy of the Old Testament Scriptures rests upon the unambiguous declarations of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as recorded in the Gospels. It is evident to any unbiased mind

that the Saviour went out of His way to vouch for the total trustworthiness of the Old Testament, when He affirmed: *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. 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]. *"Without doubt"*, says Robert Lightner, *"the last part of this quotation grants inspiration to the most minute part of Scripture and it thus also emphatically gives Christ's view of the inspiration of the whole."* [T.S.T.S.p.61] On every occasion that He appeals to the Old Testament, we are left in not the slightest doubt that the Lord holds it to be the very word of God written. It is worth remembering that when He thus validated the inerrancy of the entire Old Testament, none of the original autographs was in existence. The text of the Old Testament writings had by this time suffered minor defects through scribal transmission. The standard authoritative Hebrew text was not established until at least the end of the first century A.D. It will not do, then, to urge that it is now pointless to insist on the inerrancy of the Old Testament seeing that the original autographs have been irretrievably lost.

Many modern evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic are uneasy about using the term 'inerrancy' with reference to the Scriptures. Indeed, we can put it more strongly. They are actually contending against the use of this term. This is not in fact something altogether new. James Orr as early as 1910 raises the point: *"Does the Bible itself claim or inspiration necessitate such an errorless record in matters of minor detail? ... this is a violent assumption which there is nothing in the Bible really to support"* [R & I p.214] His statement was made with reference to what he considered to be minute matters of historical, geographical, and scientific detail. Everett F.Harrison writing in 1958 concludes an essay on The Phenomena of Scripture with this astonishing statement: *"Unquestionably the Bible teaches its own*

inspiration. It is the Book of God. It does not require us to hold inerrancy, though this is a natural corollary of full inspiration." The whole tenor of his essay implies that he himself has doubts on the score of inerrancy.

Are we being pedantic and unnecessarily precise in insisting upon the Biblical doctrine of inerrancy? Is it something worth contending for? Is it an essential part of our contending for the Faith once delivered to the saints? This is no minor or secondary doctrine. It is by no means enough to claim merely, as Bernard Ramm does, that the language of Scripture "*is trustworthy for all the theological and moral requirements of the historical existence of the Church*" [S.R. & W.G.p.179]. Nor to say with another "... *it was not God's intention or purpose to secure inerrancy in peripheral matters. 'Peripheral matters' include Scriptural data which have nothing to do with faith and life, such as minor historical details, grammatical constructions and the like*" [T.S.T.S. p.158 - Joseph A.Hill]. But these 'peripheral matters' turn out to be not so peripheral. They may include anything that, in the subjective opinion of an individual, is not essential to faith and life.

Our Lord's view of the Old Testament was that it was entirely free from error of any kind. He made no distinction between facts of history, geography, science or theology. What some are pleased today to call 'minutiae' or 'peripheral matters', the Saviour encompassed within His clear and unequivocal assertions regarding the absolute trustworthiness of the Old Testament Scriptures - "*Thy word is truth*". "*The Scripture cannot be broken*". Dr J.I.Packer has put the matter most pointedly, "*The question, 'What think ye of the Old Testament?' resolves into the question, 'What think ye of Christ?' and our answer to the first proclaims our answer to the second ... To undercut Christ's teaching about the authority of the Old Testament*

is to strike at His own authority at the most fundamental point" [F. & W.G. pp59f] The Old Testament is divinely authoritative on all the matters of which it treats. We are not at liberty to set aside nor to explain away any statement in any part of the Old Testament writings. It has all been out-breathed by the God of truth who cannot lie. Says E.J.Young, "*If God has communicated wrong information even in so-called unimportant matters, He is not a trustworthy God*" [T.W.I.T.p.164]. A.A.Hodge and B.B.Warfield plainly reveal what is at stake in contending for an inerrant Bible when they jointly declared, "*A proved error in Scripture contradicts not only our doctrine, but the Scripture claims, and therefore its inspiration in making those claims*" [P.R. Vol.IIp.245].

Seeing then that the inerrancy of the Old Testament was clearly taught by Christ, to deny it is at the least to falter in our submission to His Lordship and at the most to impugn His character as the only wise God. We hold to the doctrine because Christ taught it. Taking this as our starting-point, we confront the difficulties and problems which this doctrine gives rise to. Some of these problems are due to the present state of the Hebrew text; some arise through conflict with modern scientific theory; others stem from the difficulty of harmonising Biblical history and chronology with archaeological research and extra-Biblical chronological data, and yet others may be traced to wide differences of interpretation resulting from divergent hermeneutic principles. At the same time it has to be acknowledged that many alleged discrepancies and contradictions are due simply to a superficial misreading of the text, while a host of real problems yield fully to patient and reverent study.

