

Benjamin Wilson

Benjamin Wilson was born in Halifax, England in 1817, one of four sons of a well-educated Baptist. In 1840, the family joined the emerging Campbellite movement. Soon afterwards, they must have become acquainted with the writings of John Thomas, founder of the group later known as Christadelphians. In 1844, the first wave of the Wilson family—Benjamin and his older brother, John—emigrated to America, joining their Yorkshire acquaintances in Geneva, Illinois. This was only a few miles from St. Charles, where John Thomas had resided until May, 1843. The Wilsons initially formed a Campbellite Church in that city. However, they gradually distanced themselves from that body, encouraged by correspondence with John Thomas.



In 1855, Benjamin Wilson had begun publishing a free religious paper, *The Gospel Banner*, which was reasonably successful. Soon, it was converted to paid monthly, and it continued to be published until 1869. In 1871 Benjamin moved with his wife and some of his family to Sacramento, California where he died some 29 years later, on May 9, 1900, at the age of 83. He had two sons and two daughters, although one son died at a young age.

The *Sacramento Evening Bee* wrote this about him in their May 9th edition:

Yesterday...there passed away a noted man, not because he had builded for himself a name in public or religious world, but great because he left to the student of the Bible and Christian religion one of the most remarkable translations of the New Testament now extant. This version is known as The Emphatic Diaglott.

Early Pioneers for Truth

The Emphatic Diaglott Translation

Benjamin Wilson

[Excerpts from “*Our Gospel Pioneers*” by W. H. Wilson,
“*Restitution Herald*,” May 22, 1951.]

The early pioneers who so “earnestly contended for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” now sleep in Jesus, awaiting the coming King. I thought it may be of interest to many of like precious faith to learn the history of its introduction into the Western States so long ago.

First, I will go back and show how the truth first began to illuminate the minds of those who afterwards introduced it. Let your minds follow me across the mighty ocean to Halifax, England. About the year 1839 or 1840, certain ones were enduring a great struggle, in order that they might emerge out of the gross darkness of old Babylon and back in the full sunlight of God’s saving message of life. Among that number was my father, Joseph Wilson and his brothers, Benjamin, John, and James, also Benjamin’s boys, and Richard and William Appleyard.

At that time, they were all members of the same Baptist Church at Halifax. About this time, Alexander Campbell began preaching what he called the “Reformation,” urging people to get back to the primitive faith and practice. He started well but stopped short of ascertaining the primitive faith. He introduced baptism for the remission of sins, ignored all human creeds, and established weekly Communion.

A congregation was organized on this partial reformation called "The Disciples of Christ" at Halifax, England. The group mentioned left the Baptist Church and united with this organization. The little light which they had received made them anxious for more light. The congregation then formed itself into an investigating class, with a firm determination to search carefully the Holy Scriptures. They resolved to begin with the first chapter of Genesis and go through the entire Word of God. They had not progressed very far in the study of Genesis before they came across the covenants of promise made unto Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob. An inquiry was made as to whether those promises had been fulfilled or not. You can imagine how like a golden cord they discovered that those promises permeated and ran through both the Old and New Testament and constituted the basis of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was at this point that the true light began to shine, and as the investigation progressed, the light shone brighter and brighter until they were led into obedience of the one true faith and hope of the Gospel.

While the investigation was in progress, my Uncles James and Benjamin Wilson, and Benjamin's boys emigrated to America in 1844, bringing with them what light they possessed. Later in 1849, my father, Joseph Wilson, his brother, John Wilson, William and Richard Appleyard, also sailed for Geneva, Illinois, where my Uncle Benjamin had previously located and entered the printing business. Uncle James had bought a farm a few miles west of Geneva. Later still came Joseph Cockroft, who became a partner with Uncle Benjamin in the printing business. Later still, George Westgarth and family became located in Geneva....

While a boy, my father put me into *The Gospel Banner* office to learn the printing business. It was during this time that *The Emphatic Diaglott* was translated and printed.

In my mind's eye, I still see my Uncle Benjamin sitting at his desk making a literal word-for-word translation of the New Testament. I remember seeing the Greek type arrive from England. Many readers of the *Diaglott* may not be aware that my Uncle not only translated the *Diaglott* but took charge of the mechanical work as well. He electrotyped the entire book himself.

