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newsletter

Ruckmanism or Wreckmanism

THE TEACHING THAT K.J.V. TRANSLATORS WERE INSPIRED IS DANGEROUS

By Rev. G. R. Fisher

Ruckmanism is a little-known system of teaching that has been formulated by Dr. Peter S. Ruckman, head of the Pensacola Bible Institute in Pensacola, Florida. This teaching is basically Baptist and dispensational, but with some radical twists that set it apart as an unorthodox position.

Born in Wilmington, Delaware, and raised in Topeka, Kansas, Mr. Ruckman received his B.A. degree from the University of Alabama in 1944. His early religious connections were with the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches, the latter of which he prepared to join in 1949. That year marked his conversion to Christ and he pursued Christian training at Bob Jones University. After completion

of his studies there he accepted a pastorate of a Baptist Church in Pensacola. In 1959, he was divorced from his wife and subsequently married the wife of one of his students, a matter that has brought personal criticism from some Christian leaders.

It is Ruckman's unique position on the King James Version however, that has brought him the greatest opposition. In the past decade the attention of conservative writers has been centered upon what group of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament most accurately represents the original text. A number of Christian writers favor what is known as the Byzantine text type, the basic text used in the translation of the King James Version. For this reason they believe that the Authorized Version represents the best possible translation of the New Testament into English. English-speaking Christians, they claim, should use the King James Version exclusively because it alone gives us more accurately the Word of God in our English tongue. Ruckman agrees with this but goes even further. He regards the translators



of the Authorized Version as having been "inspired" by the Holy Spirit in their translating work, therefore making their translation more accurate than any Greek text of the New Testament now in existence. Thus the K.J.V. becomes for Ruckman and his followers the only possible translation acceptable for use by God's people today.

The elevation of the King James Version to the level of an "inspired" and therefore "infallible" translation is a serious error, for it goes beyond what the facts themselves warrant and leads Ruckman to conclusions that ultimately damage the authority of God's original words written by his inspired Apostles. In the first place it means that Ruckman is forced to de-

fend questionable and even erroneous translations made by the King James translators. One such questionable translation is the use of the term Easter in Acts 12:4. In his *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, he acknowledges that the words "after Easter" in the A.V. are used to translate the Greek words "after the Passover." Since Easter is a term adopted several centuries ago by Christianity to refer to the time of Christ's resurrection, it is not strictly accurate to designate the Passover as Easter. What especially bothers some Christians about the use of the term "Easter" for "Passover" is the fact that Easter was derived from the name of a pagan goddess "Eastre" whose festival was celebrated at the time of the vernal equinox — the same basic season as the Passover and the celebration of the resurrection. Therefore to use this term of pagan origin when the Greek text simply reads "Passover" leads many Christians to feel that the A.V. should be corrected at this point. However, Ruckman's

(continued on page 5)

NEWS UPDATE

ALBERTO RIVERA – IS HE FOR REAL?

Dr. Alberto Rivera claims to be a former Roman Catholic priest from the Jesuit order who asserts among other things, that he is exposing the Catholic Church's attempts to overtake all of Protestantism.

As the comic book publications concerning his wild assertions continue to come from (Jack) Chick Publications, only a few refutations have been recently issued.

A notable one appeared as a letter to the editor of the Asbury Park Press newspaper. The Rev. John J. Scully of St. Barnabas Catholic Church (in Bayville, N.J.) writer of the editorial, relates how he recently met with Dr. Rivera after one of his lectures at a local public school. Father Scully notes: "I asked him (Rivera) to verify the authenticity of his ordination as a Jesuit Priest. He could only produce a document which allegedly came from a bishop in Spain, but I suggested any person with a typewriter could make such a form. So, in an attempt to prove his ordination, as a priest to another priest, I asked him to recite the Latin words of the Consecration of the Mass. Any priest ordained in 1959 (as he claims) could easily recite those brief Latin words. Doctor Rivera could not!"

