

# THE AUTHENTICITY OF 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7 CONSIDERED.

Compiled by Rick Henwood – May, 2020.

# The KJV is the Bible of choice used in this Study Document; and the compiler has supplied all emphasis.

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“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” – 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 & 8 – *King James Version*.

## THE ISSUE TO BE EXAMINED: -

This passage is generally attacked as being a **supposed** interpolation of Scripture, by two very different groups of professed Christians: -

1. Those professed Christians who deny the full deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who also deny the Person of the Holy Spirit, thus attacking the Trinity doctrine, assert that 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 is a spurious interpolation, which does not belong in the Bible. And,
2. Many Bible scholars and New Testament textual critics assert that 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 is a spurious interpolation, which should find no place in the Bible. These critics do not generally reject the Trinity doctrine, but they use the **supposed** interpolation of this passage, to attack the textual reliability of the “*textus receptus*”, from which the King James New Testament was translated. Once they do this, they then promote the new “critical Greek text” as being superior, which forms the basis of most modern New Testament versions.

I will not be addressing these two groups of professed believers at all within this Study Document. But I will be focusing my attention specifically on the issue that forms the title of this Study Document - “***The Authenticity of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 Considered***”.

Over the last six months, I have spent countless hours researching into this issue; I have read several thousands of pages of material contained within articles, pamphlets and books examining this controversy. After all this careful sifting of the evidence, I believe that this verse is a genuine part of God’s inspired Scripture. And I will share with the reader some of the evidence that I have come across from this research, that has convicted me as to the genuineness of this passage.

As there will be some reference to the Greek Grammar involved in a consideration of these verses, I should make the reader aware, that I am an ongoing student of New Testament Greek for more than ten years now. So I do have a clear understanding of the grammatical issues involved in this controversy.

There is one thing, which I wish to make very clear before I start an investigation into this contentious subject. This point is often misunderstood or completely overlooked by many professed Christians, even by some of those who defend this passages’ authenticity. And that truth is this: -

“... the Verse is not the Apostle’s testimony to the doctrine of the Trinity, but the testimony of the Trinity to the Divinity of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

**RICK HENWOOD – MAY, 2020.**

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<sup>1</sup> “An Introduction to the Controversy on the disputed verse of St. John, as revived by Mr. Gibbon: to which is added, Christian Theocracy; or, A second letter to Mrs. Joanna Baillie, on the Doctrine of the Trinity.” by Thomas Burgess; 1835; p. XXX.

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## **APPENDIX: -**

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<sup>2</sup> "The so-called *Johannine Comma* (also called the *Comma Johanneum*) is a sequence of extra words which appear in 1 John 5:7 - 8 in some early printed editions of the Greek New Testament. In these editions the verses appear thus (we put brackets around the extra words):

ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες [ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Πατήρ, ὁ Λόγος, καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι. 8 καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ] τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.

The King James Version, which was based upon these editions, gives the following translation:

For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth], the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." - [www.bible-researcher.com/comma.html](http://www.bible-researcher.com/comma.html). Accessed 25/04/2020.

Thoughtful insights regarding the authenticity of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 and the early corruption of the Scriptures.

- From Robert L. Dabney's book, "*DISCUSSIONS – “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek”*"; 1890; pp. 377 – 387.
- From Dr. Edward F. Hills' book, "*The King James Version Defended*" – 1983 edition; pp. 209 – 212.

## 1.] THE COMMON OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE AUTHENTICITY OF 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7: -

There are a number of professed Christians, who oppose the “*three Person Godhead*” teaching which is commonly called the Trinity; because of their theological presuppositions [for example, Arians, Unitarians, and Anti-Trinitarians], they cannot accept this verse as genuine, because it cuts right across their personal religious beliefs. There are also many other Christians, who through the teachings and influence of modern textual critics, regard this verse as a spurious interpolation, because of its lack of support among the Greek New Testament manuscripts.

In fairness to those who oppose the authenticity of this verse, I shall let their case be stated in the words of the late, liberal textual critic, Bruce M. Metzger.

**“5.7 - 8 μαρτυροῦντες, 8 τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἶμα {A}”**

“After μαρτυροῦντες the Textus Receptus adds the following: ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Πατήρ, ὁ Λόγος, καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι. (8) καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ. That these words are spurious and have no right to stand in the New Testament is certain in the light of the following considerations.”

“EXTERNAL EVIDENCE. (1) The passage is absent from every known Greek manuscript except eight, and these contain the passage in what appears to be a translation from a late recension of the Latin Vulgate. Four of the eight manuscripts contain the passage as a variant reading written in the margin as a later addition to the manuscript. The eight manuscripts<sup>3</sup> are as follows:”

61: codex Montfortianus, dating from the early sixteenth century.

88 v.r.: a variant reading in a sixteenth century hand, added to the fourteenth-century codex Regius of Naples.

221 v.r. : a variant reading added to a tenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

429 v.r. : a variant reading added to a sixteenth-century manuscript at Wolfenbüttel.

636 v.r. : a variant reading added to a sixteenth-century manuscript at Naples.

918: a sixteenth-century manuscript at the Escorial, Spain.

2318: an eighteenth-century manuscript, influenced by the Clementine Vulgate, at Bucharest, Rumania.

“2) The passage is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers, who, had they known it, would most certainly have employed it in the Trinitarian controversies (Sabellian and Arian). Its first appearance in Greek is in a Greek version of the (Latin) Acts of the Lateran Council in 1215.”

“3) The passage is absent from the manuscripts of all ancient versions (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic), except the Latin; and it is not found (a) in the Old Latin in its early form (Tertullian Cyprian, Augustine), or in the Vulgate (b) as issued by Jerome (codex Fuldensis [copied A.D. 541 – 46] and codex Amiatinus [copied before A.D. 716]) or (c) as revised by Alcuin (first hand of codex Vallicellianus [ninth century]).”

“The earliest instance of the passage being quoted as a part of the actual text of the Epistle is in a fourth century Latin treatise entitled Liber Apologeticus (chap. 4), attributed either to the Spanish heretic Priscillian (died about 385) or to his follower Bishop Instantius. Apparently the gloss arose when the original passage was understood to symbolize the Trinity (through the mention of three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the blood), an interpretation that may have been written first as a marginal note that afterwards found its way into the text. In the fifth century the gloss was quoted by Latin Fathers in North Africa and Italy as part of the text of the Epistle, and from the sixth century onwards it is found more and more frequently in manuscripts of the Old Latin and of the Vulgate.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Although Metzger asserts that this verse is found in only eight Greek New Testament manuscripts, he actually lists only seven.

<sup>4</sup> “*A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament*”; by Bruce M. Metzger; “Second Edition - A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)”; 1994; pp. 647 & 648.

☞ I should point out, that all these arguments that are raised against this verse, are all of the negative kind.

## 2.] THE ERASMUS CONNECTION AND 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7: -

It is often asserted as **supposed** fact, by most textual critics and Bible scholars that: -

Erasmus promised if a Greek manuscript which contained this verse, could be produced, he would include it in his Greek New Testament. A manuscript was found and put before him which contained this passage, and therefore, Erasmus included it in his 1522 edition, in order to fulfil his promise.

☞ The historical facts concerning this common assertion are somewhat rather different. The world renowned Erasmian scholar, H. J. De Jonge, having researched this issue thoroughly, clearly states that this popular assertion has **no support** in the documentary evidence available from Erasmus's letters and writings.

"Yet there are a number of difficulties in the story of Erasmus' promise and its consequences, which arouse a certain suspicion of its truthfulness. ... He [that is, John Mills - compiler] even adds the interesting detail that Erasmus included the *Comma Johanneum* as early as June 1521, in a separate edition of his Latin translation published by Froben at Basle. This detail is important because it helps to determine the period of time within which Erasmus must have become aware of the *Comma Johanneum* in Greek. He was still unaware of it in May 1520 when he wrote his apologia *Libei tertues* against Edward Lee. Thus, he must have received evidence of the passage between May 1520 and June 1521. It is not known who brought it to his attention. ... The earliest reference to Erasmus' promise of which I am aware is that of T. H. Horne in 1818. ... A second difficulty is that in the retelling of the story of Erasmus' supposed promise, there are striking variations. ... A third problem is that the famous promise of Erasmus is not to be found anywhere else in his oeuvre<sup>5</sup>. ... How then did the famous story arise of his promise and the way in which he honoured it? It is likely that it grew out of a misinterpretation of a passage in his *Responsio ad Annotationes Eduardi Lei* of May 1520. Lee was a truly quarrelsome individual a myopically conservative theologian later archbishop of York who troubled and pestered Erasmus for several years with his criticisms which were unusually mediocre of the *Novum Instrumentum*. Lee was one of several critics who had remarked on the absence of the *Comma Johanneum* in the first two editions. In 1520 Erasmus felt himself obliged to make a detailed reply to Lee. In his lengthy discussion of I John 5.7 Erasmus wrote as follows ... If a single manuscript had come into my hands in which stood what we read (see in the Latin Vulgate) then I would certainly have used it to fill in what was missing in the other manuscripts I had. Because that did not happen I have taken the only course which was permissible that is I have indicated (see in the *Annotationes*) what was missing from the Greek manuscripts. This is the passage which Bainton regarded as containing the promise which Erasmus is supposed to have redeemed later. It is to Bainton's credit that he at least tried to find the promise somewhere in Erasmus works no other author so far as I am aware took this trouble. Still no such promise can be read into the passage cited. It is a retrospective report of what Erasmus had done in 1516 and 1519. If he had had a Greek manuscript with the *Comma Johanneum* then he would have included the *Comma*. But he had not found a single such manuscript and consequently he omitted the *Comma Johanneum*. **This is not a promise but a justification after the event of what had happened cast in the unfulfilled conditional.**"

"... *Conclusions*

"(1) The current view that Erasmus promised to insert the *Comma Johanneum* if it could be shown to him in a single Greek manuscript, **has no foundation in Erasmus' works**. Consequently, it is highly improbable that he included the disputed passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word "**OEUVRE**" as: -  
"Noun 1 The body of work of a painter, composer, or author: *the complete oeuvre of Mozart*."

(2) It cannot be shown from Erasmus' works that he suspected the Codex Britannicus (min 61) of being written with a view to force him to include the *Comma Johanneum*."<sup>6</sup>


So why did Erasmus include this passage in his third edition of 1522?

"His own defence was that the verse was in the Vulgate and must therefore have been in the Greek text used by Jerome."<sup>7</sup>

Letting Erasmus speak for himself concerning his reason for the inclusion of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 in his New Testament, the following statement is to the point.

"But, not to dissemble any thing, one single Greek manuscript hath been discovered in England, wherein what is wanting in other manuscripts is found thus: Ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, Πατήρ, Λόγος, καὶ Πνεῦμα, καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσιν. Καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ, πνεῦμα, ὕδωρ, καὶ αἷμα ἢ εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων &c. yet, I know not by what accident, what is in our Greek copies is not repeated here, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν, and these three agree in one. From this English manuscript we have supplied what is said to be deficient in our copies, that no one might take occasion to calumniate us; although I suspect that this manuscript hath been corrected and accommodated to some of our [Latin] copies."<sup>8</sup>

"The real reason which induced Erasmus to include the *Comma Johanneum* was thus clearly his care for his good name and for the success of his *Novum Testamentum*."<sup>9</sup>

 Even though the thoroughly researched article by H. J. DE Jonge was published in 1980, and this historical documentation has been in the scholarly domain for 40 years now, the falsehood concerning Erasmus's **supposed promise** to include the Johannine Comma if a Greek manuscript containing it could be furnished him, is still confidently asserted and proclaimed by some Bible scholars and textual critics, and is trumpeted on a lot of websites that attack the Textus Receptus reading of this verse. To continue to promote this historical falsehood when clear evidence has been published in the scholarly community refuting it, is neither honest or right. It is in actual fact, downright misleading and deceptive.

### 3.] THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE FOR THE COMMA: -

I should make it clear, that while the detailed previous quotation from Bruce Metzger on Page 4, might lead one to believe that 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 does not appear in any Greek manuscripts before the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the fact is, that MS. 61 was the first Greek manuscript **DISCOVERED** which contains this passage.

"MS. 61. This manuscript of the entire New Testament, dating from the early sixteenth century, now at Trinity College, Dublin, has more importance historically than intrinsically. It is the first Greek manuscript **discovered** that contains the passage relating to the Three Heavenly Witnesses (1 John 5.7 - 8). It was on the basis of this single, late witness that Erasmus was induced to insert this certainly spurious passage into the text of 1 John."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum"; by H. J. DE Jonge; Extrait des *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 1980; pp. 382 - 385 & 389.

<sup>7</sup> "Erasmus of Christendom"; by Roland H. Bainton; Collins; 1970; p. 170.

<sup>8</sup> "The Life of Erasmus". By John Jortin; Volume II, 1758; pp. 231 & 232.

<sup>9</sup> Op. cit., H. J. DE Jonge, p. 385.

<sup>10</sup> "The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration"; by Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman; fourth edition; 2005. p. 88.

☞ At the present time, there is a total of **Eleven [11]** Greek New Testament manuscripts which contain the Comma<sup>11</sup>.

Below is the current list of the **Five [5]** Greek New Testament manuscripts that contain the Comma within the text itself.

- **61 - Codex Montfortianus** - is a **supposedly**<sup>12</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript, which contains the entire New Testament. It is located at Trinity College, in Dublin, Ireland.
- **629 - Codex Ottobonianus 298** - is a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Greek – Latin manuscript, which contains the Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles. It is located at the Vatican Library, in Vatican City, Italy.
- **Minuscule 918** [it is also known as **Cod. Escorialensis, Σ. I. 5**] – is a **supposedly**<sup>13</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript, which contains the Pauline EpistlesΚ†, General EpistlesΚ†. It is located at the Royal Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain.

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<sup>11</sup> **Codex Ravianus** [which is also known as **Berolinensis**] is a 16<sup>th</sup> Greek Manuscript that contains the entire New Testament. It also contains the Johannine Comma. It is manuscript taken from the Complutensian Polyglot Bible. It is not considered to be an independent textual witness by textual critics. It was removed from the list of Greek New Testament Manuscripts in 1908, by the American/German Textual Critic, Caspar René Gregory. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex\\_Ravianus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Ravianus) - Accessed 21/01/2020.

<sup>12</sup> Codex Montfortianus is generally considered by most modern Textual Critics to have been compiled in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. It is asserted by these same critics, that it was compiled around 1520 to deceive Erasmus, to make him include the Johannine Comma in the third edition of his Greek New Testament in 1522, thus forcing him to fulfil his so called “promise”. [I have previously documented that this popular assertion is without any foundation in Erasmus’ extant writings.]

It is of interest that older generations of Textual scholars from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, dated this manuscript to range from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century before the age of printing, to as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Here is the evidence from three of these well respected Biblical scholars on this issue.

“61. MONTFORT. Dublin, **of about the 15th century**, contains the whole N. T. This manuscript was at one time suspected (**unjustly, as it would seem**) of having been forged in order to uphold the text of the Three Heavenly Witnesses, 1 John v, 7: which passage was inserted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Erasmus (1522) on the authority of the present document.” – *“A Supplement to the Authorized English Version of the New Testament: being a critical illustration of its more difficult passages from the Syriac, Latin and earlier English Versions.”* by Frederick H. A. Scrivener; 1845; p. 330.

Dr. Orlando Dobbin, who had personally examined and collated this manuscript, believed that it was written in the last half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. He also believed that it was **not** written by a forger.

“Nevertheless, forming his opinion from the sundry aspects of the manuscript, its history, its readings, its character, its paper, Dr. Dobbin declared his conviction to be, that **the Codex Montfortianus was written, from first to last, within the last fifty years of the fifteenth century**, and that by some half-learned scribe, - not by any one “bold critic,” as had been averred, **nor by an unprincipled forger.**” – *“On the Codex Montfortianus”*; by Dr. Orlando Dobbin. Paper presented to the Royal Irish Academy; 1850; “Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy;”, Volume 5, pp. 432 & 433. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20489793.pdf>. Accessed 7/02/2020.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in 1790 personally examined this manuscript, and came to the conclusion that it existed before the time of printing, and he dated it, to sometime within the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

“In 1790 I examined this MS. myself, and though I think it to be comparatively modern, **yet I have no doubt that it existed before the invention of printing; and was never written with an intention to deceive.** ... There is an inscription in it, in these words, *Sum Thomae Clementis, olim fratris Froyhe*. On this inscription Dr. Barrett remarks: “It appears *Froyhe* was a *Franciscan*; and I find in some blank leaves in the book these words written, (by the same hand, in my opinion, that wrote the MS.) *Ιησους μαρια φραγκισκος*, by the latter, I understand the founder of that order.” If *St. Francis d’ Assise* be here meant, who was the founder of the order of *Franciscans*, and the inscription be written by the same who wrote the MS. then the MS. must necessarily be written in the thirteenth century, as St. Francis founded his order in 1206, and died in 1226, and consequently proves that the MS. could not have been written in the eleventh century, as Mr. *Martin* of Utrecht and several others have imagined. ... **the manuscript is more likely to have been a production of the thirteenth century**, than of either the eleventh or fifteenth.” – *“A concise view of the succession of sacred literature, in a chronological arrangement of authors and their works, from the invention of alphabetical characters, to the year of our Lord 1445.”* – by Dr. Adam Clarke; 1839 edition; pp. 74, 75 & 77.

