

Westcott, Hermes & the Occult

by **James May**[1]

While advocates of the King James Only position have hurled a myriad of accusations at Brooke Foss Westcott, none is perhaps more serious in nature than the assertion that he was a practitioner of the occult. The first bit of evidence produced by Gail Riplinger in support of this thesis is his membership in a student association at Cambridge University named the Hermes Club. Actually the club was first called the Philological Society and only later renamed Hermes. Gail, with James Sightler[2] and David Sorenson[3] close behind, would have us believe that this club was, to get right to the essence of the whole mess, a group of devil worshipers.[4] This idea is immediately obvious as New Age Bible Versions titles the section in which Hermes is discussed as “Hermes: Alias ‘Satan’,” and then proceeds to allegedly quote Helena Blavatsky to the effect that “Satan or Hermes are all one.”[5] I say “allegedly quote” because I have not personally looked up this reference, and I have learned NEVER to trust any quote from any King James Only defender without examining it myself. Two considerations supposedly demonstrate that the Hermes Club was concerned with the occult: The name of the club and the topics discussed in the club meetings. The only 19th century documentation that has been presented concerning the nature and activities of the Hermes Club is found in the biography of Westcott written by his son Arthur. Since this material is somewhat difficult to secure, I have reproduced the account of the club in full in the next three paragraphs:

Westcott’s most intimate friends during his career as an undergraduate were J. Llewelyn Davies, C. B. Scott, and David J. Vaughan. These four, together with W. C. Bromhead, J. E. B. Mayor, and J. C. Wright, were the original members of an

essay-reading club, which was started in May 1845, under the name of “The Philological Society.” At a later date the society took the name of “Hermes.” The society met on Saturday evenings in one or other of the members’ rooms, when a paper was read, and a discussion, not infrequently somewhat discursive, ensued. The following were the subjects of papers read by my father:-- The Lydian Origin of the Etruscans; The Nominative Absolute; The Roman Games of (or at) Ball; The so-called Aoristic Use of the Perfect in Latin; The Funeral Ceremonies of the Romans; The Eleatic School of Philosophy; The Mythology of the Homeric Poems; The Theology of Aristotle; Theramenes.

On two joyful occasions the ordinary business of the society at the weekly meeting was suspended--the first being 7th March 1846, when Westcott was elected to the “Battie” Scholarship; the second, 6th March 1847, when Scott was elected to the “Pitt” Scholarship. In 1847 A. A. Vansittart and J. Simpson became members of the club. At times the society’s philosophic gravity relaxed, as witnesses the following entry in the minute-book under date 8th May 1848: “Mr. Vaughan having retired to his rooms, and Mr. Davies within himself, the rest of the society revived the ludus trigonalis [a Roman game of ball], and kept it up for some time with great hilarity.” Presumably Westcott took his share in this hilarious revival, though it did not form part of the discussion on his paper concerning Roman Games of (or at) Ball.

The last recorded meeting of the society took place on 15th May 1848. On that occasion the character of Theramenes was discussed in Westcott’s rooms. Before separating for the evening the society chose the character of Philopoemen as the “next topic of discussion.” So ends the minute-book. Whether the society survived to discuss the character of Philopoemen or not is not apparent. Probably not, for the four faithful members of the club had now graduated. There is an entry in the minute-book which indicates that in March the end was near. Above the initials B. F.

W. occur these words: "Let me here offer my heartfelt tribute to a society from which I have derived great pleasure, and, I trust, the deepest good-not least under the feelings of today." The subject that evening had been "The Condition of Women at Rome"; but the discussion had wandered over a wide field, and, in its latest stages, was concerned with a comparison of Plato and Aristotle.[6]

It hardly needs to be said that the description of this club as given in Westcott's biography strikes the reader much differently than the material found in Riplinger, Sightler and Sorenson. The term philological, as used in the original club name, refers to the study of classical Greek and Latin literature, religion and culture, and the description of the activities of the club seems to very much fit this title. So why the change to "Hermes"? Should we see some hidden occult significance in this? To disarm Westcott's accusers on this point we must only show that "Hermes" has attributes and associations which are not connected to the occult and which would reasonably explain the choice of the club's title. To this end we note that Hermes was the messenger of the gods and was himself the god of eloquence:

In the Odyssey, however, he appears mainly as the messenger of the gods and the conductor of the dead to Hades. . . . He was also god of eloquence and presided over some kinds of popular divination.[7]

Interestingly this usage is also reflected in the pages of the New Testament:

And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker (Acts 14:12, New American Standard Bible).

The word "Hermes" in this verse is transliterated from Greek into English by the NASB and other modern translations. The KJV obscures the use of the name by following the Latin and thus translates the Greek "Hermes" as "Mercurius." The obvious point

is that the people in Lystra did not call Paul Hermes because they believed that he was Satan or because they thought that he was somehow connected with the occult. No, he was the chief speaker, and it seems most likely that the young Cambridge students called their club Hermes because they considered themselves to be eloquent speakers in their meetings.

There is a second occurrence of Hermes in the New Testament in Romans 16:14:

Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them (Romans 16:14, King James Version).

The name Hermes in Romans 16:14 is identical to the name in Acts 14:12. Those who read no Greek will be helped by knowing that it has the Strong's concordance number 2060 assigned to it. It appears a very safe assumption that the early Christians did not agree with Gail Riplinger that "Hermes" = "Satan". The first century church would not have accepted anyone into its midst with a name associated with the devil, but would have demanded that the name be changed, which leads us to conclude that the use of the name Hermes provides no reasonable indication that the Cambridge club was associated with the occult.

Riplinger and Sightler also imply that the topics covered by the Hermes Club in its meetings indicate an occult connection. To this end they chose only the most sinister sounding topics to relate to their readers. The full list of topics presented by Westcott, as given in his biography, is as follows:

1. The Lydian Origin of the Etruscans
2. The Nominative Absolute
3. The Roman Games of (or at) Ball
4. The so-called Aoristic Use of the Perfect in Latin
5. The Funeral Ceremonies of the Romans
6. The Eleatic School of Philosophy

7. The Mythology of the Homeric Poems
8. The Theology of Aristotle
9. Theramenes

Of these topics Riplinger mentions only numbers 5, 6, 7 and 9; Sightler only number 6. The others perhaps sounded too innocuous for a band of devil worshippers. It takes little research in a good encyclopedia to confirm that these are indeed subjects that young classical scholars might discuss. Since these papers have not been presented to us, we have no way of knowing the opinions which Westcott expressed toward his topics. For example, we do not know what aspects of Aristotle's theology were discussed, and we do not know what criticisms were offered. In other words, and to get right to the point, the Hermes Club provides no indication whatsoever that Westcott was involved in the occult.

Addendum: An Important Correction

With what appears to be but one exception, quotations in Riplinger, Sightler and Sorenson associating the god Hermes with the occult are completely irrelevant and do not prove that Westcott wished such an identification. The information below first appeared in Riplinger and was then copied by Sorenson:

The designation [Hermes] is derived from "the god of magic. . .and occult wisdom, the conductor of Souls to Hades,. . .Lord of Death. . .cunning and trickery, (Riplinger, p. 400).

The latter title [Hermes] was so named by Westcott because it derived from "the god of magic. . .and occult wisdom, the conductor of Souls to Hades,. . .Lord of Death. . .cunning and trickery, (Sorenson, p. 175).

While both versions claim to relate Westcott's motives, the second by Sorenson contains a particularly egregious error. Instead of referencing Riplinger as his source, Sorenson here has a footnote (number 36) informing his readers that this information was

derived from volume 1, page 47 of the biography of Westcott written by his son. This statement would indeed be a strong indictment if it had been written by Westcott's son, but it was not.[8] Sorenson's footnote is simply wrong. There remains not one shred of evidence that Westcott chose the name Hermes for any reason except that Hermes was the god of oratory.

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[2] James Sightler, A Testimony Founded For Ever (Greenville, SC: Sightler Publications, 1999), pp. 103-4.

[3] David H. Sorenson, Touch Not The Unclean Thing (Duluth, MN: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001), p. 175.

[4] Sightler does not make the statement as directly as Riplinger, but no one can miss his idea. Sorenson does not take his accusation quite this far.

[5] Gail Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions (Ararat, VA: A.V. Publications, 1993, eleventh printing 2000) p. 400.

[6] Arthur Westcott, Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott (London: Macmillan and Co., 1903), Vol. I, pp. 46-48.

[7] "Hermes" The Encyclopedia Britannica (Electronic Edition, 2001).

[8] I have, of course, read Westcott's biography and have examined this page in particular.