As Chick Publications persists in promoting Rivera in such new publications as the comic book, *The Godfathers* and the witnessing tract, *Are Roman Catholics Christians?* we continue to see Chick further separating himself from the body of Christian believers. His Alberto publications are now banned in Canada. Domestically, Christian bookstores who refuse to sell these publications are on the increase. Sadly, Chick and his publishing company, which has served the cause of Christ so well in the past, continue to be deeply hurt through the ongoing support of Dr. Rivera's false accusations.

For more information concerning Chick Publications and the Alberto Rivera saga, see *Cornerstone* magazine (Vol. 9, #53); *The Journal Of Pastoral Practice* (Vol. 5, #2); and *Christianity Today* magazine (March 13, 1981).

PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE WAY

Reports of paramilitary activity in The Way continue to surface. The Jan. 5, 1982 *National Examiner* quotes Peter Loomis, an aide to Congressman G. W. Whitehurst, as saying, "We're very concerned about their military recruitment." Way recruiter Vince Finnegan claims that The Way has gained over 500 military personnel in Washington as new members.

It has been known for a long time that The Way requires members of its Way Corps to own guns and has trained hundreds of them to use guns. The Way Corps is a four-year work-study program in The Way's leadership training.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported in 1981 that the FBI was investigating possible infiltration of Way members into Chrysler plants where the M-60 and M-1 tanks were produced. Some ex-members claim that members of The Way Corps were put through "commando exercises." While it is difficult to prove definite violent or criminal activity on the part of The Way, the group's activities should continue to be scrutinized.

THE WAY HONORS LEADERS

The Way International recently released films on important members of the group. **One of a Kind** presents The Way's history, and focuses on founder Victor Paul Wierwille. Two 20-minute videotapes focus on the late H.E. Wierwille, and Erma L. Owens, original trustees of The Way.

The Way expects to break ground for the Victor Paul Wierwille Word Over the World auditorium at its New Knoxville, Ohio, headquarters this year. Through regular magazine articles and a presentation titled **See It Now**, The Way's leadership is encouraging its followers to contribute money "above and beyond their normal abundant sharing." The building will accommodate more than 1100 people and will be able to house several meetings at once.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES – DID YOU KNOW?

In the latest edition of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1981 edition), Hebrews 1:6 has been changed. All previous editions have read that "all God's angels (were to) worship Him (Jesus)." The new version reads that the angels are to "do obeisance" to Him. This distinction between words is yet another attempt to bend God's word to fit Watchtower theology and to discredit the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The subject of worship of our Lord Jesus has always been a stumbling block for the Watchtower organization. Its charter amended in 1944, states that one of the Watchtower Society's purposes was to promote "public Christian worship of Jehovah God and Christ Jesus." This doctrine has changed from the worship of Christ, to no worship of Christ (*The Watchtower*, 1/1/54, pg. 31), to indirect, or relative, worship (*Aid to Bible Understanding*, pg. 1242).

The Watchtower Society claims to lead its adherents to true worship, but has only remained consistently inconsistent.

EX-JW CONVENTION

A great way to take a mid-summer break would be to pack up and head for Dallas during the 4th of July weekend.

Colonial Baptist Church of Dallas will be the site of an Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses for Jesus convention July 2-4. Those attending will learn how to witness to Jehovah's Witnesses and will hear former Witnesses tell how their search for truth led them from the Watchtower Society and into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joe Hewitt, a former Witness and author of the book, *I Was Raised a Jehovah's Witness*, will be the convention's host. Other speakers will include William Cetnar, who was a Jehovah's Witness for 22 years; Duane Magnani, Director of Witness, Inc.; David Henke, Director of Watchman Fellowship; Colin and Regina Ackridge of The Way of Jesus Ministries; and Kurt Goedelman, co-director of Personal Freedom Outreach.