There is a tendency among us to subscribe wholeheartedly to this doctrine because we see it to be clearly taught in the Bible and yet to fail to come to terms with the problems that inevitably arise when we relate the doctrine to what we find in the

Scriptures as they have come down to us. There are errors in the extant Hebrew text of the Old Testament. There are what appear to be contradictions and discrepancies. All these must be honestly confronted and examined in the light of the doctrine. We may have to admit that some of these problems cannot be satisfactorily explained for the present. If this is the case, we ought not to hesitate to say so. This does not invalidate the doctrine. What we can be certain about is that none of these problems constitutes an error in the Scriptures as they were originally given. Our inability to solve them is due to the incompleteness of our knowledge.

The Most Basic Question of Interpretation

As we approach the various types of problems occasioned by the doctrine of inerrancy, we do well to remind ourselves of the extraordinary diversity of subject-matter and literary forms which are to be found within these thirty-nine books of the Old Testament - a veritable Divine library! Historical narrative occupies about a third and prophetic discourses about a quarter of the whole. Sublime poetry is to be found not only in the Psalms, Job, the Song of Songs and Proverbs, but extensively in the Prophets and elsewhere. There are parables and allegories and apocalyptic with its special use of symbols. Even in what is straightforward narrative the Biblical writers make use of vivid metaphor and simile. The doctrine of inerrancy implies that the Bible means what it says. So often problems arise for us because we have mistaken the real meaning of what the Bible says. For example, when we read in Exodus in the account of the crossing of the Red Sea that "*the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left*", we are not necessarily to think of the waters piled up perpendicularly like a literal wall. Moses is using metaphorical language here. The parted waters of the Red Sea gave

the Israelites complete protection on both flanks so that they were immune from attack. Similarly, when we read in Joshua that the waters of the Jordan "*stood and rose up upon an heap*" when the feet of the priests carrying the ark of the covenant touched the brink of the river, it is probable that we are not to understand the language literally but metaphorically. The damming of the Jordan some miles upstream from where the Israelites were to cross, was still an extraordinary event fully miraculous in its timing if not altogether supernatural in its character.

We must be careful that we do not unwittingly disparage the doctrine of inerrancy by literalizing what is intended to be understood metaphorically, analogically, symbolically or typically. In Jeremiah's prophecy against Babylon in chapter 51, he employs a number of vivid metaphors which would be sheer nonsense if taken literally. He describes Babylon as a "*destroying mountain*" though the city was situated in an alluvial plain with not a mountain in sight. Babylon is so described either because of its high walls or its inordinate pride and ambition. Later in the same chapter the overthrow of Babylon is expressed thus: "*The sea is come upon Babylon; she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof*". Yet the very next verse seems to state the exact opposite! "*Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land where no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby*". But there is no contradiction here. Jeremiah represents the invasion of the Babylonian kingdom by the Medo-Persian army as a tidal wave that overwhelms the entire nation.

On the other hand, we are not to take what was clearly intended to be understood literally as a metaphor or a parable or an allegory. The third chapter of Genesis is presented as an historical event and is so treated in the New Testament. It is a record of what actually transpired. (See 2 Corinthians 11:3 and 2 Timothy 2:13). The Book of Jonah is not a parable but sober history through and through. The words of the

Lord Jesus in Matthew 12: 39-41 settle the matter, surely, beyond any doubt. At least one would have thought so. Yet the tutor in Hebrew Literature and Language at London Bible College does not hesitate to classify the literary form of the book as "*a parable with certain allegorical features*" [N.I.C. p.181]. For one who would claim to be an evangelical it is astonishing to see how he disposes of the Saviour's testimony. "... *it is not strict exegesis that is reflected in Jesus' use of the narrative of Jonah and the fish, but the popular Jewish understanding, which the Lord took up and employed as a vehicle for truth concerning Himself*". Elsewhere Dr Allen affirms his belief in verbal inspiration, but he seems to be merely playing with words. If we deplore such a misuse of Scripture, we must be careful that we do not fall into the prevalent error of far-fetched spiritualizations. If we hold the doctrine of inerrancy dear to us, let us beware that we are not guilty of imposing a meaning upon the Scriptures which does not rightly belong to them.

