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"Come, follow me, and I will make you
fishers of men." - Matthew 4:19

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THE UNLEARNED MEN: THE TRUE GENEALOGY & GENESIS OF KJV ONLY

By Doug Kutilek

The KJV-Only Resource Center -

The Unlearned Men:

The True Genealogy and Genesis of

King-James-Version-Onlyism

By Doug Kutilek

Robert Dick Wilson, the great Princeton Seminary Old Testament scholar who died in 1930, was well practiced in exposing and refuting error in matters of Biblical studies. In one of his writings, he insisted on the importance of tracing every error back to its original source. His research had convinced him that almost invariably any commonly-held but false view could be traced back to a single writer, and that this error had become widespread, not because other writers had independently investigated the same evidence and arrived at the same conclusions, but merely because other writers were lazy and simply parroted the conclusions of the first writer. In short, the false conclusions were naively adopted and the evidence ignored.

In the realm of King-James-Version-Onlyism, just such a genealogy of error can be easily traced. All writers who embrace the KJV-only position have derived their views ultimately from Seventh-day Adventist missionary, theology professor and college president, Benjamin G. Wilkinson (d.1968), through one of two or three of his spiritual descendants. In 1930, he wrote *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, a book of several hundred pages, which attracted almost no attention in its day (no doubt chiefly because it was awash in a vast ocean of error). In that book, Wilkinson attacked the Westcott-Hort Greek text, in large measure by attacking Westcott and Hort personally (the common but

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**A Summary
Critique: Jehovah's
Witnesses
Defended**

By Dr. James R. White
Director, Alpha & Omega Ministries
Jehovah's Witnesses are not known for engaging in scholarly and apologetic dialogue. For decades they have been encouraged to skip higher education and enter into the service ministry. Leaders have instructed the rank-and-file Witnesses to avoid examining materials that are written by active opposers to the organization and have told them such materials are like gangrene and pornography. ▶



**Bible Verse for
June 30**

Do not lay up for
yourselves
treasures on earth,
where moth and
rust destroy and
where thieves
break in and steal;
but lay up for
yourselves
treasures in
heaven. ...

Matthew 6:19-20

Scripture taken from
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Scripture for June 30

"The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and His name the only name."

Zechariah 14:9 (NIV)

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fallacious ad hominem method; I exposed and refuted his line of argument in "Erasmus and His Theology," *The Biblical Evangelist*, vol. 19, no. 20, October 15, 1985, pp. 3, 4). He also expressed strong opposition to the English Revised Version New Testament (1881), in particular objecting to it because it robbed Adventism of two favorite proof-texts, one allegedly teaching Gentile Sabbath-keeping (Acts 13:42), the other misused by the Adventists to teach soul sleep (Hebrews 9:27). I documented some of Wilkinson's grosser errors in "Wilkinson's Incredible Errors," *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. I, no.3, Fall, 1990. Wilkinson was the first to misapply Psalm 12:6, 7 specifically to the KJV as though the passage were a promise to preserve the words of verse six (when in fact the promise is the preservation of the persecuted saints of verse five, as I demonstrated in my essay, "A Careful Investigation of Psalm 12:6, 7," *The Biblical Evangelist*, vol. 17, no. 21, October 14, 1983, later issued in booklet form as "Why Psalm 12:6, 7 is not a Promise of the Divine Preservation of Scripture"). Wilkinson also manufactured the erroneous idea that the medieval Waldensian Bible was based on the Old Latin version and not the Vulgate, and that the Old Latin version was Byzantine in its text-type (all of which is demonstrably false, as I showed in "The Truth about the Waldensian Bible and the Old Latin Version," *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. II, no. 2, Summer, 1991). Thus Wilkinson, the first generation.

Wilkinson's book lay unused and unknown (and how good it would have been had his errors died with him!), until 1955 when J. J. Ray, who is self-described as "business manager, missionary, Bible teacher" published a little volume, *God Wrote Only One Bible* (Ray is apparently still living, but I can find out nothing about him, and he refuses to reply to certified letters; if anyone can supply specific information about this man, I would greatly appreciate it). [Note, G. Hudson: It is my understanding that J. J. Ray is now Deceased]. In his book, Ray heavily plagiarized, without note or acknowledgement, Wilkinson's book, repeating and propagating wholesale Wilkinson's errors and misstatements (the fact of Ray's plagiarism and dependence is documented in Gary Hudson's article, "The Real 'Eye Opener'," *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. II, no. 1, Spring, 1991). Ray's book has gone through numerous printings, with total copies numbering perhaps in the tens of thousands. I first saw a copy myself in 1971 as a first-year student at Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Missouri, where I was also introduced--by students from Ohio--to Ruckman's *Bible Babel* and Fuller's *Which Bible?* I find it of particular interest that Ray acknowledges that there are some erroneous translations in the KJV which do demand revision (pp. 30, 31, 102), a position today's KJVO mainstream would consider rank heresy.

