

**Corruption Unveiled:**  
**A Critical Analysis of the United Bible Societies’**  
**The Greek New Testament**

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**NOTE:** This Thesis was assigned a failing grade because of the nature of the argument. Thus, I was unable to graduate with a 4.0 GPA At Liberty University and was forever marked with a big fat F at the end of my college transcript. Such is typical of the prejudice and bias towards the King James Bible that exists in today’s “conservative, evangelical” colleges and universities. Nonetheless, I believe the F stood for “faith,” not “fail”—Faith, that is, in the perfect, preserved Word of God that all English speaking people have access to. Regardless of what the faculty of Liberty University might say, they have no monopoly on the truth regarding what does and does not belong in my Bible. What’s in there is in there because God put it there; that settles it for me. It is interesting that the arguments set forth in this paper were never rebuked or challenged; only my character was challenged; and the paper was given an F. The grade on this paper kept me from graduating from Liberty with a flawless record of straight A’s. I received a BA in Religion from Liberty with a minor in Greek—all A’s and one F. Oh well, I count it all joy to have suffered persecution, slight as it may have been, for the TRUTH.

“ . . . for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.”

Jeremiah 23:36

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Revelation 22:18-19

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## PREFACE

It is only appropriate to begin by promulgating that I, the author, am in no way a scholar of textual criticism. Moreover, my educational credentials do not even come close to those of the ones about to be criticized. However, I know and believe the simple facts. God inspired his Word and promised to preserve every word of it. Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* [emphasis mine] that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). This being true, the Almighty is duty-bound to preserve every word for every generation so that they can live by them; it is unchanging. Such a position, which is rooted in faith, may be criticized for being fanatical and unscholarly. However, I read, believe, and practice God’s Word. Therefore, “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts” (Psalm 119:99-100). All in all, the purpose of this thesis is to assure the common, uneducated Christian. It is not necessary to possess a college degree in order to be able to understand God’s Word. Let believers rejoice as the Lord Jesus Christ did in Luke 10:21: “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis will seek to prove the unreliability of the United Bible Societies' The Greek New Testament (UBS<sup>4</sup>). Extensive historical, biographical, and statistical research should illuminate numerous problems that exist in this text. The case against the UBS<sup>4</sup> will begin with a historical overview and analysis of modern Greek editions. By establishing fault in these texts, a cloud of doubt will begin to engulf the UBS<sup>4</sup> because it is closely related to its predecessors. The evolution of the UBS text through its four editions will likewise be traced. The gross number of changes involved suggests that the New Testament, according to the UBS editors, is unestablished.

Having examined the UBS<sup>4</sup> at face value, the author will draw the reader's attention to the apostasy that runs rampant within the ranks of the United Bible Societies. The case will then move against the elevated manuscripts. The perverted characteristics of these ancient documents prove the UBS text to be defective for following them. Next, the practices of textual criticism followed by the UBS editors will be examined.

Inconsistency and duplicity will manifest itself through such an analysis. A general overview of the methods of textual criticism behind the text warrants the explication of a particular example. The UBS' rendering of I John 5:7-8 will be utilized as an illustration of the misrepresentation that underlies the text.

Finally, in light of the author's negative review of the UBS<sup>4</sup>, a better approach to the sacred science of textual criticism will be offered. Furthermore, several important implications will be considered, especially with reference to modern translations of the Bible.

# CORRUPTION UNVEILED: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES' THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

## Introduction

“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever” (Psalm 12:6-7). As the Psalmist writes, the Word of God is impeccable and has been perfectly preserved for every generation. Practically all conservative evangelicals agree with this and preach it from their pulpits, holding up their Bibles and asserting that they hold the Word of God in their hands. On the other hand, however, it seems as if they fail to believe it, consistently pointing out “mistranslations” and making reference to the “Original Greek.”<sup>1</sup> Where is this so-called “Original Greek?”

The latest “Original Greek” to hit the markets is the work of the United Bible Societies’ The Greek New Testament.<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps the most well-known Greek edition in modern times and, consequently, is the textbook for Greek classes in many colleges and seminaries across the country. At Liberty University, for example, this edition is handled as an object of deep reverence in student circles. Its has been referred to as “The Greek New Testament,” “The True Word of God,” “The Real Bible,” “The Original Scriptures,” and “The Infallible Word.” The little red book is so magnified that a student can sit through three semesters of Greek and never even have his attention drawn to the

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<sup>1</sup>The primary focus of this thesis is upon the New Testament which was written in Greek. An equally important case, however, can be built from the Old Testament.

<sup>2</sup>Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce Metzger (4th Edition), The Greek New Testament (Germany: United Bible Societies, 1994).

numerous omissions in the text and variant readings in the critical apparatus.<sup>3</sup> In fact, it is possible to attain a Greek minor and never even hear the phrase Textus Receptus<sup>4</sup> in the classroom.

Upon engaging in extensive research concerning textual criticism, one cannot deny the uncertainty that runs rampant throughout the UBS 4th Edition. In fact, the disputability of the text is even codified by their own editors in the Introduction:

But since in a number of instances the evidence from such sources points to the *possibility* [emphasis is mine] of different solutions and thus involves different degrees of certainty with respect to the form of the original text, the letter A, B, C, or D has been employed within braces {} at the beginning of each apparatus item so as to mark *one of four levels of certainty* [emphasis is mine], as representing in large measure the difficulties encountered by the Committee in making textual decisions. The letter A indicates that the text is certain. The letter B indicates that the text is almost certain. The letter C, however, indicates that the Committee had difficulty in deciding which variant to place in the text. The letter D, which occurs only rarely, indicates that the Committee had great difficulty in arriving at a decision.<sup>5</sup>

In light of these facts, it is quite legitimate to question whether this edition should even be called “The New Testament.” Is God’s Word uncertain when He promised to preserve it perfectly (cf. Psalm 12:6-7; Matthew 5:18; 24:35)? If He was powerful enough to inspire it (cf. II Timothy 3:15-16), surely He is powerful enough to sustain it.

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<sup>3</sup>Almost seventeen entire verses are missing from the UBS<sup>4</sup>. These include Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mark 9:44,46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; I John 5:7. Moreover, variant readings can be found on practically every page of the text.

<sup>4</sup>The phrase Textus Receptus is used in this thesis to refer to the traditional text of the New Testament used by the translators of the AV 1611 King James Bible. It represents the Syrian-Byzantine type text (the majority of Greek manuscripts) for the most part with a view non-Byzantine readings (e.g., I John 5:7-8; Acts 8:37; Matthew 18:11). Technically speaking, this term was first applied to an edition of the Greek New Testament put out in 1632 by the Elzevir Brothers. However, the previous editions of the Greek New Testament all presented substantially the same text, and the variations were not of great significance and never affected the sense of the passage. In the course of time, the title “Textus Receptus” came to be associated with the Traditional Text as contained in the editions of Erasmus, Stephens, Beza, and the Elzevirs. For a more detailed discussion on this topic please refer to Appendix E. It is the opinion of this author that the Textus Receptus represents the New Testament in its true form. Therefore, it is the standard by which the UBS<sup>4</sup> will be judged in this thesis. For reference and statistical purposes, the phrase Textus Receptus will be used throughout this paper to refer to the edition put out by the Trinitarian Bible Society in 1994 (The New Testament: The Greek Text Underlying the English Authorised Version of 1611. [Avon: The Bath Press, 1994] ). This present edition of the Textus Receptus follows Beza’s 1598 edition as the primary authority and corresponds with The New Testament in the Original Greek according to the text followed in the Authorised Version (Ed. by F. H. A. Scrivener, Cambridge University Press, 1902).

<sup>5</sup>The Greek New Testament, 4th Edition (United Bible Societies), 3\*.

These questions warrant an investigation into the text of the UBS 4th Edition. The purpose of this thesis is to construct a convincing criticism of this popular Greek text. Such an investigation will undoubtedly show that the United Bible Societies' The Greek New Testament is corrupt in nature and, consequently, should not be considered a New Testament in the original Greek. This claim can be substantiated by examining the predecessors to the text and its subsequent evolution as well as the manuscripts elevated by the editors and their practices of textual criticism. Furthermore, the UBS<sup>4</sup>'s rendering of I John 5:7-8 will be used as an example to bring to light the misrepresentation and duplicity that underlines this edition. Finally, a better approach to the sacred science of textual criticism will be offered in light of these facts.

All in all, the total word differences in the UBS 4th Edition as compared to the Textus Receptus is 8,674 words<sup>6</sup>. In clearer terms, one in every sixteen words is different (6.2%). This fact raises questions that deserve careful consideration. As Dean John Burgon once wrote:

At a period of extraordinary intellectual activity like the present, it can occasion no surprise--although it may reasonably create anxiety--if the most sacred and cherished of our institutions are constrained each in turn to submit to the ordeal of hostile scrutiny; and sometimes even to bear the brunt of actual attack. When, however, at last the very citadel of revealed Truth is observed to have been reached, and to be undergoing systematic assault and battery, lookerson may be excused if they show themselves more than usually solicitous.<sup>7</sup>

May God Almighty guide this quest

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<sup>6</sup>David Blunt, "The Differences Between the Texts of the New Testament," <http://www.hutch.com.au/~rlister/bible/kj4.htm>.

<sup>7</sup>John W. Burgon, "The Revision Revised" in Unholy Hands On The Bible, Vol. 1, Including the Complete Works of John W. Burgon, Dean of Chichester, Ed. by Jay P. Green (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, 1990), D-2.



## CHAPTER 1

## THE PREDECESSORS TO THE UBS TEXT

The war against the King James Bible and its Greek textual basis (Textus Receptus) is not contemporary in its origins. In fact the United Bible Societies is the latest in a long line of critical Greek texts that have replaced the Textus Receptus, which dominated for two hundred and fifty years in Europe and America.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is only appropriate to briefly trace the modern era of textual criticism up until 1966 when the UBS First Edition hit the markets. This chapter will focus upon the texts of Westcott and Hort, Nestle-Aland, and the United Bible Societies.