- **Minuscule 2318** – is an 18th Century manuscript, which contains the Pauline EpistlesK†, General EpistlesK†. It is located at the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania.
- **Minuscule 2473** – is a 17th Century manuscript [1634 to be exact], which contains the Acts and the General Epistles. It is located at the National Library, in Athens, Greece.

Below is the current list of the **Six [6]** Greek New Testament manuscripts that contain the Comma in the margin<sup>14</sup> of the text.

- **Minuscule 88 Codex Regis** – is a 12<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript, which contains the Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles and Revelation 1:1-3:13†. It is located at the Victor Emmanuel III National Library, in Naples, Italy.
- **Minuscule 177** – is an 11th Century manuscript, which contains the Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles, and the Revelation. It is located at the Bavarian State Library, in Munich, Germany.
- **Minuscule 221** – is a 10<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript, which contains the Acts, Pauline Epistles, and the General Epistles. It is located at the Bodleian Library, in Oxford, United Kingdom.
- **Minuscule 429** – is a 14<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript, which contains the Acts, Pauline Epistles, and the General Epistles. It is located at the Herzog August Library, in Wolfenbüttel, Germany.
- **Minuscule 635** – is a 11<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript, which contains the Acts, Pauline Epistles, and the General Epistles. It is located at the Victor Emmanuel III National Library, in Naples, Italy.
- **Minuscule 636** – is a 15<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript, which contains the Acts, Pauline Epistles, and the General Epistles. It is located at the Victor Emmanuel III National Library, in Naples, Italy.

**NOTE: - K in the above two lists indicates the manuscript also includes a commentary. † in the above two lists indicates that the manuscript has damaged or missing pages.<sup>15</sup>**

It is often argued by those who deny the authenticity of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7, that eleven, late minuscule manuscripts, out of the approximately 5, 800 Greek New Testament manuscripts that are known to exist today, is overwhelming evidence against its genuineness.

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<sup>13</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century textual critic, Fredrick Scrivener dated this manuscript to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. See “*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament.*” by Frederick Scrivener, Volume 1; Edited by Edward Miller, 1894; p. 299. Scrivener lists this manuscript as 206<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Most textual critics use the truth that 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 is often found in the margin of both Greek and Latin New Testament manuscripts, as “proof” that this verse was an unwarranted interpolation into these New Testament manuscripts. Yet there is a very simple alternative explanation to this fact concerning ancient New Testament manuscripts, that actually helps to support this verse’s authenticity. George Travis explained this fact very simply in the following statement.

“The Adversaries of this verse have sounded, on this latter circumstance, their idea of a *marginal gloss*, or comment. But, surely, nothing can be more affected, or absurd. When the possessor of a MS of this Epistle had discovered the omission of this verse, in his copy, how is it to be supposed that he would act? He would not *re-copy the whole of his MS*, beginning with this omission; for that expedient would be too troublesome, or too expensive. He must, of necessity, correct his erroneous MS, either by an *interlineation* (which, however, would be impracticable in some MSS) or by inserting the omission *in its margin*. And this seems to be the true, the obvious, and the only, reason why some MSS have interlined, and others have exhibited in their margins, this verse of *St. John.*” – “*Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. author of the History of the Decline, and Fall, of the Roman Empire.*” By George Travis; 1785; p. 342 – note.

<sup>15</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists\\_of\\_New\\_Testament\\_manuscripts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_New_Testament_manuscripts). Accessed 8/01/2020.



While the above statistics are true, they are extremely misleading and are distorting the real facts. How is this so? Because the actual number of New Testament Greek manuscripts that contain 1<sup>st</sup> John Chapter 5, is about 498 manuscripts. So the reality is in fact, it is eleven Greek manuscripts that contain the Comma, out of about 498 manuscripts that contain 1<sup>st</sup> John Chapter 5.

Here is a list of the twelve oldest Greek manuscripts that contain 1<sup>st</sup> John Chapter 5, but which lack the Comma: -

- Aleph - 01 (4th century) – Codex Sinaiticus, Uncial manuscript; located at the British Library, London; Add. 43725. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- B (4th century) - Codex Vaticanus, Uncial manuscript; located at the Vatican Library, Vat. gr. 1209. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- A (5th century) – Codex Alexandrinus, Uncial Manuscript; located at the British Library, London; Royal MS 1. D. V – VIII. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- Uncial 048 (5th century) – Codex Vaticanus Graecus 2061 - Uncial manuscript; located at the Vatican Library, Vat. gr. 2061. Relevant portion: - 1st John 4:6 - 5:13,17 - 18, 21.
- L<sup>ap</sup> (9th century) - Codex Angelicus, Uncial manuscript; located at the Biblioteca Angelica, Ang. gr. 39, Rome, Italy. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- K<sup>ap</sup> (9th century) - Codex Mosquensis I, Uncial manuscript; located at the State Historical Museum, V. 93, S. 97, Moscow, Russia. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- P<sup>ap</sup>r (9th century) - Codex Porphyrianus, Uncial manuscript; located at the National Library of Russia, Gr. 225, Saint Petersburg, Russia. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- Ψ (9th century) - Codex Athous Laurae, Uncial manuscript; located at the Great Lavra Monastery, B' 52, Mount Athos, Greece. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- Uncial 049 (9th century) – Uncial manuscript, located at the Great Lavra Monastery, A' 88, Mount Athos, Greece. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- Uncial 056 (10th century) – Uncial manuscript, located at the National Library, Coislin, Gr. 26, Paris, France. Relevant portion all of 1st John 5.
- Uncial 0142 (10th century) - Codex Monacensis 375, Uncial manuscript; located at the Bavarian State Library, Gr. 375, Munich, Germany. Relevant portion: - all of 1st John 5.
- Uncial 0296 (6th century) – Uncial manuscript; located at the Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery, Σπ. ΜΓ 48, 53, 55. Relevant portion: - 1st John 5:3 – 13.

The following statement by the historical researcher Michael Maynard, who thoroughly researched the history of the controversy concerning 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7, highlights the weakness of the **supposed** overwhelming supremacy of the Greek manuscript evidence against the authenticity of the Johannine Comma.

“Not even 3 percent (14/498 = 2.8%) of all Greek MSS hostile to 1 John v.7f are in these first eight centuries. Let it be emphasized again, from published statistics (as of 1987) compiled from data at the manuscript institute in Münster, Germany:”

“There are only 14 Greek MSS which omit 1 John v.7f (less than 3% of all hostile Greek MSS) in the first eight centuries. All the rest (482 MSS or 97.2% of the hostile MSS) are dated to the tenth century or later. Many opponents of the Received Text, consider MSS dated to the tenth century or later as “late and conflated”.”

“Many of these same opponents claim the TR is based on “late and inferior” MSS, because they scorn any MSS from these late centuries (10<sup>th</sup> and later).”

“Even though they have such scorn for MSS from these late centuries, they use, as the bulk of their evidence against 1 John v.7f, Greek MSS from these very same late centuries!”

“In summary of the first reason, the absence of 1 John v.7f in any Greek MS before the sixteenth century, does not constitute disproof, since:”

“1. Many regard late MSS (10<sup>th</sup> century or later) as inferior.”

“2. The distribution of hostile MSS is skewed toward late centuries.”

“3. 97% of their evidence (as witnesses hostile to 1 Jn v.7f) is late.”

“In other words, opposers of 1 John v.7f are not admitting, that after four centuries (the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>) of scholars searching for MSS, they could not even muster 3% of all their evidence against 1 John v.7 as being significant, by their standards. Only 14 Greek MSS (2.8%) of the 482 hostile MSS they would consider boasting about, were dated from the ninth century or earlier.”<sup>16</sup>

The following comment from Dr. Orlando Dobbin concerning the **supposed** age of the oldest Uncial manuscripts gives some rather insightful observations on this contentious issue.

“... the author made certain observations to the effect that **the age of uncial manuscripts was greatly exaggerated in his opinion; and that their value was, by consequence, extremely overrated.** He urged, that there always had been a current or cursive hand during the predominance of the uncials; and again, that there always had been, during the prevalence of the cursive manuscript, occasion for large, costly, uncial volumes for ecclesiastical purposes. That this rendered it difficult to assign a *prima facie* greater antiquity to the uncial over the cursive manuscript; **while the perishable nature of the materials on which every book was written, if exposed to the external air and the chapter of accidents, rendered it improbable in the highest degree that any Codex of any portion of the Scriptures was as old as 1000 years. That thus, not only in accordance with the canon of criticism might a cursive copy have all the value of the uncial from which it was transcribed but an older cursive would have a positive value superior to that of an uncial of more modern date:** that, in fact, the character of the writing was, not an infallible guide to a right decision as to the date of a manuscript, but that that decision must be guided by other no less weighty considerations.”<sup>17</sup>

#### **4.] THE INCONSISTENCY OF MOST OF THE TEXTUAL CRITICS OF THIS PASSAGE: -**



I would also like to point out, the **complete inconsistency** in argument of many of the modern textual critics, who argue that 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 should not be included in the Bible, because it is not found in the majority of Greek New Testament manuscripts. The **inconsistency** of their argument is this: -

*Most of the scholars who use this argument against 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7, do not care one bit for the majority of manuscript evidence, or for what the majority of textual readings may be found in them. They personally follow the minority "critical text" exclusively, which departs in thousands of places from the "majority text". So in reality, they are being hypocritical to use this as their main argument against the authenticity of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7.*

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<sup>16</sup> “A History of the debate over 1 John 5, 7 - 8: a tracing of the longevity of the Comma Johanneum, with evaluations of Arguments against its authenticity.” By Michael Maynard; 1995; pp. 285 & 286.

<sup>17</sup> “On the Codex Montfortianus”; by Dr. Orlando Dobbin. Paper presented to the Royal Irish Academy; 1850; “Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy”, Volume 5, p. 432. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20489793.pdf>. Accessed 9/02/2020.

## 5.] THE INTERNAL GREEK GRAMMAR SUPPORTS THE AUTHENTICITY OF 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN

### 5:7:-

The following information concerning the Greek grammar of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 & 8 supports the textual authenticity of this passage.

Below is the actual "Textus Receptus" Greek text of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 & 8<sup>18</sup>. The disputed portion is underlined and in italics.

ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατήρ, ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἔν εἰσι. 8 καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ, τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.

At the start of VS. 8 the Greek word τρεῖς - "three" which is Masculine in Gender<sup>19</sup>, and Plural in number, is referring to the three Neuter nouns - τὸ Πνεῦμα - "the Spirit"; τὸ ὕδωρ - "the water"; and, τὸ αἷμα - "the blood".

Further on in VS. 8, the Greek words οἱ μαρτυροῦντες - "that bear witness", are Masculine in Gender, and Plural in number, and refer again to the same three Neuter nouns - "the Spirit", "the water" and "the blood". And at the end of VS. 8, the Greek words οἱ τρεῖς - "these three", are also Masculine in Gender, and Plural in number, and refer again to the same three Neuter nouns - "the Spirit", "the water" and "the blood". This can only have been written in this form in Greek by John, because of the presence of the two Masculine nouns in VS. 7, ὁ πατήρ - "the Father"; and, ὁ λόγος - "the Word".

If VS. 7 is not genuine, then John should have used the Neuter Plural form τὰ τρία - "the three" in VS. 8 referring to the three Neuter nouns "the Spirit", "the water" and "the blood". The fact that he did not do this, but used the Masculine, Plural forms of τρεῖς, οἱ μαρτυροῦντες and οἱ τρεῖς when referring to these three neuter nouns, is solid internal proof that 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 & 8 is indeed genuine and belongs in the Greek text.<sup>20</sup>

I wish to share with the reader, another point of Greek grammar that is often overlooked concerning this issue, but which also attests to the authenticity of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7. The nineteenth century English Biblical Scholar, Bishop Thomas Middleton, devoted 13 pages upon the Johannine Comma, in his well known book, "*The Doctrine of the Greek Article*". He raised one specific grammatical difficulty concerning the omission of the

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<sup>18</sup> This Greek text us taken from "H KAINH DIAΘHKH - The New Testament" – The Greek Text Underlying the English Authorized Version of 1611." Printed by the Trinitarian Bible Society.

<sup>19</sup> When reference is made to the Gender of a Noun in Greek, it is not referring to sexual or natural gender, but rather to grammatical gender.

<sup>20</sup> A point of particular interest is the fact that the Greek Orthodox Church includes this disputed passage in its Greek New Testament. The following is from the current Greek New Testament, which is the authorized 1904 text of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

7 ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Πατήρ, ὁ Λόγος καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἔν εἰσι· καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ, 8 τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν. - <https://www.goarch.org/chapel/greek-new-testament>. Accessed 12/01/2020.

Comma, which relates to the last clause of 1st John 5:8 -  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ . I shall list a couple of his grammatical insights concerning this issue.

“It has, however, been insisted, that the omission of the rejected passage rather embarrasses the context: *Bengel*<sup>21</sup> regards the two verses as being connected “*adamantinâ cohaerentiâ*.”<sup>22</sup> and yet, it must be allowed, that among the various interpretations there are some which will at least endure the absence of the seventh verse. But the difficulty to which the present undertaking has directed my attention, is of another kind: **it respects the Article in  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$  in the final clause of the eighth verse:** if the seventh verse had not been spurious, nothing could have been plainer than that  $\tau\omicron\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$  of verse 8, referred to  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$  of verse 7: **as the case now stands, I do not perceive the force or meaning of the Article;** and the same difficulty is briefly noticed by *Wolfius*. In order to prove that this is not merely *nodum in scirpo qucerere*<sup>23</sup>, I think it right to examine, at some length, what are the occasions on which, before  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ , the Article may be inserted.”

“**The Article, when prefixed to  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$**  [that is, the masculine Greek word for “one” – compiler], is not used in any peculiar manner, but is, as in all other cases, **subservient to the purpose either of reference or of hypothesis.**”<sup>24</sup>

“... **In concluding this Note, I think it right to offer something towards its vindication.** I am not ignorant, that in the rejection of the controverted passage learned and good men are now, for the most part, agreed; and I contemplate with admiration and delight the gigantic exertions of intellect, which have established this acquiescence: **the objection, however, which has given rise to this discussion, I could not consistently with my plan suppress.** On the whole I am led to suspect, that though so much labour and critical acuteness have been bestowed on these celebrated verses, more is yet to be done, before **the mystery**, in which they are involved, can be wholly developed.”<sup>25</sup>

☞ For a counterfeit or forgery to be able to successively deceive people, it needs to be as close as possible to the genuine article. Imitation and **NOT** dissimilarity, is the first rule to successful counterfeiting. **If** [and I emphasize the word **if**] 1st John 5:7 is a forgery or interpolation, why did not its **supposed** interpolator use the common Trinitarian formula as found in Matthew 28:19 – “*The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost*”? Why use the unique formula, “*The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*”, which might arouse suspicion? The simple fact is that this expression “*the Word*” fits in with the Apostle John’s terminology as found in both his Gospel, his first epistle itself, and in the Revelation [See John 1:1 & 14; 1st John 1:1 & Revelation 19:13].

## **6.] MORE INTERNAL EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORTS THE COMMA’S AUTHENTICITY: -**

- One of the consistent themes that runs throughout the epistle of 1st John concerns Jesus being the Christ – the Son of God, who has come in the flesh. John clearly testifies to the Divinity of the Son of God in this epistle. He warns his readers against being deceived by those false teachers who were denying these truths concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>21</sup> Reference is here made to Johann Albrecht Bengel [1687 – 1752], was a German Lutheran pietist clergyman and Greek-language scholar who believed that the Johannine Comma was genuine.

<sup>22</sup> *adamantinâ cohaerentiâ* = “a diamond-like cohesive”.

<sup>23</sup> *nodum in scirpo qucerere* = “the rush to seek. a knot”

<sup>24</sup> What Bishop Middleton is referring to in this paragraph, is the fact that in the New Testament, the Greek word  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  – “one”, or its neuter form  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$  [which is found in 1st John 5:7 & 8, where it appears twice], fulfils the grammatical function of reference or hypothesis. In VS. 8, it clearly is fulfilling the purpose of reference. That is, it is referring to something previously listed by the writer.

<sup>25</sup> “*The Doctrine of the Greek Article applied to the Criticism and Illustration of the New Testament.*” By Thomas Fanshaw Middleton; 1833 edition; pp. 441, 442 & 453.

1st John 2:22 & 23: - "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*"

1st John 2:26: - "These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you."

1st John 4:2 & 3: - "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

1st John 4:15: - "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

1st John 5:1: - "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."

1st John 5:5: - "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

**NOTE:** - As I shall proceed in my study of 1st John 5:7, we shall see that this verse is a Divine testimony or witness from the three Persons of the Godhead, concerning Jesus being the Christ – the Divine Son of God. The apostle is NOT testifying to the truth of the Trinity in the disputed verse. Rather, he is recording the testimony of the three members of the Trinity, to the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

- A consistent principle of God's justice that is recorded throughout the Bible, is the fact that two or three witnesses must be produced to establish the truthfulness of any testimony.