Westcott and the Ghostly Guild

by James May[1]

Many years ago I had occasion to investigate “spiritualistic” phenomena with some care, and I came to a clear conclusion, which I feel bound to express in answer to your circular. It appears to me that in this, as in all spiritual questions, Holy Scripture is our supreme guide. I observe, then, that while spiritual ministries are constantly recorded in the Bible, there is not the faintest encouragement to seek them. The case, indeed, is far otherwise. I cannot, therefore, but regard every voluntary approach to beings such as those who are supposed to hold communication with men through mediums as unlawful and perilous. I find in the fact of the Incarnation all that man (so far as I can see) requires for life and hope. ~ B.F. Westcott[2]

Brooke Foss Westcott was a 19th century conservative Anglican New Testament scholar who, because of his efforts in producing a revised version of the Greek New Testament, has become the object of many false and vicious attacks by those who consider the King James Bible to be the only perfect Word of God. This author has, in several previous monographs, established beyond all dispute that Westcott was generally conservative in his theology, as witnessed by his belief in the inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth and full deity of Jesus Christ, and the physical resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ from the dead.[3] He was also an important defender of the integrity of the New Testament against the assaults of F.C. Baur and the Tübingen school of Germany, particularly in regard to the Johannan authorship and first century dating of the Gospel of John. Leaders of the King James Only movement have, in spite of the clarity and volume of evidence to the contrary, attributed to Westcott beliefs which he never advocated. They have also, in what would seem to be every possible case, interpreted both actions and words of Westcott in the worst possible light, and have made far more out of those

actions and words than a sober analysis of the facts would warrant. In no case is this more evident than in Westcott’s alleged participation in spiritualism.

Background

The genesis of modern spiritualism is to be found in rather strange happenings that allegedly occurred in the upper New York State town of Hydesville in March of 1848. The home of a humble Methodist farmer, J.D. Fox, became the locus of mysterious rappings, rappings which could not be accounted for, and which, according to many witnesses, were anything but random. It was soon discovered that the source of the noises would respond with intelligent patterns when appropriate questions were asked. The news spread rapidly, and interest was intense. Many believed that the dead were speaking, and it appeared that the living were more than willing to listen. The two daughters of Mr. Fox, Kate and Maggie, who seemed to be intimately connected with the sounds, were soon joined in what had become their new careers by others who professed contact with another world.

The number of Spiritualists grew and grew. By 1853 ten Spiritualist periodicals were established in the United States. In 1855 an enthusiast claimed that there were 2,500,000 Spiritualists in the country; in 1859 a Catholic Convention put the number at 11,000,000. These figures must be greatly exaggerated; but even so there can be no doubt about the astonishing success of early Spiritualism.[4]

As would be expected, the new interest provoked responses by people with a wide variety of outlooks and motives. While many were attracted by hopes of contacting departed friends and loved ones, others saw the movement as a ready source of cash, and still others sought to expose what they believed to be obvious chicanery and self deception. Interest in, and investigation of, spiritualist phenomenon soon crossed the Atlantic to find fertile soil in Great Britain as well.

Edward White Benson, a future Archbishop of Canterbury, developed an early penchant for the investigation of spiritualist happenings. His particular motives are not clear, but in 1851, while still a student at Cambridge University, he formed a campus society which came to be known as the Ghostlie Guild. He invited several of his friends to join, including Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort. Westcott accepted the invitation and for a period of perhaps one year aided in the investigation of paranormal phenomena.

Westcott's Involvement

The club members were interested in collecting firsthand accounts of incidents which might be considered encounters with the supernatural. Westcott took a leading role. In addition to collecting the accounts, he also prepared a circular in which others were asked to supply any information that they might have. The circular was never used, and beyond the collection of some number of accounts, there is no record of Westcott's activities. This was his last year as a student at Cambridge, and we have no record of further interest in any form of spiritualism after he left the university to begin seventeen years of work at Harrow School for Boys.

Observations

The scant information which has been preserved from the 19th century in regard to the Ghostly Guild warrants a few comments. First, no information has been produced indicating that any club members, certainly during Westcott's tenure, themselves participated in any occult activities. The word that stands out in the descriptions of the club, both in Westcott's biography as well as in Hort's, is investigation. To take this a step farther, there is no evidence that Westcott ever at any time anywhere participated in spiritualism. Those who say otherwise have offered only

accusations, not historical documentation.

There is no information suggesting that Westcott sought or obtained contact with spirits, nor is there any indication as to his motives in his investigations. He lived in an age when skeptics, and in particular those who were denying miracles in the Bible, did not believe in any supernatural intervention in history. Westcott may have felt that clear examples of contact with the spirit world, while not to be condoned, would at least vindicate the existence of the supernatural. Such a motive would be consistent with his doctrinal orthodoxy and his clear and consistent defense of biblical supernaturalism against rationalist thinking.

It also appears that Westcott's interest in investigating spiritualism was rather short lived. He had joined the Ghost Club during his final year as a student at Cambridge. The following year he was appointed a school master at Harrow in the northeast of London. His busy life there appears to have left him little time for his former interests. Before leaving Cambridge, Westcott had prepared a questionnaire for the purpose of gathering information from those who had experienced unexplained phenomena. The questionnaire is reproduced in Westcott's biography and is neither complex nor lengthy. After the conclusion was reached that the topic of spiritualism would be the cause of alarm, the questionnaire was "unceremoniously set aside," never to be resurrected. This appears to be Westcott's last dabbling in the investigation of spiritualism. At least two King James Only writers have alleged that Westcott's involvement continued no less than ten more years. There is no evidence to support their claim.

Regardless of his early thinking, Westcott reached the conclusion that investigations into spiritualism lead to no good, and for this reason ceased any further involvement. The words of Arthur Westcott, as recorded in his father's biography, are instructive:

What happened to this Guild in the end I have not discovered. My father ceased to interest himself in these

matters, not altogether, I believe, from want of faith in what, for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism, but because he was seriously convinced that such investigations led to no good.[5]

This observation, which so greatly diminishes whatever guilt may be imputed to Westcott for his activity, causes his false accusers serious difficulty, and for this reason, they grossly pervert the words in the biography. We will examine this material in more detail shortly.

As shown at the head of this paper, we possess Westcott's own explanation and conclusion concerning the time that he spent investigating spiritualism. In the early 1890's William Stead had sent an appeal for support for his new spiritualist magazine *Borderland* to all of the bishops of the Anglican Church, including Westcott. To each recipient, Stead offered the following purpose for his endeavor:

As the enclosed circular will inform you, I have decided to bring out a new *Quarterly Review and Index*, entitled *BORDERLAND*, which is to be exclusively devoted to the study of the phenomena which lie on the borderland which Science has hitherto, for the most part, contemptuously relegated to Superstition.[6]

In the first edition, he reproduced several replies, including Westcott's, which we display for the second time:

Many years ago I had occasion to investigate "spiritualistic" phenomena with some care, and I came to a clear conclusion, which I feel bound to express in answer to your circular. It appears to me that in this, as in all spiritual questions, Holy Scripture is our supreme guide. I observe, then, that while spiritual ministries are constantly recorded in the Bible, there is not the faintest encouragement to seek them. The case, indeed, is far

otherwise. I cannot, therefore, but regard every voluntary approach to beings such as those who are supposed to hold communication with men through mediums as unlawful and perilous. I find in the fact of the Incarnation all that man (so far as I can see) requires for life and hope.[7]

This quotation, in combination with other evidence, suggests that for a brief period, as a young man of twenty-six years old, Brooke Foss Westcott spent some time investigating, but not participating in, spiritualism. He soon concluded that such investigations led to no good and abandoned them. There is no evidence that he ever in anyway participated in spiritualism. There is no evidence that his investigations extended much beyond one year. I invite the reader to examine the materials produced by King James Only accusers, notably Gail Riplinger,[8] James Sightler,[9] and David Sorenson,[10] as well as the biographies of Westcott and of Hort to find any documentation from the 19th century that contradicts this conclusion. The KJVers allege that Westcott participated in spiritualism and did so throughout his adult life; ---the facts do not.

King James Only Bias and Misinformation

King James Only proponents disagree among themselves regarding Westcott's alleged participation in séances. While Riplinger and Sorenson both assert that he did participate, Sightler tells his readers that there is no evidence to support such a claim. Riplinger's position is made clear in the following four quotations:

The Greek text used to translate the NIV, NASB and others was an edition drastically altered by a Spiritualist (one who seeks contact with the dead through séances), who believed he was in the "new age," (Riplinger, p. 2).

New versions (and the 'new' church they are producing) owe their occult bend to their underlying Greek text, a

novelty produced in the 1870's by B.F. Westcott, a London Spiritualist. Secular historians and numerous occult books see him as 'the Father' of the current channeling phenomenon, a major source of the "doctrines of devils" driving the New Age movement, (Riplinger, p. 25).

In tracing the recent revival of channeling, scores of history books, as we shall see, point to one origin: Westcott and Hort. These new version authors did not stop with their 'Hermes' Club, but went on to engage in spiritualism and to organize a society called the Ghostly Guild, (Riplinger, p. 402, underlining added).

Toppling over the heap of secular histories which identify Westcott and Hort among the seeds of the present New Age thicket is The Founders of Psychical Research, by Alan Gauld. He lists their 'Guild' among the 'Founders,' (Riplinger, p. 407, underlining added).