The Westcott and Hort Text

As previously mentioned, the Textus Receptus of the Authorized Version dominated for close to four hundred years. During this time period, however, attacks were made against it, but the beginning of its downfall did not come around until the close of the nineteenth century with the extensive work of two men, Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892). As Wilbur Pickering asserts, “Although men such as Tischendorf [sic] Tregelles, and Alford had done much to undermine the position of the Textus Receptus, Westcott and Hort are generally credited with having furnished the death blow and with beginning a new era--an era in which we still find ourselves.”<sup>9</sup> In 1881, Westcott and Hort’s The New Testament in the Original Greek appeared. Codex Vaticanus (B), a fourth century uncial manuscript locked up in the Vatican, was their touchstone, and they believed that they had discovered in it a

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<sup>8</sup>Bruce Metzger, The Text of the New Testament (New York: Oxford Press, 1968), 95-118.

<sup>9</sup>Wilbur Pickering, “Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Criticism,” True or False?, ed. by David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids, MI: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, 1973), 218.

representative of the “Neutral Text”<sup>10</sup> which came far closer to the original text than any of the manuscripts from the three recognized text types (Alexandrian, Byzantine, Western)<sup>11</sup> especially when it stood in agreement with Sinaiticus (Aleph), another fourth century uncial manuscript.<sup>12</sup> They concluded that the Received Text of the Textus Receptus was formed by the conflation, or fusing together, sometime prior to the fourth century, of two primitive texts of Scripture. Proceeding from this presupposition, Westcott and Hort believed that their edition had successfully resolved this composite text into its original constituent elements. All of this scholarship is based upon the examples of just seven passages in two books of the New Testament, all of which they viewed as having been welded together from several originally diverse readings.<sup>13</sup> Despite obvious flaws in this theory, it “underlies virtually all subsequent work in New Testament criticism,”<sup>14</sup> including the work of the United Bible Society.

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<sup>10</sup>According to Westcott and Hort, Aleph and B had preserved a pure form of the Alexandrian text type. There is actually no such thing as a “Neutral Text” and it has been discovered that these two manuscripts were corrected on several occasions by later scribes. However, they are the most respected uncials among textual critics, and they preserve the Alexandrian text at an early stage. Some of the papyrus fragments also represent this family.

<sup>11</sup>The Byzantine text-type is found in the majority of extant manuscripts (mostly uncials and minuscules), and its origin was Antioch, where the believers were first called Christians (cf. Acts 11:26). Both Erasmus, who created the first printed Greek text, and the translators of the Authorized Version used this type of text. The Western text-type, on the other hand, is best represented by the Old Latin translations, the Syriac Versions, and the church fathers. Its most famous representative is Codex Bezae (D). Some have argued for a fifth category of classification, the Caesarean text-type. However, it is most likely that these manuscripts (Codex Washingtoniansis [W], P<sup>45</sup>, two groups of minuscules and lectionaries) arose out of the Alexandrian text-type with a Western influence.

<sup>12</sup>Kurt and Barbara Aland, The Text of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 34.

<sup>13</sup>An honest look at these passages (Mark 6:33; 8:26; 9:38; 9:49; Luke 9:10; 11:54; 12:18; 24:53), however, yields nothing to indicate “conflation.” If there were the clearest evidences in these seven scattered passages, what proof would that afford that the entire Text was a “conflation” as Westcott and Hort assert? NONE WHATSOEVER! Therefore the textual theory of Westcott and Hort breaks down completely in its initial stage.

<sup>14</sup>J. H. Greenlee, An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 78.

### The Nestle-Aland Text

Following the work of Westcott and Hort, Eberhard Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece* was published in 1898 by the Wurttemberg Bible Society in Stuttgart, Germany: "This signaled the retreat of the Textus Receptus from both church and school."<sup>15</sup> What Nestle did was actually quite simple in retrospect; he cloned the text for a new generation. Nestle compared the texts of Tischendorf and of Westcott and Hort. When the two differed, he consulted a third edition for the deciding vote (at first Richard Francis Weymouth's second edition of 1892, and later 1901 Bernard Weiss' 1894-1900 edition). This made a majority decision possible so that the agreement of the two editions determined the text while the reading of the third was placed in the critical apparatus. As a result, a series of symbols enabled the reader to reconstruct with accuracy the texts of the editions used.<sup>16</sup>

In 1927, Nestle's son, Erwin, reformed the critical apparatus of his father's text in minor ways. He also made numerous changes in the text, but continued to guard the essentials of Westcott and Hort. It is only appropriate to conclude with Gail Riplinger, "**Nestle's Makes the Very Best.** . . Chocolate, not Greek texts."<sup>17</sup>

Kurt Aland, in 1950, became the gatekeeper, so to speak, of the Nestle tradition. His name first appeared on the title page of the twenty-fifth edition in 1952. Since then, this text has been updated to a twenty-seventh edition. Gail Riplinger reveals a shocking truth:

A verbatim translation of the Nestle-Aland text, with all of its deletions, would shock even the most liberal reader and could never be sold as a 'New Testament' [The closest actual translation of it are the super-liberal NEV, TEV, NRSV and Catholic Versions, all of which use many of Nestle's manuscript D readings]. Consequently, other versions which are based on Nestle's, such

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<sup>15</sup> Aland and Aland, 19.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Gail Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions (Ararat, VA: AV Publications, 1995), 493.

as the NASB, ‘borrow’ some ‘Majority’ readings from the *Textus Receptus* in order to be marketable (e.g., John 7:53 and 8:1-11).<sup>18</sup>

Even Nestle himself cautions the reader that his edition is not the “Traditional Text” but a “new kind of Textus Receptus.”<sup>19</sup> At this point, something seems very wrong. To pursue the issue a little further, the Nestle-Aland text shows a close-affinity to Westcott and Hort, with only 558 differences. Even Aland admits that this “is by no means a negligible amount.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, the Nestle-Aland editions are essentially the text of Codex Vaticanus (B), as was the text of Westcott and Hort. The problems regarding this manuscript will be discussed later.

#### The United Bible Societies’ Text

This brings us to 1966, the year in which the United Bible Society produced their first edition of *The Greek New Testament*. The scholars asked to participate in this endeavor included Kurt Aland, who continued to work on the new Nestle edition, thus participating simultaneously in the management of two different and somewhat competitive editions. As the UBS text evolved into subsequent editions as the Nestle-Aland text had for years, the two quite independent editions “approached a close degree of unity with regard to their text--or more precisely, their wording. There, remained, nevertheless, considerable differences between their texts in orthography, punctuation, paragraphing, and so forth.”<sup>21</sup>

After briefly and broadly overviewing the modern era of textual criticism, a cloud of doubt begins to form around the UBS’ The Greek New Testament. It is now befitting to

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<sup>18</sup>Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, 493.

<sup>19</sup>Ervin Nestle and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Biblelanslalt, 1960), 40-41.

<sup>20</sup>Aland and Aland, 26.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

narrow our focus down to this particular text, which in and of itself, has evolved considerably since 1966.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE UBS TEXT

As previously mentioned, the first edition of the UBS Greek New Testament appeared in 1966. Its primary purpose, according to the editors, was “to meet the growing need for an edition of the Greek New Testament specially adapted to the requirements of Bible translators throughout the world.”<sup>22</sup> Immediately, however, one begins to question the motive. Is it the same as that of all subsequent Greek editions since Westcott and Hort--to undermine the Textus Receptus of the Authorized Version and push it further into obscurity? One might immediately attack such a conclusion as being conjecture, assuming a purpose based on results. However, Satan is at work, ceaselessly attempting to change and destroy God’s Word. After all, in Mark 4:15, Jesus says “Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.” This is exactly what the tempter did in the hearts of those whose work has pushed the Traditional Text aside in the past 100 years. This chapter will primarily focus upon the evolution of the UBS text through its four editions.

#### The Unique Features of the UBS Text

In seeking to achieve its purpose, the UBS text included several special features. First of all, a critical apparatus was inserted to promulgate variant readings significant for translators or necessary for establishing the text. Secondly, a grading system regarding the relative degree of certainty for each adopted variant was put to use. Also, a “full citation of representative evidence for each variant selected”<sup>23</sup> appears. This assertion is

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<sup>22</sup>The Greek New Testament, 4th Edition (United Bible Societies), viii.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, xiii.

somewhat misleading as will later be shown (cf. I John 5:7-8). Finally, a second apparatus is included which explains meaningful differences of punctuation.

#### The First Edition of the UBS Text

The First Edition was compiled in four principal stages. First of all, on the basis of Westcott and Hort's edition of the Greek New Testament, a comparison was made of the text and apparatus of several other editions (Nestle, Bover, Merk, Vogels, and others). Secondly, data from several thousand sets of variants were gathered from numerous sources, including printed editions, commentaries, technical studies, and extant Greek manuscripts. Next, approximately six hundred variations in punctuation were selected and compared in various Greek editions as well as principal English, German, and French translations. Finally, the Greek text was established, the degree of certainty for the reading adopted in the text was estimated, and decisions were made as to whether or not a set of variants for particular passages should be included in the critical apparatus.<sup>24</sup>

In comparison to the Nestle-Aland editions, the UBS text was unique in that it provided a broader selection of data from witnesses and a much wider range of variant readings. According to the editors, it is not to be regarded as in competition with other modern editions because it is primarily for translators.<sup>25</sup>

The preface to the first edition of the UBS text concludes with a rather interesting statement: "It is the intention of the Committee from time to time to revise its work in order to take into account new discoveries and fresh evidence."<sup>26</sup> This statement, by the editors themselves, immediately destroys the aforementioned assumptions of naive students. Someone did not read the fine print. How can such a work based on so much

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., viii-ix.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., x.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

uncertainty even be called a New Testament if God's Word is established and preserved as He promised (cf. Psalm 12:6-7)?