Deuteronomy 17:6: - "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death."

Deuteronomy 19:15: - "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."

John 8:17: - "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true."

2nd Corinthians 13:1: - "This *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

**NOTE:** - As we shall soon see, the Godhead has followed this principle in 1st John 5:7. This is another evidence that this passage is genuine and harmonizes perfectly with the surrounding context of 1st John 5, as the three members of the Godhead have testified that Jesus is the Christ – the Divine Son of God.

- 1st John 5:9: - "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: **for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.**"

Where is to be found the witness of God concerning his Son Jesus being the Christ in this chapter? It is found in the disputed verse 1st John 5:7, concerning the Three Heavenly Witnesses. **They are one** in their testimony concerning Jesus being the Christ – the Divine Son of God.

1st John 5:7: - "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

- God the Father testified publicly concerning Jesus being the Christ – the Divine Son of God, several times during Jesus' public ministry.

At Jesus' baptism, the Father openly testified that Jesus was his Son.

Matthew 3:16 & 17: - "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: **And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**"

At Jesus' transfiguration, the Father testified to the three chosen disciples that Jesus was his Divine Son.

Matthew 17:5: - "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.**"

Jesus himself stated that his Father had borne witness concerning him.

John 5:37 & 38: - **“And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.** Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.”

John 8:18: - **“I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.”**

- The Word (that is, Jesus Christ) testified by his works that he was the Christ – the Divine Son of God.

John 5:36: - **“But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.”**

John 8:18: - **“I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.”**

John 10:25: - **“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.”**

Jesus himself claimed to be the Christ – the Divine Son of God.

John 4:25 & 26: - **“The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.”**

Mark 14:61 & 62: - **“But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”**

- The Holy Spirit testified that Jesus was the Christ – the Son of God at Jesus' baptism.

John 1:32 - 34: - **“And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”**

Jesus informed his disciples, that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, when he should come, would testify concerning himself.

John 15:26: - **“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”**

★ Some textual critics who oppose the authenticity of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7, quote the following verse from Jesus himself, concerning the unity or “oneness” that Jesus testified as existing between himself and his Father.

John 10:30: - **“I and my Father are one.”**

**NOTE:** - They then ask the following question: - **“Why did not Jesus include the Holy Spirit in this verse, concerning the oneness and unity that is supposed to exist between the three members of the Godhead? Because if he had done this, it would strength the case for the authenticity of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7.”**

Jesus himself has provided a simple answer to this question: -

John 7:38 & 39: - **“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”**

**NOTE:** - Jesus could not include the Holy Spirit in his statement of John 10:30, because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given [with power]. This event would occur when Jesus had been glorified in heaven, after his ascension to heaven, and the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost.

👉 If the Comma is removed from this chapter, the witness that the Godhead has given concerning the Divine Son of God is not present; and therefore, 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:9 makes no sense. But when the disputed passage is

allowed to remain in the chapter, it harmonizes perfectly with 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:9. This is another evidence that this passage is indeed genuine.

## 7.] THE OLD LATIN BIBLE AND 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7: -

The term "*old Latin Bible*" is **not** to be confused with the Latin Vulgate translation of Jerome that was made late in the fourth century of the Christian era. This original Latin version was produced in the second century of the Christian era, being translated directly from the Greek New Testament manuscripts. It is an older version of the New Testament than any of the surviving Greek New Testament manuscripts that are available today.

"... whereas the Old Latin was translated direct from the original Greek, the Vulgate was only a revision of the Old Latin. Moreover, we possess a few manuscripts of the original Greek which are as early as the Vulgate; but the Old Latin was made long before any of our manuscripts were written, and takes us back almost to within a generation of the time at which the sacred books were themselves composed."

"The Old Latin Version is consequently one of the most valuable and interesting evidences which we possess for the condition of the New Testament text in the earliest times."<sup>26</sup>

Very careful research was undertaken to evaluate the authenticity of the Johannine comma, by Dr. Frederick Nolan [1784 – 1864]. He concluded that the Johannine comma was indeed part of the old Italic version, which was translated from the Greek into Latin, no later than 157 A. D.

"... on this subject, the author perceived, without any labour of inquiry, that it [that is, the Italic version – compiler] derived its name from that diocese, which has been termed the Italic, as contradistinguished from the Roman. This is a supposition, which receives a sufficient confirmation from the fact, -- that the principal copies of that version have been preserved in that diocese, the metropolitan church of which was situated in Milan. The circumstance is at present mentioned, as the author thence formed a hope, that some remains of the primitive Italic version might be found in the early translations made by the Waldenses, who were the lineal descendants of the Italic Church; and who have asserted their independence against the usurpations of the Church of Rome, and have ever enjoyed the free use of the Scriptures. In the search to which these considerations have led the author, his fondest expectations have been fully realized. **It has furnished him with abundant proof on that point to which his Inquiry was chiefly directed; as it has supplied him with the unequivocal testimony of a truly apostolical branch of the primitive church, that the celebrated text of the heavenly witnesses was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate.**"<sup>27</sup>

A further witness on this point relating to this passage being contained in the old Latin Version of the second century states,

"I need not tell you, Sir, because you must deny, nor need I tell the learned, because they cannot but know, that the *chief support of this contested verse is the authority of the Vulgate,*" which he has just before called "*the main prop and pillar of Mr. Travis's cause.*" **Here we ascend to the end of the second century, the age of Tertullian, who appears from his writings to have found the verse in his copy of the Latin Version."**

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<sup>26</sup> "*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts being a History of the Text and its Translations*"; by Frederic G. Kenyon; 1895; p. 166.

<sup>27</sup> "*An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, or Received Text of the New Testament: in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the authorised text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin.*"; by Frederick Nolan; 1815; "Preface", pp. xvii & xviii.

"So far, then, from resting on the authority of Vigilius Tapsensis of the fifth century, we may consider it **as extant in the Latin Version, at least as early as the end of the second century.**"<sup>28</sup>

Thomas Burgess gives us a summary of how the African Church testified to the authenticity of this passage as being in the early Latin Bible.

"The African Church from Tertullian to Fulgentius, that is, for somewhat more than 400 years, is the chief witness to the authenticity of 1 John v. 7, as the depository of the ancient Latin version, which contained the verse, and by the testimony, **which the African Bishops bore to it in the fifth century.** The Latin translation was their Bible for ordinary use; but it cannot be supposed that this learned Church was without the Greek text of the New Testament."<sup>29</sup>

**NOTE:** - The phrase "*which the African Bishops bore to it in the fifth century*", is referring to the "Confession of Faith" drawn up at the Council of Carthage in 485 A. D.

## **8.] OLD LATIN BIBLE MANUSCRIPTS WHICH CONTAIN THE COMMA: -**

**NOTE:** - The following LIST will contain manuscripts from the Old Latin Bible – that is, the *Italia* or *Italic* version that contain the Comma. I will list the manuscripts in chronological order as to when they have been estimated by textual critics to have been written.

- **Codex Speculum**<sup>30</sup> - designated as **m**. 5th century; Quotations from the New Testament; Saint Cross monastery (Sessorianus); Rome, Italy.
- **Frisingensia Fragmenta** or **Codex Frisingensis**, designated by **r** and **q** or **64** [in the Beuron system]. 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century; Pauline epistles & 1 John 3:8 – 5:9; the Bavarian State Library; Munich, Germany.
- **León palimpsest** designated as **l** or **67** [in the Beuron system]. 7<sup>th</sup> century; James; 1 Peter; 1 John; 2 John; 3 John; the Library of Santa María de León Cathedral; León, Spain.
- **Fragmenta Monacensia** - designated as **q**. 7<sup>th</sup> century [650]; General Catholic epistles; Munich, Germany.
- **Codex Harleian**<sup>31</sup> – designated as **z** or *harl.*<sup>2</sup> or **65**. 8<sup>th</sup> century [750]; General Catholic Epistles; the British Museum; London, England.

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<sup>28</sup> "A Vindication of 1 John, v. 7: From the Objections of M. Griesbach: in which is given a new view of the External Evidence, with Greek Authorities for the Authenticity of the Verse, not hitherto adduced in its Defence." by Thomas Burgess; 1821; pp. 6 & 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>30</sup> "... but what is one of the most valuable and interesting of all documents of this class, a *Speculum* or *Book of Quotations*, from almost every part of the New Testament (being all the more prized, inasmuch as our main Old Latin authorities contain the Gospels alone), edited in 1843 from a manuscript of the sixth century (cod. *m*. of our critical notation) in the monastery of S. Croce at Rome, and conspicuous for being the earliest in which the clause about the Three Heavenly Witnesses (1 John v. 7, 8) is contained: it is here found in two different places." - "Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient Manuscripts which contain it: chiefly addressed to those who do not read Greek"; by Frederick Scrivener; 1875; p. 101.

The actual Latin text from this manuscript is listed as follows: -

"In the second chapter, which is entitled, *De distinctione Personarum*, fol. 19, ver. we have the following passage. *Item Johannis in aepistula ... Item illic Tres sunt qui testimonium dicunt in caelo pater, verbum et spiritus. et hii tres unum sunt.*" – "Two Letters on some part of the controversy concerning 1 John V. 7. Containing also an enquiry into the origin of the first Latin version of Scripture, commonly called the *Itala*." – By Nicholas Wiseman; 1835; p. 15.

**NOTE:** - "*De distinctione Personarum*" = "The distinction of persons."

"*Item illic Tres sunt qui testimonium dicunt in caelo pater, verbum et spiritus. et hii tres unum sunt.*" = "Also there are three that bear witness in heaven Father, Word and Spirit. And these three are one."

<sup>31</sup> "... a text much mixed with the Old Latin, contains all the Epistles (that to the Colossians following 2 Thess., and 1 John v. 7 – Jude being crowed on one leaf), and the Apoc. (*mut. xiv. 16 – fin.*)" - "A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Biblical Students." – By F. H. A. Scrivener; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition; 1883; p. 355.



- **Codex Lemovicensis**<sup>32</sup> – designated as **L**. 9th century; General Catholic Epistles; the National Library of France Lain reference 2328; Paris, France.
- **Codex Perpinianus** – designated as **p** or **54** [in the Beuron system]. 12th century; the New Testament; the National Library of France; Paris, France.
- **Codex Demidovianus** – designated as **dem**, **λ<sup>D</sup>** or **59** [in the Beuron system]. 13th century [1250]; Acts; Pauline Epistles; General Catholic Epistles; Revelation; lost, last seen in the late eighteenth century in Moscow, Russia.
- **Codex Divionensis** – designated by **div.** or **Ω<sup>D</sup>**. 13th century [1250]; Pauline Epistles; General Catholic Epistles; Revelation; lost, last seen in Dijon, France.

## **9.] SOME LATIN VULGATE MANUSCRIPTS THAT CONTAIN THE COMMA**<sup>33</sup>: -

- **Codex Sangallensis** – 907 designated **S**. 8th century [750]; General Catholic Epistles; the Abbey of St. Gall; St. Gallen, Switzerland.
- **Codex Ulmensis** - designated as **U** or **σ<sup>U</sup>**; 9th century; Pauline Epistles, Epistle to the Laodiceans, General Catholic Epistles, Acts, Revelation; the British Museum [Reference Number - Manuscript Additional 11852]; London, England.<sup>34</sup>
- **La Cava Bible or Codex Cavensis**<sup>35</sup> - designated as **C**; 9th century; Old & New Testaments; the Abbey of La Trinità della Cava; Campania, Italy. - "It contains the comma Johanneum, I John v. 7 after VS. 8."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "166. Lat. 2328. Codex Lemovicensis. Catholic Epp. [ix], mixed text; contains 1 John v. 7, with the "Three Heavenly Witnesses," but in a mutilated form. Wordsworth's L3." – "A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Biblical Students. Volume II." By F. H. A. Scrivener; 4th edition; Edited by Edward Miller; 1894; p. 87.

<sup>33</sup> This is **NOT** an exhaustive list of all the Latin Vulgate manuscripts that contain the Comma, as it is a recognized fact by textual critics, that the Comma appears in the vast majority of Latin Vulgate manuscripts.

"... it is found in the printed Latin Vulgate, and in perhaps forty-nine out of every fifty of its manuscripts, but not in the best, such as am. fuld. harl.3; nor in Alcuin's reputed copies at Rome (primâ manu) and London (see p. 350 note 1), nor in the book of Armagh (p. 357) and full fifty others." – "A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Biblical Students." – By F. H. A. Scrivener; 3rd edition; 1883; p. 650.

<sup>34</sup> The Latin text for 1st John 5:7 & 8 is listed in the following statement: -

"Canon Westcott cites a manuscript in the British Museum (Addit. 11852), of the ninth century, to the same effect, observing that, like *m* and *cav.*, it contains the Epistle to the Laodiceans. This MS. runs "quia tres sunt qui testimonium dant sps et aqua et sanguis, et tres unum sunt. Sicut in caelo tres sunt pater verbum et sps, et tres unum sunt." **Westcott's manuscript is, in fact, ulm., (see p. 359),** and had already been used by Porson (*Letters*, &c., p. 148)." – *Ibid.*, p. 650, note 2.

The English translation of the Comma is as follows: - "There are three that bear testimony, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three are one. Likewise in heaven there are three, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and the three are one."

<sup>35</sup> The actual Latin text from this manuscript is listed as follows: -

"Et tres sunt qui testimonium dicunt in caelo. Pater. verbum. et sps. et\* hii tres humum sunt." – "Two Letters on some part of the controversy concerning 1 John V. 7. Containing also an enquiry into the origin of the first Latin version of Scripture, commonly called the *Itala*." – By Nicholas Wiseman; 1835; p. 10.

**NOTE:** - "Et tres sunt qui testimonium dicunt in caelo. Pater. verbum. et sps. et\* hii tres humum sunt." = "And there are three that bear witness in heaven. The Father. Word and Spirit. And these tree are one."

<sup>36</sup> "The Early Versions of the New Testament - Their Origin, Transmission, And Limitations." By Bruce M. Metzger; 1977; p. 338.

- **León Bible of 920** [designated as **leon<sup>1</sup>** by 19<sup>th</sup> century British textual critic F. H. A. Scrivener]; 10<sup>th</sup> century [920]; [Reference Number - Codex 6]; the Library of Santa María de León Cathedral, León, Spain.

“The León Bible of 920 is a manuscript bible copied and illuminated in 920 in a monastery in the Province of León in Spain. It is also known as the John and Vimara Bible or the Holy Bible of León. It is now held as codex 6 in the library of León Cathedral and is one of the most important manuscripts of the Spanish High Middle Ages.”<sup>37</sup>

“... originally two-volume Bible authority:.. Abbot Maurus of St. Martin de Albelda written and illuminated by the monks Vimara and Johannes.”<sup>38</sup>

“It was penned by two scribes, Vimara “presbiter” and Johannes diaconus. This is a specimen of the Visigothic minuscule, and contains 1 John v. 7, 8 in a varied form.”<sup>39</sup>

- **León Bible of 960, also known as Codex Gothicus Legionensis or Codex Biblicus Legionensis – designated as  $\Lambda^L$**  [designated as **leon<sup>2</sup>** by 19<sup>th</sup> century British textual critic F. H. A. Scrivener]; 10<sup>th</sup> century [960]; Old and New Testaments; the Library of the Basílica de San Isidoro, León; Leon, Spain.

“The order of the books is Gospels, Paul, Catholic Epistles, Acts, Apocalypse: 1 John v. 7, 8 is here found only in the margin.”<sup>40</sup>

- **Codex Complutensis I, - designated c;** 10<sup>th</sup> century [927]; Old & New Testaments; the Biblical University Centre 31; Madrid, Spain.
- **Codex Toletanus, designated by T.** 10<sup>th</sup> century; Old & New Testaments; the National Library of Spain [Reference Number - MS. Tol. 2. 1, vitr. 4]; Madrid, Spain. “It contains the characteristic Spanish form of Vulgate text, second only to codex Cavensis, and has the text of I John v. 7 in the same location (after vs. 8) as that manuscript.”<sup>41</sup>
- **Codex Sangallensis 63 – designated as s – margin at the bottom of the page.** 9<sup>th</sup> century; Acts; Pauline Epistles; General Catholic Epistles; Revelation; the Abbey Library of St. Gall; St. Gallen, Switzerland. – “155. No. 63 [ix], 4to, 320 pages. Acts, Epistles, and Apoc. divided as follows: foll. 2 - 163 Pauline Epp.; 163 - 244 Acts; 245 - 283 Catholic Epp. (but not 2 and 3 John), the “three heavenly witnesses” in 1 John v. 7 being added by a contemporary corrector; 283 - 320 Apocalypse.”<sup>42</sup>

“The Comma: sicut in caelo tres sunt pater uerbum et spiritus et tres sunt (as in heaven three are: the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, they are three)”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/León\\_Bible\\_of\\_920](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/León_Bible_of_920). Accessed 21/02/2020.

<sup>38</sup> [www.hellenicaworld.com/Art/Paintings/en/Part12509.html](http://www.hellenicaworld.com/Art/Paintings/en/Part12509.html). Accessed 21/02/2020.