Colonial Baptist Church is located at 6954 Scyene Road in Dallas, Texas. For more information concerning speakers, accommodations and meals, write to Rev. Joe Hewitt, 532 Apollo, Richardson, TX 75081.

PASS IT ALONG

If you have a friend who would like to have a copy of this newsletter, simply pass along to him yours. If you will then send us your name, and address, your friend's name and address and a 20¢ stamp we will gladly replace your issue via First Class mail. Your friend will be placed on our mailing list so he (she) will receive all future issues of our Newsletters.

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He Is Not Here He Is Risen As He Said

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Gospel of the Resurrection

By M. Kurt Goedelman

Our hope as Christians resides in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul, while addressing the Corinthians boldly states: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

The religious group known as Jehovah's Witnesses states that they indeed believe in the resurrection of Christ. But is this an honest claim when their doctrines clearly teach that Christ was raised a spirit? In the Watchtower publication, *The Time Is At Hand*, (pg. 129) it is announced, "whether it [Christ's body] was dissolved into gases or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love, of Christ's obedience, and of our redemption, no one knows."

The sacred Scripture gives us a completely different view of the resurrection of Jesus, because it nowhere states that His body was dissolved into gases or is preserved somewhere. The Lord Jesus prophesied His resurrection and told the manner thereof when He addressed the Jews in the Gospel of John (John 2:19-21). Jesus said, "destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up ... but He spoke of the temple of His body." Also, in the same Gospel, we find the disciple Thomas at first doubting Christ's resurrection, then Jesus appears to Thomas and offers for his examination the same body that was crucified. The body of Jesus still bore the print of the nails and the spear wound in His side.

The Watchtower Society evades this Scripture verse by stating, "He [Jesus] merely materialized flesh and blood to be seen and believed" (*Make Sure of All Things*, 1953 ed., pg. 314). This is, of course, merely a vague assumption on the Watchtower's part, designed to save their doctrine; there is no Scripture to back up their claim. Worse yet, it means Jesus intentionally deceived Thomas into thinking he saw the actual body in which Jesus had been crucified. If the resurrection were only an illusion, then Christianity could have been easily discredited by displaying the real, dead body of Jesus.

An interesting development took place when the disciples of Christ made the same mistake the Jehovah's Witnesses are presently making. In Luke 24:37 it is noted that the disciples thought they were seeing the ghost of Christ: "...they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." But Jesus proceeded to calm their fears and correct their error: "Behold my hands and feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see for a spirit has not flesh and bone as ye see me have" (vs. 39). Here again the Watchtower Society weakly asserts that Jesus materialized a body, but as noted earlier, there is no Scriptural evidence to back this misguided claim, and it completely ignores the clear context and plain meaning of the words of our Lord.

Scripture makes it emphatically clear that Jesus' resurrection was in a bodily form, but what of the texts brought forth by Jehovah's Witnesses to support their doctrine? A brief look at these will show that their position is quite superficial. A favorite text is 1 Corinthians 15:50, which states that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." We are told by the Jehovah's Witnesses that since Jesus has indeed "inherited the kingdom of God," He therefore cannot possess a body of "flesh and blood."

However, the Jehovah's Witnesses seem unaware of the use of the expression "flesh and blood" as it appears in the New Testament. The phrase "flesh and blood" occurs only in the above verse, in Matthew 16:17; Galatians 1:16, Ephesians 6:12; and in Hebrews 2:12. Under close examination of each of these verses we can see that the writer is speaking not of literal flesh and blood, as the Watchtower implies, but of natural man. The Christian church has always taught that natural man (man in his sinful nature) "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Natural man needs to be born again (see John 3:3).