The other chief disseminator of Wilkinson's misinformation was David Otis Fuller, a Regular Baptist pastor. Fuller must be counted as part of the third generation, since, according to Fuller's own words in the dedication of *Counterfeit or Genuine* (1975), Ray's book *God Wrote Only One Bible* "moved me to begin this fascinating study." Ray and his book were also repeatedly noted on pp.2-4 of *Which Bible?* I imagine the scenario went something like this: Fuller reads Ray; Fuller

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"...dowsing is neither a scientific technique nor a natural human ability. It is a spiritistic power used by dowsers who only think they are using a natural or divine gift. Unfortunately, they are really practicing a forbidden art." ►

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By Dr. John Weldon
Author / Theologian

writes Ray for more information; Ray directs Fuller to Wilkinson; Fuller reads Wilkinson, is led astray, then reprints Wilkinson in Which Bible?

In 1970, Fuller issued Which Bible?, which was in its 5th edition by 1975 and contained 350 pages. Of those pages, almost half were taken from Wilkinson's Our Authorized Bible Vindicated, with some editing, first to conceal from view Wilkinson's cult affiliation, and second, to correct some of the worst of his errors. According to D. A. Waite, long associated with Fuller in KJVO matters, Fuller knew full well that Wilkinson was an Adventist and deliberately concealed that fact from the reader, and even from the Publisher, because the Baptist brethren "wouldn't understand." Fuller's haphazard "back and fill" operation aimed at editing out some of Wilkinson's grosser errors failed miserably to make a silk purse out of a literary sow's ear, with most errors left untouched (see the expose by myself and Gary Hudson, "The Great 'Which Bible?' Fraud," Baptist Biblical Heritage, vol. I, no. 2, Summer, 1990). As reproduced in Which Bible?, Wilkinson's material is still plagued by blatant misstatements of the facts, distortions, misrepresentations and half-truths (see my article, "Wilkinson's Incredible Errors," Baptist Biblical Heritage, vol. I, no. 3, Fall, 1990).

It is this same David Otis Fuller who knowingly misrepresented the views of Spurgeon regarding the textus receptus, KJV, and English Revised Version (I exposed Fuller's deception with extensive quotation and documentation from Spurgeon's own writings in, "Spurgeon and Bible Translations: the Abuse Continues," Baptist Biblical Heritage, vol. I, no. 1, Spring, 1990, and later issued in booklet form as "An Answer to David Otis Fuller" by Pilgrim Publications).

And it is this same David Otis Fuller who grossly misrepresented the views of Robert Dick Wilson concerning the English Bible. Fuller claimed that the views of Wilson and himself in this regard were exactly the same, that is, that Wilson, too, found no errors in the English translation and none in the underlying texts in Hebrew and Greek. Anyone familiar with Wilson's writings at all knows that Wilson believed that only the original text was inspired, that often the translation must be corrected on the basis of the original, and that, though current Hebrew copies of the Old Testament are generally reliable, sometimes the ancient versions (Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, etc.) preserve the true original reading in places where the Hebrew has been corrupted in the copying process (see Wilson's remarks in Studies in the Book of Daniel, vol. I, pp.84-85, and A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament, p. 61).

Fuller also dragged Anglican priest John William Burgon in as "witness" for his own point of view, even founding a society named in Burgon's honor, though the society propagated views the late Dean Burgon would have rejected. Contrary to David Otis Fuller, not only did Burgon not believe the textus receptus was unalterably perfect and the KJV unchangeably

correct, he was convinced that the textus receptus needed extensive revision (proposing more than 120 changes in Matthew's Gospel alone), and stated in print that in some places the English Revised New Testament of 1881 was a decided improvement over KJV obscurities and inaccuracies (see the direct quotations from Burgon's famous book, *The Revision Revised*, in *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. IV no. 2, pp. 4, 11, 16; and Gary Hudson's article, "Why Dean Burgon Would Not Join the Dean Burgon Society," available from the author).

