

The Great Which Bible? Fraud

by Doug Kutilek *

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David Otis Fuller
1903-1988



Benjamin G. Wilkinson
Seventh-day Adventist
1872-1968

The single book most responsible for the “King James only”/”Textus Receptus only” view gaining wide acceptance is Which Bible?, edited by the late David Otis Fuller. First appearing in 1970 (a date not without significance), the book was revised and updated several times, the latest edition being the fifth, which runs 318 pages--with indices, 350. (All page references to Which Bible? will be to the fifth edition). The greater part of the book addresses the issues of the Greek texts and English translation, that is, lower criticism, though the second longest article (37 pages) in the book focuses on the subject of destructive higher criticism. This is a completely separate matter which some of the writers in Which Bible? do not seem to recognize.

Besides Fuller, there are eleven other writers represented in this compilation, not all of whom accept Fuller’s views of the KJV and TR. The quality and accuracy of the articles varies widely. Some are excellent and others are exceptionally poor. Most of the articles average a mere dozen or fewer pages in the book; two are as long as thirty to forty. But the overwhelmingly longest contribution, running to 146 pages (46% of the book), is that of Benjamin G. Wilkinson. This section is in reality a nearly complete reprinting of ten chapters of Wilkinson’s sixteen

chapter book, Our Authorized Bible Vindicated, published in 1930, and which in its full form ran 259 pages.

Who was Benjamin G. Wilkinson? Fuller prefaced his efforts with a two page introduction headed, "About the author of Our Authorized Bible Vindicated" (pages 174, 175). Only the first paragraph says anything about Wilkinson, and one page merely reproduces Wilkinson's own foreword. Here is the total of what Fuller told the trusting reader about Wilkinson:

Benjamin G. Wilkinson, Ph.D., is all but unknown to the world of scholarship, but once his book is carefully considered it will be evident that here is a scholar of the first rank with a thorough knowledge of the subjects about which he wrote. Dr. Wilkinson taught for many years in a small and obscure Eastern college. For this excellent work which he produced he secured copyrights in both England and America back in 1930. [Which Bible?, page 174]

Fuller went on to laud Wilkinson's book:

Dr. Wilkinson's book is...a cogent presentation of little known facts along with a thrilling review of the battle that began in Eden with Satan's skeptical question, "Yea, hath God said?" and has continued unabated until this present hour.

With such a surfeit of Bible translations and such profound confusion existing in Christian circles, Dr. Wilkinson's work will go a long way in bringing into proper focus and perspective the whole question on where final authority lies and just what we can trust with confidence in the midst of this multiplicity of versions. [Which Bible?, page 174].

Fuller was apparently including Wilkinson in his remarks in the "Acknowledgements" (preceding the "Contents" page) when he wrote:

The writers of some of the articles quoted in this book are now with the Lord, having faithfully served Him in their generation as earnest contenders for "the faith once delivered to the saints."

Wilkinson died in 1968; Which Bible? appeared in 1970.

When I (Doug) first read Which Bible? while in Bible College in the early 1970's, the vague reference to Wilkinson teaching at a "small and obscure Eastern college" sparked my interest. Try as I might, for over fifteen years I could find no information on Wilkinson beyond what Fuller gave. I had no idea what "Eastern college" Fuller referred to. The only reference to Our Authorized Bible Vindicated I could find beyond Which Bible? was a mere listing in the bibliography of H. S. Miller's General Biblical Introduction, a Bible College textbook. I thought it strange that no one but Fuller was aware of such a man who would be described as "a scholar of the first rank with a thorough knowledge of the subjects about which he wrote" and whose

writing could be called, "this excellent book." My long unanswered questions about Wilkinson and his school were answered in a surprising way.

I (Gary) spoke at the annual meeting of the Dean Burgon Society (of which Fuller was a founding member) in July, 1989, in Grafton, Illinois. While at dinner with the president of the Dean Burgon Society, Dr. D. A. Waite, I asked him if he knew anything about the background of Dr. Benjamin G. Wilkinson. He said in a voice just above a whisper, "He was a Seventh-day Adventist." I asked him if Dr. Fuller knew that. Dr. Waite said, "Yes, but he didn't like to mention it because he knew how people might react."