A further attempt is made to discredit the bodily resurrection (so strongly rejected by the Jehovah's Witnesses) by misusing 1 Peter 3:18. Peter speaks of Christ being put to death in the flesh,

but being made alive in the spirit." The Witnesses set forth the idea that Jesus was raised from the dead as a spirit. However, this text does not say that Christ was brought forth from the dead as a spirit; it simply informs us that Jesus was raised "in the Spirit" or (better) "by the Spirit" (see further Romans 8:11). If we are to understand the term "in the Spirit" as being a spirit (as the Watchtower wants us to believe), then we must also believe that all Christians living in Rome were spirits, because according to the Apostle Paul (Romans 8:9), the Christians "were not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Also, from other such references (Revelation 1:10, Galatians 5:25, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Peter 4:6) to being "in the Spirit," it can be further shown how futile the Watchtower's position is.

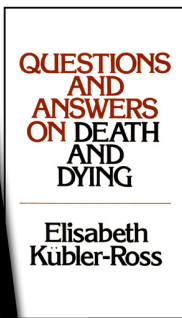
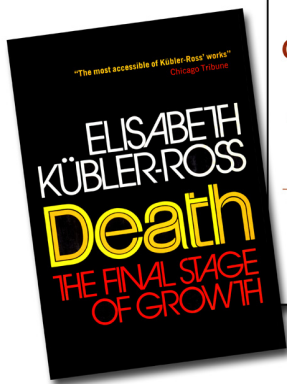
The Jehovah's Witnesses also use two accounts of Jesus not being recognized by those who knew Him as proof of being resurrected in a different form. This view, however, comes from shallow Bible study, twisting Scripture, and using verses out of context. This is evident from the fact that the Jehovah's Witnesses claim that the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) did not recognize Him because He was in a different form than that in which He was crucified. Witnesses completely ignore verse 18: "their eyes [the disciples'] were holden that they should not know Him." This can only mean that it was the same body, and Jesus had supernaturally veiled their eyes. After their faith was tested (vv. 25, 26), He opened their eyes and they knew Him (vs. 31). We can see clearly that the Scriptures tell us the disciples did not know Jesus because He did not will it so.

In *The Time Is At Hand* (pg. 128), Witnesses tell us "He [Jesus] appeared to Mary as the gardener." Scripture is clear that it is Mary who, in error, thought that Jesus was the gardener. John 20:16 emphasizes this point when it states: "She, supposing Him to be the gardener ..." Once again sacred Scripture makes it clear that the Watchtower Society has misrepresented what God has set forth in His Word.

The Witnesses further claim that Jesus could not have come forth from the grave in His body, as His body was given for a ransom (Luke 22:19) The assertion is then made that if Christ were raised from the dead in the same body it would, in essence, be taking back the sacrifice or ransom. However, again in the light of God's Word, this idea too, becomes only a weak point of view on the Watchtower's part. Matthew 20:28 declares that the

(continued on page 5)





A DEADLY VIEW — “ON DEATH AND DYING”



By
Keith A. Morse

Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross has received widespread attention for her work in the field of thanatology — the study of death.

Among her best-known books are *Questions and Answers on Death and Dying*, *Death — The Final Stage of Growth* and *On Death and Dying*. That last book was a best-seller.

Kubler-Ross also wrote the forward to Raymond R. Moody's bestseller, *Life After Life*, a book that purports to recount the experiences of people who “died” and were revived a short time later.

Some of Kubler-Ross' books have found their way into Christian bookstores. While some of her earlier works may offer nothing harmful theologically, it is important to read any of her books with a wary eye.

Regardless of her claims that she is a skeptical, unbiased scientist, Kubler-Ross brings some definite biases — which she is not afraid to discuss — into her work.

Many of her biases involve beliefs that are also in direct conflict with Christianity.

Let's compare what Kubler-Ross says with what the Bible teaches.

Kubler-Ross

The Bible

Man's Problem

Negativity: Negativity is “anything that drains your energy and prevents you from living in peace, love or harmony, anything that makes you sick physically or emotionally.”

Sin: Psalm 32:3-4 — “When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.”