### The Second Edition of the UBS Text

The second edition of the UBS Greek New Testament appeared in September of 1968. It contained a "few significant" textual changes from the first edition (approximately 200--hardly a few I would say). It is interesting to note that a great number of these changes were back to the readings of the Textus Receptus. Also, there were considerable changes in the evaluation of evidence for the variant readings in the critical apparatus.<sup>27</sup>

### The Third Edition of the UBS Text

#### The original third edition.

The third edition of the UBS Greek text which appeared in 1975 contained a more thorough revision of the text. As a result, a single text was established between the UBS 3rd Edition and the Nestle-Aland 26th Edition. Despite the singularity of text, the goals of the two disparate editions remained unchanged, at this point. More than five hundred changes were introduced (Once again, these changes were back to the Textus Receptus)<sup>28</sup>. Since no manuscript discoveries occurred during this time period, "it is hard to resist the suspicion that they are guessing."<sup>29</sup> "The 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland text will develop even further in the direction of handysized scientific edition through an

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., xi.

<sup>28</sup>The author of this thesis has examined a number of the textual changes from the earlier editions of the UBS. Every one of them was back to a reading from the Textus Receptus. I have not examined all of the changes, but others such as Peter Ruckman (Bible Babel [Pensacola, FL: Bible Believer's Press, 1964] 8.) and Thomas Weddle (*Personal Letter Addressed to Jesse M. Boyd* [February 5, 1997] ) of Walking Tree Ministries have undertaken a more thorough investigation and claim that all of the changes were back to the readings of the Textus Receptus. This assertion, of course, has to be true because what readings would the UBS go back to if not the Textus Receptus?

<sup>29</sup>Wilbur Pickering qtd. in Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 497.



extension and improvement of the critical apparatus, and this Greek New Testament will continue to cite more extensive evidence for a more select number of variants.”<sup>30</sup>

#### The corrected third edition.

In 1982, a corrected third edition of the UBS appeared on the market. Its changes included alterations in the critical apparatus and punctuation to conform with the Nestle-Aland 26th Edition [NA<sup>26</sup>]. The punctuation changes were made because that of the NA<sup>26</sup> is supposed to reflect the tradition of punctuation of the Greek New Testament text.<sup>31</sup> At this point, one must ask what tradition is being referred to? Certainly, this is not a reference to the Textus Receptus, the Greek text tradition that reigned supremely for two hundred and fifty years, for it differs in scores of places.

#### The Fourth Edition of the UBS Text

The evolution of the UBS text reached its zenith in 1992 with the Fourth Revised Edition. The text remained unchanged with the UBS<sup>3\*</sup> and proceeded to conform with the NA<sup>27</sup>. However, extensive changes occurred in the critical apparatus. Specifically, a large number of variants were eliminated from the apparatus because they were “of minor significance.”<sup>32</sup> This move was somewhat deceptive in nature because now the reader is unable to determine numerous places where the UBS<sup>4</sup> differs from the Traditional Text of the Textus Receptus. In order to find these “hidden variations,” one is forced to compare the UBS<sup>4</sup> with the Textus Receptus, placing the two editions side by side. This process can be very difficult and cumbersome. Examples of such “hidden variations” can be found in the readings of Ephesians 3:9; Luke 12:18; Luke 11:54; Revelation 8:13; Mark 6:11; Matthew 1:19; Matthew 13:36; John 12:13; Revelation 12:5; Matthew 4:23 and

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<sup>30</sup>The Greek New Testament, 4th Edition (United Bible Societies), xi.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., xiii.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., v.

many others. In addition to the numerous changes in the apparatus, changes were also introduced regarding the various levels of evaluation of evidence on the basis of relative degrees of certainty. According to the editors, “the evaluations of all the 1438 sets of variants cited in the apparatus have been completely reconsidered.”<sup>33</sup>

All in all, the UBS<sup>4</sup> is the most recent and updated version in existence today, in concordance with NA<sup>27</sup>. However, according to Aland, “this should not be misunderstood to mean that the editors now consider the text as established. Work on the Holy Scriptures continues to be a task of concern for each of the editors who will offer the results of their research in future editions of the *Greek New Testament*.”<sup>34</sup> Are the Holy Scriptures continually changing as the UBS editors seem to indicate? For those who believe in the absolute authority of Scripture, this is certainly not the case because absolute truth does not change. Therefore, based on these assertions, the UBS text warrants a close investigation. After all, it has been the textual basis for many modern English versions such as the NIV.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., vi.

## CHAPTER 3

## THE APOSTATE EDITORS OF THE UBS TEXT

Having discussed the historical precursors to the UBS text and its consequent evolution, a brief biographical sketch is now warranted regarding the editors of the text. At first glance, this line of argument can be accused of being *ad homonym*, but in this case it is important in light of I Corinthians 2:14-15. The apostle Paul writes “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he *know* them, because they are *spiritually discerned*. But he that is spiritual judgeth *all things . . .*”.<sup>35</sup> Some argue that this statement only refers to Scriptural interpretation and understanding, but such an interpretation is just a way of excusing the acceptance of questionable presuppositions, speculations, textual research, and translations. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. The Holy Scriptures are from the Spirit of God, so the natural man cannot know or understand them properly. His perspective is clouded. This involves anything having to do with the Scriptures such as textual criticism and translation. Therefore, it is dangerous for any Christian to put his faith and trust in translations and interpretations of the Bible that were produced by unregenerate skeptics and apostates. As Henry Morris, one of the leading creation scientists, argues:

So one of the serious problems with most modern English translations is that they rely heavily on Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible developed by liberals, rationalists, and evolutionists, none of whom believed in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Is this how God would preserve His word? Would He not more likely have used devout scholars who believed in the absolute inerrancy and authority of the Bible?<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Emphasis mine.

<sup>36</sup>Henry Morris, “Should Creationists Abandon the King James Version?” [Vital Articles on Science/Creation](#) (El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1996), 2.

Morris makes a point worthy of consideration especially with regard to the UBS Greek text and its editors, for a general biographical overview clearly shows that they are far from biblical inerrantists and are better classified as theological skeptics. This particular chapter will outline the heretical beliefs of four of the main editors of the UBS text (Carlo Martini, Eugene Nida, Kurt Aland, and Bruce Metzger) in an effort to exploit the text's corruption.

### The Apostasy of Carlo Martini

For example, one of the editors is Roman Catholic Cardinal Martini. *Father* Martini is the Archbishop of Milan, and his diocese in Europe is the largest in the world, with two thousand priests and five million laity. He is a Jesuit and the Professor of New Testament Textual Criticism at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Moreover, he is the President of the Council of European Bishop's Conferences. Time Magazine, in December of 1994, listed him as the best-known candidate in line for the papacy:

Among the Italians, the best-known candidate is Carlo Maria Martini. As the Archbishop of Milan, Europe's largest archdiocese, Martini, 67, is promoted by moderate Catholics as the single most palpable prince of the Roman Catholic Church. Suave, brilliant, cosmopolitan, he hews closely to John Paul's dogma but is reputed to harbor less conservative inclinations. Some are convinced. Martini could spur reform on issues such as celibacy and women priests . . . Martini, however, is a Jesuit, and the conservative College of Cardinals is not likely to look kindly upon even a moderate member of an order with a reputation for liberalism. And Vatican watchers never tire of invoking this aphorism: "He who goes into the conclave the next Pope, comes out a Cardinal."<sup>37</sup>

These credentials speak enough, in and of themselves, of *Father* Martini's apostasy.<sup>38</sup>

At this juncture, it is interesting to note that Catholics and Protestants are now working together on Bible translation. In the past, the two would not work together "because

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<sup>37</sup>Kevin Fedarko, "Who Will Be First Among Us?" in Time Magazine Vol. 144 No. 26 (December 26, 1994), 72.

<sup>38</sup>Carlo Martini's involvement and association with the Roman Catholic Church is evidence enough of his apostasy. Most obviously, he holds to the doctrines of the Church which go clearly against the teachings of Scripture (e.g., priestly confession, veneration of the Virgin Mary, papal infallibility, transubstantiation, etc.). This is apostasy!

Catholics translated using the Greek manuscript Vaticanus (B) as seen in Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Protestants, until 1881, used the Majority Greek Text [The Textus Receptus for the most part]."<sup>39</sup> Because liberal Protestants are now using Vaticanus primarily, the Roman Catholics are now saying (Vatican II): "Catholics should work together with Protestants in the fundamental task of biblical translation . . . [They can] work very well together and have the same approach and interpretation . . . [This] signals a *new age* [emphasis is mine] in the church."<sup>40</sup> In Kurt and Barbara Aland's Text of the New Testament, the authors admit that the UBS text is "the sole text distributed by the United Bible Societies and by the *corresponding* [emphasis is mine] offices of the Roman Catholic Church . . . it will soon become the commonly accepted text for research and study in universities and churches."<sup>41</sup> This is pretty scary. How can Catholics and Protestants agree on interpretation when their theological outlooks are so different? They cannot if the Protestants are Bible-believing evangelical conservatives. Unfortunately, they are not. The Bible clearly warns, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). It should not be surprising, however, that the United Bible Societies included a Roman Catholic as one of their editors, for the Society has had a long history of dealings with the papacy. In fact, the attitude of the UBS toward the Catholic Church can be summed up for the most part in the policy of the Canadian Bible Society, an affiliate and member of the UBS. In

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<sup>39</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 497.

<sup>40</sup>Patrick Henry, New Directions in New Testament Study (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1979), 232-234.