We pay mere lip-service to the doctrine of inerrancy if we fail to take into account the variety of literary forms to be found within the Old Testament. Our aim must be to arrive at the meaning which was intended by the Holy Spirit when He moved the minds and the pens of the men He used to record infallibly His revelation. Poetry must be treated as poetry. Hence when Isaiah prophesies that "*the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills*" [Isa.2:2] he is not to be taken to mean that little Mount Zion will rise higher than Everest! This is a poetic way of describing the spiritual pre-eminence of Zion through the coming of the Son of God Himself and His great work of redemption so that the glorious Gospel first sounded forth from Jerusalem. So Zion would become so conspicuous as to be known eventually in the remotest parts of the earth. When godly Job declares, "*I brake the jaws of the wicked*" [Job 29:17], he is far from saying

that he resorted to physical violence to curb the power and oppression of unscrupulous men. This is the language of poetry. He means that he used his authority and influence to bring to an end their rapacious cruelty.

Historical narrative must be treated as historical narrative and not allegorized, though we must recognize that metaphorical language can be found in the record of historical events. We not infrequently find anthropomorphic descriptions of God in prose narrative. This is a unique form of metaphor. When we read in Genesis chapter 11, "*And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men had builded*", we are not to infer that this points to any limitation in God. This language is an accommodation to us that we may know that God is a Person though He be an infinite Spirit. Such language as this must be interpreted in the light of those statements which declare that God is both omnipresent and omniscient.

Especial care must be taken in interpreting the language of prophetic prediction lest we claim a meaning for Scripture which was not intended. Take for example the remarkable prophecy concerning God and Magog in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. Ezekiel represents the land of Israel as being invaded by a vast army comprising contingents from both remote nations and more adjacent kingdoms equipped with cavalry, chariots, bows, spears and swords. This army is almost entirely destroyed upon the mountains of Israel. The magnitude of God's victory over His people's enemies is vividly portrayed: their discarded weapons will provide Israel with a supply of wood for their fires which will last seven years and the corpses of the slain soldiers will take seven months to bury. Now are we to take Ezekiel's language literally? Is there to be some future war in which the nations will make an assault upon Palestine and revert to the use of cavalry and chariots and all the primitive weapons of war? Patrick Fairburn rightly points out the absurd consequences of a

literal approach. "It would be but a very moderate allowance, on the literal supposition, to say that a million men would be thus engaged, and that on an average each would consign two corpses to the tomb in one day; which, for the 180 working days of the seven months, would make an aggregate of 360,000,000 of corpses! Then the putrefaction, the pestilential vapours arising from such masses of slain victims before they were all buried! Who could live at such a time? It bids defiance to all the laws of nature, as well as the known principles of human action; and to insist on such a description being understood according to the letter, is to make it rank with the most extravagant tales of romance, or the most absurd legends of Popery". [Com. on Ezek.p.423].

In contending for the doctrine of inerrancy we must spare no pains to ensure that we are not misrepresenting the true meaning of the Scriptures by insisting upon a literal interpretation where such was not intended. It is of the utmost importance that we formulate and implement valid principles of interpretation. This may mean parting with some cherished notions that we have always assumed to be correct. It may even revolutionize our whole understanding of Old Testament prophecy. It is, however, a necessary corollary of the doctrine of inerrancy that our interpretation should be in harmony with the meaning that the Holy Spirit intended to convey through the variety of literary media that He has seen fit to employ.

Having said that, we must also add that because we are fallible and sinful men, our application of valid principles of interpretation may still be coloured unwittingly by prejudice and presupposition. Therefore, we must be careful not to insist that our interpretation is the only correct one. For example, the meaning of the word 'day' in Genesis chapter one; is it to be understood of a literal day of twenty-four hours? It might seem in

the light of Exodus 20:9-11 that this must be so. The reason given for the keeping of the sabbath day holy is, "*For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ...*" Yet the late Professor E.J.Young who was a firm upholder of the doctrine of inerrancy states, "*For our part, we incline toward the view that the days were periods of time longer than twenty-four hours. We do this, however, not in order to find an expedient for harmonizing Scripture with geology but simply upon exegetical grounds. We are inclined to think that the Bible itself implies that the days were longer than twenty-four hours in length*" [T.W.I.T p.167]. Some of us may feel that it is precisely on exegetical grounds that we are driven to a literal interpretation here. It is interesting and perhaps significant that Professor Young's son, Dr David A. Young, is an associate professor of geology at the University of North Carolina and in a recent book has found fault with what he terms the "*flood-geologists*"! The fact remains, however, that we must not claim that our interpretation is inerrant. We may have to say with regard to certain statements and passages in the Old Testament, "I believe that this is what the Scripture teaches, though others with equal sincerity have interpreted it differently".