Man's Accountability After Death

“God creates everyone to fulfill his destiny in one lifetime, but very few make it, maybe one in a billion ... you will always have another chance. There is nobody who doesn't make it because God doesn't know punishment or condemnation.”

Hebrews 9:27 — “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”

Romans 6:23 — “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Damnation and Hell for Unforgiven Sinners

“Those things do not exist. I have always known that.”

Matthew 10:28 — “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Where does Kubler-Ross get her information? She admits that it comes from her “spirit guides.” God warned against such contacts in Leviticus 20:6, 27.

It is understandable that people are interested in how to deal with the loss of a loved one or one's own impending death. However, there may be better sources to consult than Kubler-Ross.

Kubler-Ross' thinking is fraught with contradictions. For example, she says that “it would be the greatest tragedy to do away with cancer. Visualize what it would be like: every house would be full of paralyzed, incontinent old people. All illness fulfills a function.”

Later in the same interview, she says: “And I believe that if people could be in total harmony, without all the negativity that we've been talking about, cancer would be extremely limited.”

While both statements, taken by themselves, appear to be logical, given Kubler-Ross' assumptions that cancer is often caused by stress, when they are taken together, they reveal a very muddled philosophy. Are we to attempt to make a more peaceful world, only to have it inhabited by “incontinent old people” and their caretakers, or should we forget the whole thing? Kubler-Ross appears to want to have her cake and eat it too.

Kubler-Ross, a heavy smoker, also pooh-poohs the link between smoking and cancer, not with any studies or statistical analyses, but with this statement:

“I have been telling you that nothing can touch you if you're not afraid of it. Voodoo death cannot kill you if you're not afraid; cigarettes cannot touch you if you're not afraid of them. You can only be damaged by those things you fear.”

Kubler-Ross says that her research in “after-death” experiences (those in which people have been revived after being declared clinically dead) proves that God is an all-forgiving being and that hell and damnation are not real. However, when told of other research that revealed such “after-death” experiences that included visions of hell and damnation, she dismisses them by saying that all those people lived in Florida (in the “Bible Belt,” she adds), and that they were conditioned to believe in that, therefore, those findings are invalid. Then, she says that Hindus never have visions of hell and damnation, because they don't believe in such things.

At best, all this research proves is that these “after-death” experiences reflect whatever a person believes. However, Kubler-Ross is willing to believe only those experiences that suit her preconceived ideas.

Are these the thoughts of a skeptical scientist devoted to an objective search for the truth, or someone who believes whatever makes her feel good at the moment? If you're looking for answers about death, or for comfort over the loss of a loved one, turn to the Bible and get straightforward, consistent answers, not the muddled metaphysical mess that Kubler-Ross offers.

Furthermore, if you see any of Kubler-Ross' books at your local Christian bookstore, check with the store's managers to see if they understand Kubler-Ross' background, how her background might affect her beliefs and whether a Christian bookstore ought to be carrying her books.

Even if some of her earlier works contain no theologically harmful material, there is the danger that her “harmless” work will lend credibility to her more harmful books.

All of the quotes attributed to Kubler-Ross came from an interview with her in the May, 1981 edition of *Playboy*.

AVAILABILITY OF BOOKS

In our last newsletter we reviewed two books, *Answers To The Cultist At Your Door* and *TRAPS: A Probe Of Those Strange New Cults*. Since that time we have

received numerous inquiries where these publications may be obtained. We are happy to announce that both are available for your convenience directly from our ministry. The cost of *Answers* is \$4.95 and *Traps* is \$8.95. If both books are ordered from us we will pay for shipping; if only one is ordered please add \$1.25.

RUCKMANISM

(from page 1)

position will not allow him to alter one single word in the Authorized Version. He therefore defends the King James use of "Easter" by insisting that the Holy Spirit personally directed and inspired the translators to use this term. He writes: "'AFTER EASTER' (vs. 4). The Holy Spirit has thrust Himself into the A.V. committee of 1611 and said 'WRITE' ..." (pg. 335).