As each page of the *Diaglott* was put into type, he took an impression of the page of type in wax. This wax mold was then black-leaded with very fine black lead dust. He had a vat containing acid. In this acid, he hung a copper plate and also the wax mold before he went home at night. In the morning, he would find the wax mold covered with a thin sheet of copper. The acid dissolved the copper and the black-lead attracted it to the wax mold. He then made metal plates, out of melted metal and fastened the copper upon it. He printed the first edition of the book from these plates on a hand press. I used to ink the plate by a soft roller while he worked the press. Thus from Geneva, as the early gospel center, issued one of the most useful aids for Bible study that ever issued from the press, in any section of this country....

Zion's Watch Tower, January 1880, page 8 (R71)

WHAT HELPS CAN WE OBTAIN

The "Emphatic Diaglott," a work upon which a great deal of time and care have been bestowed by its author Benj. Wilson. We value it highly. It contains the *Greek text* of the N.T. according to Dr. Griesbach and interlined with it a literal word-for-word translation-- The corresponding English being placed directly under the Greek word. Together with this it contains a *new version* for general reading based upon the labors of many learned critics. In the form of foot notes, it gives the different readings of the Vatican MSS. No. 1209, as far as it goes, after which Vatican MSS. 1160 (of the seventh century) 884 pp.

Zion's Watch Tower, February 1881, page 3 (R188)

A GLANCE BACKWARD

Looking back to 1871, we see that many of our company were what are known as Second Adventists, and the light they held briefly stated, was that there would be a second advent of Jesus—that he would come to bless and immortalize the saints, to judge the world and to burn up the world and all the wicked. This, they claimed would occur in 1873, because the 6,000 years from the creation of Adam were complete then.

Well 1873 came, the end of 6,000 years, and yet no burning of the world, &c.; but prophecies were found which pointed positively to 1874 as the time when Jesus was due to be present... The autumn of 1874 anxiously expected, finally came, but the earth rolled on as ever; "all things continued as they were from the beginning of creation." ... Was an error found? No, they stood the test of all investigation and the jubilee argument and "1335 days" of Daniel could not possibly be prolonged beyond the fall of '74 or spring of 1875 and these periods were both past.

Just at this time Bro. Keith, (one of our contributors) was used of the Lord to throw another beam of *light* on the subject which brought order out of confusion, and caused all of the former "light" to shine with tenfold brightness. Brother K. had been reading carefully Matt. 24 chapter, using the "*Emphatic Diaglott*," a new and very exact word for word translation of the New Testament; when he came to the 37th and 39th verses he was much surprised to find that it read as follows, viz: "For as the days of Noah, thus will be the *presence* of the Son of Man. For as in those days, those before the deluge they were eating and drinking, marrying and pledging in marriage till the day that Noah entered the Ark, and *understood not* till the Deluge came and swept them all away; thus will be the presence of the Son of Man."

His surprise was, at finding that the Greek word *parousia* which signifies *presence*, had in our common version been improperly rendered *coming*, but the new rendering showed, that it was not the act of coming that resembled the days of Noah, but that as in Noah's days the masses of the people "*knew not*" so it would be in the time of Jesus' *presence* at the second advent.

A careful examination of the word was begun by all deeply interested, to see whether it, as a whole, would be in harmony with this new thought. It was found to be in perfect harmony and opened up and made clear many scriptures hitherto dark: For instance the differences between natural, earthly bodies and *spiritual, heavenly* bodies; how that the things which are seen are temporal, natural, but the things that are not seen are eternal, spiritual; that spiritual beings could not be seen by mortals, (without a miracle) and that the object and scope of the Gospel age was, the taking out of the world of mankind a "little flock" to be associated with Jesus in the work of the future—destroying evil and blessing all the families of the earth; that God's plan was not, to destroy all mankind after the gathering of the Gospel church but to "*restore all things*" and destroy only the evil which now rules in the world; that the *fire* supposed to be literal, was really symbolic and signified a great time of trouble which would be the close of the Gospel age and dawn of the Millennial in which all evil principles of governments and society would be manifested and destroyed, as a necessary preparation for the coming blessing.

Zion's Watch Tower, December 15, 1902 (Helps: listed after Page 376)

THE EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT.

This very valuable work, published under the author's copyright by Fowler & Wells Co., New York City, until now (A.D. 1902), has been sold by them at \$4 in cloth and \$5 in half leather binding. For several years a friend, an earnest Bible student, desirous of assisting the readers of our Society's publications, has supplied them through us at a greatly reduced price; now he has purchased the copyright and plates from the Fowler & Wells Co., and presented the same to our Society as a gift, under our assurance that the gift will be used for the furthering of the Truth to the extent of our ability, by such a reduction of price as will permit the poor of the Lord's flock to have this help in the study of the Word.