While these statements accuse Westcott of participating in spiritualism, they produce no documentation that he actually did so. Mrs. Riplinger claims that she will produce "scores of history books" (quotation #3) which will document that Westcott and Hort were not only involved in séances, but were indeed, the originators of the modern channeling movement. I have taken the time to very carefully examine Riplinger's material and to count the "history books." By the time she gets to page 407, she believes that she has a "heap" of them. In reality, there are only three "history books"[11] from which Gail has even tried to prove that Westcott and Hort were the originators of the modern channeling movement. The three books are The Occult Underground by James Webb, The Founders of Psychical Research by Alan Gauld, and The Society for Psychical Research: An Outline of Its History by W.H. Salter. I have examined at length and read substantial portions of these books. The Occult Underground does not even list Westcott, "the father of the modern channeling movement," in its index, and his name is nowhere mentioned in the book.[12] The

Founders of Psychical Research has in its index one reference to Westcott, a reference which has nothing to do with the occult. This reference directs the reader's attention to page 64 where Gauld contrasts the orthodoxy of the intellectuals present at Cambridge during Westcott's time there in the 1840's with the "agnosticism or hesitant Deism" of those who came in the 1870's. This is not exactly the kind of material that Riplinger wants us to read. The index also fails to note a reference to Westcott on page 51. This material likewise has no connection to spiritualism, and will be passed over for the sake of time and topic. Salter's book tells us that Westcott was a member of the Ghostly Guild, which is not in dispute. Riplinger has not produced any quotation from any of these books indicating that Westcott participated in any séance or any other occult activity, and in fact, the books contain no such information. When she says that "secular histories and numerous occult books see him [Westcott] as 'the Father' of the current channeling phenomenon," and when she promises to produce "scores of history books" that point to Westcott and Hort as the one origin of the recent revival of channeling, she simply is not telling the truth.

David Sorenson also claims that Westcott participated in the occult. He uses material which he appears to have copied from page 416 of Riplinger's book:

In 1872, Westcott then organized the Eranus Club which included not only Hort, but also Sidgwick, J.B. Lightfoot (of the English Bible Revision Committee), Arthur Balfour (later prime minister of England), and others. The club met to conduct séances in the homes of its members, including the home of Hort, (Sorenson, p. 176).

Sorenson "supports" this statement with footnote #42, which refers his readers to the biography of Hort written by his son Arthur. Volume 2, pages 184-85 are supposed to document séances in the home of Hort. I have these pages before me as I write and have just finished reading them again (I have read them

numerous times in the past). There is not one word present that has anything to do with spiritualism and the occult. Any ordinary reader would suppose that Sorenson is documenting a séance in the home of Fenton John Anthony Hort. The pages simply tell us that the Eranus Club had meetings in the home of Hort, not séances. I am tempted to reproduce the pages in their entirety to demonstrate once again the true nature of King James Only “documentation.” I will not waste the space. Hort’s biography here describes the Eranus Club as a faculty discussion group where papers were read and topics were discussed that included those related to “education, politics, and the mutual duties of social classes.” I can well imagine some young ministerial student at Pensacola Christian College reading Sorenson’s book (as such students are required to do) and supposing that it is a documented fact that séances were conducted in the home of F.J.A. Hort. Any such student has been sadly deceived.

James Sightler’s book contains the following statement, that while true, contains a shameful innuendo:

There is so far no known record of Westcott’s personal participation in séances or mesmerism, (Sightler, p. 263).

We note the words which Sightler has offset in bold. It obviously pains him greatly to make such a confession, and he apparently wants us to imagine that we are no doubt just on the verge of finding material that will surely prove what we all know anyway, namely that Westcott was indeed a spiritualist. How would Dr. Sightler respond if we were to say that so far we have found no record of his membership in Alcoholics Anonymous? Such innuendo would be no different than what he has done with Westcott. If Sightler is correct in his observation concerning the lack of documentation (and he is), we must wonder why he does not condemn Riplinger and Sorenson for making such unfounded and irresponsible accusations. Perhaps it is because false information and irresponsible reporting are perfectly acceptable when presented in support of the King James Bible.

This writer has exchanged a few e-mails with King James supporter David Sorenson. While it appears that he no longer intends to respond to my questions, I have still sought on a couple of occasions to give him the opportunity to defend his positions. I recently asked him to defend his statement that Westcott was involved with the Ghostly Guild for a period of ten years. I told him that I could find no documentation for this assertion and would like to know where he got the information. No, he has not responded. While this is only a supposition on my part, I believe that he most likely came to his conclusion after reading the following in Gail Riplinger’s book:

Their subversive and clandestine approach continued, as seen ten years later when Westcott writes, “. . . strike blindly . . . much evil would result from the public discussion.” Westcott’s son alludes to the shroud of mystery surrounding the continuation of the ‘Ghostly Guild’. “[M]y father laboured under the imputation of being ‘unsafe’ . . . What happened to this Guild in the end I have not discovered,” (Riplinger, p. 408).

If there was ever a hodgepodge quotation, it is before us. This material occurs right in the heart of Riplinger’s discussion of Westcott and the occult, and anyone reading it would naturally assume that both “their subversive and clandestine approach” and “the imputation of being ‘unsafe’” were in connection with spiritualist activity. The first hint as to the true nature of this documentation comes when we examine the footnotes which Riplinger has attached to it (#39 & #40) and discover that Gail has strung together material from three different, and widely separated, pages in the first volume of Westcott’s biography. The pages are 229, 235, and 119. Any reader who has not fallen asleep will suspect that there might be something not entirely kosher about this. The simple fact is that the three passages are discussing three entirely different subjects. We have reproduced Westcott’s material in full with Riplinger’s clippings underlined:

[To J.F. Wickenden, November 14, 1854]: Have you entered into the Maurice controversy? I only hope it may pass away quietly. At the first onset we always strike blindly; and much evil would result from the public discussion of the moot points just now. It is well, I believe, that they have been named; and it will be well for men to get familiarized with them. Then at length they may debate if they please. This is a strange symptom of belief or disbelief---that Mr. Maurice's views of the Atonement seem to have called forth comparatively little criticism.[13]

The following letter to Mr. Wickenden refers to the index to the Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, prepared by him, and to an adverse criticism of The Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles, which had appeared in the Literary Churchman. It may be remarked in passing that these Cambridge sermons were somewhat severely handled by too orthodox critics, and did not obtain a wide circulation. It was mainly on their account, I believe, that my father laboured under the imputation of being "unsafe," (Ibid., p. 235).

What happened to this Guild in the end I have not discovered. My father ceased to interest himself in these matters, not altogether, I believe, from want of faith in what, for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism, but because he was seriously convinced that such investigations led to no good, (Ibid., p. 119).

There are so many problems with this information that it is hard to know where to begin and how far to continue. This is again the only material that I have found that might explain Sorenson's statement, "They continued to participate in the Ghostly Guild until 1861, a period of ten years," (Sorenson, p. 172). While the Guild did begin in 1851, the alert reader will note that the letter from which Riplinger misquotes the words "strike blindly" and from which she gives a time period of "ten years later" was

written in 1854, a period of only three years. We suspect sloppy research here by Sorenson, but he has actually done better than Riplinger. The "ten years later" in Riplinger's book is ten years later than a quotation which she introduces on the prior page with the words, "In 1860 and 1861, Hort wrote to Westcott of their mutual concern in this regard," (Riplinger, p. 407). Following the quotation, she introduces the second quotation (actually a compound quotation), which she says was written ten years later, which would be in 1871. The words which were supposed to be ten years later, however, were instead six or seven years earlier, or to beat the point to death, according to Riplinger, 1854 is ten years later than 1861. As tedious and ridiculous as this is, it is important to document that Westcott was only involved in the investigation of occult activity for a short period of time, at least so far as can be determined by the evidence at hand, and that Riplinger and Sorenson are quite careless in their research. Sorenson's claim, and the material in Riplinger from which he evidently derives it, is entirely fraudulent.

Mrs. Gail Riplinger claims that "Westcott's son alludes to the shroud of mystery surrounding the continuation of the 'Ghostly Guild'," (Riplinger, p. 408). He actually said, "What happened to this Guild in the end I have not discovered." He is not discussing the continuation of the Guild, but its end. She twists the words to make it sound as if the Guild continued clandestinely. Indeed, she wants us to believe that Westcott continued throughout his life to participate in the occult, and to this end she tells us:

Westcott's son writes of his father's lifelong "faith in what for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism . . .," (Riplinger, p. 407).

The actual words of Westcott's son, in their true context, paint a much different picture:

What happened to this Guild in the end I have not discovered. My father ceased to interest himself in these

matters, not altogether, I believe, from want of faith in what, for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism, but because he was seriously convinced that such investigations led to no good.

Arthur Westcott says just the opposite of that which Riplinger claims. His second sentence is somewhat difficult to follow because of its complexity, and we offer a simplified version:

My father ceased to interest himself in these matters, not entirely from a lack of faith in Spiritualism, but because he was seriously convinced that such investigations led to no good.