Ruckman goes even further, however, and defends the A.V.'s errors as additional revelation. In his book, *The Christian's Handbook of Manuscripts Evidence* (1970), he has a chapter entitled, "Correcting the Greek with the English." In it he actually defends the K.J.V. translation of "churches" in Act 19:37 when every known Greek manuscript has the word "temples." He justifies this rendering with the startling assertion that "Mistakes in the A.V. 1611 are advanced revelation" (pg. 126). This makes the A.V. better than the original Greek upon which it is based. In his book *Problem Texts*, he asserts that "the K.J.V. English rendering is so perfect that Acts 2:38 was left in by God to mislead people."

The major difficulty with such a position is that such a claim of infallibility could be made about any translation. Once a translation is viewed as superior to the text it translates, any mistakes in translation can be written off as further light revealed by God. On this basis no translation could ever be shown to be incorrect. Furthermore, the only evidence one would have that the translation was given directly by God would be the word of the one making such a claim. In that case the word of the religious leader making this assertion would become more authoritative than the Biblical text itself, since one would have only his word that the translation was infallible. This is exactly what has happened in Ruckmanism, and Ruckman's followers cling to his every word with all the devotion of cultists to their cult leader.

A number of Ruckman's teachings are nothing but a straining and twisting of Scripture. He holds that Judas Iscariot was not human because Jesus said of him "one of you is a devil." Did Jesus' characterizing of the Pharisees as "vipers" mean they were literally snakes and not humans? Ruckman thinks Judas was, is and will be the Antichrist, and as such he lacks a true human nature. Yet Paul speaks of this arch-enemy as the "man of sin" (2 Thes. 3:2). Ruckman also teaches that all those who indulge in physical sexual union ("flesh joined to flesh" as he calls it) have been married, even though their marriage may not be recognized in the eyes of men. This is hardly a Biblical concept of marriage which involves a public contract or ceremony (Jn. 2:1-10) as well as physical union. He also maintains that the Septuagint translation which rendered the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek about 200 B.C. was not really produced until long after Christ had come. Such a position makes it difficult to account for how the Greek New Testament could quote from it when it had not as yet been produced. Ruckman has authored 11 books and a commentary series. These and his tapes are full of historical and Biblical errors, yet his followers relish every word he puts forth.

Ruckman resorts to vicious badgering and name-calling for those who do not submit to his authority. In the book *Problem Texts* he uses curse words and vile language to castigate all the major Bible schools and seminaries in America. All who do not agree with him are the "Alexandrian Cult," "Heretics," "Apostates," etc. In one of his books, he describes himself creeping into a church basement with blackened face, grenades in hand to blow apart the apostates. He is at times fanatical, rabid and incoherent. Because of the divisions and confusion he has produced, Ruckmanism could well be called "Wreckmanism". His "us against the [Christian] world" mentality produces fear and paranoia. When Ruckmanism gets a foothold in a church, one can be sure it will nearly always tear the church apart. It must accordingly be regarded as a serious error and a growing cult that has just enough truth to deceive, as it were, the very elect.

RESURRECTION

(from page 3)

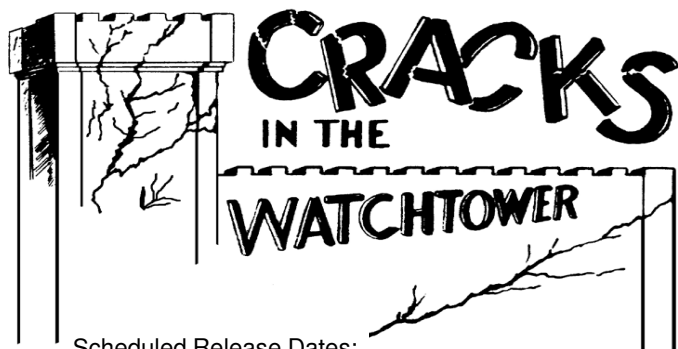
Son of Man came to "give His life as a ransom for many" and using the aforementioned Watchtower logic, Witnesses must then believe that Jesus no longer has life, because if He came back to life He would be taking back the ransom.