<sup>41</sup>Aland and Aland, 35.

their “constitution,” one reads: “The Canadian Bible Society considers itself totally at the service of Catholic Bible work.”<sup>42</sup>

### The Apostasy of Eugene Nida

Another close associate of the UBS textual committee is Eugene Nida. He was the Executive Secretary of the Translations Department of the United Bible Societies from 1943-1980. Though presently retired, he continues to act as Special Consultant for Translators. Nida is far from a biblical inerrantist. With regard to his view of inspiration, he argues that God’s revelation is not absolute and involves limitations. Furthermore, he claims that all divine revelation is essentially incarnational so that if a truth is given only in words, it has no real validity until it has been translated into life. In other words, the text is in a sense nothing in and of itself, being void unless related to experience.<sup>43</sup>

Nida’s theological outlook appears to be governed by experience. According to Proverbs 28:26, he is a fool. If one bases his Christian life on experience, there exists no absolute authority. The Bible is very explicit in its teachings regarding the words of Scripture. They themselves are said to be important, not just the basic meaning (cf. Psalm 12:6-7; 138:2; Matthew 5:18; 24:35). Jesus did not say that man should live by the general message of the Father, “but by *every word* [emphasis mine] that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

### The Apostasy of Kurt Aland

Another important member of the UBS editorial committee is Kurt Aland, who, as previously mentioned, also continues to work on the Nestle-Aland editions. According to world renowned creationist Henry Morris, Aland is an evolutionist just like his

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<sup>42</sup>Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly Record (July-September, 1978), 6-8.

<sup>43</sup>Eugene Nida, Message and Mission - The Communication of the Christian Faith (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 222-228.

predecessors, Westcott, Hort and Nestle. Moreover, he is a German theological skeptic.<sup>44</sup> A casual reading of this work The Text of the New Testament shows that Aland is far and distant from being considered a believer in biblical inspiration and inerrancy. In fact, he never even uses either of these words while discussing in-depth the text of the New Testament in several hundred pages. Something is most definitely amiss. How can someone spend so much time on the text and not even consider its inspiration or inerrancy? Aland does exactly what other heretical scholars do when approaching the New Testament--he treats it as any other book. While evaluating the “standard text” of Nestle’s and the UBS, he remarks, “it is not just any random text, but the very foundation for New Testament exegesis by churchmen of all confessions and denominations throughout the world . . . it is in effect the foundation to which the whole contemporary Church looks in formulating expressions of faith.”<sup>45</sup> In section VII of this book, Aland discusses in-depth all of the entire verses found in the Textus Receptus that are omitted in the UBS text. In each instance, he presents a one-sided and biased approach to the evidence in order to “provide the reader an opportunity of forming an independent judgment of them as well as of the newly proclaimed return to the Textus Receptus on the basis of the knowledge and practical experience thus far.”<sup>46</sup> The so-called “knowledge and practical experience” of which Aland speaks is supposed to come from the previous three hundred pages of his biased and slanted book. While asserting the greatness of the so-called “standard text,” Aland’s overriding message is “Down with the Textus Receptus.” His wife, Barbara Aland, co-authored this book with her husband and also

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<sup>44</sup>Morris, 2.

<sup>45</sup>Aland and Aland, 35.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 292.

served on the editorial committee of the UBS<sup>4</sup>. Most obviously, her theological viewpoints are in line with her husband's.

### The Apostasy of Bruce Metzger

Perhaps one of the most interesting editors of the UBS<sup>4</sup> is Bruce Metzger. He is the Professor Emeritus of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary and he serves on the board of the American Bible Society. He is also the head of the continuing NRSV translation committee of the liberal National Council of Christian Churches in the United States. The RSV was soundly condemned for its liberal modernism when it first appeared in 1952. Today, Metzger, the chief editor of its revised form, is invited to speak at Evangelical forums. "The RSV hasn't changed, but Evangelicalism certainly has!"<sup>47</sup>

### Apostasy evident in the *Reader's Digest Bible*.

Metzger was the chairman for the Reader's Digest Condensed Bible and, consequently, wrote the introductions for each book. The preface promulgates, "Metzger was actively involved at every stage of the work, from the initial studies on each of the 66 books through all subsequent editorial reviews. The finished condensation has received his full approval."<sup>48</sup> This so-called "bible" removed approximately 40% of the Bible text, including Revelation 22:18-19 which warns against what Metzger himself is doing. In the introductions to the books of the Reader's Digest Bible, questions are frequently raised about the authorship, traditional date, and even the inspiration of various books. For example, in the introduction to Daniel, Metzger writes, "Most

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<sup>47</sup>David Cloud, For the Love of the Bible: The Battle for the King James Version and the Received Text from 1800 to the Present (Oak Harbor, WA: Fundamental Baptist News Service, 1995), 112.

<sup>48</sup>The Reader's Digest Bible, Ed. by Bruce M. Metzger (Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest Association, 1982), x.



scholars hold that the book was compiled during the persecutions (168-165 B.C.) of the Jewish people by Antiochus Epiphanes.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, Metzger would allow that the contents of Daniel are not legitimate prophecy, being pseudepigraphical. Furthermore, he argues that the Gospel of John whether “written directly by John, or indirectly (his teachings may have been edited by another), the church has accepted it as an authoritative supplement to the story of Jesus’ ministry given by other evangelists.”<sup>50</sup> This is denial of biblical inspiration in its most deceptive and scholarly form. It is fortunate that no one ever took the Reader’s Digest Bible seriously anyway.

Apostasy evident in the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV*.

Bruce Metzger’s liberalism was also made known in the notes to The New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV. Metzger co-edited this volume with Herbert May. It first appeared in 1962. This edition was the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible to be approved and accepted by the Roman Catholic Church. Metzger wrote many of the rationalistic notes in this “Bible” and gave his approval on the rest of them. In these notes, the Old Testament is called “a literary expression of the religious life of ancient Israel.”<sup>51</sup> Also, the Book of Job is called a “folktale”<sup>52</sup> while the Book of Jonah is termed a “popular legend.”<sup>53</sup> In the Introduction to the New Testament, Metzger argues that “The Gospel, along with a collection of sayings of Jesus and several other special sources, formed the basis of the Gospels attributed to Matthew and Luke.”<sup>54</sup> Metzger’s

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<sup>49</sup> The Reader’s Digest Bible, 465.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 606.

<sup>51</sup> The Oxford Annotated Bible, Ed. by Herbert May and Bruce Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), xxi.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 613.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 1120.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1167.

nonsensical attempt to find the “original source” for the Gospels (the Q document) makes him a liberal. As a result, it does not even warrant consideration.

Perhaps one of the most preposterous statements Metzger makes in The Oxford Annotated Bible can be found in the section entitled “How to Read the Bible with Understanding.” He writes, “We should always remember the variety of literary forms found in the Bible, and should read a passage in light of its own particular literary character. Legend should be read as legend, and poetry as poetry, and not with a dull prosaic and literalistic mind.”<sup>55</sup>

Apostasy evident in *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*.

One final work of Metzger’s that is of considerable importance is A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, the companion to the UBS<sup>4</sup>. In this small volume, Metzger attempts to defend the UBS’ selection of particular readings, primarily readings contrary to those found in the Received Text: “One of the chief purposes of the commentary is to set forth the reasons that led the Committee, or a majority of the members of the Committee, to adopt certain variant readings for inclusion in the text and to relegate certain other readings to the apparatus.”<sup>56</sup> Such a statement seems to defend the haphazard guessing of the editorial committee.

In the simplest and briefest of terms, Bruce Metzger is a liberal. On the one hand, he piously claims that the Bible is inspired, but on the other, he argues that it is filled from beginning to end with myths, legends, folk tales, and lies. He has even been called an Evangelical by some (As previously promulgated, liberalism has remained the same,

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 1515.

<sup>56</sup>Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 2nd Edition (Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993), vii.

evangelicalism has changed.), but based upon his own writings, it is safe to say that he is not an evangelical in the true sense of the word.

These are ones who have led the charge against the Received Text in modern times with their production of the UBS<sup>4</sup>. Can God use people such as this to preserve His Word? Based on biblical teaching, these are the type of men that Satan used to change God's Word as he did in the Garden of Eden. As the Apostle Paul writes in I Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; *Speaking lies in hypocrisy* [emphasis mine]. . ." Moreover, in his second epistle to the young Timothy, Paul urges Christians to turn away from those "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (II Timothy 3:5). These apostate editors of the UBS<sup>4</sup> do possess a form of godliness, but they deny its power. This simple fact raises questions about the entire UBS text. Should Christians join hands with these people? A different path awaits those who seek the absolute authority of God's Holy Word, not the subjective speculation of men.

## CHAPTER 4

## THE CORRUPT GREEK MANUSCRIPTS BEHIND THE UBS TEXT

The first mistake that the UBS editors make is favoring Alexandrian manuscripts. An investigation of these primary manuscripts is most definitely warranted. The eclectic method used by the UBS editors in collating ancient manuscripts and compiling the text is one in which the so-called “oldest and best manuscripts” are followed when it comes to settling textual questions. Ancient Greek manuscripts, as a whole, can be divided into two groups--uncials and minuscules. Uncial manuscripts are written in capital block letters while minuscules utilize cursive script. Generally, uncial manuscripts are considered to be older than cursive manuscripts although cursive writing was well-known in pre-Christian times.<sup>57</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to examine the two manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) that are given precedence by the UBS editors.

The Preference of Codices Sinaiticus and VaticanusSinaiticus and Vaticanus are preferred over the other oldest uncials.

Four of the oldest uncial codices are Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Vaticanus (B) from the fourth century, Ephraemi Rescriptus (C) from the fifth century, and Bezae (D) from the fifth century. It is upon these four manuscripts that the UBS text, along with its predecessors,<sup>58</sup> primarily rely. A casual reading of the critical apparatus will easily substantiate this claim. When these manuscripts differ, as they often do, the practice is to follow the readings of Aleph and B, with B receiving the highest recognition. Westcott and Hort accepted what they called a “neutral text.” In their opinion, only Aleph and B preserve this text in its purest form. In their Introduction to the New Testament in the

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<sup>57</sup>J. Ecob, Modern Versions and Ancient Manuscripts (Australia: Christian Book Centre, n.d.), 2.

<sup>58</sup>The Greek texts of Lachmann (1842-1850), Tischendorf (1865-1872), Tregelles (1857-1872), and Westcott and Hort (1881) all primarily rely on these four manuscripts.