REDUCED PRICES.--These will be sold *with* ZION'S WATCH TOWER *only*. In cloth binding \$1.50 (6s. 3d.)—includes postage and one year's subscription, new or renewal, to Z.W.T. On thin paper, in full morocco leather, divinity circuit, red under gold edges, silk sewed leather lined, \$2.50 (10s. 6d.)-- includes postage and one year's subscription to Z.W.T. The morocco bound edition will not be ready for some time, but orders may be sent in now, for later delivery.

Zion's Watch Tower, July 15, 1906, Page 231 (R3822)

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

...They [Second Adventists] had examined the time-prophecies that had seemingly passed unfulfilled, and had been unable to find any flaw, and had begun to wonder whether the time was right and their *expectations* wrong,—whether the views of restitution and blessing to the world, which myself and others were teaching, might not be the things to look for. It seems that not long after their 1874 disappointment, a reader of the *Herald of the Morning*, who had a copy of the *Diaglott*, noticed something in it which he thought peculiar,—that in Matt. 24:27,37,39, the word which in our common version is rendered coming is translated presence. This was the clue; and, following it, they had been led through prophetic time toward proper views regarding the object and manner of the Lord's return. I, on the contrary, was led first to proper views of the object and manner of our Lord's return and then to the examination of the time for these things, indicated in God's Word. Thus God leads his children often from different starting points of truth; but where the heart is earnest and trustful, the result must be to draw all such together.

Relationship To God—Author Of Diaglott

WILSON OF THE DIAGLOTT.

By Pilgrim J. A. Bohnet.

Doubtless many Enterprise readers will be interested to know something religiously and personally of the author of the Emphatic Diaglott from one who not only had his personal acquaintance, but who several times visited him at his home in Sacramento, California, and spent hours with him in religious discussion. This was in the year 1892, and at the suggestion of Brother C. T. Russell, who furnished his address. Mr. Wilson died some years later.

I met Mr. Wilson by appointment the first time, and was not prepared to accept the decrepit old gentleman who met me at the door as no less a personage than the distinguished author of the incomparable Emphatic Diaglott, yet when he spoke I realized myself as in the presence of a master mind—a scholar. Bent with age and considerably below average height, drawn-featured and slow-gearred; this was Wilson.

After some pleasant exchange of insignificant remarks on current topics we naturally drifted into religious themes. Having several times heard him referred to as of Christadelphian faith, I asked him point-blank, “Are you a Christadelphian?” His answer was, “No, I am a member of no organized denomination.” “What then would you call yourself, religiously?” I asked. He hesitated a moment and then said, half reflectively, “Well, you might call me a Resurrectionist.” As this was a new one on me I did not press the point further, but switched over to the Diaglott. We did not proceed far on that subject before Wilson spoke of the Russell criticism pasted in the inside front cover of all Diaglotts handled by the Watch Tower Society, declaring it a very difficult matter to accurately translate languages, owing to the lack of exactly corresponding words, and that the right sense in some instances lies rather between his interpretations and the friendly criticism of Mr. Russell.

Taking up the Diaglott, I referred to the gospel of St. John, 1:1-4, and requested his understanding of the term “Logos” (the Word.) He said “The Logos is the promise of God, and not a personage.” I called his attention to the marginal interpretation, “was God,” and to the interlinear, “a God,” and asked a defining of his understanding. He declared it makes no real difference in the Greek, or to a Greek scholar—“the sense is identical and may be used interchangeably,” he said. To my retort, “then, if there really is no difference in the two expressions, why did you not use the original, as set forth in the interlinear, instead of using the other?” he offered no satisfactory explanation. “Then,” said I, “if the Logos was merely the promise of God, how could we harmonize verses 3 and 4, showing that in the Logos was life; and the life was the light of men? And again, this ‘light shone in the darkness’ (verse 5), which was true of Jesus, but could not be true of a mere promise.” To this he made no intelligent reply, though I pressed the point persistently. I there detected his bias; he would not squarely meet the issue, neither would he admit the ransom for all.