Fuller, in summary, was ready and willing to conceal the truth about Wilkinson, and deliberately distort the opinions of Spurgeon and Wilson, men he claimed to admire, and to invoke the name of John William Burgon, to deceive his readers and to bolster his own views, even though his (Fuller's) views were very much at odds with the beliefs of these men. Such blatant dishonesty and disregard for the truth does not fill one with confidence in examining anything Fuller wrote or edited on the Bible translation controversy, and yet Fuller is a "founding father" and "leading light" of the KJVO movement!!

The book Fuller edited, *Which Bible?*, is a hodge-podge of writings, many by authors such as Robert Dick Wilson, Zane Hodges and others, who distinctly reject the textus receptus-only/KJV-only point of view (and at least one of the writers who gave Fuller permission to include something he had written, complained about the way Fuller had altered the writer's point of view in the editing process), and actually gives some information which refutes some of the extremes of the KJVO movement. In spite of its inherent defects, inherently contradictory points of view, and frequent errors, *Which Bible?* in numerous printings in at least five editions has had a very extensive influence in shaping much of the current debate and disseminating much of the misinformation that characterizes KJV-onlyism today. Without any doubt at all, I am convinced that the vast majority of this highly destructive controversy is a direct result of Fuller's deceptive and inflammatory book, *Which Bible?*, and that he must bear the odium of stirring up strife among brethren (Proverbs 6:19). Also in the third generation, without question the most vocal and abusive of the KJVO partisans is Peter S. Ruckman, who passes for a Baptist preacher and whose rantings have been thrust upon the public in a monthly publication *Bible Believers' Bulletin*, but especially in a series of uniformly bound and uniformly bad books that are claimed to be commentaries on various Bible books, topical books on Bible-related subjects, and books related to the Bible text and translation issue. All of his writings are characterized by the most vehement vilification and denunciation of everyone and anyone, lumping together great defenders of the faith such as B. B. Warfield, A. T. Robertson, and Charles Spurgeon (when he's not falsely claiming Spurgeon's support for his own views), with the likes of Wellhausen, Hitler, and Harry Fosdick. Far worse is the torrent of errors that flood each work and virtually each page of Ruckman's every published work. He single-handedly has injected more misinformation into the controversy than all other writers combined. It is he who first propagated the erroneous idea that the KJV has no copyright (I exposed and refuted this error with extensive documentation in "The KJV

is a Copyrighted Translation," first published in *The Biblical Evangelist*, vol. 17, no. 11, May 27, 1983, and reissued in a revised and expanded form in *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. IV, no. 3, October, 1993). It was he who manufactured out of whole cloth the false claim that no Protestant scholar has ever personally examined the Vaticanus manuscript (see for my refutation, "Ruckmanism: A Refuge of Lies," *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. IV, no. 4, January, 1994). It was he who created out of thin air the absurd notion that there was no Greek translation of the Old Testament until one was produced by Origen in the third century A. D. (proven false by me in "The Septuagint: Riplinger's Blunders, Believe It or Not," *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. V, no. 2, Third quarter, 1994).

And how was Ruckman drawn into the fray? What book influenced him? Ruckman's first-born book on the subject (unfortunately not "stillborn"), *The Bible Babel* (1964) betrays unmistakable signs of heavy dependence on Ray. Ruckman's chart of "corrupt" texts and versions facing p. 28 is an abbreviation of Ray, pp.56-70; Ruckman's "tree" of "good" versions facing p. 73 is a virtual reproduction, with very minor alterations, of Ray's chart on p. 109; on p. VIII of the footnote references, Ruckman specifically mentions Ray's book, though giving the title as "God Only Wrote One Book," which is typical of Ruckman's level of accuracy. Just as Wilkinson misapplied Psalm 12:6,7 to the KJV, as did Ray, so did Ruckman. Furthermore, in his so-called *The Christian's Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* (1970), Ruckman specifically commends Ray (along with Edward F. Hills) as one of a very few reliable writers on text and translation issues (preface, p. I).