Having dealt with this basic question of how to interpret the Old Testament, we now turn to consider other problems to which the doctrine of inerrancy gives rise. First we deal with:

Problems due to the Present State of the Hebrew Text

None can dispute the fact that the text of the Hebrew Old Testament has not been preserved faultless. Errors have crept into the text through scribal transmission. There are about 1353 variant readings in the margin of the Hebrew Bible noted by the Massorettes - those generations of Jewish scholars who sedulously worked on the Hebrew text between AD 500-1000 to ensure its accurate preservation. Most of these variant readings

are of minor importance amounting to no more than a difference in spelling. Some of the marginal readings appear more appropriate than those in the text. But what is important is that the Jewish scribes did not attempt to alter the text itself even when there was an obvious scribal mistake. Their suggestions were always placed in the margin. So that we may say that these very errors in the text are remarkable evidence of the reverence with which the scribes handled the Scriptures. They were so concerned to hand on the text exactly as it had come down to them. No other writings in the whole of human history have been handled with such care and faithfulness as the Old Testament writings.

Clearly it is possible to give only one or two examples of this kind of transcriptional error. Frequently numbers suffer in transmission. For example in 1 Kings 4:26 we read, "*And Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen*". A little later in chapter 10:26 we find, "*And Solomon ... had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen.*" The identical statement is found in 2 Chronicles 1:14. But in 2 Chronicles 9:25 there is the statement, "*And Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots and 12,000 horsemen*". Taking the four statements together we can easily see that 40,000 figure in 1 Kings 4:26 should read "4,000". In the parallel records of Kings and Chronicles there are a number of places where a transcriptional error can be detected and put right with confidence.

One other example must suffice. In 2 Chronicles 22:2 we read that Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah was 42 years old when he began to reign. In the previous chapter his father Jehoram is twice stated to have been 32 years old when he began to reign and that his reign lasted only eight years (2 Ch. 21:5,20). Further in this same chapter we are told that Ahaziah was the youngest son of Jehoram (v.17), and also in chapter 22:1. Ahaziah's age is clearly wrong and by looking at the parallel passage

in 2 Kings 8:26, we find that his age when he succeeded his father was in fact 22 years. Of course, the Jewish scribes were every bit as much aware of the obvious discrepancy as you and I are, but on no account would they amend the text.

These transcriptional errors in no way affect the doctrine of inerrancy. For the most part they are not difficult to resolve. They are to be found mainly in the realm of statistics. Sometimes names of people and places have suffered distortion. When it is remembered that Hebrew was originally a consonantal language with no vowel letters, similar words were more easily confused. The marvel is that the Hebrew text has been preserved so largely free from scribal mistakes.

Problems in the Realm of Biblical Chronology

It is customary in many quarters these days to sneer at the chronological system devised by Archbishop James Ussher in the 17th Century from the biblical data. But Ussher was not only a distinguished scholar, he also believed implicitly in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. He took the chronological data of the Bible seriously. We may agree perhaps that the matter is less straightforward than he assumed. It is possible that the genealogical lists in Genesis chapters 5 and 11 are incomplete. There may well be gaps in these lists which seem to display evidence of a symmetrical arrangement. If this is so we cannot insist upon the year 4004 B.C. as the year in which creation took place. The date of creation must be pushed back well before this, it would seem. Even so, in the light of Scripture it does not seem conceivable that this date can be earlier than about 10,000 B.C. Instead of ridiculing Ussher, we ought to applaud him for his consistency. Believing the Scriptures to be inerrant, he placed the utmost confidence in their statements relating to chronology.