A most crucial word in the analysis of Arthur Westcott's comment is the word "altogether". This word tells us that it was not only because of his lack of faith in spiritualism that B.F. Westcott ceased his investigation of it, but also because he had concluded that such investigations led to no good. If Westcott's son had not used the word "altogether," he would have been saying that even though Westcott may have believed that spiritualism did indeed produce genuine results, the investigation of such results led to no good. Notice the effect of removing "altogether" from the sentence:

My father ceased to interest himself in these matters, not, I believe, from want of faith in what, for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism, but because he was seriously convinced that such investigations led to no good.

The biography says nothing about a "lifelong" anything. Riplinger's accusation of a "lifelong faith in spiritualism" is nothing short of nonsense and the exact opposite of Arthur's point.

In the third passage from which Riplinger fabricated her quotation, Arthur Westcott speaks of his father being labeled as "unsafe" as a

result of criticism by certain "too orthodox critics." This has nothing to do with the occult, but rather is in connection with two books by Westcott, *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles* and *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*. I have read carefully and collected notes from both of these books. I have no idea why they were found objectionable, and without some knowledge of the particular criticisms that were offered, I cannot respond intelligently to those criticisms. I can, however, supply some interesting information from the two books under question. It is surely most surprising that Gail Riplinger has failed to investigate the books so that she might supply her readers with the following from Westcott's *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*:

The narratives of the Gospels admit of the most manifold combinations, not because they are constructed artificially, but because they are true records of the Truth. Everything tends to show that the intricate relations which exist between them were not the result of any conscious purpose, but of that Inspiration which led the Evangelists to preserve only such details as have a lasting and representative interest. This they did from different points of sight; and each special aspect of truth admits of a perfect combination with the others both in its parts and as a whole.[14]

Of higher blessings which the Spirit of God still gives through the words which He inspired, I will not speak, (Ibid., p. ix, underlining added).

The student may [examine any minute aspect of the Gospels] and his feeling will be, a wonder, which increases with time, at the fullness and subtlety of the connections by which each part of the Holy Scripture is bound to all others; and this feeling is the noblest homage to its Inspiration, (Ibid., pp. xi-xii, underlining added).

Riplinger also failed to inform her readers that Westcott wrote

Introduction to the Study of the Gospels specifically to refute David Strauss and other radical German biblical critics:

It is an important feature of the work, that, though it is intended specially to refute the form of skepticism represented, for example, by Strauss in Germany, and by Theodore Parker in this country, it is not directly polemic in its character, but treats of facts and discusses principles which render the argument appropriate to all times and places.[15]

My obligations to the leaders of the extreme German schools are very considerable, though I can rarely accept any of their conclusions, (Ibid., p. xiii, underlining added).

It [the Bible] is authoritative, for it is the voice of God; it is intelligible, for it is in the language of men. The possibility of such a combination seems to follow directly from a consideration of the nature and form of Inspiration; and the same reflections which establish a necessary connection between inspired thoughts and inspired words, point out the natural transition from the notion of an inspired teacher to that of an inspired book, and justify the application of the epithet at once to the impulse and the result, an ambiguity which at first sight creates only confusion and embarrassment, (Ibid., pp. 33-34, underlining added).

It [Inspiration] presupposes that the same providential Power which gave the message selected the messenger; and implies that the traits of individual character, and the peculiarities of manner and purpose, which are displayed in the composition and language of the sacred writings, are essential to the perfect exhibition of their meaning. It combines harmoniously the two terms in that relation of the finite to the infinite which is involved in the very idea of revelation. It preserves absolute truthfulness with perfect humanity, so that the nature of man is not

neutralized, if we may thus speak, by the divine agency, and the truth of God is not impaired, but exactly expressed in one of its several aspects by the individual mind, (Ibid., p. 41, underlining added).

The statement by Westcott's son and biographer that after a period of investigation Westcott came to the conclusion that investigations into spiritualism led to no good cannot be answered by his detractors, and for that reason they must pervert the statement so as to make it mean something entirely foreign to its context:

In response to public disfavor regarding his esotericism and liberalism and in light of his position in the 'religious' community, Westcott determined that public involvement in the Ghostly Guild "led to no good," (Riplinger, p. 407).

They continued to participate in the Ghostly Guild until 1861, a period of ten years. However, they were clever enough to realize that being connected with such an organization could impair their greater goals in life--the publishing and acceptance of their new Greek Text. They thus determined that their involvement in the Ghostly Guild would lead to no good, (Sorenson, p. 172).

Arthur Westcott said nothing indicating that his father's conclusion about spiritualism had anything to do with "public disfavor," nor that it was "public involvement" that led to no good. This is just more twisting of words by one who claims to follow the truth. The same is true of what Sorenson says Westcott and Hort were "clever enough to realize." Westcott's accusers have made up such material because the facts do not support their case. James Sightler has a different take here; his idea is that Westcott came to his conclusion after Edmund Gurney's suicide in 1888, (Sightler, p. 251). This is the product of his imagination, not of historical documentation. The death of his three sisters in a boating accident is the more likely cause of Gurney's depression

and suicide than his investigations into psychical phenomena.[16] For Riplinger, Sorenson, and Sightler, it is quite impossible to imagine that Westcott may have had good motives when he ceased his investigation of spiritualism. They can, of course, believe whatever they choose, but they once again have manufactured what they want to believe without any historical documentation whatsoever.

The only bit of material suggesting that Westcott's investigations extended much beyond 1851 is found in Salter's history of the Society for Psychical Research. He says:

He [Henry Sidgwick] joined the "Ghost Society" before he took his degree in 1859; Westcott was then the secretary, and on his leaving Cambridge Sidgwick appears to have succeeded him.[17]

Salter indicates a bit of uncertainty (and with good reason) when he says that "Sidgwick appears to have succeeded him." Since Westcott left Cambridge in 1852, and Sidgwick did not arrive until 1855 (Gauld, p. 47), Salter's hesitancy with this claim is well founded. His statement simply does not coincide with the facts.

The paragraph that begins this paper presents a serious problem for the unfounded charges that James Sightler brings against Westcott. For this reason he cannot allow the words to have their obvious force, but must instead imagine some hidden agenda on the part of the Bishop:

. . . this apparent rejection of spiritualism, which is much more a rejection of W.T. Stead's new journal, a lower level competitor of the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, than of spiritualism, (Sightler, p. 266).

In spite of the fact that Westcott had no ties to the Society for Psychical Research, we are supposed to imagine that his real concern here was to guard its journal against competition from

Borderland. Once again, Sightler's imagination and uncontrolled bias have gotten the best of him. Once again, he has imputed the worst possible motives to Westcott with no historical documentation. Dr. Sightler can obviously see that Westcott's words, in this reply and if taken at face value, represent a rejection of spiritualism. There is no historical documentation to suggest that Westcott did not reject the investigation of spiritualism after a brief period of investigation. Why can the KJV accusers not allow him to mean what he says? The real reason is that the King James Only position is wrong, completely wrong, and that false positions can only be defended with falsehood. The truth about B.F. Westcott destroys a very significant portion of the KJV myth.

Riplinger, Sightler, and Sorenson all seem obsessed with the Society for Psychical Research and with linking Westcott to the group. Even though Westcott is never listed as a member, they imply that he may have been one anyway because he knew people who were members and because every member's participation was not made public. This kind of argument can be used to assert any absurd position and is even less worthy of discussion than what I have already covered in this paper. Unable to produce any indication that Westcott was in any way tied to the SPR, Sightler offers these lame words for our consumption:

It is at least possible that Westcott or Hort were at some point members [of the SPR] whose names were withheld from public lists, (Sightler, p. 263).

Yes, and they may have also been secret child molesters who managed never to be caught. While I have no intention in this paper of devoting the considerable space that would be necessary to discuss the SPR and the relationship of the organization to spiritualism, I will supply two quotations which may prove suggestive:

There is a sharp line of distinction between the S.P.R. and the Central Association of Spiritualists. The Spiritualists

have a settled faith---nay, more, a certain knowledge---in regard to facts about which the S.P.R. would not profess to have any knowledge whatever. The S.P.R. are busy with phenomena only, seeking evidence of their existence, but not yet hazarding even a hint of their spiritual origin. To them the idea of spirit-communion, of sweet converse with dear departed friends---so precious to Spiritualists---has no present interest, (Cerullo, p. 71, quoting E. Dawson Rodgers).

It is worthy of note that the Society's manifesto nowhere suggests any intention to institute an enquiry into the problem of survival, since the word "spiritualistic" is simply used to indicate a type of phenomenon already generally known by that name. The popular notion that psychical research is merely a refined and more intellectualized form of spiritualism derives no support from this document, nor from the early work of the Society, little of which had any direct bearing on survival, (Salter, p. 14).