A word needs to be said here about Edward F. Hills, who wrote two books that in part address the text and translation controversy, *Believing Bible Study* (1967) and *The King James Version Defended* (1956, 1973), and who wrote a chapter on Burgon in Fuller's *Which Bible?* The theme of Hills' work is the defense of, not just the Byzantine text-type in general as the true original form of the text of the New Testament, but the defense of the specific textus receptus form of the Byzantine text, including the unique (i.e., unsupported) readings in the textus receptus introduced by Erasmus (the textus receptus and the majority text as published by Hodges and Farstad differ in 1,838 specifics). Hills, who did not advocate the inerrancy of the King James Version nor the Origenian origin of the Septuagint, is neither a founding father nor a star of the first magnitude of the KJVO movement, but may be viewed as a secondary tributary, whose works are commonly cited wherever his words can be made to support a writer's point. On the whole, Hills' writings are much better informed and more accurate in presentation of facts than nearly all of the KJVO literature, though he writes as one blinded to evidence by his presuppositions. An extended analysis of Hills and his point of view was made by Dr. James A. Price, "King James Only View of Edward F. Hills," *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, vol. I, no. 4, Winter 1990-1.

From Ruckman have sprung, like the serpent heads from Hydra, a teeming uncongealed mass of incredibly misinformed writers, editors, preachers and evangelists, imagining that they are

defending the true faith when in fact their ignorance of the truth is almost immeasurable. As John Broadus was wont to say, it is amazing how much ignorance some men have been able to accumulate.

Among those heavily influenced by Fuller can be named D. A. Waite, who now does a great deal of his own misleading, and E. L. Bynum. Jack Chick, whose comic books have espoused KJV-onlyism, has acknowledged in letters that he is entirely dependent for his information on Fuller and Ruckman. I am reminded immediately of an ancient Jewish proverb: "If you wish to strangle, be hanged on a good tree," that is, if you must rely on an authority, you do well to make sure it is a reliable one.

From Wilkinson in the first generation, through Ray in the second, and Fuller and Ruckman in the third, the entire KJVO movement has arisen, and every present-day KJV-onlyite is a direct spiritual descendant of these ill-informed men. And as the movement has progressed from one generation to the next, with each new generation arising from intellectually incestuous in-breeding, the views have become more radicalized and extreme. First, the KJV was viewed as better than other English versions, though not above some revision and correction (thus Ray); then, the view was taken that the KJV was error-free (but not without insoluble problems; thus Fuller); then, the KJV came to be accepted as perfect, and infallible, unalterably exact, superior even to the Greek and Hebrew texts from which it was made, and in fact was alleged to contain new revelations not found in the Greek and Hebrew (thus Ruckman); and now it is asserted that a person cannot be saved unless through the English KJV (thus Hyles and others), and all foreign Bibles should be revised to conform to the KJV (a view advocated by, among many others, some Americans visiting in Romania, by an American missionary in Japan, and by a church in Arizona which insists that the Reina-Valera Spanish translation, which has brought the conversions of millions, is not the Word of God), a point of view so absurd that only the most culturally isolated could believe it. The movement has become a vulgar caricature of itself, rushing at break-neck speed to ever more extreme views, and as the adherents grope about in the intellectual smog of KJV-onlyism, having lost all perspective and ability to discern truth from error, they become easy prey for every false doctrine. One leading KJVO advocate in the upper Midwest was recently ostracized from his circle of associates because he has begun espousing British Israelism, the view that the English-speaking peoples are Israel (the view of Garner Ted Armstrong; this view arises naturally from KJV-onlyism, for after all, the English-speaking people must be special, since to them alone God gave an infallible, inspired, perfectly preserved translation, right?).

Every KJVO advocate is a lineal descendant of Wilkinson, Ray, Fuller and Ruckman, and all are the victims (unwitting, I hope) of the multitude of gross distortions, errors, corruptions, misunderstandings, misrepresentations, and, in some cases, out-right lies of these men. These men are collectively a bruised reed of a staff, upon which if a man leans, it will pierce his hand. They are unreliable in the extreme and are deserving of no confidence as to the truthfulness of anything they affirm. But I have no doubt

that some will blissfully continue in their ignorance, willfully ignorant of the truth, not seeing because they do not want to see.

"So then Wilkinson, when he had conceived, brought forth Ray, and Ray, when he was full-grown, brought forth Fuller, Ruckman, Waite, Chick, Riplinger, Hyles, Bynum,...."

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