We might wish that there were more statements in the Old Testament giving precise details of chronology. Those that occur are clearly of great importance. We

learn from Exodus 12:40,41 that Israel spent 430 years in Egypt. This figure is given twice in these verses and therefore has some stress laid upon it. It is not an approximate or round figure but an exact figure. The other date of crucial importance for Old Testament chronology is that given in 1 Kings 6:1. This states that the fourth year of Solomon's reign - the year in which he commenced to build the temple - coincided with the four hundred and eightieth year after the Exodus. The two periods together enable us to account for over nine hundred years of Israel's history. Few evangelical scholars are prepared to take the second date at its face value because it would point to an Exodus in the 15th century and this conflicts with most of the archaeological evidence we are told. The figure of 480 years is reduced by regarding it as an ideal figure corresponding to twelve generations of 40 years each. But as a generation would be strictly nearer 25 years than 40, the period can be reduced to about 300 years which is much more convenient from the archaeological point of view. The New Bible Commentary (R) deals with the statement in a still more high-handed way by suggesting, "*There are indications that this verse may be a late gloss in the text*". In fact there is no evidence to cast any doubt upon the accuracy of the text at this point. If we believe in the inerrancy of the Old Testament, that figure must be taken as it stands and it must be regarded as a key-stone in Biblical chronology. That it conflicts with archaeological evidence is a problem that has to be faced. But we will come to that in a moment.

Another area of difficulty in the realm of Biblical chronology concerns the regnal years given for the kings of Israel and Judah during the period of the divided monarchy. The problem is how to harmonize the two sets of data for Judah and Israel. A date which all are agreed upon is that for the fall of Samaria, i.e. 722 B.C. It is also generally agreed that Solomon's reign commenced about 971 B.C. This

latter date is arrived at on the assumption that two names in Assyrian records refer to the Ahab and Jehu of the Bible. The only way of fitting all the regnal years mentioned in the Books of Kings into this period of 250 years is by postulating that there were several co-regencies in Judah. The work of Edwin R. Thiele in solving many of the problems of the chronology of this period in this way has certainly demonstrated that all the figures can be satisfactorily harmonized. But everything depends upon the correctness of identifying two names in Assyrian records with the Biblical Ahab and Jehu. The late Dr. Oswald T. Allis, an Old Testament scholar of great stature, was unconvinced by Theile's thesis and held that the almost universal assumption that the kings mentioned in the Assyrian records are the Biblical Ahab and Jehu, was unproved. Allis was uneasy that some of Theile's harmonizations were at the expense of some of the Biblical data.

Again the point for us to bear in mind is that we must not claim that such solutions as Theile and others have proposed are unquestionably correct. We do value all reverent endeavours to deal with the problems of Biblical chronology. We may not be completely successful in our efforts to find solutions. But whatever be the degree of our success, the chronological data in the Old Testament are self-consistent. That we may not be able to prove them to be so does not impair the doctrine of inerrancy.

Problems Arising from the Conflict Between Archaeology and the Old Testament

Let us acknowledge right away that the science of archaeology has in many ways provided background information which has shed no little light upon the text of the Old Testament. Ancient Near Eastern studies came into their own during the nineteenth century. Through the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs and Mesopotamian cuneiform along with extensive excavations of ancient ruins, centuries of

human history have been unveiled and vanished civilisations have been rediscovered. The Hittites, so frequently mentioned in the Bible were completely unknown outside the Scriptures until the latter part of the last century. Their state archives were recovered through archaeological excavations in Asia Minor, providing a wealth of information about their history and culture. Yet we must be careful not to exaggerate the importance of archaeology for the study of the Old Testament. Allis puts the whole matter into proper perspective when he comments, *"We need however to remember that while in many cases the biblical writers assume and presuppose, on the part of their readers, knowledge which we of today do not possess and which we must obtain, if at all, from extra-biblical sources, the reason that much of the information of this nature is not recorded in the Bible itself is that, however interesting and even valuable it may be, it is not of vital importance"*. (T.O.T.I.C.C. p.3)

There is a very real danger that we may pay too much attention to the evidence provided by archaeological research and accept its findings uncritically. With all sciences we confront the problem of how to interpret the objective evidence set before us. In archaeology this problem is further complicated by the possibility that a site being excavated has been wrongly identified. This possibility is a very real one in Palestine. The very fact of its being the land-bridge between the two great civilizations of the Ancient Near East, meant that it was relatively densely populated and that many diverse races settled there in the course of the centuries. Add to this the fact that only a small part of any site is normally excavated, and it becomes rather evident that our confidence in archaeology must be less than total. The classic example is surely Jericho. The site of what is believed to be ancient Jericho has received a great deal of attention from successive generations of archaeologists. Professor John Garstang was confident as a result of the

excavations which he carried out in the 1930s that the Bronze Age city of Jericho was destroyed about 1400 B.C. For the next twenty years or so a 15th century date for the Exodus was widely accepted. Since 1952, Miss Kathleen Kenyon has carried out further explorations and her conclusion is that there is almost nothing left of the town which Joshua captured. She insists that the town he captured "*must have been very small*". Although the narrative in Joshua makes it clear that Jericho was a formidable city and immensely strong, the modern archaeologist on the basis of his very slender and ambiguous evidence is ready to correct the biblical account. Dr G.E.Wright makes this pronouncement: "*Investigations at the site of Jericho itself, however, have been inconclusive ... Perhaps in Joshua's time Jericho was already an uninhabited tell or mound or ruins; or perhaps the centuries have merely eroded all signs of the Israelite victory*". [N.G.M. 1957].

