**Some Questions concerning Inspiration, Infallibility, and Inerrancy**

Mr. James R. White, in his book ***The King James Only Controversy*** said, “… God has never once promised that translations will be infallible or inerrant.” (***The King James Only Controversy***, pg 128.)

Let me first say that I agree with Mr. White that some - perhaps most - English translations are neither infallible nor inerrant. The same holds true for translations into the mother tongue in many third world countries of South Asia and North East India.

But let us look again at what is being said. Mr. White said, “… God has never once promised that translations will be infallible or inerrant.” Mr. White is saying that no translation - whether English or any other language - is infallible and inerrant.

If what Mr. White says is true, what may we conclude concerning all translations which call themselves the Holy Bible or the Word of God? If they are not infallible or inerrant then they must be fallible and errant.

The word inerrant may be defined as being without error. Errant therefore means with error and therefore not accurate.

The word infallible means absolutely trustworthy. Fallible therefore means not trustworthy.

True Christians have, for centuries, believed that the translation of the Word of God which they held in their hands was inspired, infallible, and inerrant. But, today, and for many years, many who profess to be Christians no longer believe that. Many believe as Mr. White does – that their translation of the word of God is errant and fallible.

What those like Mr. White are unwilling to admit is if their translation contains error then it cannot be said to be the word of truth. (**II Timothy 2:15; James 1:18**)

One of the definitions of the truth is: fidelity (faithful or accurate) to an original or to a standard.

Contrary to Mr. White’s position, I can say that my translation of the Word of God is truth because it is an accurate and faithful translation agreeing with other accurate and faithful translations. In addition, it is an accurate and faithful translation of those manuscripts which are accurate and faithful copies of the original given and preserved by God Himself.

However, let us entertain his idea for a moment and ask a few questions.

If it is true that translations are neither infallible nor inerrant – then what good are they in the establishing of truth?

If they contain error in one part is it not possible that they contain error in other parts or in the whole of the parts?

I believe that once it is allowed that error is possible in one place, then it must be allowed that it is also possible that error may be present in another place – and another – and on and on until the whole is brought into question.

The great question then becomes, how is it that the word of truth is determined?

Are we, in our day, dependent upon academia - the textual critics - to tell us what truth is even as the serfs under Rome during the dark ages were dependent upon their priests to tell them what truth was in their day?

Is there no source where we might determine truth outside modern textual critics and modern scholars who scoff at the notion that God has preserved His inspired word in an infallible and inerrant translation?

Is it possible that a simple and common Christian (I count myself among that noble group) might determine for himself that truth exists and that it is found in a faithful and accurate translation of the very words which came out of the mouth of God? (**Matthew 4:4**)

Is there not one translation – of all the English bibles – that is infallible and inerrant and therefore may be called the word of Truth? (**II Timothy 2:15; James 1:18**)

In **John 17:17** Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth, **thy word is truth**.”

If we do not have a translation that is inerrant or infallible then where is the truth mentioned in **John 17:17**? How will the Father in heaven answer the prayer of His only begotten Son - Jesus Christ - who asked that He sanctify His followers through His truth?

In a foot note, refuting the idea that the King James Version (KJV) is inerrant, Mr. White writes:

“When speaking of inerrancy, I am not referring to the inerrancy of the Scriptures as they were inspired of God. Instead, I am speaking of the alleged inerrancy of an English translation, the King James Version. I fully believe God’s Word is inerrant (I have defended Scriptures inerrancy against cultists and atheists in public forums for years), but I recognize that translations cannot (and do not) make that claim.” **(**James R. White, ***The King James Controversy***, p 277)

First Mr. White said, “When speaking of inerrancy, I am not referring to the inerrancy of the Scriptures as they were inspired of God…”

He then says, “… I fully believe God’s Word is inerrant …”

How does Mr. White define God’s Word in reference to his belief in inerrancy?

The answer to our question is, “…the inerrancy of the Scriptures **as they were inspired of God**…”

Mr. White believes that only the original words of God are inspired, inerrant, and infallible!

Now we know why he believes that translations are not inspired, inerrant, or infallible. Those things belong only to the original words spoken by God.

He is not alone in his opinion on this matter.