With this bit of information in hand, we decided to pursue the subject further. What we discovered surprised even us. We secured a copy of the 1930 edition of Our Authorized Bible Vindicated. From the title page, we learned the name of the "small and obscure Eastern college." It was Washington Missionary College, a Seventh-day Adventist training school. (This is today Columbia Union College, 7600 Flower Avenue, Tomoka Park, MD 20912). Not only did Wilkinson teach there for many years, the title page identified him as "Dean of Theology!" Therefore, he was head of the theology department of a recognized cult's training college!

Through an acquaintance, we sought additional information about Wilkinson directly from the Adventists themselves. From Andrews University, a preeminent Adventist school in Berrien Springs, Michigan, we received the following official obituary, which appeared in the Seventh-day Adventist publication, Review and Herald, May 2, 1968.

Wilkinson, Benjamin George--b. June 20, 1872, Hamilton, Ont., Canada; d. Jan. 25, 1968, Riverdale, MD. His family became Adventists through the reading of The Great Controversy. In 1891, he began to study for the ministry at Battle Creek College. The following year, he began evangelism in Wisconsin. He received his B.A. degree in 1897 at the University of Michigan. He became Dean of Theology at Battle Creek College that same year. He was called to the presidency of the Canadian Conference in 1898. The following year he became dean of theology at Union College. From 1901 to 1905 he was president of the Latin Conference (now Southern European Division). During those years, he started our work in Rome, Paris, and Spain. Maude Morrison became his wife in 1902, and to this union two sons were born, both of whom preceded him in death. Upon his return to the United States he labored in the Columbia Union holding evangelistic services in large cities, such as Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., and Charleston, W. Va. For five years he was Dean of Theology at Washington Missionary College. In 1908 he received his Ph.D. degree from George Washington University. In 1909 he became president of Columbia Union Conference, which responsibility he carried for more than 10 years. His wife died in 1911, and in 1914 he was united in marriage with Dorothy Harris. To this marriage a son was born, Dr. Rowland Wilkinson, who survives. In 1920, he became president of the Kansas Conference. For a time he served as temporary mission superintendent in Haiti. In 1923, he became president of the East Pennsylvania Conference. Following this he gave 24 years of consecutive service to Washington Missionary College. From 1936 to 1946 he served as president of the college. He

retired from active work after 56 years of service. Two of his literary productions are Truth Triumphant and Our Authorized Bible Vindicated.

From this it is readily apparent that Wilkinson wasn't just an Adventist, but Wilkinson was one of Adventism's leading propagators and proselytizers. He headed numerous Adventist Conferences (roughly equivalent to a diocese), served in various important capacities of their schools, and was a zealous missionary in far-flung fields of the world. It is evident why Fuller did not like to mention it!

Note that Fuller did not even hint that Wilkinson taught in a religious institution, only "a small and obscure Eastern college," which could make it a secular "college" and even more "obscure" in the mind of the reader. Who would have known from reading Which Bible? that the facts on Wilkinson were available from a Seventh-day Adventist University?

Lest the reader be in doubt whether Seventh-day Adventism is a cult, consider the following: Adventism historically has taught as fact that the soul sleeps between death and resurrection and that during that period neither the saved nor the lost have conscious existence; that Sabbath-keeping is an essential part of having post-conversion sins forgiven; that Sunday observance is the mark of the beast and all who accept it will be lost; that Satan, not Christ, ultimately bears the Christian's sin; that Jesus inherited a sinful human nature, and that Jesus' Divine nature died on the cross; that Ellen G. White was a true "prophetess" of God, who experienced visions and received new revelations from God. This is but a brief list of Adventist errors (for a solid treatment, see The Four Major Cults by Anthony C. Hoekema, pages 89-169).

Fuller's calculated and deliberate obscuring of Wilkinson's true identity as an important theological instructor for a cult is a deplorable deception. He knowingly withheld damaging information about Wilkinson. This amounts to fraud. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "pious fraud" as "a deception practiced for the furtherance of what is considered a good object; especially for the advancement of religion." That is EXACTLY what Fuller did in concealing the facts about Wilkinson. Once again, he "put on a hairy garment in order to deceive" (Zechariah 13:4). Such behavior is inexcusable. Fuller must have concluded that the end did justify the deceptive means.