The SPR, as led by Henry Sidgwick, while hardly an organization to be commended, was not devoted to that which is commonly described as spiritualism, that is, to contacting the dead through séances. Many spiritualists, unaware of the true direction of the organization, had joined its ranks. The continued lack of interest in the subject led to a mass exodus of them from the SPR in 1885, (Cerullo, pp. 70-84). Even if his detractors could link Westcott to the SPR, it would not prove that he had participated in necromancy. Neither Riplinger, Sightler, nor Sorenson manifest any interest in making this clear to their readers. The reason is obvious.

Sightler, evidently imagining that spiritualism is a corollary of mysticism, misquotes from Westcott's biography the following words:

"from Cambridge days I have read the writings of many who are called mystics with much profit. Everyone [sic: every one] who believes that phenomena are signs [sic: "signs"] of the spiritual and external [sic: eternal] receives the name; [sic: name,] and to believe in the Incarnation involves this belief, does it not? After all, the first chapter of Genesis is the Protoevangelium [sic: Protevangelium]," (Sightler, p. 242, quoting Westcott).

Sightler manages to commit five errors in two short sentences ("Everyone" for Westcott's "Every one," "signs" for Westcott's "signs'," "name;" for Westcott's "name," "external" for Westcott's "eternal," and "Protoevangelium" for Westcott's "Protevangelium." Are we supposed to imagine that the doctor is a careful researcher? I have found many such errors throughout his book. According to Sightler's analysis, "This quote is an admission of his [Westcott's] own mysticism and spiritualism." Well, maybe not. In the first place, there is no linkage between mysticism and spiritualism. In the second place, Sightler gives us no definition of mysticism, a word notoriously hard to define, and one which when undefined is practically devoid of information.[18] A rather tepid definition is "a belief in and consciousness of a greater reality than that which presents itself to the senses." In this sense a person could be a mystic and also be anything from a Buddhist to an orthodox Christian. There is yet a further problem here with Sightler's attempt to use this quotation to prove Westcott's mysticism and spiritualism: He neglects to include the immediately preceding sentence. We must keep in mind that according to Sightler, this is Westcott's "admission of his own mysticism":

I don't think that I have even used the word "mystics": it is so hopelessly vague, and it suggests an esoteric teaching which is wholly foreign to the Christian. But from Cambridge days I have read the writings of many who are called mystics with much profit. Every one who believes that phenomena are "signs" of the spiritual and eternal

receives the name, and to believe in the Incarnation involves this belief, does it not? After all, the first chapter of Genesis is the Protevangelium, (Westcott, Life and Letters, Vol. II, p. 309, underlining added).

So we see that in reality, instead of Westcott admitting that he was a mystic, he was instead denying that he was one, but was confessing that he had read the writings of many so-called mystics with profit. In particular, the Bishop of Durham says that esoteric teaching common to mysticism is foreign to Christianity. This is quite revealing in light of the fact that over and over Sightler has implied in his book that Westcott was esoteric.[19] Apparently he does not expect anyone to ever check his quotations.

Conclusion

In spite of all claims to the contrary, the leaders of the King James Only movement have produced no evidence that Brooke Foss Westcott personally participated in spiritualism. They have not even discussed the important difference between investigation and participation. They have produced no evidence that his investigations into spiritualism lasted more than approximately one year. They have not demonstrated that his motives in his investigations were sinister. They have not shown us that his conclusion that investigations into spiritualism lead to no good was anything but genuine. They have demonstrated that they are willing to twist words and falsify quotations in order to support their position. They have shown that they are willing to snip quotations out of context in order to manufacture support that the quotations would not otherwise provide. They have shown that they are willing to state something as fact for which they have no documentation and then to supply a footnote to material difficult to obtain that does not say that which they indicate that it says. We can be assured that they did not develop these tactics by reading the King James Bible, and we can also be assured that Brooke Foss Westcott was a far different sort of man than his accusers would have us believe.

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[2] B.F. Westcott in “The Response to the Appeal”, *Borderland*, Vol. I, No. 1 (July 1893) p. 11.

[3] See my articles at www.KJVOnly.org.

[4] Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 29.

[5] Arthur Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1903), Vol. I, p. 119.

[6] W.T. Stead, “Seeking Counsel of the Wise”, *Borderland*, Vol. I, No. 1 (July 1893) p. 7.

[7] B.F. Westcott in “The Response to the Appeal,” *Borderland* Vol. I, No. 1, July, 1893, p. 11.

[8] Gail Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions* (Ararat, VA: A.V. Publications, 1993, eleventh printing 2000) pp. 397-442.

[9] James Sightler, *A Testimony Founded For Ever* (Greenville, SC: Sightler Publications, 1999), pp. 96-116, 241-70.

[10] David H. Sorenson, *Touch Not The Unclean Thing* (Duluth, MN: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001), pp. 171-79.

[11] If we consider the biographies of Westcott and of Hort to be “history books,” the number rises to five.

[12] There is a mention that two members of the Ghostly Guild became bishops on page 36.

[13] Arthur Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1903), Vol. I, p. 229.

[14] B.F. Westcott, *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1859), pp. viii-ix, underlining added.

[15] B.F. Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), p. viii, underlining added.

[16] John Cerullo, *The Secularization of the Soul* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982), p. 52.

[17] W.H. Salter, *The Society for Psychical Research: An Outline of Its History* (London: The Society for Psychical Research, 1948), p. 6.

[18] See, for example, "Mysticism," *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mysticism and the Mystery Religions*, John Ferguson (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), p. 126.

[19] Occultism is by definition esoteric.

FAQs - Frequently Assaulted Quotes & Fully Accurate Quotes

In recent years, there has been an outbreak of false information about Westcott and Hort. Many things have been written (especially by extremist KJV-only authors) that paint a completely false and slanderous picture of Westcott and Hort - the thinking being that if Westcott and Hort can be personally discredited, that would in turn discredit their Greek New Testament of 1881 and in turn most of the English Bibles since then. Some claim Westcott and Hort are guilty of "heresy", "occultism", etc., and many are being led to believe completely wrong things about Westcott and Hort. Others are less easily convinced, and are looking for verification and more detail about such quotes, as well as

information on what they actually believed. That's why this section exists.

On the left are the misquotes (constructed, misunderstood, and/or out of context) and false claims produced and repeated by those intent on discrediting Westcott and Hort, along with some discussion explaining the misuse of the quote. On the right are the accurate, verifiable, full quotes to demonstrate what Westcott and Hort really believed, in their own words.

Most attempts at defamation take the form of misquotes: quotes taken out of context, quotes altered, even quotes constructed by piecing together words and phrases from entirely different chapters or even books. Initially, such misquotes were largely ignored because very few people actually took seriously the ones putting forth the quotes, and of those that did, nobody bothered to verify the references. However, during the last few decades, a snowball effect has taken place where KJV-only authors have fed off each other, using each other's "information" in their own writings. As the KJV-only movement has gained a foothold in some evangelical circles, the number of authors, preachers and laymen who are believing and repeating such misinformation has grown at an alarming rate. A simple search on the internet will reveal website after website where Westcott and Hort are unjustly attacked and falsehoods are repeated.

(It is worth noting here that people like Charles Spurgeon and Dean Burgon, who were contemporaries with Westcott and Hort and knew them personally, never made such claims against their character and beliefs, even when vocally disagreeing with some of their approaches to textual criticism. Burgon and Spurgeon never called them heretics, never questioned or challenged their Christian faith, never challenged or questioned their doctrinal statements, never accused them of involvement or of condoning of occultic or New Age practices or beliefs, etc.)

This rise in the spread of falsehoods is due largely to the fact that

extremely few people are taking the time to verify the information for themselves: the books that the "quotes" come from are quite rare in the first place, and sometimes cumbersome to read through if obtained. The authors spreading the falsehoods are either guilty of not verifying their sources (at best), or deliberate misrepresentation and lying (at worst). I give the benefit of the doubt to most, simply because the books are so hard to come by to do real verification. However, there are three or four authors who:

1. pride themselves on their research abilities,
2. have written extensively on Westcott and Hort,
3. claim to own several books by Westcott and Hort, and
4. have their KJV-onlyist agenda to push - and it is these authors that, I can only conclude, provide the misquotes with the full knowledge that they are deliberately slandering and spreading falsehoods.

Various replies by various people have been given to these authors, and they have had years to apologize and/or correct the false information they are spreading - yet no apologies or corrections have been made. This is completely unacceptable in Christian literature. It is these authors that inspired me to create this section of the Westcott and Hort Resource Centre.

This section of the Westcott and Hort Resource Centre is my attempt to fight back against the lies. It is my hope that by making available electronic copies of the books (see the Bookshelf) that contain the quotes in question, people can both more easily verify the sources for themselves, as well as learn what Westcott and Hort really believed on various issues. As well, I will be responding below to specific misquotes that are more "popular" in KJV-only circles, and I will provide the necessary context, additional references on the same subject, links directly into the Bookshelf, and my own commentary so that when you encounter such misquotes (and you will, if you spend any time in discussion with those that support KJV-onlyism), you can verify for yourself whether or not the "quotes" are genuine and the implications are

valid - and maybe even respond back to the person making the claims, to minimize the spread of misinformation.