An extremely important text on the bodily resurrection of Jesus (and one which many times is overlooked by Christians) is Colossians 2:9. This text is a very significant verse concerning the deity of Jesus, but is even more so in regard to His bodily resurrection. We are told by the Apostle Paul, "for in Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Paul used the Greek word *katoikei* (dwelleth), which is present tense, meaning that Jesus is at the present time (when Paul was writing, some

25 years after the resurrection) dwelling bodily (*somatikos*), that is in a physical bodily form. When we view this verse, we can see that Paul announces that at the present time the fullness of the Godhead is still, even in heaven, residing in Christ in a physical, bodily form.

To deny and misrepresent what the Bible teaches concerning Christ's resurrection is an extremely serious matter and will result in one's eternal damnation: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from among the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). If Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in their hearts that God has raised Jesus bodily from among the dead, as the Bible clearly teaches, how can those who embrace the Watchtower's doctrines ever hope to have eternal life? Our concern is for Jehovah's Witnesses to come to know the true resurrected Lord Jesus.

COMING SOON!!



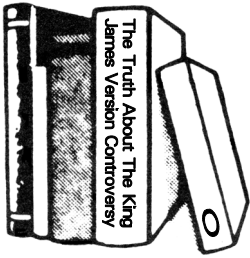
Scheduled Release Dates:
35mm Slide Program — April 15, 1982
Filmstrip — May 1, 1982

A new 87-frame/42-minute program dealing with massive inner conflicts of the Watchtower Society will soon be released. This presentation examines Doctrinal Changes; Misquotations and Misrepresentations; Jehovah's Witnesses and Johannes Greber; Is the Watchtower President Fred Franz a Scholar? and Why Jehovah's Witnesses Were Looking Forward To 1975. In addition, a presentation of the Gospel is made as a closing segment.

This program may be used for Christians who wish to learn ways in which to better approach the Jehovah's Witnesses or for direct viewing by members of the Watchtower Society.

Cost: 35 mm Slide Program — \$45.00 (price includes 87 Frames, Carousel Slide Tray and Cassette Narration Tape).
Filmstrip — \$18.95 (price includes 87 Frame Filmstrip, Cassette Narration Tape and Storage Box).

Orders are currently being accepted. Please add \$1.25 per order for shipping. Supplying us with a street address will help insure prompt UPS delivery.



BOOKS IN REVIEW

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE KING JAMES VERSION CONTROVERSY

By Stewart Custer

Bob Jones University Press, 38 pages, \$2.95

This little booklet is actually an exposé of the distorted and extreme teachings of Peter Ruckman concerning the King James Version. Like a number of Christians today, Ruckman's basic position is that the King James Version is the only infallible, inerrant Bible to be used by English-speaking people. However, he goes beyond this and holds that it even corrects the Greek of the original manuscripts. He also is a savage critic of all and any who disagree with him, calling all other versions perversions and apostasy.

Dr. Custer's critique is scholarly and well-documented, yet within the grasp of the layman. In his introduction and Part I, Dr. Custer does an excellent job of "boiling down" the overwhelming evidence that shows how well God has preserved His word in the existing Greek manuscripts including a table of these manuscripts from NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE to acquaint the reader with this body of textual material. The chart shows the contents of Papyrus 1 through Papyrus 88 as well as the contents of other early manuscripts. This is very helpful information especially for one with no background in Textual Criticism.

In Part II, the point is made by the author that all types of texts are theologically conservative and none can be called heretical. This section, entitled "The Conservative Position," comes to grips with the hard fact that no two manuscripts totally agree and helps us with historical information as to the origin of the "Textus Receptus," which is the basis for the K.J.V.

