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## Westcott, Hort, and the Scofield Bible

### 1909 Scofield Reference Bible

This is taken from the January 1, 1909 Introduction:

"After mature reflection it was determined to use the Authorized Version None of the many Revisions have commended themselves to the people at large. The Revised Version, which has now been before the public for twenty-seven years gives no indication of becoming in any general sense the people's Bible of the English-speaking world. The discovery of the Sinaitic MS. and the labours in the field of textual criticism of such scholars as Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Winer, Alford, **and Westcott and Hort**, have cleared the Greek textus receptus of **minor inaccuracies**, while confirming in a remarkable degree the general accuracy of the Authorized Version of that text. Such emendations of the text as **scholarship demands** have been placed in the margins of this edition, which therefore combines the dignity, the high religious value, the tender associations of the past, the literary beauty and remarkable **general accuracy** of the Authorized Version, with the **results of the best textual scholarship.**"

C.I. Scofield, Scofield Reference Bible (1917), pp. iii-iv

It should be very apparent when reading a Scofield Reference Bible that Mr. Scofield held the Revised Version of the Bible to be superior to the KJV. For example, the Introduction to 2 Thessalonians is very clear - he wrote that the KJV contained a "mistranslation." Unfortunately, he did not point out that the KJV did not mistranslate - it translated correctly from the *Textus Receptus* - he just preferred they use the works of "scholars" such as Westcott and Hort. It is ironic that Scofield's continual criticism of the KJV translation is partly based on a manuscript that was found in the trash in 1844.

### A Perfected Text?

"The results of the study of God's Word by learned and spiritual men, in every division of the church and in every land, during the last 50 years, **under the advantage of a perfected text**, already form a vast literature, inaccessible to most Christians."

C.I. Scofield, Scofield Reference Bible (1917), pp. iv

Mr. Scofield, what did you mean by "a perfected text" when you wrote that? We can't ask you, so let's look at what the Bible says:

### 2 Peter 1:19-20

**19** We have also **a more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do

well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,  
until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:  
**20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any  
private interpretation.

### King James Version

I can not find a Revised Version (R.V.) of 1881-1885 so I will now quote from the  
American Standard Version (A.S.V.) of 1901:

### **2 Peter 1:19-20**

**19** And we have the word of prophecy [made] more sure;  
whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a  
dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:  
**20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private  
interpretation.

### American Standard Version

Let's see. That phrase "we have the word of prophecy [made] more sure" sounds a lot like  
"under the advantage of a perfected text" - corrected, of course, as "scholarship demands"  
according to Mr. Scofield. (I think the KJV folks did a fine job with "a more sure word of  
prophecy.")

### **Conclusion**

Many will disagree with the points I am trying to make on this page, and that's okay. We  
agree to disagree. But our conclusions are hard to deny. Scofield preferred the Revised  
Version and the Alexandrian Text, including the highly unreliable Codices Sinaiticus and  
Vaticanus. Scofield considered the scholarship of men such as Westcott, Hort,  
Tischendorf, and others to be invaluable. Scofield apparently believed that without the  
"advantage of a perfected text" that we probably would not understand some things from  
the Bible. From the Introduction to 2 Thess. it is apparent that one of those things is the  
pretribulational "rapture" doctrine, which he realized was refuted unless he pointed out  
the "errors" of the KJV and its underlying Greek.

Of course, there is an explanation for all this. Scofield compromised and used the KJV  
(after "mature reflection"). He knew his "ministry" would falter if if used the Revised  
Version outright. But I don't think he compromised when he said he trusted Westcott and  
Hort and others' scholarship. I think he was in their camp **already**.

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Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the

[King James Version of the Bible.](#)