Some days later Bro. F. M. Campbell and I called on him together and wrestled with him on the subject of the ransom. Adroitly, Bro. Campbell led Mr. Wilson step by step with Scripture following Scripture from “dead in Adam” to “alive in Christ,” Wilson admitting, and apparently accepting every point of the argument in the procedure until he must have realized himself as being led into an acknowledgment of the ransom, when he declined to go further into the matter, despite all attempted persuasion, and thus our Scripture examination together was necessarily terminated. “An ear to hear” was evidently lacking. “Not many wise, not many learned, but the meek will the Lord guide in judgment and teach them His ways.”

I might add that there has been a report circulated charging Mr. Wilson as saying he would never have written the Diaglott could he have known beforehand that Mr. Russell would secure its control or use it so extensively, but Mr. Wilson denied ever having made such a statement. He expressed himself as having been greatly blessed in its preparation. It did not net him much financially, he told me.

ST. PAUL, THE CITY OF HOMES
Minnesota Historical Soc.
John Talman, Librarian

St Paul Enterprise

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Responsibility For Sin Our Real View

Pastor Russell's Teaching Grossly Misstated and the Truth Shown by Brother Silloway of Peoria in Actual Quotations.

The following falsehoods about Pastor Russell's teachings were published by E. L. Harvey of Waukegan, Wis., who claims to be "holy." Bro. Silloway's compilation is appended thereto, as of apparent timeliness.

Millennial Dawn's Tomorrow.

"The Millennial Dawn people have perhaps one of the brightest tomorrows of any of the modern latter-day false religions. But, according to their teachings, though a man may make shipwreck of faith in this life, live in unspeakable wickedness and violation of laws, moral, spiritual, and physical, there is coming a time when the goodness of Jehovah will be so great that the apostate and even the devil himself can get converted; and when the fallen angels of darkness will have an opportunity to climb back into the choir of Heaven; and when all hands will join in and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. There is an attractiveness about the doctrine of Millennial Dawn that brings great peace to the most depraved heart, the most atrocious yeggman, safecracker, the folks who are living with other men's wives, gambling on the board of trade, stealing fortunes on the stock exchange, betting on horse races, flirting with other men's wives, and acting the devil generally; for in the glorious tomorrow of Millennial Dawn, God will let in everybody. All can have their good time in this world and a better time in the world to come."

Pastor Russell's Exposition of the Punishment of Sin.

Editor St. Paul Enterprise:

The Scriptures interpretations of Pastor Russell have been criticized frequently on the ground that he practically ignores the law of retribution for sin in this life. Indeed, several months ago, a sister writing in the Enterprise, betting on a charge to our notice, as advanced by an evangelist in a public meeting. It is well for us, as loyal students of the Divine Plan, to be prepared to answer such charges, and to show that they have no foundation in fact.

Pastor Russell alone, of present-day expositors of the Scriptures, delineates the full meaning of the results of sin in the individual experience. In his logical, philosophical insight, he has clearly portrayed in his writings the terrible results of man's experience with sin; and while standing squarely upon the fundamental truth that the wages of sin is death, he has incidentally plumbed the depths of the disaster into which our first parents plunged humanity by their disobedience.

The accompanying selections are taken from "Studies in the Scriptures," with emphasis placed upon the terms which indicate the measure of consequences that have attended the steps of mankind down the road of sin. These selections were written through the course of time. They are submitted with a view of refreshing the minds of Bible Students, by grouping our Pastor's comments in a way which manifests the full and logical grasp of the question.

Your fellow-servant in the Truth,
P. M. SILLOWAY,
404 Fredonia St., Peoria, Ill.

The Punishment of Sin.

Looking back to the time when life and Edenic happiness were forfeited by our first parents, we see them under the just penalty of sin, filled with sorrow, and without a ray of hope, except that drawn from the obscure statement that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 77.

God first made His creatures acquainted with good, surrounding them with it in Eden; and afterward, as a penalty for disobedience, He gave them a severe knowledge of evil. Expelled from Eden and deprived of fellowship with Himself, God let them experience sickness, pain and death, that they might thus forever know evil and the inexpressible and exceeding sinfulness of sin.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 120.

The moral sense, or judgment of right and wrong, and the liberty to use it, which Adam possessed, were important features of his likeness to God. The law of right and wrong was written in his natural constitution. It was a part of his nature, just as it is a part of the Divine nature. But let us not forget that this image or likeness of God, this originally law-inscribed nature of man, has lost much of its clear outline through the erasing, degrading influence of sin.—Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, page 120.