Custer contends that there is a preservation of Christian doctrine in all reputable translations and that God is "sending His word" (Isaiah 55:11) through translations into all languages. His weaving in of Luther's experiences with the Latin Bible and the early church's use of the Septuagint helps to make this point. Dr. Custer's suggestion that we leave the small amount of textual problems to the textual experts, with the illustration that we do not have to become botanists to feed on fruit, says it all. His facts at this point are simply irrefutable. (His select bibliography at the end relates to this section.)

Part III takes up "The Ruckman Position" under the following headings:

- His Factual Errors. Dr. Custer blows away Ruckman's fabricated theories that the K.J.V. originally did not contain the Apocrypha and that there was never a Septuagint until after A.D. 300. Historical fact and Biblical evidence prove otherwise. In this section, Dr. Custer shows from Ruckman's Handbook that Ruckman believes the 1611 English to be superior to the Greek text and is an improvement on it.

- His Personal Bias. Ruckman's statements reveal his personal and geographical prejudices. He will not be moved by facts or evidence.

- His Doctrinal Heresy. Again Ruckman's confusion and inconsistency are pointed out as he quotes from the men he condemns when they agree with his odd interpretations. He commends Arians and attacks Trinitarians and so sets himself up to be charged with possible heresy himself.

- His Bias Against Wescott and Hort. Dr. Custer does an excellent job in compiling the later quotes of Wescott and Hort, showing that in their mature years they were conservative and evangelical. After 3½ pages of quotes, one realizes those scholars have become "whipping boys" unjustly.

- His Twisted Portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Ruckman's commentary on Matthew, which he calls "the first real commentary ever written on Matthew," Stewart Custer shows Ruckman using abusive language and painting Christ as an "abusive," uncouth, "rude," "fist-clenching," "revolutionist." Obviously Ruckman has created a false Jesus in his own image. Isaiah 42 and 53 are quoted to offset this vilification of Christ.

- His Theological Inconsistencies. Some of Ruckman's private interpretations of scripture are documented (again from his Matthew commentary): the Second Coming in 2004, no Old Testament saints were ever born again, this generation to see the Rapture, five different dispensations in the New Testament.

- His Odd Doctrines. Another sprinkling of Peter Ruckman's strange teachings such as all resurrected saints will be 33-year-old males, that traveling from west to east dishonors God and Matthew 28 is not for this present age.

- His Judging of Brethren.

- His Evil Speaking. In a sampling of the men he condemns (everyone!) and the words he uses, Ruckman attacks savagely and uses vile words and what would be considered cursing.

- His Divorce and Remarriage. His unbiblical divorce and the grounds are documented, as well as Ruckman's remarriage to a divorcee. In this Custer sees him as disqualified for ministry and service. The only thing that might have been added would be information on Ruckman himself, background schooling (he is from Bob Jones University), his church, etc.

All in all, this 38-page paperback is loaded with facts and information that make it worth far more than its cover price. (This reviewer's church survived a "Ruckman Invasion" and so is very near to the subject).

The book could serve the purpose of preventative maintenance and could help churches divided over the K.J.V. controversy. We recommend its study and distribution since there is so little available on Ruckman and his wild extremes.

The conclusion expresses what Dr. Custer expressed to this reviewer personally in a phone conversation, that is, his desire to sound a warning. "Mr. Ruckman has misrepresented the value of the manuscripts; he has misrepresented the facts; he has misrepresented the Biblical portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ; he has manifested a bitter spirit; and for years he has divided God's people against themselves. He has tried to make his followers blind fanatics. They cannot think for themselves; they must accept with blind submission Mr. Ruckman's infallible pronouncements. Therefore, let all the Christian world know that Mr. Ruckman has started a cult. No born-again, Bible-believing Christian should have anything further to do with Mr. Ruckman or with his literature.

Rev. G. R. Fisher
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