False claim #1:

"Writing that his father had a lifelong "faith in what for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism," the son of famed biblical Greek text editor B. F. Westcott admits to considerable public alarm at his father's activity." (Jack Chick, Battle Cry, July/August 1993 issue)

This combination of claim and quote comes from the July/August 1993 issue of "Battle Cry", the newspaper put out by Jack Chick. The quote above still appears on Chick's website at the time of this writing. Similarly, Gail Riplinger writes "Westcott's son writes of his father's lifelong "faith in what for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism. . ." " (Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, p.407). The context is from where Westcott's son discusses Westcott's short-lived involvement in the "Ghostlie Guild" when he was a young man still in university (see James May's article and Robert L. Sumner's article for more information), and the entire paragraph the quote is lifted from is as follows (bold added):

"What happened to this Guild in the end I have not discovered. My father ceased to interest himself in these matters, not altogether, I believe, from want of faith in what, for lack of a better name, one must call Spiritualism, but because he was seriously convinced that such investigations led to no good." (Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott, Vol. I, p.119)

There are several problems with the claim as made by Chick and Riplinger. First, and most importantly, notice that the quote had "want of" (lack of, e.g. Psalm 23:1) chopped off the front.. Westcott did not have "faith" in Spiritualism, he had "want of [(lack of)] faith" in Spiritualism. Secondly, it was one of two reasons he ceased to interest himself in the the matters the Guild was involved in, shortly after it was formed (notice Chick and Riplinger both falsely use the word "lifelong"). Thirdly, nothing in

the quote (or surrounding material) even hints at "public alarm", let alone "considerable" or even Westcott's son admitting such. Chick's claim is completely fabricated, and the quote he chopped to support his claim actually says the exact opposite when the context is examined. The entire quote is somewhat difficult to parse as it stands, but it's easier to breakdown if viewed as follows: "Westcott ceased, not altogether (not entirely) from want (lack) of faith in Spiritualism, but also because such investigations led to no good." Was the reason that Westcott ceased due to want (lack) of faith in Spiritualism? Yes, but it was "not altogether" the reason - it was also because "he was seriously convinced that such investigations led to no good".

False claim #2:

"Hort taught that Revelation 3:15 proclaimed Christ was the first thing created, agreeing with the Gnostic teaching that Christ was a begotten god. [F. J. A. Hort, *The Apocalypse of St. John 1-3: The Greek Text with Introduction, Commentary, and Additional Notes* (1908; reprint, Minneapolis: James and Klock Publishing, 1976), 36.]" (Crowned With Glory, by Dr. Thomas Holland, chapter 2).

This claim by Dr. Holland is a vain and libelous attempt to portray Hort as an Arian. Hort had "deeply-rooted agreement" with official Anglican views, "above all, Creeds" (Life and Letters of Hort, volume 1, p.400). The Creeds which were written to combat heresies such as Arianism (e.g. the Nicene creed says "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.", the Athanasian creed says "the deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty", "the Son uncreated", "the Son eternal", "The Son is neither made nor created", etc.). It is inconceivable that Hort could believe that Christ was the first thing created, while at the same time believing the three most-accepted Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian). But nevertheless, what does Hort actually say on page 36, regarding "the beginning of the creation" (in Rev 3:14-15)? Here it is (bold

added):

" n apx. t. ktis. Prov. viii. 22, [(Prov 8:22 in Greek and Heb)] The words do not define the precise sense. On apxn, as a term cf. Col. i. 18, and for the probable idea Col. i. 16. The words might no doubt bear the Arian meaning "the first thing created": but they equally well bear the sense which the other Christological language of the book suggests, the being antecedent to all creation, in whom all creation came and comes to pass. Christ's last testimony and His earliest function seem purposely combined."

Hort did NOT "proclaim Christ was the first thing created", as Holland claimed. He simply recognized that the precise Greek words of this particular verse (n apxh thc kticwec), on their own, from a grammatical perspective could mean "the first thing created" - but they could also just as easily mean the source of creation, which is the meaning we accept because it is the meaning the rest of Revelation and the Bible (such as Col 1:16-18, which Hort mentions) and even the Creeds (with which Hort had "deeply-rooted agreement") compel us to accept.

Scripture

Quotes:

Quote #1: "Our Bible as well as our Faith is a mere compromise." (Westcott, *On the Canon of the New Testament*, p.vii).

Quote #2: "I reject the word infallibility of Holy Scripture overwhelming." (Westcott, *The Life and Letters of Brook Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p.207)

Quote #3: "If you make a decided conviction of the absolute infallibility of the N. T., I fear I could not join you, even if you were willing to forget your fears about the origin of the Gospels." (Hort, *The Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. I,

p.420)

False claims:

False claim #1: "Hort stated that those who believed in biblical authority were perverted. [Hort, 400.]"

For a growing collection of quotes on what Westcott and Hort really believed about scripture, see the Fully Accurate Quotes: Scripture page, as well as James May's excellent article on B.F. Westcott and the Inspiration of the Bible.

Quote #1: "Our Bible as well as our Faith is a mere compromise." (Westcott, On the Canon of the New Testament, p.vii).

This quote comes from the very first page of the preface, where he explains why he's writing this book. The quote above is NOT a complete sentence in the context, but has been altered by capitalizing "Our" to make it appear that this is Westcott's complete thought and sentence, rather than him discussing (and rebutting) someone else's previous claim (specifically, a claim coming from the Tübingen School in Germany). Whoever originally "dug out" and altered this quotation of Westcott did so dishonestly, for to find the quote they would have had to read the surrounding text, which makes it clear Westcott is talking about what others have said, not what he himself believes. The misquote attempts to portray Westcott as believing the exact opposite of what he believed. Here is the quote in context, with the sub-quote in bold and Westcott's own view underlined:

"My object in the present Essay has been to deal with the New Testament as a whole, and that on purely historical grounds. The separate books of which it is composed are considered not individually, but as claiming to be parts of the Apostolic heritage of Christians. And thus reserving for another occasion the inquire into their mutual relations and essential unity, I have endeavoured to connect the history of the New Testament Canon with the

growth and consolidation of the Catholic Church, and to point out the relation existing between the amount of evidence for the authenticity of its component parts, and the whole mass of Christian literature. However imperfectly this design has been carried out, I cannot but hope that such a method of inquiry will convey both the truest notion of the connexion of the written Word with the living body of Christ, and the surest conviction of its divine authority. Hitherto the co-existence of several types of Apostolic doctrine in the first age and of various parties in Christendom for several generations afterwards has been quoted to prove that our Bible as well as our Faith is a mere compromise. But while I acknowledge most willingly the great merit of the Tübingen School in pointing out with marked distinctness the characteristics of the different books of the New Testament, and their connexion with special sides of Christian doctrine and with various eras in the Christian Church, it seems to me almost inexplicable that they should not have found in those writings the explanation instead of the result of the divisions which are traceable to the Apostolic times."

See scanned images of the pages these words come from: vii and viii.

Quote #2: "I reject the word infallibility of Holy Scripture overwhelming." (Westcott, The Life and Letters of Brook Foss Westcott, Vol. I, p.207)

This misquote comes in several flavours. Sometimes you will see it with or without a hyphen (sometimes the hyphen is removed to make it appear even more like a continuous thought, a complete sentence). Other times, you may also see the word "overwhelming" changed to "overwhelmingly", in an attempt to fix the grammar problem that arises from chopping off the first half of the original sentence. Both alterations are attempts to remove the clues that something is amiss with the quote - and there is definitely something amiss.

It comes from Life and Letters of Westcott, Vol. I, p.207, and here

it is in entirety (misquote in bold, context in underline):

"My dear Hort - I am very glad to have seen both your note and Lightfoot's - glad too that we have had such an opportunity of openly speaking. For I too "must disclaim setting forth infallibility" in the front of my convictions. All I hold is, that the more I learn, the more I am convinced that fresh doubts come from my own ignorance, and that at present I find the presumption in favor of the absolute truth - I reject the word infallibility - of Holy Scripture overwhelming. Of course I feel difficulties which at present I cannot solve, and which I never hope to solve."

This quote is part of a three-way discussion between Westcott, Hort and Lightfoot, when they were initially considering working together to produce a commentary of the entire New Testament. Part of the discussion is lost, but a couple of letters from Hort remain (see misquote #3 below for part of one of them). The quote as originally presented was not the complete sentence, but was prefaced with an affirmation of "the absolute truth of Holy Scripture". Any "difficulties" and "doubts" he sees in scripture "come from my own ignorance" - i.e. when he sees a problem, he recognizes and admits that the problem is with him, not with Scripture.

