

AD 63 (at the time of writing of 2 Timothy) included copies of the Old Testament books, copies of those New Testament books which had thus far been written, put into circulation, and made available to Timothy, and perhaps the original of Paul's first epistle to Timothy, together with the original of this second epistle. It should also be recognized that the claim of inerrancy is not made for copies of Scripture, but for the originals.

This distinction between inerrant originals and errant copies has occasioned considerable discussion, both concerning the value of the doctrine of inerrancy (since we do not possess the originals), and concerning our ability to say that we are proclaiming the word, sound doctrine and truth today (since we possess only errant copies). This discussion, which has been going on for some time, has acquired a new impetus and urgency in recent years, in part because of the cleavage which has surfaced between "inerrantists" and "errantists" in the evangelical camp.

An illustration of this discussion appears in the exchange, in editorials and letters, between Dr. Lester De Koster, editor of *The Banner*, and Dr. Edwin H. Palmer, late Executive Secretary of the New International Version Translation Committee. The exchange was occasioned by Dr. Palmer's statement in the January 1977 issue of *The Outlook*, as follows:

To be very clear, let me assert with all the force that is in me that the King James Version that Dr. De Koster has on his table is *not* the infallible, inerrant Word of God. And no translation of the Bible is without error -- not even the best of them all, the New International Version! All translations without exception have errors in them.

(Dr. Palmer wrote these words in an article defending Harold Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible* against criticisms by Dr. De Koster.) Dr. De Koster subsequently sent a letter to the editor of *The Outlook* which appears in the June 1977 issue, together with Dr. Palmer's reply. Dr. De Koster asked four questions, and Dr. Palmer addressed three of them. Permit me to quote the exchange:

1. "Can Dr. Palmer be serious?"

Answer: "Yes, I am. I will say again what I believe: the Bible which Dr. De Koster has on his table is not, I repeat, not the infallible, inerrant Word of God. And it is