<sup>39</sup> “A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Biblical Students.” – By F. H. A. Scrivener; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition; 1883; p. 360.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>41</sup> *The Early Versions of the New Testament - Their Origin, Transmission, And Limitations.*” By Bruce M. Metzger; 1977; p. 339.

<sup>42</sup> *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Biblical Students.*” – By F. H. A. Scrivener; Volume 2; 1894; Edited by Edward Miller; p. 86.

<sup>43</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex\\_Sangallensis\\_63#cite\\_note-6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Sangallensis_63#cite_note-6). Accessed 2/02/2020.

- **Codex Theodulphianus, designated by Θ.** 10<sup>th</sup> century; Old and New Testaments; the National Library of France [Reference Number - Latin 9380]; Paris, France.

## **10.] EVIDENCE FROM CHRISTIAN WRITINGS THROUGHOUT HISTORY THAT SUPPORT THE HISTORICAL EXISTENCE AND AUTHENTICITY OF 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7: -**

"Evidence for the early existence of the Johannine Comma is found in the Latin versions and in the writings of the Latin Church Fathers. For example, it seems to have been quoted at Carthage by Cyprian (c. 250), who writes as follows: *"And again concerning the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit it is written: and the Three are One."* It is true that Facundus, a 6th century African bishop, interpreted Cyprian as referring to the following verse, but, as Scrivener (1883) remarks, it is *"surely safer and more candid"* to admit that Cyprian read the Johannine comma in his New Testament manuscript *"than to resort to the explanation of Facundus."*

"The first undisputed citations of the Johannine comma occur in the writings of two 4th century Spanish bishops, Priscillian<sup>44</sup>, who in 385 was beheaded by the Emperor Maximus on the charge of sorcery and heresy, and Idacius Clarus<sup>45</sup>, Priscillian's principal adversary and accuser. In the 5th century the Johannine comma was quoted by several orthodox African writers to defend the doctrine of the Trinity against the gainsaying of the Vandals, who ruled North Africa from 439 to 534 and were fanatically attached to the Arian heresy. And about the same time it was cited by Cassiodorus (480 - 570) in Italy. The comma is also found in r, an Old Latin manuscript of the 5th or 6th century, and in the *Speculum*, a treatise which contains an Old Latin text. It was not included in Jerome's original edition of the Latin Vulgate, but around the year 800 it was taken into the text of the Vulgate from the Old Latin manuscripts. It was found in the great mass of the later Vulgate manuscripts and in the Clementine edition of the Vulgate, the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church."<sup>46</sup>

Tertullian [155 – 240 AD.?] quotes directly from John 10:30 referring to the unity of the essence and not the unity of number, among the Persons of the Godhead. His wording is very particular to that contained in 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 concerning the three Persons of the Godhead. This statement was made around the close of the second century of the Christian era.

"Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, *who are yet distinct* One from Another. **These Three are one essence, not one Person, as it is said, I and my Father are One, John 10:30 in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number.**"<sup>47</sup>

He also made the following statement which is clearly echoing the teaching of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7.

"Nam et ipsa ecclesia proprie et principaliter ipse est spiritus, in quo est trinitas unius diuinitatis, Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus."

<sup>44</sup> In 380 AD in Spain Priscillian (or one of his associates) referred to the Comma."

"There are three that bear witness on earth: the water, in the flesh, and the blood: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one in Christ Jesus." - [http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1\\_John\\_5:7#Priscillian](http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1_John_5:7#Priscillian). Accessed 15/11/2019.

<sup>45</sup> "Idacius Clarus (350 - 385 AD) referred to it in [Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina by Migne, vol. 62, col. 359.] He also has it in *Contra Marivadum Arianum*."

"Et tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus, et ii tres unum sunt. *Contra Marivadum Arianum*. PL 62, col 0359B" - - [http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1\\_John\\_5:7#Idacius\\_Clarus](http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1_John_5:7#Idacius_Clarus). Accessed 15/11/2019.

The English translation reads as follows: - "And there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word and Spirit, and these are one."

<sup>46</sup> *"Forever Settled - A Survey of the Documents and History of the Bible"*; by Dr. J. A. Moorman; 1985; pp. 205 & 206.

<sup>47</sup> Tertullian - "Against Praxeas", Chapter 25. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0317.htm>. Accessed 29/01/2020.

“For the very Church itself is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity --- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>48</sup>

**NOTE:** - The only passage in the New Testament which describes the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as being the Trinity, that is, three in One Divinity is 1st John 5:7.

Cyprian of Carthage who died in 258 of the Christian era plainly quotes this verse.

“He who breaks the peace and the concord of Christ, does so in opposition to Christ; he who gathers elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ. The Lord says, I and the Father are one; John 10:30 and again **it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, And these three are one. 1 John 5:7.**”<sup>49</sup>

Another statement made by Cyprian also refers to the teaching of 1st John 5:7 concerning the unity of the three Persons of the Godhead. Such a teaching is only found in 1st John 5:7, and nowhere else in the New Testament.

“For if any one could be baptized among heretics, certainly he could also obtain remission of sins. If he attained remission of sins, he was also sanctified. If he was sanctified, he also was made the temple of God. I ask, of what God? If of the Creator; he could not be, because he has not believed in Him. If of Christ; he could not become His temple, since he denies that Christ is God. If of the Holy Spirit; **since the three are one**, how can **the Holy Spirit** be at peace with him who is the enemy either of **the Son** or of **the Father**?”<sup>50</sup>

👉 Around 350 of the Christian era, we find that Athanasius [about 296 – 373 AD] quoted directly from the Comma in the Greek language in his “Talk against Arius”. He even refers to the Apostle John writings as he quotes part of 1st John 5:7.

“Τί δὲ καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀφέσεως τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν παρεκτικόν, καὶ ζωποιοὺν, καὶ ἀγιαστικὸν λουτρὸν, οὗ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, οὐκ ἐν τῇ τρισμακαρίᾳ ὀνομασίᾳ δίδοται τοῖς πιστοῖς; Πρὸς δὲ τοῦτοις πᾶσιν Ἰωάννης φάσκει· **Καὶ οἱ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.**”<sup>51</sup>

“But the absolving and quickening and sanctifying laver, without which no one shall see the kingdom of heaven – is it not given to the faithful in the Thrice-Blessed Name? **And in addition to all these things, John says, ‘And the Three are One.’**”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Tertullian – “De Pudicitia” – Chapter XXI – “Of the difference between Discipline and Power, and of the Power of the Keys”; Section 16.

<sup>49</sup> Cyprian – “On the Unity of the Catholic Church”, Chapter 6. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050701.htm>. Accessed 29/01/2020.

Often modern textual critics dismiss this statement of Cyprian’s as being a quote of 1st John 5:7, but the following statement from F. H. A. Scrivener, who did not believe in the authenticity of this verse, is decisive on this point: -

“If these two passages be taken together (the first is manifestly much the stronger), **it is surely safer and more candid to admit that Cyprian read ver. 7 in his copies**, than to resort to the explanation of Facundus [vi], that the holy Bishop was merely putting on ver. 8 a spiritual meaning; although we must acknowledge that it was in this way ver. 7 obtained a place, first in the margin, then in the text of the Latin copies, and though we have clear examples of the like mystical interpretation in Eucherius (fl. 440) and Augustine (contra Maximin. 22), who only knew of ver. 8.” “A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the use of Biblical Students - Volume 2.” by F. H. A. Scrivener. Fourth Edition edited by Edward Miller, 1894, p. 405.

<sup>50</sup> Cyprian – “Epistle 72, To Jubaianus”, paragraph 12. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050672.htm>. Accessed 29/01/2020.

<sup>51</sup> Athanasius – “Disputatio Contra Arium” – Section 28.500. [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02g/02950373,\\_Athanasius,Disputatio\\_contra\\_Arium,\\_MGR.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/02g/02950373,_Athanasius,Disputatio_contra_Arium,_MGR.pdf). Accessed 31/01/2020.

<sup>52</sup> “The Three Witnesses. The disputed text in St. John: considerations new and old.” By H. T. Armfield; 1883; p. 56.

**NOTE:** - While the first portion of this statement is referring to Christian Baptism, and the command of Christ to baptize in the three blessed name as recorded in Matthew 28:19; the reference to the apostle John's writings and the statement "the Three are One", is **ONLY** found in 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7.

Phoebadius, Bishop of Agen in Gaul, when writing "Against the Arians" in 359 of the Christian era, quoted the Comma.

"Just as another – **the Son** – comes from **the Father**, so also another – **the Spirit** – comes from the Son. And just as the Son is the second person [of the Godhead], so also the Spirit is the third. Nevertheless, the sum (omnia) is one God, because **the three are one** (quia tres unum sunt)."<sup>53</sup>

**NOTE:** - The only place in the New Testament, where it is stated that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, "these three are one", is in 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7.

Around 385 of the Christian era, Gregory of Nazianzus [329 – 390 AD] appears to be the first writer to raise the Greek grammatical objection concerning the three neuter nouns in 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:8, the Spirit, the blood and the water, following three masculine nouns [a clear reference to the nouns of VS. 7], which neuter nouns having been masculinised in VS. 8.

"What does John say? In his Catholic Epistles he says: *There are three that bear witness: the Spirit and the water and the blood (1st John 5:7 & 8)*. For what you have reserved for names which are common to a general class of things, we claim – in conformity with your analytical figment – for proper names as well; otherwise, you will be unfair in not conceding to others what you arrogate for yourself. Do you think he is talking nonsense? – Talking nonsense, first, because he has been so bold as to assign a single numeral to things which are not "of the same being [ homoousia ]," though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are "of the same being". For who would assert that these three "witnesses" have the same essence? Talking nonsense, secondly, because he has not been consistent in the way he happened upon his terms. **For after using three in the masculine gender [τρεις – treis], he adds three words which are neuter [τα τρια – ta tria], contrary to the rules and regulations which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine-gender three first, and then adding one and one and one in the neuter gender, or after a masculine-gender one and one and one to use the three not in the masculine but in the neuter gender? Is this not what you yourself reject in the case of the divinity?"**<sup>54</sup>

There was a Church Council in 485 AD at Carthage in North Africa. A group of over 450 Bishops in defence of their Trinitarian faith, stood against the Arian Vandal King Hunnerick, and directly quoted 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 in their "Confession of Faith."

"After the African provinces had been over-run by the Vandals, Hunnerick, their king, summoned the bishops of the church, and of the adjacent isles, to deliberate on the doctrine inculcated in the disputed passage. Between three and four hundred prelates attended the Council, which met at Carthage; and Eugenius, as bishop of that see, drew up the Confession of the orthodox, in which the contested verse is expressly quoted. **That a whole church should thus concur in quoting a verse which was not contained in the received text, is wholly inconceivable: and admitting that 1 John v. 7 was thus generally received, its universal prevalence in that text is only to be accounted for by supposing it to have existed in it from the beginning.**"<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Phoebadius – "Liber Contra Arianos" – Chapter XXVII, Section 5. <http://www.fourthcentury.com-phoebadius-of-agen-against-the-arians>. Accessed 1/02/2020.

<sup>54</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus – "Theological Orations", Number 5 – "On the Holy Spirit"; Section 19. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/36303/1/Gregory%20of%20Nazianzus%20Theological%20Orations.pdf>. Accessed 30/01/2020.

<sup>55</sup> "An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, or Received Text of the New Testament: in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the authorised text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin."; by Frederick Nolan; 1815; pp. 296 & 297.

Below is part of the “Confession of Faith” that was drawn up by Bishop Eugenius, from this Council of Carthage in 485 A. D., that quotes 1st John 5:7.

“Church Council of Carthage (485 A.D.) Eugenius was the spokesman for the bishops of Africa, Mauritania, Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearick Isles, these bishops numbered 461 who stood in defense of the Trinity and used 1 John 5:7 - 8. Arians didn't believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. The bishops used 1 John 5:7 - 8 against the Arians proving Jesus is God and God is a Trinity. ‘Victor of Vitensis, Historia persecutionis Africanae”

“His words are recorded, :”

‘...and in order that we may teach until now, more clearly than light, that the Holy Spirit is now one divinity with the Father and the Son. **It is proved by the evangelist John, for he says, “there are three which bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one”.**”<sup>56</sup>

Fulgentius of Ruspe, a Bishop of North Africa [about 468 to about 533], directly quoted the Comma around 527 of the Christian era, in his “Reply against the Arians”.

“In the Father, therefore, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we acknowledge unity of substance, but dare not confound the persons. **For St. John the apostle, testifieth saying, “There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one.”**”<sup>57</sup>

Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator [about 485 to about 585 AD], approximately in 570 of the Christian era, quoted the Comma.

“And the three mysteries testify – on earth: water, blood and spirit. The fulfillment of which we read about in the passion of the Lord. **And in heaven: Father and Son and Holy Spirit. And these three are one God.**”<sup>58</sup>

Though the early Vulgate manuscript *Codex Fuldensis* in 546 of the Christian era does not have the passage directly in the text, it is quoted in the manuscript’s “PROLOGUE” to the Catholic or General Epistles. The writer of this “PROLOGUE” [which is often believed to have been Jerome himself] affirms that unfaithful translators of his time had removed the verse from the Bible.

“Just as these are properly understood and so translated faithfully by interpreters into Latin without leaving ambiguity for the readers nor [allowing] the variety of genres to conflict, **especially in that text where we read the unity of the trinity is placed in the first letter of John**, where much error has occurred at the hands of unfaithful translators contrary to the truth of faith, who have kept just the three words water, blood and spirit in this edition **omitting mention of Father, Word and Spirit in which especially the catholic faith is strengthened and the unity of substance of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is attested.**”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> [http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1\\_John\\_5:7#Council\\_of\\_Carthage](http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1_John_5:7#Council_of_Carthage). Accessed 15/11/2019.

It is often asserted by those who deny the authenticity of 1st John 5:7, that one reason why they do not accept it as being authentic Scripture, is that the church fathers did not quote the verse, in their battle against the Arians. This historical event completely refutes that assertion, as these bishops quoted this verse, in defence of their faith, in the presence of their Arian opponents.

<sup>57</sup> Fulgentius – “Responsio contra Arianos” - [https://wiki2.org/en/Comma\\_Johanneum#Fulgentius](https://wiki2.org/en/Comma_Johanneum#Fulgentius). Accessed 2/02/2020.

<sup>58</sup> Cassiodorus – “Complexionn in Episttt. Paulinn”. “An inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, or Received Text of the New Testament: in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the Integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin.” by Frederick Nolan; 1815; p. 292.

<sup>59</sup> [http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1\\_John\\_5:7#Codex\\_Fuldensis](http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1_John_5:7#Codex_Fuldensis). Accessed 17/11/2019.

The “Venerable” Bede [672/3 – 26 May 735 of the Christian era], directly quoted 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7. This reference is contained in a Latin Manuscript, located at Balliol College, in England. Although the Manuscript is dated to the 13th century, obviously Bede would have written it during his life time. Most likely it was written during the 8th century of the Christian era. It is listed as “MS. Ball. 177 – Beda – Heironymus”. The page which the specific statement is located on that quotes 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7, is listed as “83r”.

Below I shall give the Latin translation, and then directly underneath, I shall give an English translation.

“Quia tres sunt qui testimonium dant in celo pater uerbum et spiritus sanctus. Et hii tres sunt [sic].”<sup>60</sup>

**“There are three that bear record in heaven the Father the Word and the Holy Spirit. And these three are one.”**

In an ancient Confession of Faith of the Waldensian Christians dated to 1120 of the Christian era, the Trinity doctrine is plainly affirmed, and this Confession directly quotes 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 in this statement of faith.

“We must believe in God the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth: the which **God is one Trinity**, as it is written in the law: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one.” And Isaiah: “I am the Lord, and there is none else; neither is there any God besides me.” And St Paul, in the fourth of the Ephesians: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” And St John: “**There are three that bear witness in heaven; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.**” And the Gospel of St John shows, that **the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one**, when Jesus Christ says, “that they all may be one as we are one.” We must likewise believe that **this Holy Trinity** has created all things, and is the Lord of all things celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, as it is in St John: “All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”<sup>61</sup>

The Fourth Lateran Church Council in 1215 of the Christian era, quoted directly from the comma, in its Second Canon: -

“For the faithful of Christ, he says, are not one in the sense that they are some one thing that is common to all, but in the sense that they constitute one Church by reason of the unity of the Catholic faith and one kingdom by reason of the union of indissoluble charity, **as we read in the canonical Epistle of St. John: “There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one” (I John 5: 7).**<sup>62</sup> And immediately it is added: “And there are three who give testimony on earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one” (I John 5: 8), as it is found in some codices.”<sup>63</sup>

In the fourteenth century of the Christian era, we find that the Armenian Church and its Bible gave witness to 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7's existence.

“It had been early noticed that Uscan’s text contains the verse 1 John v. 7.; and this led to the *suspicion* that he had himself inserted it by translation from the Latin: indeed he seems to have admitted that he used the Latin to supply what he found defective in his MS. But it was doubted whether *this* addition was due to Uscan, for it was said that Haitho or Haithom, the king of Armenia in the thirteenth century (1224 – 70), had introduced the verse; in fact, that he had revised the Armenian version by the Latin Vulgate, and that he had translated

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<sup>60</sup> “*Raising the Ghost of Arius – Erasmus, the Johannine Comma and Religious Difference in Early Modern Europe.*” By Grantley Robert McDonald; 2011; p.44 – note 58.