As part of this premeditated fraud, Fuller sought to remove telling remarks and references which would have clued the reader to Wilkinson's background. The most blatant of these is Fuller's deletion of a footnote on page 215 of Which Bible? (corresponding to page 42 if Wilkinson's original edition). As the reproductions accompanying this article show, Wilkinson quoted the Seventh-day Adventist "prophetess" Ellen G. White as authoritative. Fuller kept the quotation in, but concealed the source by deleting the footnote. How many thousands have read this page, not being aware that they were reading from a foundational book of Adventism, E.G.White's The Great Controversy. Wilkinson, while quoting from White, dropped (following

the words “hatred and persecution”) White’s description of the Waldenses as those “who kept the true Sabbath,” which would have warned the reader that something was not right (The Great Controversy, page 62; page 65 in other editions). Wilkinson, of course, was not disagreeing with White or concealing his true views, just shortening a quotation--a different intent than Fuller! This is not the only place where Fuller deleted a Wilkinson reference to White. On pages 60-61 of Our Authorized Bible Vindicated, Wilkinson quoted two lengthy paragraphs from White’s The Great Controversy. Had Fuller not deleted both this quotation and the corresponding footnote, they would have appeared on page 233 of Which Bible? immediately before the first full paragraph on that page.

This brings us to one very disturbing aspect in Fuller’s editing of Our Authorized Bible Vindicated: nowhere does he indicate that he has edited Wilkinson’s book in any way (contrast Fuller’s introduction to the article in Which Bible? titled, “Codex Vaticanus and Its Allies,” by Herman Hoskier, pages 134-143, where it states that the article constitutes only extracts of a larger work; and compare the introduction on page 144 to an article by Alfred Martin). Wilkinson was heavily edited by Fuller--six of Wilkinson’s sixteen chapters were omitted altogether (and in these some of Wilkinson’s most blatant Adventism surfaces). He also deleted an additional 23 pages in the chapters he retained. Repeatedly, Fuller added to the information with his own supplementary formats to correct or “clarify” some grossly inaccurate or misleading remark made by Wilkinson. (Fuller by no means caught all of Wilkinson’s blunders; many persist unamended in Which Bible?). However, Fuller never identified these changes as his own. As a result of this massive editing job, the reader has no way of telling what is Wilkinson’s and what is Fuller’s, and much of Wilkinson’s Adventism is concealed.

There are additional evidences of Wilkinson’s Adventism concealed by Fuller via editorial deletion. Here are some specifics from the original Our Authorized Bible Vindicated: on page 110, Wilkinson condemns the Revised Version’s changing of Hebrews 9:27 from “the judgment” (KJV) to “judgment”(the RV is in precise, literal agreement with all Greek texts, which have no definite article before “judgment” here). Why does he object? Because they “changed the meaning from the great and final judgment to judgments in the intermediate state,” the latter of which, with their “soul sleep” teaching, Adventists have historically denied. Of course, the Bible plainly teaches that both saved and lost men are fully conscious after death, the one experiencing constant joy, the other continual agony (Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; 2 Peter 2:9, RV; etc.). Wilkinson again objects to Hebrews 9:27, RV, on page 208-9. Wilkinson similarly objects to the RV translation of Job 19:25-26, because it teaches conscious existence in the intermediate state between physical death and resurrection (pages 193-4).

On pages 199-200, Wilkinson objects to Mark 7:19, RV, which alters the KJV’s “purging all meats” to “making all meats clean.” Adventists were the original health-food faddists (Kellogg’s, the cereal maker in Battle Creek, Michigan, was founded by an Adventist; many Adventists today are strict vegetarians or adhere to Old Testament dietary regulations). Wilkinson displays Adventist views in saying, “In the Old Testament system of sacrifice, God

never accepted the offering of an unclean beast. Moreover, he forbade the use of unclean meats as food...Who said that the Revisers had the right to alter what God anciently ordained?" (page 199). However, the making of all foods "clean" is plainly taught in Romans 14:1-14, 20. In other words, to make a cultist's book acceptable to fundamentalists, Fuller had to delete a "doctrine of demons" (I Timothy 4:1-4).