Original Greek, they concluded that readings of Aleph and B “should be accepted as the true readings.”<sup>59</sup> They went on to characterize these manuscripts as standing far above all other manuscripts, preeminently excellent, and enjoying a “singular immunity from corruption.”<sup>60</sup> Of these two, Westcott and Hort always preferred B when they differed. This, as Philip Mauro asserts, is the postulate which all modern editors, including those of the UBS, have accepted:

namely, that of following the oldest manuscripts in settling all questions of doubtful or disputed readings [which] throws us back upon the two codices (Vaticanus and Sinaitic) which, though not dated, are regarded by all competent antiquarians as belonging to the fourth century; and its practical effect is to make those two solitary survivors of the first four Christian centuries the final authorities, where they agree (which is not always the case), upon all questions of the true Text of Scripture.<sup>61</sup>

Occasionally, the UBS editors will accept the readings of one of the other three early uncials over the reading of Aleph (cf. Revelation 5:9; 13:10), but this is rare. B, on the other hand, is hardly ever rejected when it differs from other manuscripts. In fact, its following is so strict that oftentimes older manuscripts as well as the majority of manuscripts are ignored. For example, in John 13:36, the UBS<sup>4</sup> follows B and ignores P<sup>66</sup>, Aleph, and the majority of manuscripts. In John 14:5, P<sup>66</sup> and the majority are also ignored in favor of the “Great Vatican Manuscript.” In both I Corinthians 15:49 and 15:54, P<sup>46</sup>, Aleph, and the majority are cast aside for the reading of B. To deny that this manuscript is practically treated as an icon by the UBS editors is to deny the glaring evidence right before one’s eyes.

Vaticanus is preferred over Sinaiticus.

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<sup>59</sup>B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek (London: MacMillan, 1896), 225.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 210, 212, 220.

<sup>61</sup>Philip Mauro, “Which Version? Authorized or Revised?” True or False?, Ed. by David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids, MI: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, 1973), 73.

The early editions of the UBS text followed the readings of Aleph and B more strictly, but the recent editions, having inserted over 400 Textus Receptus readings back into the text tend to deviate from the two only rarely. Nonetheless, generally speaking, Aleph and B are the “textual idols,” with B receiving the “worship” when the two conflict. In fact, all of the entire verses omitted from the UBS<sup>4</sup> are based on the “manuscript authority” of Vaticanus.<sup>62</sup> It is only appropriate to take a look at these two “preeminently excellent” manuscripts which supposedly represent the text closest to the original autographs of the New Testament.

### A Closer Look at Sinaiticus

Codex Sinaiticus was originally a complete Bible containing the Apocrypha.<sup>63</sup> The New Testament portion, in particular, is well preserved and includes the *Letter of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, two pseudepigraphical works.<sup>64</sup> The problems of this manuscript already begin to shine through. The New Testament portion of this codex is written on 148 leaves, each leaf being approximately 15”x 14.” There are four columns per page with 48 lines in each column. It has generally been recognized that

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<sup>62</sup>Seventeen complete verses are omitted from the UBS<sup>4</sup> text, based primarily on the reading of B (Although other manuscripts contain the omission, B can still be regarded as the primary authority. If Vaticanus contained these passages, it can be fairly certain that the UBS editors would not be so hasty to dismiss them.) These include: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mark 9:44,46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; I John 5:7.

<sup>63</sup>Most obviously, the author of this thesis has not personally examined Codex Sinaiticus, but this assertion is based upon the fact that Alfred Rahlfs’ edition of the Septuagint (Septuaginta. Ed. by Alfred Rahlfs. Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart, 1935, rep. 1979) gives readings from Aleph in the critical apparatus for many of the Apocryphal books (Although citations are not found in all fourteen books, it is not inconceivable that the manuscript once contained them all). It is also interesting to note that the Apocryphal Books were not set aside or separated from the canon, but interspersed amidst the true books. For example, the story of “Bel and the Dragon” is found in the Book of Daniel. This fact is well-known and is clearly explained by Peter Ruckman in his lecture on “Greek Manuscript Evidence” (Greek Manuscript Evidence. Pensacola, Florida: Bible Believer’s Press, n.d. Tape #2). Let it be noted at this juncture that the AV 1611 is often hastily criticized for including the Apocrypha as well. However, such a statement is made out of ignorance, for the AV translators included the fourteen Apocryphal books between the two testaments, making it abundantly clear that they were not a part of the Scriptures. These books were only included for historical and study purposes.

<sup>64</sup>Christian Tindall, Contributions to the Statistical Study of the Codex Sinaiticus (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), 4.

nine correctors worked on this manuscript between the fourth and twelfth centuries.

Even Bruce Metzger admits:

In the light of such carelessness in transcription, it is not surprising that a good many correctors (as many as nine) have been at work on the manuscript . . . Tischendorf's edition of the manuscript enumerates some 14,800 places where some alteration has been made to the text . . . [with] more recent detailed scrutiny of the manuscript . . . by the use of ultra-violet lamp, Milne and Skeat discovered that the original reading in the manuscript was erased . . .<sup>65</sup>

And this is supposed to represent the purest form of the New Testament text? Faulty reasoning is at work here. Speaking of Constantinus von Tischendorf, he was the one who found Aleph in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai in 1853. A good portion of the codex (43 leaves) was in a wastebasket containing materials that were about to be burned. Six years later (1859), the rest of this so-called "bible" was found wrapped in a red cloth and hidden on a bookshelf.<sup>66</sup> Dean Burgon characterizes this codex as "recently recovered from a monastery wastebasket."<sup>67</sup> One is forced to question what 43 pages were doing in a trashcan in the first place?<sup>68</sup> Burgon also notes that, Aleph, when collated and compared to the Traditional Text, differs in 8,972 places. Moreover, 3,455 words are omitted, 839 words are added, 1,114 words are substituted, 2,299 words are transposed, and 1,265 words are modified.<sup>69</sup>

#### A Closer Look at Codex Vaticanus

Codex Vaticanus (B) was likewise originally a complete Bible containing the Apocrypha as part of the canon.<sup>70</sup> The New Testament portion is made up of about 142

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<sup>65</sup>Bruce Metzger, Manuscripts of the Greek Bible (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 77.

<sup>66</sup>Tindall, 3.

<sup>67</sup>Burgon, "The Revision Revised," in Unholy Hands on the Bible, D-6.

<sup>68</sup>Perhaps a Bible-believing Christian trashed the codex because it was so filled with blatant omissions and alterations.

<sup>69</sup>Burgon, "The Revision Revised," in Unholy Hands on the Bible, D-6.

<sup>70</sup>As was the case with Sinaiticus, this assertion is based upon the fact that Alfred Rahlfs' edition of the Septuagint (Septuaginta. Ed. by Alfred Rahlfs. Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart, 1935, rep. 1979) gives readings from B in the critical apparatus for many of the Apocryphal Books. This fact is also

leaves which measure about 10.8 x 10.8 inches. The text appears in three columns with 40-44 lines of text per column and about 16-18 letters per line. All of the New Testament has been preserved in Vaticanus save the books of Philippians, Titus, I-II Timothy, part of Hebrews, and Revelation. Moreover, it adds the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The history of this manuscript is enshrouded in mystery. Its was written in the fourth century but was not even used or referred to until 1481 when it suddenly appeared in the Vatican.

Immediately thereafter, Codex B was used to help repress the Reformation. In 1582, it was released as the Jesuit-Rheims Bible. This is “logical considering the manuscript’s omission of anti-Catholic sections and books (i.e. Hebrews 9:14, Revelation, etc.).”<sup>71</sup>

The Catholic slant of Vaticanus is further “evidenced by the fact that at Vatican Council II, each bishop was given his own copy with an introduction by Jesuit priest, Carlo Martini [the UBS’ own].”<sup>72</sup> Modern textual critics have never been able to study Codex B firsthand, because it is locked away securely in the Vatican. Only copies and/or pictures of the manuscript are available for study. Like Sinaiticus, Vaticanus was also subject to the hands of correctors. Recent technology has been able to show that at least two correctors worked on the manuscript, one being as late as the twelfth century.

Vaticanus differs from the Traditional Text almost 50 per cent of the time. According to Dean John Burgon, 237 words, 452 clauses, and 748 whole sentences are missing from the Gospels alone.<sup>73</sup> As far as the entire codex is concerned, it differs from the

Traditional Text in 7,578 places (2,877 words are omitted; 536 words are added; 935

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explained by Peter Ruckman in his lecture on “Greek Manuscript Evidence” (Greek Manuscript Evidence. Pensacola: Florida: Bible Believer’s Press, n.d. Tape #2).

<sup>71</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 552.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>John W. Burgon, “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels” in Unholy Hands On The Bible, Vol. 1, Including the Complete Works of John W. Burgon, Dean of Chichester, Ed. by Jay P. Green (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, 1990), 41.



words are substituted; 2,098 words are transposed; and 1,132 words are modified).<sup>74</sup> It is also interesting to note that Vaticanus was composed on vellum scrolls (skins of animals not yet born), not papyrus codices which were used among early Christians.<sup>75</sup>

### When Sinaiticus meets Vaticanus

#### The similarities.

In light of the obvious corruption of these two manuscripts, what happens when Aleph meets B? Well, for starters, both contain the Alexandrian-type text and have their origins in Egypt where, according to Scrivener, the African Church corrupted the New Testament as far back as A.D. 150.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, an ancient Western (Rome) Church Father by the name of Caius (2nd century) once wrote:

For this reason is it they have boldly laid their hands upon the divine Scriptures, alleging that they have corrected them. And that I do not state this against them falsely, any one who pleases may ascertain. For if any one should choose to collect and compare all their copies together, he would find many discrepancies among them . . . their disciples were very zealous in inserting the corrections, as they call them, i.e., the corruptions made by each of them . . . For one may compare those which were formerly prepared by them with those which have been afterwards corrupted with a special object, and many discrepancies will be found. And as to the great audacity implied in this offence, it is not likely that even they themselves can be ignorant of that. *For either they do not believe that the divine Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and are thus infidels; or they think themselves wiser than the Holy Spirit, and what are they then but demoniacs* [emphasis is mine]? Nor can they deny that the crime is theirs, when the copies have been written with their own hand; nor did they receive such copies of the Scriptures from those by whom they were first instructed in the faith and they cannot produce copies from which these were transcribed.<sup>77</sup>

Sinaiticus ended up in a wastebasket in Egypt and Vaticanus made its way to Rome.