<sup>61</sup> “History of the Waldenses”; by Adam Blair; 1832. Appendix No. VI; page 523.

<sup>62</sup> It should also be noted, that there was also a Greek translation made of this Council’s proceedings, which also included a Greek translation of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7. “Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουμτες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, λογος, και το πνευμα αγιον’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν. [ευθευς τε προζιθησι]” - “*Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. author of the History of the Decline, and Fall, of the Roman Empire.*” By George Travis; 1785; p. 286.

<sup>63</sup> [http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1\\_John\\_5:7#Fourth\\_Lateran\\_Council\\_in\\_1215](http://textus-receptus.com/wiki/1_John_5:7#Fourth_Lateran_Council_in_1215). Accessed 23/01/2020.

even all the *prefaces* which bear the name of Jerome, real and spurious, into Armenian: that he did this last work seems pretty certain.”

“As 1 John v. 7. is quoted by a synod held at Sis in Armenia thirty-seven years after the death of Haithom [that is 1303 A. D. – compiler] it was deemed pretty certain that it had been brought into the text by that king, whose adherence to the Western Church was very marked, and who at length became a Franciscan monk.”<sup>64</sup>

The Orthodox “Confession” of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church, which was written by Peter Mogila in 1640, directly quotes this verse of Scripture.

“For what the Father is in his Nature, the same is the Son and the Holy Ghost. Now the Father is, in his Nature, true and eternal God, the Creator of all things both visible and invisible. Such therefore is the Son, entirely without any Difference, and the Holy Ghost; and all these are consubstantial with each other. **Accordingly the Evangelist teacheth (1 John v. 7), There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.**”<sup>65</sup>

☞ It should also be pointed out to the reader, that there was no questioning or even a suspicion against the genuineness of this verse, from the first centuries of the Christian era, until early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The church fathers did not question its authenticity, nor did the proponents of unorthodox heresies question its genuineness. It was only after Erasmus’s first two editions of his Greek New Testament did not include this verse, that some churchmen were stirred to ask why he had not included it in his Greek New Testament. Before that time, there was complete silence relating to any questioning of its genuineness.

## **11.] THE TEPL CODEX AND THE COMMA: -**

There is a surviving codex of the New Testament, that was translated into the Middle-High German language, that is dated to approximately 1400 of the Christian era. It is called the Codex Tepl, or Codex Telpensis. It is located at the Premonstratensian convent of Tepl in Bohemia. This Codex of the New Testament, formed the textual basis for all of the first printed editions of the German New Testament, from the invention of the printing press in the 1450’s, to the first edition of Martin Luther’s German New Testament in 1522.

The following two statements establish the fact that the Codex Teplensis was the textual basis for all of the printed, pre-Luther, German New Testaments.

“During the fourteenth century some unknown scholars prepared a new translation of the whole Bible into the Middle High German dialect. It slavishly follows the Latin Vulgate. It may be compared to Wiclif’s English Version (1380), which was likewise made from the Vulgate, the original languages being then almost unknown in Europe. **A copy of the New Testament of this version has been recently published, from a manuscript in the Premonstratensian convent of Tepl in Bohemia.** Another copy is preserved in the college library at Freiberg in Saxony. Both are from the fourteenth century, **and agree almost word for word with the first printed German Bible**, but contain, besides the New Testament, the apocryphal letter of St. Paul to the Laodiceans, which is a worthless compilation of a few sentences from the genuine writings of the apostle.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> “An introduction to the critical study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.” by Thomas Hartwell Horne; tenth edition; Volume 4; 1856; p. 312.

<sup>65</sup> “The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church from the version of Peter Mogila.” Edited by J. J. Overbeck; 1898; p. 17.

<sup>66</sup> “History of the Christian Church”; Volume 7; By Philip Schaff; Chapter IV; “The German Reformation from the Diet of Worms to the Peasants’ War, A.D. 1521 – 1525”; § 62, “Earlier Versions”. Accessed [https://www.bible.ca/history/philip-schaff/7\\_ch04.htm](https://www.bible.ca/history/philip-schaff/7_ch04.htm). Accessed 3/03/2020.

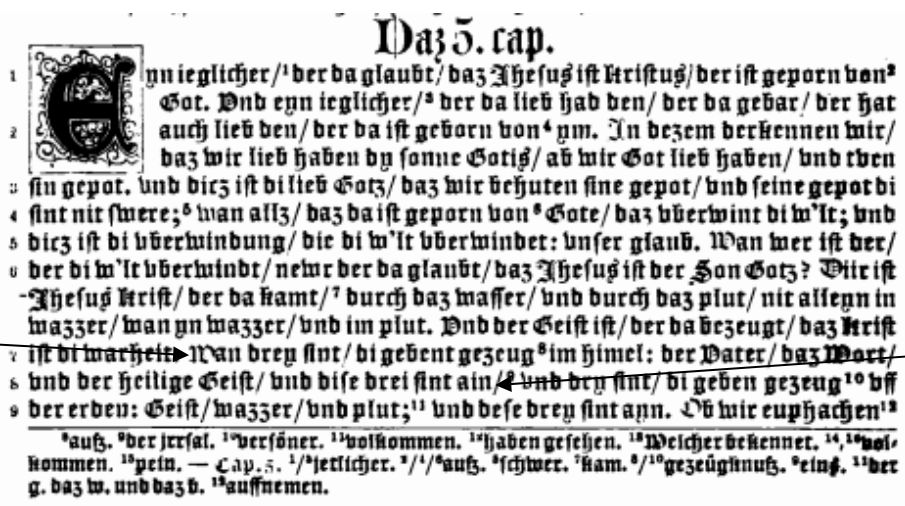


“It is certain at any rate that **all the early German printed Bibles follow a text derived, as regards the New Testament and part of the Old, from a group of late fourteenth century manuscripts**, and that this text is followed in the majority of the manuscript plenaries, or collections of the epistles and gospels, with glosses. There was, that is to say, a German translation of the New Testament at least, which was sufficiently widely known to be copied in all the plenaries and early printed Bibles, and to be translated into Low Dutch. **The oldest and most remarkable manuscripts of this translation are those at Wolfenbüttel, Frieberg and Tepl, all written shortly before or after 1400, the oldest being the New Testament which belongs to the cloister of Tepl in Bohemia.**”<sup>67</sup>

The same researcher has provided evidence that the Codex Tepl originated from a Waldensian source.

“It is [that is, the Codex Tepl – compiler] characterised by a set of peculiar readings, amounting to over thirty, in the Acts of the Apostles, and these readings appear, as S. Berger pointed out, in the early Provençal, Catalan and Italian Bibles. **They appear also in the Tepl manuscript: and S. Berger, whose authority is very high, gave it as his opinion that the prototype of the Tepl manuscript was translated from such a Latin version, or even from a very early Provençal version: he therefore concluded that the Tepl manuscript was of Waldensian origin.**”<sup>68</sup>

One more important fact I need to bring to the reader’s attention concerning this important German Bible Manuscript. The Codex Tepl contains 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7. I have reproduced below the start of the fifth chapter of this epistle, which contains the comma, which I have highlighted.



## 12.] THE PRE-LUTHER GERMAN BIBLES AND THE COMMA: -

From the time of the invention of the art of printing, until 1522, when Martin Luther produced his "September Testament", there were many printed versions of the German New Testament. It is very interesting to note, they nearly all contained 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7.

**NOTE: -** All of the following historical extracts concerning the pre-Lutheran, German Bibles that contained 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7, have been taken from Michael Maynard's excellent and thorough historical survey of the controversy surrounding the Johannine Comma: -

"A History of the Debate over 1 John 5, 7 – 8 – A Tracing of the Longevity of the *Comma Johanneum*, With Evaluations of Arguments Against its Authenticity." By Michael Maynard, M. L. S.; 1995; pp. 65 – 68.

1466 [G01]:pre-Lutheran German Bible (Strassburg: Johann Mentel)

Wann drey seind die gebent gezeug auf der erde, der geist, wasser, vnd blut, vnd dise drey seind ein. Vnd drey seind die gebent gezeug im himel, der vatter, das wort, vnd der heilig geist; vnd dise drey seind ein.

1470 [G02]: pre-Lutheran German Bible (Strassburg: H. Eggestein)

(This was available neither in Tübingen nor in Leipzig)

1475 [G03]; pre-Lutheran German Bible (Augsburg: Jocus Pflanzmann)

Man drey seind die gebe gezeug auff dez erd, der geyst wasser vnd blut, vnd dise drey seind ei Vnd drey seind die gebet gezeug im himel, der vater, das wort, vnd der heilig gaist, vn dise drey seind ein.

1476 [G04] pre-Lutheran German Bible (Augsburg: Günther Zainer)

wan drey seind die da gebent gezeugnub auff der erde, d' geyst, das wasser, vn dz blut, vnd dise drey seind eins. Vnd drey seind die da gebent gezeugnub im himel. Der vatter, das wort, vnd der heylig gist vnd dise drey seind eyng. Ob wit auffnemen

1476 [G05] pre-Lutheran German Bible (Nuremberg: Johannes Sensenschmidt & Andreas Frisner) p. xcv.

was drey sind die da gebet gezeugnus; uff o erde der geyst,  
das wasser, vnd das plut, und dise drey sind eins. Vn drey  
sind die da gebent gezeugnus; im himel Der vatter, das  
wort, vn der heylig geyst, vnd dise drey sind eins.  
Ob wir affnemen. . .

The words "Monastery Wemgartensis AniGis" are written in the Tübingen copy. On the inside of the front cover, one finds the words "De hac Editione Vid. D. Panzer . . ."

1477 [G06] pre-Lutheran German Bible (Augsburg: Günther Zainer)

wan drei seind die do gebent gezeugnub auff d'erd, d'geyst,  
d; wasser vn d; plut, vn dise drei sind eins Vn drei seind  
die do gebent zeugnub i himel. Der vater d; wort vn d'heylig  
geyst, vnd dise drei seind eins. Ob wir aufneme. . .

1477 [G07] pre-Lutheran German Bible (Augsburg: Anton Sorg)

wan drey seind die da gebent gezeugk-nub auff dez erde, der  
geyst, das wasser, vnd das blut vnd dise drey seind eins.  
Vn drey seind die da gebent gezeugnub im hymel. Der vater,  
das wort, vnd der heylig geyst und dise drey seind eins. Ob  
wir auffnemen.

In the copy in Tübingen, the verse is underlined in red.

1478 Kölner Bible (pre-Lutheran low-German Bible)

7. wente dre sint de dar gheuen ghetuchnisse in dem  
hemmel. de vadeer. dat word, vnde de hillighe gheyst.  
vnde desse dre sint een. 8. Vnde dre sint de dar  
gheuen ghetuchnisse vp der erden. de gheyst. dat  
water. vnde dat bloed. vnde desse dre sint een.<sup>167</sup>

1480 [G08] pre-Lutheran German Bible: (Augsburg: Anton Sorg)

wann drey seind die do gebent gezeugknuff all o erd der geyst  
daz wasser und das plut. un disc drey seynd eyns. Un drey seind  
die do gebet zeugknuff im himel. Der vater dz wort und heilig  
geist. un disc drei seind eins Ob wir auffneme

1483 [G09] pre-Lutheran German Bible (Nuremberg: Anton  
Koberger)

wan drey sind, Sy da geben gezewgnub auff der erde, der geyst,  
dz wasser, und daz blut, und dise drey sind eins. Und drey sind  
die da geben gezewgnub im hymel. Der vater, das wort, vn der  
heplig geyst, vn dise drey seind eins. Ob wir aufnehmen . . .

1485 [G10] pre-Lutheran German Bible (Strassburg: Johann  
Reinhard de Grüningen)

Wann drey seind, die da geben gezewgnub auff der ere, d'  
geist das wasser, vnd das Blut, vnnnd dise drey seind eins.  
Vnnnd drey sind dye da geßben gezewgnub imm hymel.  
Der vatter das wort, vnd der heilig geist, und dyse drey  
seind eins, Ob wir aufnehmen . . .

1490 [G12] pre-Luthern German Bible (Augsburg: Johann  
Schönsperger)

wann drey sind, die da geben gezeugknub auff der erde,  
der geyst, das wasser, vnnnd auch dz blutt, vnnnd dise drey  
sind eyns. Und drey sind die da geben gezeugknub im  
hymmel. Der vater, das wortt, vnnnd der heylige geyst,  
vn dise drey sind eins. Ob wir aufnehmen . . .

☞ Clearly, 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 has a rich textual history in the printed editions of the pre-Lutheran German Bibles!

### 13.] THE FIRST PRINTED EDITIONS OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT AND 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7: -

**NOTE: -** The following **TABLE** will outline in chronological order, **some** of the first printed editions of the Greek New Testament during its first 200 years of being printed, and how 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 appeared in these editions. I will share with the reader 40 such examples, but the **TABLE** is not intended to be exhaustive, as over 240<sup>69</sup> different printed editions of the Greek New Testament were printed between 1514 and 1707. This list will

<sup>69</sup> In "A Companion to the Greek Testament and the English Version", written by Philip Schaff, which was printed in 1883, Dr. Schaff lists 246 printed editions having been printed between 1514 to 1707. See pages 498 – 505.

demonstrate for the reader, that in the history of the printed Greek New Testament text, 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 has solid, historical support.

<b><u>PRINTED GREEK NEW TESTAMENT: -</u></b>	<b><u>1<sup>ST</sup> John 5:7: -</u></b>
1. 1514 – Complutensian Polyglot. [It was the first edition of the <b>printed</b> Greek New Testament, although it was not published until 1522.] It was printed in Alcalá, Spain.	οτι Τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουμτες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ και ο λογος και Το αγιον πνευμα, και οι Τρεις εις Το εν εισι.
2. 1516 – Erasmus – “Novum Intrumentum omne”. [It was the first <b>published</b> edition of the Greek New Testament.] Printed in Basel, Switzerland.	Omitted.
3. 1518 – Aldine’s Greek Bible – “Sacrae Scripturae Veteris, Novaéque omnia”. [It was the first complete Bible printed in Greek.] It was printed in Venice, Italy.	Omitted. [As the New Testament portion of this Bible was based on Erasmus’ 1516 edition, it should come as no surprise that <u>1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7</u> was omitted.]
4. 1519 – Erasmus - “Novum Testamentum omne.” It was printed in Basel, Switzerland.	Omitted.
5. 1522 – Erasmus– “Novum Testamentum omne.” It contained a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Basel, Switzerland.	οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, πατηρ, λογος, και πνευμα αγιον, και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
6. 1524 – Jacob Ceperinus - “Tēs Kainēs Diathēkēs hapanta = Novi Testamenti omnia.” It was printed in Basel, Switzerland.	οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, πατηρ, λογος, και πνευμα αγιον, και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
7. 1527 – Erasmus - “Novum Testamentum omne.” It contained a Greek, Latin and Latin Vulgate text. It was printed in Basel, Switzerland.	οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το πνευμα αγιον, και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
8. 1534 – Simon de Colines. “Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ.” It was printed in Paris, France.	Omitted.
9. 1535 – Erasmus - “Novum Testamentum.” It had both a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Basel, Switzerland. <b>NOTE: -</b> This was the fifth and final edition that was produced by Erasmus	οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το πνευμα αγιον. και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
10. 1540 – Johannes Ökolampadius translator; printer Thomas Platter - “Tēs Kainēs Diathēkēs hapanta = Novum Testamentum.” It was printed in Basil, Switzerland.	οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, πατηρ, λογος, και πνευμα αγιον, και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
11. 1546 - Robert Estienne [a.k.a. Stephanus] –	οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω

<p>"Novum Testamentum". It was printed in Paris, France.</p>	<p>ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>12. 1549 – Robert Estienne - "Novum Testamentum". It was printed in Paris, France.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>13. 1550 – Robert Estienne – "Novum Jesu Christi D. N Testamentum Editio Regia". It was printed in Paris, France.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες †εν τω ουρανω) ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.<sup>70</sup></p>
<p>14. 1551 – Robert Estienne – "Apanta ta tês kainês diathêkês. Novum Jesu Christi D. N. Testamentum." It had a Greek and Latin text. [It was the first edition of the New Testament in the Greek language to be divided into verses.] It was printed at Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>15. 1553 – Jean or John Crispin's 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Greek New Testament. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες †εν τω ουρανω) ο πατηρ ο λογος και το αγιον πνευμα και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισιν<sup>71</sup></p>
<p>16. 1559 – Theodore Beza – "Tês kainês Diathêkês apanta - Novum Jesu Christi Domini nostri Testamentum latine." It contained both a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα, και ουτοι οι τρεις εις εν εισιν.</p>
<p>17. 1564 - Jean or John Crispin – "Tês Kainês Diathêkês apanta." It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>18. 1565 – Theodore Beza - "Jesu Christi D. N. Novum Testamentum, sive Novum Foedus. Cuius graeco textui respondent interpretationes duae."</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εις εν εισιν.</p>

<sup>70</sup> "Stephens (or Estienne) included 1 John v.7f, but marked the words εν τω ουρανω as wanting in seven MSS. The words marked off by "+" and ")" indicate the extent of the omission." – *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5, 7 – 8 – A Tracing of the Longevity of the Comma Johanneum, With Evaluations of Arguments Against its Authenticity.* By Michael Maynard, M. L. S.; 1995; p. 91.

