

Appendix 3—Examples of Misrepresentation of Westcott by Paul A. Himes

Example 1 (Westcott on the physical resurrection of Jesus)

*The statement by Sorenson [direct quote]¹:

“Westcott grudgingly acknowledges the *physical* resurrection of Lazarus. However, he was unwilling to ascribe the same *physical* resurrection to Jesus. In that regard, he wrote the following:

‘In doing this I have been led to emphasize *two facts* which are, I believe, of the highest importance and clearly established by the documents . . . that the Lord was *not raised again* to the *natural human life*, as Lazarus was raised. . . . The *first fact* seems to me to involve the *essence* of the whole *revelation of the risen*. No *material*, no *physiological test* could have established the fullness of the Truth which is required. . . . In other words the *physiological test would establish failure* just at the point where revelation is needed.’

(emphasis mine [Sorenson]). Notice Westcott’s comment that the Lord was ‘*not raised again* to the natural human life.’ He went on to explain that, in essence, Christ’s resurrection was not physiological (i.e., physical). That, dear reader, is unadulterated Liberalism.”

*The original statement, in context, by Westcott² (**notice what Sorenson omits!**):

“. . . (1) that the Lord was not raised again to the natural human life, as Lazarus was raised; . . . The first fact seems to me to involve the essence of the whole revelation of the Risen Christ. **If the Lord had been raised again to our present life, subject to death, there would have been no pledge of a new human life: the chasm between the seen and the unseen world would have remained unbridged.** No material, no physiological test could have established the fullness of the Truth which is required. Such a test would have established the fact of the raising of Lazarus; for the phenomena of the after life of Lazarus would have been wholly of the existing order. But these phenomena could have conveyed no revelation of that which lies beyond this present life. And if all the recorded phenomena of the Life of the Risen Lord had been in accordance with the phenomena of our present life, the conclusion would have been irresistible that His Life was identical with the present. In other words the physiological test would establish failure just at the point where the revelation is needed.”

¹ David H. Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation* (Duluth, MN: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001), 113.

² Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*, 5th ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1891), xiii-xiv.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=5ZNMAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Comments:

The complete omission of that sentence by Sorenson is inexcusable, because it makes it very clear what Westcott means by “not raised again to the natural human life,” i.e., a life with the normal limitations of Adam’s race, including being “**subject to death.**” On pages 9-10 of this same book (the 5th ed.) Westcott makes it very clear that the Lord still possesses a body: “Thus Christ is seen to be changed, but none the less He is also seen to be essentially the same. Nothing has been left in the grave though all has been transfigured. It is **not** that Christ’s soul lives on divested of the essence as of the accidents of the earthly garments in which it was for a time arrayed. . . . **But in Him soul and body, in the indissoluble union of a perfect manhood, are seen triumphant over the last penalty of sin.**” (emphasis added)

Example 2

(on John 5:39-40)

*The statement by Waite [direct quote]:

Westcott Implied That You Could Find “REVELATION” IN “SCRIPTURE,” Rather Than Equating “REVELATION” And “SCRIPTURE.”

Westcott wrote: “(John 5:39-40). From the essential elements of revelation, external (voice, shape) and internal (word), the Lord passes to the record of REVELATION IN SCRIPTURE.” W-John, op. cit., pp. 90-91).

When you say there is a record of “REVELATION IN SCRIPTURE,” you are implying that SOME of the Scripture might NOT contain “REVELATION,” but in certain portions of the “SCRIPTURE,” THERE IS SOME “REVELATION.” The proper teaching of the Bible on this matter is that ALL Scripture is God’s “REVELATION,” and not just some parts of it. It was ALL “REVEALED” by God’s Holy Spirit through the human writers! Again, this is an error which persists among the LIBERALS, MODERNISTS, and NEOORTHODOX even to this day!³

*The original statement, in context, by Westcott:

“From the essential elements of revelation, external (εἶδος, φωνήν) and internal (λόγον), the Lord passes to the record of Revelation in Scripture. This the Jews misused.”⁴

*Comments:

1. Waite conveniently obscures Westcott’s capitalization of the second “Revelation.” In light of the context of John 5:39–40, what or *Whom* was Westcott referring to with the term “Revelation”? Indeed, that Westcott is clearly referring to Jesus Himself is vindicated by his statement on the next page about “the character of the Jews

³ Waite, *Theological Heresies*, 2 (?).

⁴ B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes*, reprint of the 1908 edition, Thornapple Commentaries, in two volumes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980), 1:200.

who reposed in the letter of the Old Testament instead of interpreting it by the help of the living Word.”