According to the Scriptures, there are three places where one should not look to find truth. These are Babylon, Egypt, and Rome.<sup>78</sup> That is quite interesting considering the

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<sup>74</sup>Burgon, "The Revision Revised," in Unholy Hands On The Bible, D-6.

<sup>75</sup>Philip W. Comfort, Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the New Testament (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Publishing House, 1990), 5.

<sup>76</sup>F. H. A. Scrivener, A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, 4th ed. (London: G. Bell, 1984 [rep]), 453.

<sup>77</sup>Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 5: 602.

<sup>78</sup>Judgment upon these three places runs rampant throughout Scripture (Babylon - Isaiah 13:1-14:23; 21:1-10; Jeremiah 50:1-51:64; Egypt - Isaiah 19:1-20:6; Jeremiah 46:1-28; Ezekiel 29:1-32:32; Rome - Daniel 2:40-45; 7:7-8, 23-28; Revelation 17:1-18:24).

fact that Egypt and especially Rome are considered by modern textual critics to be the “isles of purity” with regard to the Holy Scriptures (Rome, an island of purity? - how preposterous!). This is the same place where the pagans were burning incense to Venus, and three hundred years later under Constantine, the “Christians” were burning it to Mary.

### The differences.

Not only do these manuscripts disagree with the Traditional Text, but they do not agree with each other. The thousands of changes in Aleph and the thousands of changes in B are not the same changes. According to Herman Hoskier, these two manuscripts differ from each other over 3000 times in the Gospels alone.<sup>79</sup> Dean John Burgon goes on to say that “It is easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two differ from one another, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree.”<sup>80</sup> Together, the two manuscripts differ from the Traditional text in over 13,000 places, omit 4000 words, add 2000 words, transpose 3500 words, and modify 2000 words.<sup>81</sup>

All in all, the manuscripts Aleph and B are extremely problematic. An honest evaluation of the evidence surrounding Aleph and B would render a conclusion much like that of Dean John Burgon’s. He asserts that Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are:

... the most scandalously corrupt copies extant; they exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with--yet they have strangely become, by whatever process, for their history is wholly unknown, the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of Truth which may be found in any known copies of the Word of God.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Herman Hoskier, “Codex Vaticanus and its Allies” Which Bible? Ed. by David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1974), 136.

<sup>80</sup>John W. Burgon, “The Revision Revised,” D-6.

<sup>81</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 554.

<sup>82</sup>John W. Burgon, “The Revision Revised,” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, D-8.

He goes on to characterize them as “the foulest in existence” and “the most corrupt known.”<sup>83</sup> This being the case, the UBS<sup>4</sup> is suspect for its acceptance and heavy reliance upon Aleph and B. Those who accept this “text are basing their accusations of untruth as to the Gospels upon an Egyptian revision current 200 to 450 A.D. and abandoned between 500 to 1881, merely revised in our day and stamped as genuine.”<sup>84</sup> These two manuscripts may very well be the oldest extant and the best preserved, but “who will venture to deny that those codices are indebted for their preservation solely to the circumstance that they were long recognized as the depositories of Readings which rendered them utterly untrustworthy.”<sup>85</sup> In the same way that Bibles become tattered and worn from extensive use, the early manuscripts representing the Traditional Text rotted away and were lost because of their extensive use in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, on the other hand, were corrupt manuscripts that Bible-believing Christians did not even think about using. Therefore, they were never handled and consequently, were preserved.

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<sup>83</sup>John W. Burgon, “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels,” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, A-39.

<sup>84</sup>Hoskier, 143.

<sup>85</sup>John W. Burgon, “The Revision Revised,” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, D-12.

## CHAPTER 5

## FAULTY PRACTICES OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM BEHIND THE UBS TEXT

A general perusal of the UBS<sup>4</sup> brings to light the faulty practices of textual criticism that underlie the text. According to both Metzger and Aland, certain rules should be applied when evaluating variant readings. Metzger's criteria have been broken down into two categories--external and internal evidence. Aland, on the other hand, lists twelve rules.<sup>86</sup> The rules centered around external evidence pretty much follow the textual theories of Westcott and Hort, with Aleph and B being the principal manuscripts. Dependence on Aleph and B has already been shown to be faulty. At this juncture, however, the focus will be on rules regarding internal evidence. These, as well, can be shown to be defective, for oftentimes, they lead the textual critic to overlook the obvious as he seeks to establish a variant reading. The purpose of this chapter is to explicate the practices of textual criticism followed by the UBS editors. As will be shown, such practices include faulty logic and reasoning as well as subtle deceit and inconsistency. Sometimes, even Christian doctrine is adversely affected by these practices.

The Preference of the More Difficult Reading

Generally speaking, the readings found in the UBS<sup>4</sup> follow these simple rules. Ordinarily, the more difficult reading is to be preferred (*lectio difficilior lectio potior*). This rule applies to the sense of the passage as well as its grammar. According to Young, "this only makes sense if it is believed that a fabrication took place. This essentially

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<sup>86</sup>Metzger's criteria can be found in his The Text of the New Testament (pp. 209-210), and Aland's twelve rules are listed in The Text of the New Testament by Kurt and Barbara Aland (pp. 275-276).

assumes that the penmen who spoke Greek fluently didn't even bother to check their own grammar in what they wrote, and that the Holy Ghost did not care."<sup>87</sup>

The example of Matthew 1:7,10.

A number of passages in the UBS<sup>4</sup> apply this dictum. In Matthew 1:7,10, the names "Asaph" and "Amos" appear in the UBS<sup>4</sup> even though neither the psalmist nor the prophet were in the genealogy of Christ. Rather, the names should be read, "Asa" (the king of Judah succeeding Abijam) and "Amon" (the king of Judah succeeding Manasseh). These tainted readings, of course, are the more difficult, and according to Metzger, "the evangelist [Matthew] may have derived material for the genealogy, not from the Old Testament directly, but from the subsequent genealogical lists, in which the erroneous spelling occurred."<sup>88</sup> Would Matthew have been so lax as to make these blundering errors? Such is hardly the case. James Borland notes:

It is difficult to believe that Matthew, no doubt an educated literary Jewish writer, was incapable of distinguishing between the Hebrew 'asa' and 'asap' or between the even more distinguishable 'amon' and 'amos'. Not only would he have known the names of Israel's kings by memory, but he probably would have used the 1 Chr 3:10-14 genealogy in securing the names used.<sup>89</sup>

Besides all of this, the manuscript evidence heavily supports the readings of "Asa" and "Amon." Codex B, on the other hand, renders the incorrect reading and consequently leads the UBS editors, in conjunction with the aforementioned criterion, to select it.

The example of Mark 1:2.

Another prime example of *lectio difficilior lectio potior* can be found in Mark 1:2 in which an Old Testament prophecy is quoted regarding the ministry of John the Baptist. The UBS<sup>4</sup> attributes this prophecy to "Isaiah the prophet"

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<sup>87</sup>Jeffrey Young, "Examination of Modern New Testament Text Criticism Theory and Methods" (<http://www.aloha.net/ntcritic.txt>), 21.

<sup>88</sup>Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1.

<sup>89</sup>James Borland, "Re-examining New Testament Textual-Critical Principles and Practices Used to Negate Inerrancy" (*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, December 4, 1982), 503.

(καθως γεγραπται εν τω Ησαια τω προφητη) as opposed to the Textus Receptus which attributes it to “the prophets” (εν τοις προφηταις). Upon finding this prophecy in the Old Testament, one clearly sees that verse 2 is cited from Malachi 3:1 and that verse 3 comes from Isaiah 40:3. In other words, Isaiah the prophet did not prophesy verse 2 as the UBS reading infers. Was Mark so ignorant that he did not even know the Old Testament? Better yet was the Holy Spirit not even familiar with his own inspired work? This is definitely not the case. Metzger argues that the reading of the Textus Receptus, which correctly attributes that composite prophecy to “the prophets,” was altered by copyists when they noticed Mark’s error.<sup>90</sup> In other words, the original inspired autographs of Scripture contained blatant errors. Once again, Metzger and the UBS are wrong and *lectico difclior lectcio potior* defies the obvious.

#### The example of I Thessalonians 2:7.

One final example of *lectico difclior lectcio potior* worthy of mention can be found in I Thessalonians 2:7. The UBS<sup>4</sup> accepts the reading of P<sup>65</sup>, Aleph\*, B, C\*, D\* etc.

(νηπιοι = babes) as opposed to the majority reading of the Textus Receptus (ηπιοι = gentle). The word translated “babes” makes absolutely no sense in the passage and its context. In fact, this word perverts the sense of the passage so much that the modern English versions which follow the UBS practically everywhere else are forced in this instance to go with the reading of the Textus Receptus of the Authorized Version.

#### The Preference of the Shorter Reading

##### The example of Luke 24:53.

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<sup>90</sup>Metzger, A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament, 62. Metzger’s precise words are as follows: “The quotation in verses 2 and 3 is composite, the first part being from Mal 3.1 and the second part from Is. 40.3. It is easy to see, therefore, why copyists would have altered the words ‘in Isaiah the prophet’ . . . to the more comprehensive introductory formula ‘in the prophets.’”