<sup>71</sup> "In 1553, Stephanus' folio edition of 1550 was reprinted in a small volume (3¾ by 5½ inches) by Jean Crispin (or Crespin), the French printer of Geneva, who published many editions of the Scriptures in various languages, including the second quarto English Geneva Bible of 1570. Crispin reproduced the text of Stephanus with only half a dozen minor alterations. The variant readings of the 1550 folio edition are also reproduced,"<sup>A</sup> though without Stephanus' sigla referring to individual manuscripts." – *The Text of the New Testament – Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration.* By Bruce M. Metzger and Bard D. Ehrman; fourth edition; 2005; p. 151.

"... it might be further remarked, that John Crispin (an advocate of the parliament of Paris, who had retired to Geneva, for the sake of the free exercise of the reformed religion) published a new edition of the Greek Testament, at Geneva, in A. D. 1553; wherein the **obelus, and crotchet, retain the same place, in regard to this verse, that they possessed in the edition of Robert Stephens:** which is a proof that Stephens, who was then a fellow citizen with Crispin, never found out (what you, Sir, it seems, have now found out for him) any "typographical error in the placing his crotchet." – *Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. author of the History of the Decline, and Fall, of the Roman Empire.* By George Travis; 1785; p. 11.

It contained both the Greek, Vulgate, and Latin texts in parallel columns, with notes by Beza. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	
19. 1567 – Theodore Beza – “Jesu Christi D.N. Novum Testamentum, Gr. et Lat. Theodoro Beza interprete.” It contained both a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
20. 1573 – Christopher Plantin – “Biblia Regia [that is, the “King’s Bible”], also known as the Plantin or Antwerp Polyglot. The New Testament was translated into Greek, Syriac and Latin. It was printed in Antwerp, Belgium.	οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, και ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα, οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν.
21. 1576 – Henri Estienne [he was the eldest son of Robert Estienne] - “HĒ Kainê Diathêkê. Novum Testamentum.” It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, και ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
22. 1580 – Theodore Beza – “Jesu Christi D.N. Novum Testamentum, Gr. et Lat. Theodoro Beza interprete.” It contained both a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, και ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα’ οι τρεις εν εισι.
23. 1582 – Theodore Beza - “Jesu Christi D.N. Novum Testamentum, sive novum foedus: cuius Graeco contextui respondent interpretationes duae”. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισιν.
24. 1587 – Eustache Vignon – “Tês Kainês Diathêkês apanta. Novi Testamenti libri omnes cum notis Isaaci Casauboni.” It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
25. 1588 – Theodore Beza’s - “Testamentum novum, sive novum foedus Jesu Christi, D. N. Cujus graeco contextui”. It contained both a Greek and Latin translation. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισιν.
26. 1590 – Theodore Beza – “Novum Jesu Christi Testamentum, Graece et Latine: Theodoro Beza interprete.” It contained both a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισιν.
27. 1598 – Theodore Beza – “Jesu Christi Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum.” It had a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα’ και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι’
28. 1599 - Elias Hutter’s Polyglot Bible.	Οτι τρεις οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο

<p>The New Testament was translated into twelve different languages: - Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Bohemian [a Czech dialect], Italian, Spanish, French, English, Dutch and Polish. It was printed in Nuremberg, Germany.</p>	<p>πατηρ, ο λογος. και το αγιον πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>29. 1604 - Henri Estienne – “Hê Kainê Diathêkê = Novum Testamentum.” It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>30. 1617 – Henri Estienne and Isaac Casaubon - “Hê Kainê Diathêkê = Novum Testamentum.” It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>31. 1620 – Pierre de La Roviere - “Tēs Kainēs Diathêkēs hapanta = Novum Jesu Christi D.N. Testamentum.” It was printed in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, και ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα. και ουτοι οι τρεις εις το εν εισι.</p>
<p>32. 1624 - Abraham and Bonaventure Elzevir's Greek New Testament. It was printed in Leiden, Holland.</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>33. 1639 – Joannis Jassonii – “Novum Testamentum”. It was printed in Amsterdam, Holland.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα, και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>34. 1657 – Brian Walton's “Biblia Sacra Polyglotta”. It was printed in London, England.</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>35. 1658 – Stephen Curcellaeus [a.k.a Etienne de Courcelles] – “Novum Testamentum.” It was printed in Amsterdam, Holland.</p>	<p>7. οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες [εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα. και ουτοι οι τρεις * εν εισι. 8. και τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τη γη.]</p>
<p>36. 1660 – Edited by Johann Heinrich Boecler. “Novum Testamentus Accessit Prologis in Epistolas S. Apostoli Pauli, ex antiquissimo MSC.” It was printed in Argentorati – that is, Strasbourg, France.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα, και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.</p>
<p>37. 1671 – Henry Bodmer – “Hê Kainê Diathêkê tou Kyriou hêmon Iêsou Christou - Novum Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi.” [This was based on Theodore Beza's previous translation work.] It contained both a Greek and Latin text. It was printed in Zurich, Switzerland.</p>	<p>Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα' και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι,</p>
<p>38. 1675 – Johanne Leusden. “Novum Testamentum”.</p>	<p>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω</p>



It contained both a Greek and Latin translation. It was printed in Utrecht, Holland.	ουρανω, ο πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον πνευμα, και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.
39. 1677 – Henry Bodmer - “Hē Kainē Diathēkē = Novum Testamentum.” It was printed in Zurich, Switzerland.	Οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω, ο Πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το αγιον Πνευμα και οι τρεις εν εισι.
40. 1707 – John Mill. “Novum Testamentum Græcum, cum Lectionibus Variantibus MSS. exemplarium, versionum, editionum Ss. Patrum et Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum, et in easdem notis”. It was printed in Oxford, England.	Οτι τρεις οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω*, ο Πατηρ, * ο Λογος, *και το αγιω Πνευμα *και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι.

#### 14.] A BRIEF TRANSLATION HISTORY OF 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7: -

**NOTE: -** The following TABLE gives a reasonably thorough overview of the translation history of how 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 has been translated since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. I have listed the translations in order of publication, and quite a number of these translations are in foreign languages. In these cases, I have supplied a literal English translation from “Google’s Translator”.

I have stopped the list at 1881, with the publication of the English Revised Version. This is because it was a pivotal event in moving away from the traditional and long established Greek Textus Receptus, and developing a new Critical Greek Text. This new Critical Greek Text forms the basis of modern New Testament textual criticism, and for most modern English version New Testaments.

A number of observations may be helpful to make at this point: -

- A. The traditional Trinitarian reading of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 existed before Erasmus’ 1522 Greek New Testament came out.
- B. The traditional Trinitarian reading of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 thrived throughout Christendom during the era of the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, not only in English language versions, but in nearly all other European language versions of that time period.
- C. The traditional Trinitarian reading of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 was virtually unchallenged until the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. And finally,
- D. The traditional Trinitarian reading of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 started to come under attack in some of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century English versions. Some of the translators of these versions were Unitarians in their personal belief, and their personal faith may very well have impacted upon their translation of this verse. Also, these translators started to use recently published Critical Greek Texts, which omitted the traditional Trinitarian reading of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 from their Critical Greek Texts.

<b>PUBLICATION DATE: -</b>	<b>TRANSLATION: -</b>	<b>READING OF 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7:-</b>
1. Before John Wycliffe’s Bible	Based on a manuscript in the possession of Dr. Adam Clarke: -	“... in an ancient English manuscript of my own, which contains the Bible from the beginning of Proverbs to the end of the New Testament, written on thick strong vellum, and <b>evidently</b>

		<p><b>prior to most of those copies attributed to Wiclif.</b></p> <p>“For three ben that geven witnessing in heven the Fadir, the Word or Sone and the Hooly Goost, and these three ben oon.”<sup>72</sup></p>
2. 1382	<b>Wycliffe’s Bible</b>	“For thre ben, that yyuen witnessing in heuene, the Fadir, the Sone, and the Hooli Goost; and these thre ben oon.”
3. 1400	<b>“A 14<sup>th</sup> Century English Biblical Version.”</b> edited by Anna C. Paus.	“For per bep pre pat beuep wytnesse in hefne, pe Fader, & pe Sone, & pe Holy Spiryt: & pese pre bep on.” p. 73 <b>NOTE:</b> - In this translation, p = th.
4. 1481	<b>“Biblia Latina” – the Latin Bible.</b> <b>NOTE:</b> - It was printed in Basel, Switzerland.	Qm tres sunt q’ testimonium dant i celo: pater verbum et spiritus et hi tres unu sunt. “And there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit: and these three are one.”
5. 1531	<b>German “Die gantze Bibel”.</b> <b>NOTE:</b> - It was published by Christopher Froschauer.	Dan drey sind die zeugnuß gebend im himel: Der vater, das wort, und der heylig geyst, und die drey dienend in eins. “For there are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”
6. 1534	<b>William Tyndale’s New Testament.</b>	“(For ther are thre which beare recorde in heuen the father the worde and the wholly goost. And these thre are one)”
7. 1535	<b>Coverdale’s Bible</b>	“(For there are thre which beare recorde in heauen: the father, the worde, and the holy goost, & these thre are one.)”
8. 1535	<b>French – Robert Olivetan’s Bible</b> <b>NOTE:</b> - This was a Bible produced and paid for by the Waldensian Churches, and it also relied upon old Waldensian manuscripts.	Car il y en a trois qui donet témoignage au ciel, le père, la parole, et le saint-esprit: et ces trois sont ung. “For there are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and

<sup>72</sup> “A concise view of the succession of sacred literature, in a chronological arrangement of authors and their works, from the invention of alphabetical characters, to the year of our Lord 1445.” – by Dr. Adam Clarke; 1839; p. 80.

<sup>73</sup> I have not been able to find a translation of this old English rendition of the verse into modern English.

		these three are one.”
9. 1535	<b>French “La Bible”.</b> <b>NOTE:</b> - John Calvin & Robert Olivétan; Bonaventure Des Periers amongst others, played a significant part in this French translation.	Car il en ya trois qui donet témoignage au ciel: le père, la parolle, et le saint-esprit et ces trois sont ung. “For there are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”
10. 1537	<b>Matthew’s Bible</b>	“(For there are thre which beare recorde in heauen, the father, the worde, and the holye Ghoste. And these thre are one.)”
11. 1539	<b>The Great Bible</b>	“(For ther are thre which beare recorde in heauen the father the worde & the wholly goost. And these thre are one.)”
12. 1555	<b>French – Italian New Testament – Gianluigi Paschale.</b>	Car il y en a trois qui donent tésmoignage au ciel: le Père, la Parolle, & le Saint Esprit: & ces trois sont un.” [French]  Perciocche tre sono che rendono testimonianza in cielo, il Padre, la la Parola, e lo Spirito Santo: e questi tre sono uno. [Italian]  “Because there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.”
13. 1557	<b>The Geneva Bible’s New Testament</b>	“For there are three, which beare recorde in heauen, the Father, the Worde, and the holy Ghost: and these three are one.”
14. 1563.	<b>John Calvin’s French Bible.</b>	Car il y en a trois qui donnent tésmoignage au ciel, le Père, la Parole, & le Saint Esprit: & ces trois sont un. “Because there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.”
15. 1568	<b>The Bishop’s Bible</b>	“For there are three which beare recorde in heauen, the father, the worde, and the holy ghost, and these three are one.”
16. 1569	<b>Spanish Las Sagrdas Escrituras</b>	“Porque tres son los que dan testimonio del cielo: el Padre, la

		Palabra y el Espiritu Santo; y estos tres son uno.” “Because there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; And these three are one.”
17. 1570	<b>French – “La Bible” – Old and New Testaments. Sébastien Honorat.</b>	Car il y en a trois qui donnent tésmoignage au ciel, le Père, la Parole, & le Saint Esprit: & ces trois sont un. “Because there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.”
18. 1571	<b>Basque Navarro-Labourdin New Testament</b>	Ecen hirur dirade testificatzen dutenac ceruän, Aita, Hitzza, eta Spiritu saindua: eta hauc hirurac bat dirade. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.”
19. 1582	<b>Douay-Rheim’s Catholic Bible</b>	“And there are Three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one.
20. 1590	<b>Hungarian Vizsoly (Karoli) Biblia</b>	Mert hárman vannak, a kik bizonyóságot tesznek a mennyben, az Atya, az Íge és a Szent Lélek: és ez a három egy. “For there are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”
21. 1592	<b>Clementine Vulgate</b>	Quoniam tres sunt, qui testimonium dant in cælo: Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus: et hi tres unum sunt. “And there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”
22. 1611	<b>King James Version</b>	“For there are three that beare record in heauen, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost: and these three are one.”
23. 1613	<b>Czech Bible Kralicka</b>	Nebo tři jsou, kteříž svědectví vydávají na nebi: Otec, Slovo, a Duch Svatý, a ti tři jedno jsou.

		“For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and the three are one.”
24. 1637	<b>Dutch Statenvertaling – “States-General Bible”</b>	Want Drie zijn er, Die getuigen in den hemel, de Vader, het Woord en de Heilige Geest; en deze Drie zijn Een. “For there are three that testify in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.”
25. 1649	<b>Italian Giovanni Diodati Bibbia</b>	Perciocchè tre son quelli che testimoniano nel cielo: il Padre, e la Parola, e lo Spirito Santo; e questi tre sono una stessa cosa. “For there are three who testify in heaven: the Father, and the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one and the same.”
26. 1729	<b>Daniel Mace’s New Testament</b>	“There are three witnesses in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three testify the same thing.”
27. 1744	<b>French – David Martin – La Bible</b>	Car il y en a trois dans le Ciel qui rendent témoignage, le Père, la Parole, et le Saint-Esprit; et ces trois-là ne sont qu'un. “For there are three in Heaven that bear witness, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are just one.”
28. 1745	<b>William Whiston’s Primitive New Testament</b>	“For there are three that bear record.” <b>NOTE:</b> - William Whiston was a known Arian, and his translation of this verse reflects his belief. He used the <i>Greek Alexandrian MS.</i> which was then housed in the King’s Library at St. James’, to translate the Catholic Epistles and the Revelation.
29. 1755	<b>John Wesley’s New Testament</b>	“And there are three that testify in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.” <b>NOTE:</b> - This is listed as VS. 8 in Wesley’s translation.

30. 1776	Finnish Biblia	Sillä kolme ovat, jotka todistavat taivaassa: Isä, Sana ja Pyhä Henki, ja ne kolme yksi ovat: “For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.”
31. 1795	Thomas Haweis' New Testament	“For they are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these, even the three, are one.”
32. 1808	Charles Thomson's Version	“because there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood, and these three are to one and the same thing.”
33. 1833	Noah Webster's Bible	“For there are three that bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.”
34. 1852	James Murdock's New Testament – translated from the SYRIAC PESHITO VERSION	“*[For there are three that testify in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.]” * This verse is wanting in most MSS., and is omitted in the edit. London, 1826.
35. 1853	Western Armenian New Testament	Արդարեւ երեք են՝ որ կր վկայեն երկինքի մէջ.- Հայրը, Խօսքը եւ Սուրբ Հոգին, ու այս երեքը մէկ են: Ardarev yere'k' yen` vor ky vkayen yerkin'k'i mej.- Hayry, Khosk'y yev Surb Hogin, u ays yerek'y mek yen.” “For there are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.”
36. 1858	L. A. Sawyer's New Testament	“For there are three that testify; the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three are one.” <b>NOTE:</b> - Sawyer followed the textual critic, Constantin (von) Tischendorf's 1850 revised Leipsic Greek text.
37. 1862	Robert Young's Literal Translation	“because three are who are testifying in the heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these — the three — are one.”

38. 1868	<b>George R. Noyes' New Testament</b>	<p>"For there are three that bear witness,"</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> - George Noyes was an American Unitarian minister, whose personal belief was opposed to the Trinity doctrine.</p> <p>"A translation of the Greek New Testament of Tischendorf into English by George R. Noyes."</p>
39. 1871	<b>Danish – Dansk Bible</b>	<p>Thi de ere tre, som vidne (i Himmelen: Faderen, Ordet og den Hellig Aand; og disse tre ere eet.</p> <p>"For there are three that bear witness (in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost), and these three are one."</p>
40. 1871	<b>Ukrainian New Testament – P. Kulish</b>	<p>Бо три їх, що свідкують на небі: Отець, Слово і святий Дух, і сі три – одно</p> <p>Bo try yikh, shcho s'vidkuyut' na nebi: Otets', Slovo i s'vyatyy Dukh, i syi try – jedno</p> <p>"For there are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one"</p>
41. 1872	<b>Joseph Bryant Rotheram's Emphasized Bible</b>	<p>"Because, three, are they who are bearing witness—."</p>
42. 1876	<b>Julia E. Smith's Version</b>	<p>"For three are testifying (in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one."</p>
43. 1876	<b>Russian Synodal Translation</b>	<p>Ибо три свидетельствуют на небе: Отец, Слово и Святой Дух; и Сии три суть едино.</p> <p>Ibo tri svidetel'stvuyut na nebe: Otets, Slovo i Svyatyy Dukh; i Sii tri sut' yedino</p> <p>"For three bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one."</p>
44. 1881	<b>English Revised Revsion</b>	<p>"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth."</p>

## CONCLUSION: -

I have thoroughly followed through in my investigation, many of the various issues and common misconceptions in researching this subject. I can say from personal conviction, that there is a clear weight of evidence that authenticates the genuineness of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7.