Yet it is precisely on the basis of archaeological findings that Old Testament scholars who consider themselves thoroughly evangelical are prepared to modify and alter the clear statements of Scripture, whether chronological or circumstantial, to tie in with archaeology. For example, Arthur Cundall in his Tyndale Commentary on Judges reduces the entire period of the Judges to a bare two centuries on the basis of the archaeological evidence for the destruction of sites in Palestine. Yet Jephthah whose career falls well within the Judges period speaks of Israel's occupation of Transjordan for 300 years (Jdg. 11:26). Mr Cundall remarks on how closely this period of time corresponds to the total years given for the various judges up to this point. But he goes on to say "*the actual interval between Israel's conquest of Transjordania and the rise of Jephthah was no more than 160 years*". [T.C. p.145]. What do we do about Jephthah's precise statement? Mr Cundall's solution cuts at the roots of Biblical inerrancy. "*The reference to the 300 years*", he says, "*may be an editorial amplification of the remainder of the*

verse, or it may be a broad generalization for approximately seven or eight generations, or it may represent Jephthah's rough guess, since he would hardly have access to reliable historical records."

This, alas, is rather typical of much so-called evangelical scholarship today. Archaeology is the final court of appeal. The Old Testament must be adjusted so that its statements do not conflict with what the archaeologist claims the objective evidence of excavated Biblical sites implies. A more recent example of this is to be found in Dr Allen's commentary on Jonah. He considers the author of the Book wrote long after the city of Ninevah had been destroyed. One reason he advances for this is "*Its colossal size in 3:3 reflects the exaggerated tradition echoed by the fourth-century Ctesias rather than literal fact*" [N.I.C. p.186].

The tendency to rely upon archaeology on the part of conservative scholars stems from the earlier years of this century when the spade seemed to be confirming the Bible and confounding the critics. But its help was grasped for the wrong reasons. It was as though the Old Testament needed this kind of evidence to confirm its veracity. So that confidence in the truth of the Scriptures was not built upon the doctrine of inerrancy, but upon external evidence brought to light through archaeological explorations. Having leaned upon archaeology for support, many evangelicals find themselves in a difficult position when its findings do not corroborate the Biblical record.

The salutary lesson that we may learn from this is surely that our confidence in the complete trustworthiness of the Old Testament must rest not upon the availability of external corroboration whether in the realms of history, geology or archaeology, but solely upon the claims which the Scriptures make for themselves - supremely upon the categorical declarations of the Son of God Himself.

Abbreviations used in 'The Inerrancy of Scripture'

T.S.T.S.	The Saviour and the Scriptures
R & I	Revelation and Inspiration
S.R. & W.G.	Special Revelation and the Word of God
F. & W.G.	Fundamentalism and the Word of God.
T.W.I.T.	Thy Word is Truth
P.R.	Presbyterian Review
T.O.T.I.C.C.	The Old Testament its Claims and Critics
N.I.C.	New International Commentary
N.G.M.	National Geographical Magazine

* * *

THE DANGERS OF AN INTELLECTUAL APPROACH

Rev Donald MacLeod MA (Glasgow)

Let me first of all make clear my own position. *"My relation to real scholarship will probably remain all my life that of an unfortunate lover"* - these words of Emil Brunner express it perfectly. I am not a scholar, but I do share Machen's conviction that, *"Never was there a stronger call of God than there is today for a vigorous and scholarly defence of the faith"*. In the wilderness of contemporary irrationalism, evangelical Christianity must project itself as an oasis of reasonableness.

Nevertheless, there are very real perils in the habits of the studious and book-minded Christian, and my duty for the present is to draw attention to some of these.

The basic danger is that we shall forget the depravity of the human intellect. We quite willingly grant that sin has enslaved the will and alienated our affections from what is good and true. But we are inclined to overlook the effects of sin in the realm of pure reason, to imagine that the Fall has left our cognitive faculty intact and that if we only lived up to our convictions all would be