Another flawed practice that is often applied in the UBS<sup>4</sup> is *lectio brevior lectio potior* (the shorter reading is to be preferred). This principle, of course, centers around the idea that scribes and copyists added things to Scripture as opposed to overlooking and thus omitting some words. This is hard to fathom because when someone copies something that is right before his eyes, words are most frequently left out and rarely ever added. Logically speaking, the exact opposite of this principle should be true. A prime example of this dictum applied can be found in the reading of Luke 24:53. According to the Textus Receptus, the men in the temple were continually “praising and blessing God” (αἰνούντες καὶ εὐλογούντες θεόν). The UBS<sup>4</sup>, however, denies this reading because some manuscripts only contain “praising” (D) while others only contain “blessing” (P<sup>75</sup>, Aleph, B, C\*, L). As Metzger argues, the reading of the TR is “undoubtedly conflation arising from combinations of εὐλογούντες and αἰνούντες.”<sup>91</sup> The UBS, of course, goes with the readings of Aleph and B. There is absolutely no way to prove by reading this verse that a fusion or conflation occurred in all traditional texts of the fourth century rather than independent deletions in the fourth and sixth centuries. The more logical conclusion is that copyists overlooked, and thus omitted, one or the other of the participles. As a result, a few disparate copies arose. After all, the reading of the Textus Receptus is backed up by the overwhelming majority of manuscripts, including such early uncials as A, C<sup>2</sup>, W, Δ, Θ, Ψ.

#### The theory of conflation.

Before going on, it is pertinent to note that Luke 24:53 was one of the eight verses cited by Westcott and Hort in their argument that the traditional text of the New

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 164.

Testament was based on conflation. They argue that since Aleph and B agree in omitting the same part of these eight verses, and D omits a different part, the traditional text must have been a harmonization of the two which fused the material found in each. All eight of these verses are found in Mark and Luke, and the UBS<sup>4</sup> accepts each of their readings as accepted by Westcott and Hort. Of the eight verses mentioned, four of them fail the criteria fully because D contains a paraphrase of the traditional text (Mark 6:33; 8:26; Luke 9:10; 11:54). In the UBS<sup>4</sup>, Luke 11:54 is not even listed as a variant reading. The fifth case offered, Luke 12:18, also fails because Aleph and B diverge which is contradictory to the theory. As a result, the reader is left with three passages that are supposedly conflated (Mark 9:38; 9:49; Luke 24:53) and are supposed to prove that the traditional text as a whole is conflated. As was the case with Luke 24:53, there is no internal evidence to indicate such a fusion. The idea of conflation is a farce and perhaps just an excuse for following the corrupt and perverted readings found in Codex Vaticanus. Edward Miller pointed out that if these eight picked examples, “can be so easily demolished, then surely the theory of Conflation must be utterly unsound . . . it [conflation] is really a matter of omission from the few and various manuscripts which do not contain the complete text as we see in the Traditional Text.”<sup>92</sup>

#### The Preference of the Reading Which Best Explains the Rise of Other Variants

##### The speculative nature of this practice.

Yet another practice of modern textual criticism that the UBS editors follow is the so-called reading which best explains the rise of other variants. Unfortunately, such a principle is completely subjective and coated with speculation. No one can really know

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<sup>92</sup>Edward Miller, “Dr. Hort’s Theory of Conflation and the Neutral Text” in Unholy Hands on the Bible (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, 1990), H-9.



how variants arose, and oftentimes what the editors see as the best explanation is quite ludicrous.

The example of John 5:4.

Take John 5:4, for example. This verse, as found in the Textus Receptus,<sup>93</sup> is omitted in the UBS<sup>4</sup> although the majority of manuscripts include it. The UBS, of course, accepts the distorted reading as it is found in Aleph and B. Also, Metzger explains that this verse should be rejected because it includes “non-Johannine words or expressions.”<sup>94</sup> Is this the best explanation he can come up with? Why couldn’t John have used unique words? After all, Metzger and the UBS editors accept readings containing *hapax legomena*<sup>95</sup> in numerous other places throughout the New Testament (e.g., In I Timothy 1:4, the UBS accepts the reading of ἐκζητησεις [*hapax legomena*] over the Textus Receptus reading of ζητησεις which is used elsewhere in the New Testament. Metzger is going against his own argument). What does Metzger do with the impotent man’s reply to Christ in verse 7, all of which the UBS<sup>4</sup> includes? The man complained to Jesus that he was not able to be made whole because he could not get down into the water when it was troubled. Someone always beat him to it. This reply is absolute nonsense if verse 4 is omitted. Besides, any Jewish scholar will attest to the authenticity of a tradition of an angel troubling the water at Bethesda. Logically speaking, there is no reason to doubt the verse. However, as has been plainly shown, the UBS editors often defy logic in their application.

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<sup>93</sup> ἀγγελος γαρ κατα καιρον κατεβαινεν εν τη κολυβηθρα, και εταρασσε το υδωρ; ο ουν πρωτος εμβας μετα την ταρακην του υδατος υγιης εγινετο ω δηποτε κατειχετο νοσηματι (For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had)

<sup>94</sup> Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 179.

<sup>95</sup> *Hapax Legomena* is a Greek term applied to words that are only used once in the New Testament by a particular author.

### The UBS Recension

As previously mentioned earlier in this work, the present state of the UBS text contains approximately 500 changes from the second edition. Many, if not all, of these changes are back to readings as found in the Textus Receptus (e.g., I Corinthians 1:14; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 6:1). One must keep in mind that modern scholars criticize the Traditional Text because they claim it originates from a recension made back in the early fourth century. This so-called “fact” is the entire formulation for rejecting the Textus Receptus in its entirety and defending all the changes as being “more accurate.” This is a standard Westcott and Hort position, as advocated by the UBS editors. However, these editors created their own recension by inserting the 500 Textus Receptus readings back into the text, claiming that these readings were based upon new discoveries that provide older and better manuscripts. However, there were no major manuscript discoveries during the time period between the second and following UBS editions that anyone can seem to point to. One begins to wonder, what is going on here? Well, it is quite simple to figure out provided the time is taken to think about it. Anyone can see that the text minus the receptus readings is nothing more than a Roman Catholic Vulgate in the Greek language as are many of the modern English versions (NIV, ASV, NASV, RSV, NRSV, etc.). In fact, it is tremendously easy to see the difference between a 1978 NIV (based upon the UBS<sup>2</sup>) and a 1984 NIV (based upon the UBS<sup>3/4</sup>). It is interesting to note that it was not until the Textus Receptus readings were reinserted back into the text that these “Bibles” became popular. Without the readings, they are merely modern editions of the Roman Catholic Vulgate. The UBS editors had to make this recension in order to promote the sale and acceptance of their edition as embodying new and updated

evidence: “The subtlety is the power of this because the normal response is to support the reinsertion of the 500 receptus readings, especially from a Bible believing standpoint because such a perspective sees real error as being corrected. However, what is really going on is real error becoming deceptive. This is where the Christians can get really confused.”<sup>96</sup> In establishing this recension, the UBS editors go completely against the methods of textual criticism that they claim to follow. This is utter inconsistency! All in all, this whole argument can be summed up in one statement. The reinsertion of the 500 receptus readings does nothing more than serve as a complex labyrinth that hides and cloaks the Roman Catholic Vulgate.

The three aforementioned principles (the more difficult reading is preferred, the shorter reading is preferred, and the reading that best explains the rise of other variants is preferred) as well as the “UBS Recension” are perhaps the most obviously detected when reading the UBS<sup>4</sup>. All are faulty, go against logic, and can be easily explained away. These, however, are not the only “rules” mechanically applied. As previously mentioned, Aland lists twelve. All are used in conjunction with each other, and consequently, many passages as found in the Traditional Text are adversely affected (see also Matthew 1:7-10; Mark 1:2; Luke 23:45; John 5:3; I Corinthians 10:28; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 7:21; I Peter 4:1; I John 4:3).

#### The Practice of Failing to List Variant Readings

Oftentimes, the UBS<sup>4</sup> will insert disparate readings that conflict with the Traditional Text, but will not even list the reading as a variant. The editors, of course, argue that the elimination of the listing of the textual evidence for a large number of such readings only involved “variant units where the readings were of minor significance, concerned only

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<sup>96</sup>Thomas A. Weddle (Walking Tree Ministries), Personal Letter addressed to Jesse M. Boyd, 2-5-97, 1.

with the minutest textual variations, and including others having a greater importance for the reader's understanding of the history of the text and exegesis."<sup>97</sup> Because of this, readers are unable to detect where many variant readings occur. They may actually be working with readings that differ greatly from those found in the Textus Receptus and not even know it. Besides, what the UBS editors consider unimportant and of minor significance in many cases completely alters the meaning of the text. In Ephesians 3:9, for example, the UBS<sup>4</sup> replaces the noun “κοινωνία” (fellowship) with “οικονομία” (management). Furthermore, the prepositional phrase “δια Ιησους Χριστου” (by Christ Jesus) is ousted. As a result, the reader fails to see that God created all things through Christ Jesus. There is no “minor” significance found here, but an important truth concerning the eternity of Christ. Another example of an unrecognized variant can be found in Mark 6:11. The UBS<sup>4</sup> omits the phrase “αμην λεγω υμιν ανεκτοτερον εσται Σοδομοις η Γομορροις ενημερα κρισεως η τ η πολει εκεινη” (Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city). This reading is likewise of significant importance because it is attested, according to Dean Burgon:

by the Peshitto and the Philoxenian Syriac Versions, by the Old Latin, the Coptic, the Ethiopic, and the Gothic Versions; by 11 uncials, and by the bulk of the cursives. They are also vouched for by Irenaeus and by Victor of Antioch. So that whether antiquity, or variety of attestation is considered--whether we look for numbers or for respectability--the genuineness of the passage may be regarded as certain.<sup>98</sup>

In Matthew 4:23, the name “Jesus” (Ιησους) is omitted based on the reading of one manuscript, Vaticanus.<sup>99</sup> The variant reading is not recognized in the critical apparatus of

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<sup>97</sup> The Greek New Testament, 4th Edition (United Bible Societies), v.

<sup>98</sup> John Burgon, “The Revision Revised” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, D-38.