While I commenced this Study Document with repeating the main objections raised against this verse's authenticity by its critics [that is, a lack of evidence for its existence in old Greek New Testament manuscripts, the writings of the Greek Church fathers, and in some of the early non-Greek Bible translations], I have been able to offer reasonable evidence which more than compensates for these objections.

I have documented thoroughly from the writings of the acknowledged Erasmusian scholar, H. J. De Jonge, who can find no evidence at all that supports the long held myth, that Erasmus only included this verse, in his third edition of his Greek New Testament, to keep an **supposed** promise he had made, to include this verse if a Greek New Testament manuscript could be produced which contained this verse. No such statement of a promise has been found in any of Erasmus' writings.

I supplied evidence that this verse is found in at least **eleven [11]** Greek New Testament manuscripts, some in the body of the text, and some in the margin. It was also pointed out, that there are only 12 early [that is before the 11<sup>th</sup> Century of the Christian era] Greek New Testament manuscripts of 1<sup>st</sup> John Chapter 5 that do not contain the disputed verse. The overwhelming majority of manuscripts that contain this chapter, that do not contain this verse, are late manuscripts.

Most modern textual critics who condemn this verse, because of the lack of Greek New Testament manuscript support, are totally inconsistent. That is, because they don't care at all about majority of manuscript evidence, when they rely on only a few early manuscripts to build their "critical text" upon.

The well established rules of Greek grammar clearly authenticates this verse. Whereas its omission makes VS. 8 contradict the rules of Greek grammar.

The surrounding context of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:1 – 10 also supports the authenticity of this verse.

There is an abundance of manuscript evidence for this verse's authenticity, found in both the Old Latin version – *the Itala*; and in Vulgate manuscripts.

There is also an abundance of evidence in Christian writings throughout history, dating from as early as the third century of the Christian era, that supports the genuineness of this verse's existence in the Scriptures.

The fourteenth century German Bible manuscript, the Codex Tepl contains this verse.

The pre-Lutheran German printed Bibles contains this verse within them.

There is also an abundance of evidence for the existence of this verse, in the first printed editions of the Greek New Testament.

When examining the translation history of this verse from the emergence of the Protestant Reformation, there is a clear weight of evidence for its authenticity, not only in English language translations, but also in many other language translations. It was only within the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with the emergence of the "critical text" school of theology, that new Bible versions and translations started to omit this verse from their pages.

To conclude, I find that there is indeed a clear weight of evidence that supports the authenticity of this verse's existence. While this verse does indeed help to reinforce the truthfulness of the Trinity doctrine, it more importantly establishes the Trinity's witness to the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And as such, it harmonizes perfectly with the Apostle John's theology found within the pages of his inspired writings. Surely, leaving this verse in the Scriptures, helps to uplift Jesus Christ's Divinity; while removing it, helps to down grade his Divinity [which in fact, many of the early Greek manuscripts loved by modern textual critics consistently do]. This is also another evidence testifying to the inspiration of this verse.

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." – 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 & 8 – *King James Version*.



## APPENDIX: -

### THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS REGARDING THE AUTHENTICITY OF 1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN 5:7 AND THE EARLY CORRUPTION OF THE SCRIPTURES: -

The following lengthy extract is taken from the pen of Robert L. Dabney's book, DISCUSSIONS – “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek”; 1890; pp. 377 – 387. Dabney not only gives sound evidence why 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 is genuine, but he also gives a brief overview as to how the Greek New Testament manuscripts were corrupted by Origen and his followers in the first few centuries of the Christian era.

“When we come to the second class of evidences, that from the MSS. and internal proofs for or against the doctrinal various readings, we find a very similar showing of the critics, save as to the most explicit one of all. (1 John v. 7.) This all concur in condemning. As to the rest, they differ more or less, while the majority of them admit such a show of ancient and of internal authority for them as would satisfy most minds, even from their point of view, that they have a fair claim to stand as authentic. Dismissing them with this remark, we proceed to consider 1 John v. 7 a little more in detail. This reading Tregelles considers so obviously spurious that he disdains to discuss it. All the critics vote against it. But let us see whether the case is as clear as they would have it. When we raise this inquiry, let it be understood that we do not undertake the hopeless task of satisfying the biblical critics of its certain genuineness. Neither do we absolutely assert its genuineness, but we present the arguments in favor of its claim for the purpose of showing that they do carry a good degree of probability, and that even in this extreme case, the recent critics are not so infallible as they pretend to be. Our object is to keep it an open question, and to preserve that amount of probability which appears fairly to attach to the common reading. The reader will then, by a plain *a fortiori* argument, conclude as to the other doctrinal readings, which these scholars attack with so much less confidence, that the probabilities are altogether in their favor. The often-contested text in 1 John v. 7 also furnishes us a good instance of the value of that internal evidence which the recent critics profess to discard.”

“The critics all agree in excising from the common reading the words which we include within parenthesis. “*Ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες [ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Πατήρ, ὁ Λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι. καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ,] τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.* The internal evidence against this excision, then, is in the following strong points: *First*, if it be made, the masculine article, numeral, and participle, *οἱ τρεῖς μαρτυροῦντες*, are made to agree directly with three neuters — an insuperable and very bald grammatical difficulty. But if the disputed words are allowed to stand, they agree directly with two masculines and one neuter noun, *ὁ Πατήρ, ὁ Λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα*; where, according to a well known rule of syntax, the masculines among the group control the gender over a neuter connected with them. Then the occurrence of the masculines *τρεῖς μαρτυροῦντες* in the eighth verse agreeing with the neuters, *Πνεῦμα, ὕδωρ* and *αἷμα*, may be accounted for by the power of attraction, so well known in Greek syntax, and by the fact that the *Πνεῦμα*, the leading noun of this second group, and next to the adjectives, has just had a species of masculineness superinduced upon it by its previous position in the masculine group. *Second*, if the excision is made, the eighth verse coming next to the sixth, gives us a very bald and awkward, and apparently meaningless, repetition of the Spirit's witness twice in immediate succession. *Third*, if the excision is made, then the proposition at the end of the eighth verse, *καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν*, contains an unintelligible reference. The insuperable awkwardness of this chasm in the meaning is obscured in the authorized English version, “and these three agree in one.” Let a version be given which shall do fair justice to the force of the definite article here, as established by the Greek idiom and of the whole construction, thus: “and these three agree to that (aforesaid) One,” the argument appears. “What is that aforesaid unity to which these

three agree? If the seventh verse is excinded, there is none: the τὸ εἶν so clearly designated by the definite article, as an object to which the reader has already been introduced, has no antecedent presence in the passage. Let the seventh verse stand, and all is clear: the three earthly witnesses testify to that aforementioned unit which the Father, Word, and Spirit constitute."

"But, *fourth*, the internal evidence from the apostle's scope is if possible, still more conclusive. He had just asserted (verses 1 to 6) the essential importance of *faith* as the instrumental bond of our spiritual life and the only victory over the world. To exert such energy, faith must have a solid *warrant*. And the thing of which faith must be assured is the *true sonship* and *proper divinity* of Christ. See emphatically verse 5 with verses 11, 12, 20. The only faith that quickens the soul and overcomes the world is the belief (verse 5) that Jesus is God's Son, that God has appointed him our Life (compare John's Gospel, v. 21, 26), and that this Life is *true* or *veritable* God. Now, then, the apostle's scope is to answer this question: *On what warrant* shall our faith accept these wondrous propositions about Jesus? The ninth verse gives us the key-note of his answer: *On God's warrant*. This divine warrant (nothing less would answer) comes to us, *first* (verse 6), in the words of the Holy Ghost speaking by his inspired men. (See John's Gospel, xvi. 8, etc.) It comes to us, *second* (verse 7), in the words of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, asserting and confirming by miracles the sonship and unity of Jesus Christ with the Father (as in Matt. iii. 16, 17 ; John v. 37 ; Matt. xii. 28 ; John viii. 18 ; xv. 26 ; and such like places). It comes to us, *third* (verse 8), in the work of the Holy Ghost applying the blood and water from Christ's pierced side for our cleansing, in accordance with ancient types and modern sacraments, which concur in the doctrine of Christ's divinity. It comes to us, *fourth* (verse 10), in the spiritual consciousness of the believer himself, certifying to him that he feels within a divine change. How consistent, how accordant with John's modes of teaching, how harmonious is all this, if we accept the seventh verse as genuine? But, if we excind it, the very key stone of the arch of evidence is wanting; the crowning proof that the *warrant of our faith is DIVINE* (verse 9) is struck out."

"The probability in favor of the reading which thus arises is confirmed when we remember the circumstances in view of which the apostle John undoubtedly wrote this passage. Authentic tradition teaches us that John spent his latest years at and near Ephesus. Internal marks evince what that tradition testifies, that this epistle was written in those latter years, and for his own spiritual children in those regions. He tells them that the purpose of his writing was to warn them against seducers (ii. 26), whose heresy, long predicted, was now developed, and was characterized by a denial of the proper sonship (ii. 26) and incarnation (iv. 2) of Jesus Christ. Now we know that these heretics were Ebionites, and chiefly Cerinthians and Nicolaitanes. Ireneus, Epiphanius, and other fathers, tell us that they all vitiated the doctrine of the Trinity. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was not miraculously born of a virgin, and that the "Word" Christ was not truly and eternally divine, but a sort of angelic *Aion*, associated with the natural man Jesus up to his crucifixion. The sect of Nicolaitanes is most probably identified with the Gnostic Docetae, who denied that the *Aion* Christ had a real body, ascribing to him only a seeming or phantasmal body and blood. It can scarcely be doubted that these are the errors against which John is here fortifying the faith of his "children." Then, the very point of the seventh verse in the disputed passage was obtruded upon the apostle's attention when he was writing it. Is it not hard to believe that he should, under the circumstances, write anything but what the received text ascribes to him? If we let the seventh verse stand, then the whole passage is framed, with apostolic wisdom, to exclude at once both heresies. In verse seventh he refutes the Cerinthus, declaring the unity of the Father, Word, and Spirit, and with the strictest accuracy, employing the *neuter*, εἶν εἰσιν, to fix the very point which Cerinthus denied, the unity of the three persons in one common substance. He then refutes the Nicolaitanes, declaring the proper humanity of Jesus, and the actual shedding and application by the Spirit of that water and blood of whose effusion he was himself eye-witness, and to which he testifies in his gospel so emphatically, in chapter xix. 34, 35. We agree here with Calvin, in regarding "the water and the blood" as not a direct reference to the sacraments of baptism and the supper, but to that blood and water which came from the Redeemer's side, of which our two sacraments are emblems. The shedding of that water and blood, witnessed by the apostle himself, evinced that Jesus was the true antitype to the Hebrew laver and altar, and to all the ritual of both in all ages ; that water and blood, applied by the Holy Ghost, cleansing believers from depravity and guilt, mark Christ

as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," the promised Jehovah-Christ, Immanuel, of both dispensations. Now, when we hear the apostle tell his "children," in the chapter above cited from his own Epistle, that the two heresies against whose seductions he designed by this writing to guard them were these, the denial of Christ's sonship to God and the denial of his incarnation, and when we see him in his closing testimony exclude precisely these two errors, there is a coherency in the whole which presents a very strong internal evidence for the genuineness of the received text. It is, moreover, very interesting to notice the common circumstances connecting this with the two other great Trinitarian readings which the old MSS. (so-called) concur in excluding, Acts xx. 28 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16. Paul uttered the discourse of Acts xx. to the elders of this same Ephesian church, in which John almost certainly wrote this epistle. The former "there forewarns the elders of the coming Cerinthians and Nicolaitanes under the name of "grievous wolves." Paul wrote the First Epistle to Timothy when he placed him as evangelist in this same Ephesian church, and he advertises him in it of the presence of this "*Gnosis*." We are thus led to see how Paul and John make common cause against these hated errors. We see with what object they shaped their declarations, so as to leave the most distinct testimony on the disputed points. Paul takes occasion to say that the church was ransomed with divine blood, and to tell Timothy that the very God was manifest in the flesh. John testifies that the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are one, and that the humanity was as real as the divinity. But it is clearly admitted that, for the genuineness of the seventh verse, there is very little authority from Greek MSS. It has, thus far, been found in only two of the many hundreds which have been collated — the Montfort MS. in the University Library of Dublin, which is supposed by some to be of little authority, because suspected of having been conformed to the Latin; and in the *Codex Wizanburgensis*, which Lachmann reckons of the eighth century. But a more faithful examination of the Montfort MS. shows that the suspicion of its being a modern forgery is certainly unfounded; and that, on the contrary, this codex so much spoken against has several peculiar marks of antiquity and interest besides this disputed verse. The chief MS. authority which can be cited for it is that of the Latin versions. It is found in all the codices of these, with a few exceptions ; and not only in those representing the Latin Vulgate, but those which preserve to us the *Vetus Itala*. So, likewise, the patristic authority for this reading is confined to Latin fathers; but among these, it is cited as genuine scripture by several, among whom may be mentioned Tertullian and Cyprian, as both early and well-informed, and the Council of Carthage, and a multitude of others in the later ages. In a word, it seems that this reading, omitted almost unanimously by the Greek MSS., is asserted as genuine scripture with almost equal unanimity by Latin Christendom; and that from the earliest ages. In favor of this testimony of the "West are these consideration: that the *Vetus Itala* was confessedly translated from the Greek Scriptures at a very early age, certainly within a century from the death of the apostles; that in the great persecutions, the Western, and especially the African churches, in which we find the earliest citations of the passage, did not lose their sacred books to so great an extent as the Greek churches; that the ancient Latin churches were comparatively untainted with Arianism, the suspected source of corruptions; and that in the contest with the Arians, the Council of Carthage, as well as many other fathers, appeal with unquestioning confidence to this very verse as a decisive testimony against them. This, then, seems to be the sum of the matter. As to 1 John v. 7, the Latin Church stands opposed to the Greek. As to the other various readings affecting the doctrine of Christ's divinity, the body of the Greek MSS., representing the  $\chi\omicron\iota\nu\acute{\iota}\ \xi\chi\delta\omicron\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , stands, in the main, opposed to the three so-called oldest codices. These variations are too numerous, and too significant in their effect upon the one doctrine, to be ascribed to chance. We seem, then, to be reduced, by a strong probability, to the adoption of one of these conclusions: either that the received readings are corrupt interpolations of the Trinitarians, or that the omissions of them were dishonest mutilations of the Arians, and other Anti-trinitarians. Which of these conclusions shall we adopt? The answer seems to be in substance this: the date is so remote, and so many of the records of that age have perished, that no decisive settlement of the question is now possible; yet the probabilities strongly tend to fix the blame upon the Anti-trinitarians."

"In support of this conclusion, we remark, first, that there are strong probable grounds to conclude, that the text of the Scriptures current in the East received a mischievous modification at the hands of the famous Origen, which has not been usually appreciated. The learned reader needs only to be reminded of his transcendent reputation and influence as a critic and expositor, especially over Pamphilus, Eusebius Pamphili, and the monkish theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries. The chief critical labor of Origen, which is usually

mentioned, is his *Hexapla* of the Old Testament Scriptures. But it is known that he was an indefatigable collector of New Testament MSS., and a voluminous expositor; and that while no *edition* of the New Testament Scriptures is traced directly to his editorial labors, like the *Hexapla*, the readings which he adopted in his *scholia* and commentaries were, unquestionably, much followed by his admirers in transcribing the New Testament. In a word, Origen was, during the times of the Sabellian and Arian controversies, the *Magnus Apollo* of oriental biblical scholars, and his critical opinions were regarded by them as almost infallible. Now, what manner of man was Origen? He is described by Mosheim (in his *Com. de Rebus Christ.*, Vol. II., p. 144) as "a compound of contraries, wise and unwise, acute and stupid, judicious and injudicious; the enemy of superstition, and its patron; a strenuous defender of Christianity, and its corrupter; energetic and irresolute; one to whom the Bible owes much, and from whom it has suffered much." While he gained, amidst the superstitious contemporaries who then gave character to Eastern Christianity, a splendid reputation for sanctity, as well as learning, his character was evidently dishonest and tricky, and his judgment most erratic. The disgraceful story that his condemnation by his bishop, Demetrius, and his flight from Alexandria, were caused by his apostasy to Paganism under the impulse of fear, is not only detailed by Epiphanius, the great enemy of Origenism, but by Cedremus and Suidas. As a controversialist, he was wholly unscrupulous. His reputation as the great introducer of mysticism, allegory, and Neo-Platonism into the Christian church, is too well known to need recital. Those who are best acquainted with the history of Christian opinion know best, that Origen was the great corrupter, and the source, or at least earliest channel, of nearly all the speculative errors which plagued the church in after ages. This general character, coupled with his influence as autocrat among the biblical critics, is enough to excite well-grounded suspicion."