This liberty of choice, termed free moral agency, or free will, is a part of man's original endowment; and this, together with the full measure of his mental and moral faculties, constituted him an image of his Creator. Today, after six thousand years of degradation, so much of the original likeness has been erased by sin, that we are not free, being bound, to a greater or less extent,



They do this in Ireland just as we do it in America.

PREDESTINATION OF THE CHURCH

Divine Predestination Reasonable, Beautiful, a Blessing to the World

Church Foreknown From Before the Creation of the World—God Foreknew the End From the Beginning—Our Heavenly Lord the Second Adam—The Church to Mother the Entire Human Family—Predestination Greatly Misunderstood in the Past—Elect to Bless the Non-Elect—Character Confirmation to God's Dear Son.

Special to St. Paul Enterprise.

New York, April 2.—Pastor Russell delivered a very interesting and logical address at the New York City Temple, W. 63rd St., near Broadway, this evening, on a subject which has greatly confused people in the past. His text was, "For whom He did the Firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29.) He said in part:

It seems very wonderful, dear friends, that our great Creator should so long ago have planned not only the blessing of the world, but also the High Calling of the Church. He foreknew us before the world was created, before we had come into existence.

Under the imperfections and weaknesses resulting from his disloyalty to the King of kings, Adam soon grew weak and helpless. As a monarch he began to lose the power by which, at first, he commanded and held the obedience of the lower animals by the strength of his will. He lost control of himself also, so that our condemned parents went forth and began the battle of life, seeking to prolong existence to its farthest limits, they were met at once with thorns and briars and thistles and sterile ground; and the confounding degradation and alienation from God through wicked works, and because of ignorance, superstition, and the wives of the adversary, and because the divine character and plan have been misrepresented to men, we find the message of grace and forgiveness unheeded. * * * the majority of mankind are slow to believe the good tidings, and correspondingly slow to accept their conditions. Some have become so deluded by the sophistries of Satan, by which he has deceived all nations (Rev. 20:3), that they do not believe that there is a God; and they believe in Him as great and powerful adversary, without love and sympathy, ready to torment

(Continued on Page Two.)

Pastor Chas. T. Russell.

He knew the end from the beginning, as we on a small scale often do today. If a man would put up a great building, he would employ an architect to draw up plans and specifications, and in the plan everything would be arranged for beforehand. The size and the location of the various rooms, the character of the material to be used, etc., would all be foreknown and forestated, so that whoever would read the specifications, and see the architect's drawings, would know exactly what kind of building was to be erected. Just so our Creator is a great Architect and Builder; and His entire Plan for mankind was prearranged before the foundation of the world.

God has a special purpose in everything He has made, and has a blessing in view for all His intelligent creatures. He has not been working in a hap-hazard manner, doubtful of the outcome of His plans and purposes, as it once seemed to us in our ignorance. It is very comforting to know that our Heavenly Father has infinite wisdom and power, as well as infinite justice and love; and that His glorious purposes cannot be thwarted or even delayed, but are grandly progressing to their completion. No opposition of man or demons can interfere with the glorious outworking of His great Plan of the

(Continued on Page Three.)

Relationship To God Author Of Diaglott

Two Themes Interestingly Handled; the Devotional One by Brother Pomeroy and the Historical One by Brother Bohnet.

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The Relationship of the Elect Church to the Heavenly Father.

Those Scriptures revealing the fellowship of the Church with the Father, and the character and closeness of their relationship with Him—His call, His care, His love—are, to the ones concerned, perhaps the most inspiring and strengthening, not to say thrilling, of the entire Bible. They have been largely covered up, or replaced, by a misapplication of the promises and precious sayings of God to the nation Israel; such as: "I have called thee by my name," and "I will put a new spirit within you; and I

(Continued on Page Two.)



One-Day Convention With Ann Street Ecclesia, Belfast, Ireland.

The former home of Benjamin Wilson's son, Edward Wilson. It was here that Benjamin Wilson passed away in May of 1900, at the age of 83, having lived the last 13 years of his life in this home at 1905 G St. in Sacramento. He was born in Halifax, England in 1817 and emigrated to America in 1844. He first issued the Diaglott as a serial that began in 1858 and was completed in 1863. The first complete published edition was in 1865. During the time when he was compiling and publishing the Diaglott, I believe he resided in Geneva, Illinois. He moved with his wife and some of his family to Sacramento in 1871.

Photo taken July 2012