In **Article I** of the **Dallas Theological Seminary Statement of Faith** we read concerning the Scriptures: “We believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings—historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetical—**as appeared** **in the original manuscripts**. We believe that the whole Bible **in the originals is therefore without error** …” (From their website)

Charles Ryrie is quoted as saying, “My own definition of biblical inspiration is that it is God’s superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, **they composed** **and recorded without error His revelation to man** **in the words of the original autographs**.” (Charles Ryrie – ***A Survey of Bible Doctrine*** – pg 25 – from the internet)

Thus, it is commonly held in our day that only the originals may be said to be inspired, inerrant, and infallible. These three examples are by no means the minority opinion.

However, what Mr. White and others fail to clearly state is that we no longer have any originals. We only have copies, manuscripts, translations, and historical references using manuscripts, and translations.

Below are a series of questions that I believe should be asked when considering this way of thinking.

How do Mr. White and others know that the originals were inspired of God and inerrant?

If their answer is that they have learned it from a translation or a manuscript, then I have another question: “How can you trust something that is not inspired, inerrant, and infallible as your source of belief in inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy?”

If translations cannot be - nor do they make any claim to be – infallible and inerrant, then how did Mr. White come to believe God’s original words were inspired and inerrant?

What source of truth does Mr. White use to make his decision and to base his conclusion that the words of God originally given were inspired, inerrant, and infallible?

There are no originals in existence. We only have copies, manuscripts, translations, and historical references. If manuscripts are not inspired and inerrant – if translations are not inspired and inerrant – and if the fathers were in error by quoting from manuscripts and translations which are not inspired and inerrant – how then has Mr. White concluded that the original Word of God was inspired and inerrant?

If Mr. White is right, are we then left to what has been called the **impossible possibility** of determining the truth of God’s Word?

Dear Christians please give serious consideration to the implications of the following quote: “The primary goal of the New Testament textual study remains **the recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote … to achieve this goal is well nigh impossible**. Therefore we must be content with what Reinhold Niebuhr and others have called … an ‘**impossible possibility**’.” (Mr. R. M. Grant, ***A Historical Introduction to the New Testament***, 1963, pg 51)

Is this where modern-day textual critics, Mr. White, and other scholars - so called - want to lead us? (**I Timothy 6:20**)

Are we all left to our best efforts in seeking truth through a maze of English translations which are ever changing and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth because we no longer have the inspired, inerrant, and infallible word of God in the original?

After all these years, are we still seeking the “recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote”?

After all these years are we to truly believe that to find “what the New Testament writer wrote” is “well nigh impossible”?

Is Mr. White telling us that all we can hope for is an “impossible possibility”?

If, without the originals, we do not have a standard to judge that which presents itself as the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God, then how do we know that what we have is the Word of God?

If it is agreed that a standard is needed – and all we have is material that is not inspired, inerrant, and infallible - how can that standard be determined to be the standard in the first place?

In the end, Mr. White and others who follow him are left seeking for the “impossible possibility.”

I, on the other hand, am content to rest my soul upon the truth revealed in the English translation called the King James Version (KJV). I believe my English translation to be the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and preserved Word of God. Therefore, it is my standard of truth. Any English translation that does not come up to the standard of the KJV remains among those which contain a mixture of the word of God and error.

Here are some examples of that to which I refer:

**KJV – John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his **only begotten** Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

**ESV** – **John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

One of these translations is error and the other is truth. I choose the KJV as my standard for the truth of what God said in **John 3:16**.

**KJV – I Timothy 3:16** – “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

**ESV – I Timothy 3:16** – “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: **He was manifested in the flesh**, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

One of these translations is error and the other is truth. I choose the KJV as my standard for the truth of what God said in **I Timothy 3:16**.

**KJV – I John 5:7** – “**For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”**

**ESV – I John 5:7** – “For there are three that testify:”

One of these translations is error and the other is truth. I choose the KJV for my standard for the truth of what God said in **I John 5:7**.

I believe in individual soul responsibility so others may do as they wish. I also believe that each of us will give a personal account of ourselves to our God.

In that day, we will not be able to say, “But, Mr. White said …”