Also, how can he reject the infallibility of Scripture and affirm the "absolute truth" of Scripture in the same sentence? Note that Westcott is not rejecting the concept in inerrant scripture (as numerous other quotes demonstrate), but rather he has problems with the word "infallibility", which he felt was limited and "mechanical". Elsewhere, Westcott said "Mere mechanical infallibility is but a poor substitute for a plenary Inspiration, which finds its expression in the right relation between partial human knowledge and absolute Divine truth." (Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, Westcott, p.41). By saying "I reject the word infallibility", he is not saying he rejects the idea that scripture is inerrant, but rather dislikes the word because he feels it is inadequate and doesn't go far enough - he feels it is "poor

substitute for plenary Inspiration".

Quote #3: "If you make a decided conviction of the absolute infallibility of the N. T., I fear I could not join you, even if you were willing to forget your fears about the origin of the Gospels." (Hort, The Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort, Vol. I, p.420)

The context of this altered quote (a complete phrase was removed from the middle) is when Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort were considering working together to produce a commentary of the entire New Testament (which they started but did not finish). There was some question at this point in time as to whether Hort would participate in the endeavor, because Lightfoot has some question and concerns about Hort's thoughts about what "infallibility" entails. The quote is part of Hort's response to Lightfoot on this matter, and Hort is saying that if a conviction about absolute infallibility of the NT was a prerequisite for participating on the commentary work, then Hort did not think he could participate, because although he did not believe the NT to be fallible as usage of the quote attempts to convey, he simply wasn't quite sure it was by default "infallible" even though he recognized its truthfulness, authority and its canon controlled by God. The quote as provided makes it look like Hort rejected the infallibility of the NT when he didn't. He didn't reject it, he was just unsure of whether to accept it as a "sine qua non" (Latin for "without which not", meaning an essential element, an absolute prerequisite) for work on a commentary, and thus he was also unsure whether or not he should participate in the commentary project. Here's some context (taken from pages 417-422). I've included the first paragraph because it clarifies what is being referred to by "the origin of the Gospels" comment, but the comments about "infallibility" is in the second paragraph. The quote above is from the top of the second paragraph, but note especially the words that follow the quote (misquote in bold, relevant context in underline):

"On second thoughts, however, it seems rash to call off without

ascertaining distinctly whether we really are at variance. First as to the special point you mention. It would be hardly too much to say that I have as yet no theories about the Gospels. I remember the conversation to which you refer. The opinion I expressed,—by no means a mature conviction, but merely and avowedly a tentative *frima facie* impression,—related to one isolated question.

Agreeing to the best of my belief with Westcott as to the oral or traditional narrative which was the common foundation of the Synoptic Gospels, I demurred to his explanation of the cause of its local limitation. I found it difficult to believe that the events and discourses belonging to Jerusalem were deliberately excluded by the Apostles (or others concerned) as unfitted for the then circumstances of the Church ; and I thought it a more natural explanation of the admitted fact to suppose that the first form of the narrative was a local Galilean tradition, which the Apostles (and others), finding ready to their hand, variously modified and corrected, supplying, perhaps beginnings and endings, but did not go out of their way to supplement with matter belonging to a different cycle of events. This view I now hold neither more strongly nor more weakly than before. I have seen nothing to make me think it untenable; but I have undertaken as yet no such careful investigations as would alone justify my setting it forth in print. In any case it is surely in substance by no means novel. I am convinced that any view of the Gospels, which distinctly and consistently recognises for them a natural and historical origin (whether under a special Divine superintendence or not), and assumes that they did not drop down ready-made from heaven, must and will be 'startling' to an immense proportion of educated English people. But so far, at least, Westcott and I are perfectly agreed, and I confess I had hoped that you too would assent. And, if thus much be conceded, I cannot see that my supposed view is a whit more 'startling' than Westcott's.

But I now feel that I must say a word about more general principles. If you make a decided conviction of the absolute infallibility of the N. T. practically a *sine qua non* for co-operation, I fear I could not join you, even if you were willing

to forget your fears about the origin of the Gospels. I am most anxious to find the N. T. infallible, and have a strong sense of the Divine purpose guiding all its parts; but I cannot see how the exact limits of such guidance can be ascertained except by unbiassed a posteriori criticism. Westcott—and, I suppose, you—would say that any apparent errors discovered by criticism are only apparent, and that owing to the imperfection of our knowledge. I fully believe that this is true of a large proportion of what the rasher critics peremptorily pronounce to be errors; and I think it possible that it may be true of all, but, as far as my present knowledge goes, hardly probable. And if, as I expect, there are cases where there appears to be just a thin loophole for the possibility of admitting imperfect knowledge as the sole cause of an apparent error, but where the circumstances are such as to suggest a natural explanation of the origin of a real error, such as would be at once accepted in any other book, I should feel bound to state both facts, expressing at the same time my own feeling that it is more reasonable to suppose an error. I do not think there is a real difference of principle between (at least) Westcott and myself, but only a (perhaps hypothetical) difference of opinion as to facts. But you must judge whether the difference is such as to disqualify me for your commentary. I believe I am imprudent in sometimes uttering in conversation rude and premature conjectures and suspicions, which I have not yet had time to test and work out, and which persons of a more guarded temperament would probably under such circumstances keep to themselves. But I do not think that I should be rash in deliberate print, least of all in a commentary on the Bible. At the same time it would be mere working in fetters to me to attempt an apologetic commentary as such, though I have not the smallest doubt that most of the results would be to that effect. Also forgive my saying that it seems to me the truest wisdom to think as little as possible about disarming suspicion. Depend on it, whatever either you or I may say in an extended commentary, if only we speak our mind, we shall not be able to avoid giving grave offence to both Jowett's friends and the miscalled orthodoxy of the day. It has been not altogether to my taste to go into all these details; but you will see the necessity of

my doing so, and form your judgment on what I have said. Other points must wait. Your textual suggestions I should like to think about. But I do not quite see how they go with Westcott's plan of notes, without either Greek or English text, intelligible almost throughout to persons ignorant of Greek. It is plain that we have, at present, not all the same thing in view.—Always most truly yours, FENTON J. A. HORT.

As I was writing the last words a note came from Westcott. He too mentions having had fears, which he now pronounces "groundless," on the strength of our last conversation, in which he discovered that I did "recognise" 'Providence' in Biblical writings. Most strongly I recognise it; but I am not prepared to say that it necessarily involves absolute infallibility. So I still await judgment."

So the most that we can gather from the original misquote was that Hort, in 1860 (21 years before the NT of 1881) believed the NT was inspired by God but that he wasn't 100% sure yet if that required it to also be absolutely infallible (but accepted it was probable and preferable). In a follow-up letter to Westcott, Hort stated (The Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort, Vol. I, p.422):

"I do most fully recognise the special 'Providence' which controlled the formation of the canonical books: my only difficulty is to understand how you can have had any doubt about the matter, considering how often we have talked over subjects in which such a belief was implied if not expressed. Certainly the unlucky suggestion, which gave rise to your doubts, seems to me quite consistent with it. But I am not able to go as far as you in asserting the absolute infallibility of a canonical writing. I may see a certain fitness and probability in such a view, but I cannot set up an a priori assumption against the (supposed) results of criticism. So perhaps you would say—in terms, at least—but you would deny that the fair results of criticism, making allowance for our imperfect knowledge, prove the existence of any errors. I am as yet prepared neither to deny nor to assert it. I shall rejoice on fuller

investigation to find that imperfect knowledge is a sufficient explanation of all apparent errors, but I do not expect to be so fortunate. If I am ultimately driven to admit occasional errors, I shall be sorry; but it will not shake my conviction of the providential ordering of human elements in the Bible. It is perhaps possible that these words might be used in various senses; but I am sure that, saving my doubts about infallibility, you and I mean precisely the same thing by them. I shall be glad to know whether, after this express explanation, you still are perfectly content to take me as a coadjutor in the commentary. The difference does not seem to me essential; but you may think otherwise, and will, I am sure, speak freely."

Note that he says "I am as yet prepared neither to deny nor to assert it. I shall rejoice on fuller investigation to find that imperfect knowledge is a sufficient explanation of all apparent errors....". In other words, he was not going to let bias affect his view, but was going to examine the matter more fully before deciding. Note also that he is NOT talking about the original autographs of scripture, but I think of available, later copies - thus the comments about criticism revealing the textual inaccuracies of those documents. In other words, I don't see Hort's position here as any different than any translator or compiler of manuscripts throughout history - that's why new translations and Greek/Hebrew texts are produced, because it is believed by those that produce them that although God's word is infallible and inerrant, the current specific existing documents (ink on paper) are in and of themselves not infallible. For example, the KJV translators believed in the absolute truth and infallibility of God's word, but they (like Hort) did not believe that any current specific existing scriptures were in and of themselves infallible (that's why they made the KJV, "to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one") - yet I see nobody spreading information and quotes about the KJV translators trying to paint them as disbelieving in infallibility of God's word. If the KJV translators believed in the type of infallibility that this quote of Hort's is intended to portray Hort as arguing against, they would

never have made the KJV in the first place but simply adopted whatever infallible Bible they believed existed (if in English), or translated exclusively, strictly and unflinchingly from whatever document (if in another language).