"But these suspicions are confirmed when we examine the particular traits of his system. He was strictly a *Rationalist*. No wonder that modern Rationalistic critics should manifest an instinctive sympathy with him, which gives weight to his critical testimony! He disbelieved the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, holding that the inspired men apprehended and stated many things obscurely. His philosophy was that of Ammonius, who asserted a common religion in all the schemes of philosophy, *including the Bible*, which only needed the excision of the excrescences and misconceptions added by poets and priests, to make their universal harmony appear; and the key-note of all Origen's labors was the effort to reconcile Christianity and this eclectic Pagan philosophy into a substantial unity. He held, as his theory of exposition, that there are three senses of Scripture — the grammatical or literal, the spiritual, and the anagogical; that the first sense does not exist at all in many places, but only the second or third; that the attempt to impose a literal grammatical sense on those places would lead us to absolute falsehood and nonsense; and that the mere words are, accordingly, of no importance. His opinions on the Trinity veered between Sabellianism and Arianism. He expressly denied the consubstantial unity of the Persons and the proper incarnation of the Godhead — the very propositions most clearly asserted in the doctrinal various readings we have under review. His theory was, that the objections of the philosophers, and of the Marcionitea and Valentinians, to many supposed facts and dogmas which seem to be contained in the grammatical sense of the Bible, would be unanswerable if that sense is asserted; and that the only solution was to discard that sense, and advance allegorical meanings instead. Nolan charges that his method of citing the Scriptures is inconsistent and vacillating; that he often cites from heretical *codices* and readings; that he often proposes to correct the text of the New Testament by the supposed indications of the Septuagint, and even of heretical comments, upon the most reckless and licentious critical principles. "As he had labored to supersede the authorized version of the Old Testament, he contributed to weaken the authority of the received text of the New. In the course of his commentaries he cited the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, on the former part of the canon; he appealed to the authority of Valentinus and Heracleou on the latter. While he thus raised the credit of these revisals which had been made by the heretics, he detracted from the authority of that text which had been received by the orthodox. Some difficulties which he found himself unable to solve in the evangelists he undertook to remove, by expressing his doubts of the integrity of the text. In some instances he ventured to impeach the reading of the New Testament on the testimony of the Old, and to convict the copies of one Gospel on the evidence of another." (*Nolan*, pp. 432, 433.) Such are the charges which this learned writer founds on a laborious review of Origen's critical efforts. This acute critic also charges that a number of the most characteristic discrepancies between the Greek

Vulgate or Constantinopolitan text, and the texts current from Origen's day in Palestine and Egypt, are distinctly traceable to a Marcionite or Valentinian source; and that Origen's was demonstrably the mediating hand for introducing those corruptions into the latter texts. See his work, pp. 470 to 509, where he traces the readings from the Apocryphal Gospels of those Gnostics, through Origen's comments. We especially commend to the admirers of the Oriental and Egyptian *codices* these concluding words of Nolan: "Through various channels those readings might have crept into the edition of Eusebius. The Scripture text of Tatian, which most probably conformed in many respects to the Gospel and Apostolicum of Marcion, the text of Hesychius," (the Alexandrian,) "which was compiled from various apocryphal works, and the commentaries of Origen, which abounded in quotations drawn from heretical revisals of Scripture, opened a prolific source, whence they directly passed into the Palestine edition. The facilities of correcting this text from Origen's writings, and the blind reverence in which that ancient father was held in the school of Caesarea, seem to have rendered the corruption of this text unavoidable; short annotations, or *scholia*, had been inserted by Origen in the margin of his copies of Scripture; and the number of these had been considerably augmented by Eusebius, most probably by extracts taken from Origen's commentaries. A comparison between the text and comment constantly pointed out variations in the reading; and Origen's authority being definitive on subjects of sacred criticism, the inspired text was amended by the comments. Had we no other proof of this assertion than the feasibility of the matter, and the internal evidence of the Greek MSS., we might thence assume the truth of the fact, without much danger of erring. But this point is placed beyond conjecture by the most unquestionable documents. In some MSS. containing the Palestine text, it is recorded that they were transcribed from copies the originals of which had been 'corrected by Eusebius.' In the celebrated *Codex Marchalianus* the whole process observed in correcting the text is openly avowed. The reviser there candidly states that, 'having procured the explanatory tomes of Origen, he accurately investigated the sense in which he explained every word, as far as was possible, and corrected everything ambiguous according to his notion.' After this explicit acknowledgment, it seems unnecessary further to prolong this discussion."

"Thus far *Nolan's Inquiry*. Now it is worthy of notice that these Trinitarian proof-texts, which appear in the Greek and Latin Vulgate, but are wanting in the old *codices* of the Palestine and Egyptian, were aimed by the apostles who wrote them precisely against Ebionite and Gnostic heresies. How natural that when, through the ill-starred manipulation of Origen, the text was infected from those heretical sources, these very readings should disappear? There appears a strong probability, then, that "the learned Origen" is least of all entitled to that authority which the recent critics claim for him as a witness to the state of the genuine readings; but that, if the whole truth could be recovered, he would be found the original corrupter of the text. We would particularly invoke the reader's attention to these admitted facts. This overweening confidence in the literary autocrat of Caesarea did not much extend to the Latin churches or to Byzantium and Greece. It chiefly affected the East. The Western churches were never infected with the Origenist controversies, which convulsed the churches of the East during the fourth and fifth centuries. Again: the admiration of Origen's learning and opinions was chiefly limited to the monasteries. The fanatical monks generally swore by him almost as their God, because his self-emasculatation, asceticism, mysticism, self-righteousness, and superstition, exactly favored monkery. The secular clergy usually condemned his sentiments and influence; and it was by a Byzantine council of such clergy that, his name was finally fixed (where it belongs) in the list of heretics. Couple now with this the fact asserted by our recent critics in favor of their preferred *codices*, that they were obviously copied for monastic libraries, and not for liturgical use in churches. We conclude that there is so much the more probability they embody the Origenist corruptions. And the judgment which depreciates the liturgical *codices* as compared with the monastic will be reversed: we shall conclude that the church MSS. were originally the truest. Once more. We shall be prepared to believe that the Western early version, where Origenism had then no currency, reflects the original purity of the text, even more truly than the Greek MSS. prevalent after Origen's day in Palestine and Egypt. The testimony of the old Italic in favor of 1 John v. 7 is therefore more weighty than at first appeared."

The following lengthy extract is taken from the pen of **Dr. Edward F. Hills' book, The King James Version Defended** – 1983 edition; pp. 209 – 212. Dr. Hills gives an excellent, concise summary of why 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 & 8 is a genuine part of Scripture.

### 3. The Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7)

In the Textus Receptus 1 John 5:7 - 8 reads as follows:

7 For there are three that bear witness IN HEAVEN, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: AND THESE THREE ARE ONE. 8 AND THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS IN EARTH, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

The words printed in capital letters constitute the so-called Johannine comma, the best known of the Latin Vulgate readings of the Textus Receptus, a reading which, on believing principles, must be regarded as possibly genuine. This comma has been the occasion of much controversy and is still an object of interest to textual critics. One of the more recent discussions of it is found in Windisch's *Katholischen Briefe* (revised by Preisker, 1951); a more accessible treatment of it in English is that provided by A. D. Brooke (1912) in the *International Critical Commentary*. Metzger (1964) also deals with this passage in his handbook, but briefly.

#### (a) How the Johannine Comma Entered the Textus Receptus

As has been observed above, the Textus Receptus has both its human aspect and its divine aspect, like the Protestant Reformation itself or any other work of God's providence. And when we consider the manner in which the Johannine comma entered the Textus Receptus, we see this human element at work. Erasmus omitted the Johannine comma from the first edition (1516) of his printed Greek New Testament on the ground that it occurred only in the Latin version and not in any Greek manuscript. To quiet the outcry that arose, he agreed to restore it if but one Greek manuscript could be found which contained it. When one such manuscript was discovered soon afterwards, bound by his promise, he included the disputed reading in his third edition (1522), and thus it gained a permanent place in the Textus Receptus. The manuscript which forced Erasmus to reverse his stand seems to have been 61, a 15th or 16th-century manuscript now kept at Trinity College, Dublin. Many critics believe that this manuscript was written at Oxford about 1520 for the special purpose of refuting Erasmus, and this is what Erasmus himself suggested in his notes.<sup>74</sup>

The Johannine comma is also found in Codex Ravianus, in the margin of 88, and in 629. The evidence of these three manuscripts, however, is not regarded as very weighty, since the first two are thought to have taken this disputed reading from early printed Greek texts and the latter (like 61) from the Vulgate.

But whatever may have been the immediate cause, still, in the last analysis, it was not trickery which was responsible for the inclusion of the Johannine comma in the Textus Receptus but the usage of the Latin-speaking Church. It was this usage which made men feel that this reading ought to be included in the Greek text and eager to keep it there after its inclusion had been accomplished. Back of this usage, we may well believe, was the guiding providence of God, and therefore the Johannine comma ought to be retained as at least possibly genuine.

#### (b) The Early Existence of the Johannine Comma

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<sup>74</sup> See Pages 5 & 6 of this Study Document, under the Section entitled – “The Erasmus Connection and 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7”, which gives the true facts concerning this issue. Dr. Hill's first edition of this book was published in 1956, some 24 years before the truth of this issue appeared in print in 1980, from the pen of H. J. De Jonge.

Evidence for the early existence of the Johannine comma is found in the Latin versions and in the writings of the Latin Church Fathers. For example, it seems to have been quoted at Carthage by Cyprian (c. 250) who writes as follows: "And again concerning the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit it is written: and the Three are One." It is true that Facundus, a 6th-century African bishop, interpreted Cyprian as referring to the following verse, but, as Scrivener (1883) remarks, it is "surely safer and more candid" to admit that Cyprian read the Johannine comma in his New Testament manuscript "than to resort to the explanation of Facundus."

The first undisputed citations of the Johannine comma occur in the writing of two 4th-century Spanish bishops, Priscillian, who in 385 was beheaded by the Emperor Maximus on the charge of sorcery and heresy, and Idacius Clarus, Priscillian's principal adversary and accuser. In the 5th century the Johannine comma was quoted by several orthodox African writers to defend the doctrine of the Trinity against the gainsaying of the Vandals, who ruled North Africa from 489 to 534 and were fanatically attached to the Arian heresy. And about the same time it was cited by Cassiodorus (480 - 570), in Italy. The comma is also found in an Old Latin manuscript of the 5th or 6th century, and in the *Speculum*, a treatise which contains an Old Latin text. It was not included in Jerome's original edition of the Latin Vulgate but around the year 800 it was taken into the text of the Vulgate from the Old Latin manuscripts. It was found in the great mass of the later Vulgate manuscripts and in the Clementine edition of the Vulgate, the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

(c) Is the Johannine Comma an Interpolation?

Thus on the basis of the external evidence it is at least possible that the Johannine comma is a reading that somehow dropped out of the Greek New Testament text but was preserved in the Latin text through the usage of the Latin-speaking Church, and this possibility grows more and more toward probability as we consider the internal evidence.

In the first place, how did the Johannine comma originate if it be not genuine, and how did it come to be interpolated into the Latin New Testament text? To this question modern scholars have a ready answer. It arose, they say, as a trinitarian interpretation of 1 John 5:8, which originally read as follows: For there are three that bear witness the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. Augustine was one of those who interpreted 1 John 5:8 as referring to the Trinity. "If we wish to inquire about these things, what they signify, not absurdly does the Trinity suggest Itself, who is the one, only, true, and highest God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, concerning whom it could most truly be said, Three are Witnesses, and the Three are One. By the word spirit we consider God the Father to be signified, concerning the worship of whom the Lord spoke, when He said, God is a spirit. By the word blood the Son is signified, because the Word was made flesh. And by the word water we understand the Holy Spirit. For when Jesus spoke concerning the water which He was about to give the thirsty, the evangelist says, This He spake concerning the Spirit whom those that believed in Him would receive."

Thus, according to the critical theory, there grew up in the Latin speaking regions of ancient Christendom a trinitarian interpretation of the spirit, the water, and the blood mentioned in 1 John 5:8, the spirit signifying the Father, the blood the Son, and the water the Holy Spirit. And out of this trinitarian interpretation of 1 John 5:8 developed the Johannine comma, which contrasts the witness of the Holy Trinity in heaven with the witness of the spirit, the water, and the blood on earth.

But just at this point the critical theory encounters a serious difficulty. If the comma originated in a trinitarian interpretation of 1 John 5:8, why does it not contain the usual trinitarian formula, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Why does it exhibit the singular combination, never met with elsewhere, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit? According to some critics, this unusual phraseology was due to the efforts of the interpolator who first inserted the Johannine comma into the New Testament text. In a mistaken attempt to imitate the style of the Apostle John, he changed the term Son to the term Word. But this is to attribute to the

interpolator a craftiness which thwarted his own purpose in making this interpolation, which was surely to uphold the doctrine of the Trinity, including the eternal generation of the Son. With this as his main concern it is very unlikely that he would abandon the time-honored formula, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and devise an altogether new one, Father, Word, and Holy Spirit.

In the second place, the omission of the Johannine comma seems to leave the passage incomplete. For it is a common scriptural usage to present solemn truths or warnings in groups of three or four, for example, the repeated Three things, yea four of Proverbs 30, and the constantly recurring refrain, for three transgressions and for four, of the prophet Amos. In Genesis 40 the butler saw three branches and the baker saw three baskets. And in Matt. 12:40 Jesus says, As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. It is in accord with biblical usage, therefore, to expect that in 1 John 5:7-8 the formula, there are three that bear witness, will be repeated at least twice. When the Johannine comma is included, the formula is repeated twice. When the comma is omitted, the formula is repeated only once, which seems strange.

In the third place, the omission of the Johannine comma involves a grammatical difficulty. The words spirit, water, and blood are neuter in gender, but in 1 John 5:8 they are treated as masculine. If the Johannine comma is rejected, it is hard to explain this irregularity. It is usually said that in 1 John 5:8 the spirit, the water, and the blood are personalized and that this is the reason for the adoption of the masculine gender. But it is hard to see how such personalization would involve the change from the neuter to the masculine. For in verse 6 the word Spirit plainly refers to the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. Surely in this verse the word Spirit is "personalized," and yet the neuter gender is used. Therefore since personalization did not bring about a change of gender in verse 6, it cannot fairly be pleaded as the reason for such a change in verse 8. If, however, the Johannine comma is retained, a reason for placing the neuter nouns spirit, water, and blood in the masculine gender becomes readily apparent. It was due to the influence of the nouns Father and Word, which are masculine. Thus the hypothesis that the Johannine comma is an interpolation is full of difficulties.

#### (d) Reasons for the Possible Omission of the Johannine Comma

For the absence of the Johannine comma from all New Testament documents save those of the Latin-speaking West the following explanations are possible.

In the first place, it must be remembered that the comma could easily have been omitted accidentally through a common type of error which is called homoioteleuton (similar ending). A scribe copying 1 John 5:7 - 8 under distracting conditions might have begun to write down these words of verse 7, there are three that bear witness, but have been forced to look up before his pen had completed this task. When he resumed his work, his eye fell by mistake on the identical expression in verse 8. This error would cause him to omit all of the Johannine comma except the words in earth, and these might easily have been dropped later in the copying of this faulty copy. Such an accidental omission might even have occurred several times, and in this way there might have grown up a considerable number of Greek manuscripts which did not contain this reading.

In the second place, it must be remembered that during the 2nd and 3rd centuries (between 220 and 270, according to Harnack); the heresy which orthodox Christians were called upon to combat was not Arianism (since this error had not yet arisen) but Sabellianism (so named after Sabellius, one of its principal promoters), according to which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were one in the sense that they were identical. Those that advocated this heretical view were called Patripassians (Father-sufferers), because they believed that God the Father, being identical with Christ, suffered and died upon the cross, and Monarchians, because they claimed to uphold the Monarchy (sole-government) of God.



It is possible, therefore, that the Sabellian heresy brought the Johannine comma into disfavor with orthodox Christians. The statement, these three are one, no doubt seemed to them to teach the Sabellian view that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were identical. And if during the course of the controversy manuscripts were discovered which had lost this reading in the accidental manner described above, it is easy to see how the orthodox party would consider these mutilated manuscripts to represent the true text and regard the Johannine comma as a heretical addition. In the Greek-speaking East especially the comma would be unanimously rejected, for here the struggle against Sabellianism was particularly severe.

Thus it was not impossible that during the 3rd century amid the stress and strain of the Sabellian controversy, the Johannine comma lost its place in the Greek text, but was preserved in the Latin texts of Africa and Spain, where the influence of Sabellianism was probably not so great. In other words, it is not impossible that the Johannine comma was one of those few true readings of the Latin Vulgate not occurring in the Traditional Greek Text but incorporated into the Textus Receptus under the guiding providence of God. In these rare instances God called upon the usage of the Latin-speaking Church to correct the usage of the Greek speaking Church.