On page 199, Wilkinson objects to Acts 13:42, RV, which does not expressly mention the Gentiles meeting together on the Sabbath day, as the KJV does. Wilkinson defends the KJV because:

...we see that the great truth announced by Christ, that "the Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:28), was brought home to the Gentiles. All this is lost in the Revised Version...Does not this affect Fundamental doctrine?

"Fundamental" to an Adventist perhaps, but not to a Bible-believing Baptist. This brings up the evident reason why Fuller obscured Wilkinson's identity and took out his Adventist teachings. He knew that fundamental Baptists would not follow the lead of an Adventist author.

In this context, one Adventist reference Fuller overlooked is on page 202, specifically the quote and footnote mentioning the book, History of the Sabbath, by J. N. Andrews and L. R. Conradi. This Andrews is the Andrews for whom the Adventist school, Andrews University, was named. Andrews was a devoted Adventist from the movement's beginning in the 1840's and served as a pioneer "missionary" for Adventism in Europe, a field, ironically, where Wilkinson would also serve a generation later. This book, first published in 1873 and originally written by Andrews alone, is the classic Adventist defense of their Sabbath doctrine; indeed, it solidified and established the "orthodox" Adventist view, and was heavily plagiarized by Ellen G. White in The Great Controversy. Those who are familiar with both the book by Wilkinson and the one by Andrews are aware of strong similarities in themes and treatment of specific verses in their defenses of Adventist doctrine. A great deal more could be said, but this must suffice. Wilkinson was a leader among Adventists. Fuller knew it, and concealed the truth. Of this, there is no doubt.

The last sentence of Wilkinson's chapter on "The Rising Tide of Modernism and Modern Bibles" (before a closing "NOTE") reads, "Let the many versions be used as reference books, or books for study, but let us have a uniform standard version" (Our Authorized Bible Vindicated, page 251). Fuller must have thought Wilkinson's statement needed improvement, for he certainly took it upon himself to amend it as he saw fit. Instead of the sentence ending with the words, "uniform standard version," Fuller places a comma after "version" and adds, "namely, the venerated King James Version" (Which Bible, page 311). Wilkinson nowhere says whether he would disallow the possibility that a future revision of the KJV could become a "standard version." He only said, "let us have a uniform standard version." Why did Fuller have to add, "namely, the venerated King James Version"?

Limitations of space prevent a systematic analysis of Wilkinson's errors, though we plan to give them full exposure in our next issue of Baptist Biblical Heritage [see "Wilkinson's Incredible Errors" by Doug Kutilek]. Suffice it to say they are legion--he is wrong about the nature of the Textus Receptus, he is wrong about the Waldensian Bible, he is wrong about the Old Latin version, the history of the English Bible, the origin of the Revised Version, and a good deal else. In short, the book is aptly described in a quotation (regarding a different subject) employed by Wilkinson himself:

...if tried by the rules of right reasoning, the argument is defective, assuming points which should be proved;...it is logically false, being grounded in sophisms;...it rests in many cases on quotations which are not genuine...on passages which, when collated with the original, are proved to be wholly inefficacious as proofs. [Which Bible? page 265]

SUMMARY

If you could influence thousands of fellow believers, would you willfully and deliberately lure your brethren into a cultist's camp, and encourage them to depend on him as authority, quote his words as true, and look to his scholarship as the basis for their views regarding the Scriptures? Fuller did.

If you were describing the long-time Dean of Theology at a cult's missionary training college, would you say that he had faithfully served the Lord in his generation and had earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints? Fuller did.

If you were planning to reprint the work of a cultist to bolster a particular view you held, would you be so dishonest as to conceal the nature of that cultist's doctrinal views? Fuller was.

If you were trying to win adherents to your doctrinal position, would you be so underhanded as to pass off a grossly defective and inaccurate book as a remedy for "profound confusion" in Christian circles?" Fuller was.

Some have described the "KJV only"/"Textus Receptus only" group as a cult. The fact that half of a foundational book of the entire movement is the work of a leader in the Adventist cult suggests that this description is correct. Have you been trapped unaware of the facts? We doubt seriously if very many Christian educators are aware that they have Seventh-day Adventist literature in their curriculum, and that Christian booksellers have been stocking the work of a cultist. They are, however, at least as long as they continue to use and carry Which Bible?

[PRINTER VERSION](#)

* This article was originally co-authored by Doug Kutilek and another author.