2. Obviously, then Westcott is not saying that Scripture merely *contains* “revelation.” He is not distinguishing or contrasting between “Scripture” and “revelation,” but rather between the general written revelation which is the work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 37–38) and what Scripture says about Jesus Christ (“the record of Revelation” with a capital “R”). The Jews “misused” this record of Revelation because Jesus says “ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

Example 3 (on John 1:18)

*The statement by Waite (direct quote):

WESTCOTT DENIED THAT CHRIST MADE KNOWN GOD, THE FATHER, AS “GOD,” STATING ONLY THAT HE MADE HIM KNOWN AS “THE FATHER.” He wrote:

“(John 1:18) The Son made God known NOT PRIMARILY AS GOD, but as THE FATHER.” (W-John, op. cit., p. 15)

This is HERETICAL! Had Westcott never understood Colossians 2:9? It states clearly concerning Christ: “For in Him dwelleth all the FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY.”⁵

*The original statement, in context, by Westcott:

τοῦ πατρὸς] *of the Father*. The choice of this title in place of God (τοῦ θεοῦ) serves to mark the limits of the revelation made through Jesus Christ. Even this was directed to one aspect (so to speak) of the Godhead. The Son made God known not primarily as God, but as the Father. At the same time this title lays the foundation of revelation in the essential relation of the Persons of the Godhead. Comp. 1 John i.2.⁶

*Comments:

1. Waite: “Westcott denied that Christ made known God, the Father, as God, stating only that . . .” Compare this with Westcott: “not primarily.” This is the difference between accurate representation and slander. Analogy: if I say “We should study Tom Brady not primarily as a superstar athlete, but rather as a quarterback,” am I then denying that Tom Brady is a superstar athlete? No, I am not! Waite seems to confuse the meaning of “not primarily” with the meaning of “not at all.”

2. Frankly, Westcott is on more solid ground than Waite here. The uniqueness of our God as compared to other false gods is that God is not merely “God,” but rather our Father, *especially in so far as the Gospel of John is concerned* (in contrast to, e.g., Islam). Significantly, the word πατήρ occurs more in John than in the rest of the Gospels combined, **and even occurs more in John than the word θεός!** This fact justifies Westcott’s statement, which is completely in harmony with the doctrine of the Trinity.

⁵ Waite, *Theological Heresies*, 10.

⁶ Westcott, *Gospel of John*, 1:29.

Example 4 (on John 1:1)

*The statement by Waite (direct quote):

The Elimination Of Or The Denial Of The Eternal Pre-Existence Of The Lord Jesus Christ.

a. Westcott Objects To The “PRE-EXISTENCE” Of Christ In John 1:1. He wrote:

“(John 1: 1) (In the beginning) The “being” of the Word is thus necessarily carried beyond the limits of time, **THOUGH THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE WORD IS NOT DEFINITELY STATED**. The simple affirmation of existence in this connexion suggests a loftier conception than that of **PREEXISTENCE**; which is embarrassed by the idea of time” (W-John, op. cit., p. 2).

If the “WORD” was “in the beginning” and with God, and was God, He most certainly would have to be “PRE-EXISTENT.” John 1:1 and following clearly teach this!⁷

*The statement, in context, by Westcott:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ- *In principio* v.; *In the beginning*. The phrase carries back the thoughts of the reader to Gen. i. 1, which necessarily fixes the sense of the *beginning*. Here, as there, “the beginning” is the initial moment of time and creation; but there is difference, that Moses dwells on that which starts from the point, and traces the record of divine action *from* the beginning (comp. 1 John 1. 1, ii. 13), while St. John lifts our thoughts *beyond* the beginning and dwells on that which ‘was’ when time, and with time finite being, began its course. Comp. Prov. 8. viii. 23. Already when “God created the heaven and the earth,” the Word *was*. The “being” of the Word is thus necessarily carried beyond the limits of time, though the preexistence of the Word is not definitely stated. The simple affirmation of existence in this connexion suggests a loftier conception than that of pre-existence; which is embarrassed by the idea of time. Pre-existence, however, is affirmed in a different connexion: ch. xvii. 5.⁸

*Comments:

1. This, more than the previous two examples, illustrates either that Waite either simply does not get what Westcott is saying or deliberately distorts it.

2. To understand Westcott’s statement on “preexistence,” you must understand how Westcott is viewing time, especially the phrase “The simple affirmation of existence

⁷ Waite, *Theological Heresies*, 24-25.

⁸ Westcott, *Gospel of John*, 1:4-5.

in this connexion suggests a loftier conception than that of pre-existence; which is embarrassed by the idea of time.”

3. I could say, for example, “President Joe Biden was pre-existent before me” (because he is older than me), and that would be accurate, *but not sufficient when describing God’s Son!* This is what Westcott means by the idea that “pre-existence . . . is embarrassed by the idea of time.” Even something like “eternal existence” might imply time!

4. To that we might add that Westcott does not actually say that John 1:1 does not teach Jesus’ preexistence. He merely states that it is “not definitely stated,” which presumably would have needed a $\pi\rho\iota\nu\ \alpha\rho\chi\eta\tilde{\iota}$ instead of a $\epsilon\nu\ \alpha\rho\chi\eta\tilde{\iota}$, which would have marred John’s deliberate allusion to Genesis 1:1.

5. Frankly, when all is said and done, Westcott is a better commentator on John 1:1 than Waite!

I finish with this quote from Graff and Birkenstein:

“Whenever you enter into a conversation with others in your writing, then, it is extremely important that you go back to what those others have said, that you study it very closely, and that you not confuse it with something you already believe. A writer who fails to do this ends up essentially conversing with imaginary others who are really only the products of his or her biases and preconceptions.”⁹

⁹ Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say: Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 33.