

Inerrancy does not mean that there is all knowledge in the Bible. Inerrancy does not mean that there are no errors of transmission in the Bible. These books were written down. They were not originally printed. They were originally written down. Then they had to be copied and copied and copied. I would challenge anybody to take a book the size of the book of Genesis and copy it and not make at least several mistakes in their copying it. We always make mistakes in copying anything of any length, and even if you read it over.

I've had sometimes of reading proof and it's amazing how you can go through it and through it and still find mistakes! you had not noticed before. But the marvel is that God caused that His word would be marvellously well preserved. Somebody has said there are I don't know how many thousands of variations in Hebrew MSS, but 95% of those variations are just as important as whether you spell honour (that's the British way) or honor like we do. It has been marvellously well preserved in copying and recopying and recopying but not without error. Inerrancy does not mean that there have not been errors in copying.

We read in one of the books of one of the Babylonian kings named Merodathbaladan. In the parallel passage we read about a Babylonian king named Berodathbaladan. And from the Scripture you would not know whether it was Merodath or Berodath. We have dug up the records from his reign and we know that Merodath and not Berodath is correct. The Bible would not have told you which was correct. There are little errors like that that have come in in the transmission, of the Scriptures.

We are nearer to the original than we are in the case of any other book that has been preserved from ancient times. But the fact that people who knew perfectly well that the man called Merodathbaladan here and Berodathbaladan there would be the same ruler, yet copied the two differing, copied and copied and copied it, gives us confidence in their integrity. That when they knew an error of copying had occurred they copied the MS they had just as accurately as they possibly could instead of trying to correct it according to their idea of what was right even when they were quite sure that an error of transmission had occurred.

When we say inerrancy we don't mean that there is such a thing as a perfect translation. I know there are some who say if the KJV was good enough for St. Paul it is good enough for me. But, the English language has tremendously changed. When I was a young man if we had a terrible thunder storm or something, it was just miserable, someone would say, Isn't that terrific! A few years ago I was asked to speak to a group of students at U. of PA., and I talked with the young man who was arranging the program, and I suggested certain subjects and he said, Oh, that's terrific! I thought, does he mean it is just worthless? I was shocked. But then I realized that the word has completely changed its meaning, and today the word terrific means just the exact opposite of what it meant just a few years ago.