False claim #3:

"Hort stated that those who believed in biblical authority were perverted. [Hort, 400.]" (Crowned With Glory, by Dr. Thomas Holland, chapter 2).

This claim from Dr. Holland is a gross misrepresentation of what Hort said. Rev. Dr. Rowland Williams, the vice-principle and Professor of Hebrew at St. David's College, invited Hort to contribute to a upcoming publication of essays on theology. Hort wrote a short letter containing a polite declination, due to that although he felt that he had much in common with the other contributors, his differences in beliefs would be too big of a problem. He states his case as follows:

"...Further I agree with them in condemning many leading specific doctrines of the popular theology as, to say the least, containing much superstition and immorality of a very pernicious kind. But I fear that in our own positive theology we should diverge widely. I have deeply-rooted agreement with High Churchmen as to the Church, Ministry, Sacraments, and, above all, Creeds, though by no means acquiescing in their unhistorical and unphilosophical treatment of theology, or their fears and antipathies generally. The positive doctrines even of the Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue. There are, I fear, still more serious differences between us on the subject of authority, and especially the authority of the Bible; and this alone would make my position among you sufficiently false in respect to the great questions which you will be chiefly anxious to discuss."

First, he does not say those who believe in biblical authority were perverted, he said that some doctrines (he does not specify which

ones) of the Evangelicals were "perverted rather than untrue" - meaning that they weren't necessarily outright wrong, but that they were "marked by misinterpretation or distortion" (from a modern dictionary) or "distorted; corrupted; misinterpreted; misemployed" (from Webster's 1828 dictionary). I daresay any Anglican, including the KJV translators, would agree. The comments on "Biblical authority" were not even part of this comment, but were about the differences in understanding Biblical authority (again, Hort does not specify what the differences are) than the other contributors have. He does not say he is against Biblical authority, but rather his position is different than the others'. As a devout Anglican, Hort would have a very high view of the authority of Scripture.

Creation and Evolution

Here is a growing collection of contextually accurate quotes from Westcott and/or Hort about Creation and Evolution: affirming the creation of man by God, the existence of Adam, the reality of the Fall, etc.:

"All things] The exact form (pavnta) expresses all things taken severally, and not all things regarded as a defined whole (ta; pavnta, Col. 1:16). The thought to be brought out is that of the vast multiplicity of created things (spirits, matter, & c.). Of all these no one came into being without the Word. For this reason the term "the world" (oJ kovsmo", John 1:9, 10) is purposely avoided." (Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p.4)

"There is that in the believer which never dies, even though he seems to die; and conversely, Adam died at the moment of his disobedience, though he seemed still to live. (Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p.138-139)

About Satan's roll in the Fall: "He was a murderer from the

beginning] When creation was complete he brought death upon the race of men by his falsehood (Rom. 5:12). For even before he had fallen through want of truth. He stood not in the truth (ejn th' ajl.)—the divine Sum of all truth—because there is no truth (oujk e[stin ajl.)—no fragmentary truth which has affinity with the Truth—in him.

The reference appears to be to the Fall and not to the death of Abel (1 John 3:12). The death of Abel was only one manifestation of the ruin wrought by selfishness (see 1 John 3:8 ff.)." (Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p.137)

"Creation was brought under the consequences of sin through man (Gal. 3:22) and so redemption came to creation through man. Comp. 1 Cor. 15:28; Rom. 8:19." (Westcott, The Epistle to the Ephesians, p.14)

"th"" peripoihvsew"] GOD'S own possession, all that which GOD has made His own in earth and heaven, not men only, who had fallen from Him, and earth which had shared the consequences of man's fall, but all created things, gathered together in the last crisis of their history. 'Creation' held 'in the bondage of corruption' required redemption." (Westcott, The Epistle to the Ephesians, p.17-18)

"The word heir marks the original purpose of Creation. The dominion originally promised to Adam (Gen. 1:28; compare Ps. 8) was gained by Christ. And so, in regard to the divine economy, the promise made to Abraham (compare Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:29) and renewed to the divine King (Ps. 2:8), which was symbolised by the 'inheritance' of Canaan (Ex. 23:30), became absolutely fulfilled in Christ." (Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p.8)

On Heb 2:16: "Nothing is said of the effect of the Incarnation on angels, or other beings than man. Man's fall necessarily affected all creation, and so also did man's restoration. But here the writer is simply explaining the fitness of the Incarnation." (Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p.55)

"Man as created had for his end this perfect exercise and perfect development of every human faculty that so he might bring all to God, fulfilling in this way the conception of sacrifice. And sin has not altered the obligation: Rom. 12:1 f. " (Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p.310)

"Heb. 11:3. The belief in creation—the belief in a divine will manifested in the existence of the world—is the necessary foundation for the life of faith in all its manifestations. Hence this primary action of faith is declared first. By faith we attain to the assurance that the world—history—is not the result of blind fate but answers to an expression of the will of God; and so we can attain to fresh victories corresponding to our position, even as in the past the heroes of faith triumphed.

The verse presents two distinct thoughts. It declares the fundamental act of faith by which we apprehend the fact of creation, and then points out the consequence which ought to follow from it in our view of the world, as it lies before us. The conception of creation by God's word rightly leads to a present belief in the power of God as Preserver and Governor of that which He created." (Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p.352)

"The purpose and end of the knowledge gained by faith as to the creation of the world is the conviction that the visible order as we observe it, as a whole (to; blep.), has not come into being by simple material causation." (Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p.353)

"No purely physical explanation of the origin of the world is possible. Things that appear cannot give an explanation of the origin of the universe which we see." (Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p.353)

"the law of marriage laid down in Genesis as given to Adam was for St Paul a preliminary indication of a hidden Divine purpose or ordinance, the full meaning of which was to be revealed only by the revealing of Christ as the Head of His spouse the Church'

(Hort, Prolegomena to Romans and Ephesians, p. 160).

"We must therefore seek the explanation rather in the distinctive feature of man's creation in Gen. 2:7, the special inbreathing from God Himself, by which man became, in a higher sense than the animals, "a living soul." " (Hort, The Epistle of St. James, p.34)

"We see that at the beginning of all things God Himself, making all things. He is not the earth, or the heavens, or anything that is therein: He is distinct from them all: He made them all: He was before them all. He made them according to a plan and order. Each part of the world had its own work to do, its own place in His great scheme. Last of all came man. The world was older than man, it supplied the materials for man: man was part of the world, and was meant to remember that. On the other hand, there was that in man which could be found nowhere else in the world. If he mere clay was kneaded of the dust of the earth, the pattern was a heavenly one. His truest likeness was to be found in God Himself. Though he was younger than the world, he was to be the first example of that which meets us so often in the Bible, and in our own life. The elder was to serve the younger. God gave man dominion over the older world, and all that it contained. It was not only to be beautiful and glorious for the delight of its Maker, it was to be useful for the service of man. But here came a most necessary lesson. God pronounced the whole world Good. In the course of time man in his pride would look down on the world. Nay worse, when he became evil himself, he would lay blame on the world. He would pretend that the only thing which made him sin was his connexion with the earth, his own body, and all the things which had charms for his bodily senses." (Hort, Sermons on the Books of the Bible, p.28-29)

"This unique position of man in the visible order is emphasised by other details. He has dominion over other creatures (i. 28): he assigns to them their names (ii. 19 f.): he finds among them no companion fitted for himself (ii. 18, 20). As he appears first in his true nature he is 'little lower than a divine being' (Ps. viii.), at

perfect peace in himself, towards nature and towards God. He is made for God and, to this end, he is made 'in the image of God.'" (Westcott, The Gospel of Life, p. 192)

"we must keep firm hold on the fact of the Fall and on the consequences of the Fall" (Westcott, The Gospel of Life, p.196)

"while the details of the records of the Creation and of the Fall are but rarely referred to in the Bible, the facts and the doctrines - that is the interpretation of the facts - which they preserve, the three postulates of religion, are universally affirmed." (Westcott, The Gospel of Life, p.199)

"The revelation through the Incarnation completes all that was revealed before: Christ came 'not to destroy but to fulfil': and this revelation is briefly comprehended in the words 'God is light,' absolutely pure, glorious, self-communicating from His very nature. He imparts Himself, and man was made to receive Him; and, in spite of sin, man can receive Him. Thus the fundamental ideas of Christianity lie in this announcement: 'God is light'; and man turns to the Light as being himself created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27; 1 Cor. 11:7) and recreated in Christ (Eph. 2:10; Col. 3:10)." (Westcott, The Epistles of John, p.14)

"As to the relation of the two titles 'the Father' and 'my Father,' it may be said generally that 'the former suggests those thoughts which spring from the consideration of the moral connexion of God and man in virtue of the creation of man 'in the image of God,' while the latter points to those which spring from what has been made known to us in the course of the history of the world, the revelation of the connexion of the Incarnate Son with God and with man." (Westcott, The Epistles of John, p.30)