<sup>99</sup> Constantinus Tischendorf, Novum Testamentum Graece, Vol. 1 (Lipsiae: Giesecke and Devrient, 1869), 15.

the UBS<sup>4</sup>. The reading found in II Corinthians 8:24 is also not mentioned as a variant reading. Such is important because according to Peter Ruckman, “the testimony of Vaticanus and one other late manuscript is given precedence over a fifth century manuscript (A), another fifth century manuscript (C), a manuscript as old as Vaticanus itself - Sinaiticus (Aleph) from the fourth century, and the vast majority of manuscript witnesses.”<sup>100</sup> Tischendorf’s critical apparatus also bears witness to this fact.<sup>101</sup>

Matthew 1:19 contains a different participle in the UBS<sup>4</sup> as opposed to the Traditional Text. The change does not alter the meaning substantially, but it cannot be considered of minor significance because the UBS reading is based upon B, Z, and one cursive. The reading as found in the Textus Receptus, on the other hand, is supported by A,C, Aleph, D, E, F, K, and several hundred cursives. These are just a few examples of passages where variant readings are not cited by the editors in the UBS text (see also Matthew 13:36; Luke 12:18; 11:54; John 12:13; I Corinthians 4:14; II Corinthians 4:6; I Timothy 4:12; Revelation 8:13; 12:5)<sup>102</sup>. None of them are of minor significance and one begins to wonder if space alone is the true motive of the UBS editors is to find the original text of the New Testament.

### The Practice of Listing Incomplete and Misleading Textual Evidence

#### Misleading evidence.

In addition to not listing important variant readings, the critical apparatus of the UBS<sup>4</sup> is misleading and deceptive in its presentation of manuscript evidence. For example,

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<sup>100</sup>Peter Ruckman, Bible Babel (Pensacola, FL: Bible Believer’s Press, 1994), 78.

<sup>101</sup>Constantinus Tischendorf, Novum Testamentum Graece, Vol. 2 (Lipsiae: Giesecke and Devrient, 1869), 604.

<sup>102</sup>These passages were the only ones the author found. I am sure that an extensive comparison between the UBS<sup>4</sup> and the Textus Receptus would render many more variant readings not listed in the UBS critical apparatus.

Origen is listed as a witness to the omission of Matthew 21:44. A study of Origen's writings, however, yields different evidence. On one occasion, he cites the previous verse (21:43) which is all that he requires for his purpose. The UBS editors argue from silence that Origen consented to the omission of 21:44. However, according to Dean Burgon, he did in fact cite the verse on another occasion.<sup>103</sup> In Matthew 6:13, the UBS<sup>4</sup> claims that Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 315-386) and Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 335-395) omit the important ending of this verse otherwise known as the benediction of the Lord's Prayer. Once again, the UBS editors are arguing from silence. Both of these Fathers make reference to the first portion of the verse for their individual purposes. Because they do not quote the ending of the verse, the UBS editors immediately presume that they consent to its omission. Many times portions of Scripture verses have been cited in theological writings. Does this mean that the author does not recognize the rest of the passage? Once again, faulty reasoning is at work. With reference to this specific passage, Burgon writes:

Those who have attended to such subjects will however bear me more ready witness that it is never safe to draw inferences of the kind proposed from the silence of the ancients. What if they regarded a doxology, wherever found, as hardly a fitting subject for exegetical comment? But however their silence is to be explained, it is at least quite certain that the reason of it is not because their copies of S. Matthew were without the doxology.<sup>104</sup>

### Incomplete evidence.

It is also interesting to note that the critical apparatus only cites 7 per cent of the cursive manuscripts, .02 per cent of the lectionaries, 24 per cent of the church fathers, and 33 per cent of the versions and 92 per cent of the uncials. Furthermore, important manuscripts such as H, K, M, R, U, V, and approximately 176 others are not even

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<sup>103</sup> John Burgon, "The Causes of Corruption of the New Testament Text" in Unholy Hands on the Bible (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, 1990), B-63.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., B-40.

recognized. If these manuscripts are so insignificant, why can't the editors just be completely honest and truthfully evaluate all of the evidence? One is forced to contemplate an ulterior motive.

### The Practice of Arbitrary Guesswork

A thorough comparison of the UBS<sup>4</sup> with the Textus Receptus also yields instances of arbitrary and haphazard guesswork. For example, in Acts 28:1 the Greek verb “επεγνωσαν” (they knew) is eliminated and the word “επεγνωμεν” (we knew) has been substituted. According to Peter Ruckman, “Not one single manuscript, past, present, or future, can be cited for this substitution. It is pure, arbitrary guesswork.”<sup>105</sup> In James 5:16, the word “αμαρτιας” (sins) is substituted for “παραπτωματα” (faults) based on practically no manuscript authority.<sup>106</sup> Such a substitution changes the entire sense of the passage and supports the Roman Catholic doctrine of priestly confession (rather interesting). Revelation 11:5,12 also contain alterations from the traditional text based on little to no manuscript authority.<sup>107</sup> The UBS editors are changing the words of Scripture simply because they want to. Anyone that calls this distorted and perverted edition a New Testament is sadly mistaken and misinformed.

### The Practice of Inconsistency

The UBS editors are also extremely inconsistent when selecting variant readings. Blatant inconsistency reared its ugly head when the accepted manuscript witnesses within the compass of a few pages of the UBS text were randomly overviewed. The results were quite shocking. For example, in I Corinthians 7:15, the UBS follows Aleph and

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<sup>105</sup>Ruckman, Bible Babel, 77.

<sup>106</sup>Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), 686.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 755, 757.

ignores P<sup>46</sup>, B and the Majority. In I Corinthians 8:3, the Majority is accepted while Aleph and P<sup>46</sup> are ignored. A few verses later (10:9), Aleph and B are followed and P<sup>46</sup> and the Majority are disregarded. The UBS rendering of I Corinthians 11:24 follows P<sup>46</sup>, B, and Aleph, ignoring the Majority of witnesses. Moreover, in 14:38, the reading of Aleph is given precedence over P<sup>46</sup>, B, and the Majority. There is absolutely no discernible pattern here, and this is just a random sample of a few proximal verses. It is almost frightening to think about what a complete analysis of the UBS<sup>4</sup> would yield. In II Corinthians 1:11 and 2:1, the UBS editors go with manuscript readings in a diametrically opposite fashion (1:11 follows Aleph while 2:1 ignores it. On other hand, 1:11 ignores P<sup>46</sup> and B while 2:1 follows them). Another example of diametrical opposites can be found by comparing Galatians 1:15 with 6:2. This is faulty reasoning, not scholarship. Gail Riplinger argues:

The accepted principles of the science of textual criticism used to justify this “shell game” are hardly worth the printer’s ink to print them. They are illustrations of Timothy’s “science, falsely so called” and can be summarized in one sentence--“I believe the writer is probably more likely to have said this.”<sup>108</sup>

### The Practice of Discreetly Altering Christian Doctrine

One final point that needs to be made is that many of the variant readings selected in the UBS<sup>4</sup> adversely affect Christian doctrine. In defending the modern Greek editions and English versions, James White argues that “the reality is that the amount of variation between the two most extremely different manuscripts of the New Testament would not fundamentally alter the message of the Scriptures.”<sup>109</sup> Moreover, John Ankerberg concludes that the textual differences only apply to 1 per cent of the text, and none of

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<sup>108</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 500.

<sup>109</sup>James White, The King James Only Controversy (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1995), 40.



them are important.<sup>110</sup> These assertions are simply false. As previously discussed, almost 7 per cent of the text is affected (8,674 total word differences), and quite shockingly, many affect Christian doctrine. For example, the Lord's Prayer of Matthew 6 is mutilated by the UBS editors, based on a few perverted manuscripts. This prayer is a model prayer for all Christians. According to the UBS<sup>4</sup>, Christians have no model for ascribing praise to Almighty God in their prayers, for the text omits the benediction. In Matthew 18:11, Jesus' purpose (The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost) is cut from the text. How can this be unimportant or insignificant? Both Mark 9:44,46 are omitted. These verses describe the eternal punishment of hell. It is true that 9:48 contains the clause, but why was it omitted in verses 44 and 46 when the great majority of manuscripts bear witness to its inclusion? It seems as if the UBS editors are attempting to take away Christ's repetitive emphasis on the severity of eternal punishment. As D. A. Waite argues, "While it is true that verse 48 is retained in this passage in the modern versions, the power and authority is weakened by two-thirds. The Received Text [Textus Receptus] says Jesus repeated this statement three times to emphasize the horrors of going to hell."<sup>111</sup> In Luke 2:33, Joseph is called Jesus' father and in 2:43, Mary and Joseph are called Jesus' parents against the readings of the Textus Receptus. Regardless of what James White may say, this is a subtle denial of Christ's deity. Joseph was not his father, God Almighty was. Furthermore, Mary and *Joseph* were not Jesus' parents.

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<sup>110</sup>John Ankerberg and John Weldon, The Facts on the King James Only Debate (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 8.

<sup>111</sup>D. A. Waite, "The Four-Fold Superiority of the King James Version" (kjavwaite.txt at www.aloha.net), 12.

Another important passage dealing with Christ's deity is I Timothy 3:16. The UBS<sup>4</sup> accepts the relative pronoun "ος" (who) as opposed to the common abbreviation for God (Θς). This simple alteration affects the entire sense of the passage. Not only does it erase the idea that God was manifest in the flesh, but it makes the syntax awkward and nonsensical. Dean John Burgon showed in his studies that the evidence for "Θς" as opposed to "Ος" is overwhelming.<sup>112</sup> He concludes his argument by stating, "Let it be clearly understood that I rest my contention not at all on Internal, but entirely on External Evidence--although, to the best of my judgment, they are alike conclusive as to the matter in debate. Having now incontrovertibly, as I believe, established Θεος as the best attested reading of the place, I conclude."<sup>113</sup> Burgon's arguments concerning this passage as well as numerous others have remained unanswered for years.

Many other examples of readings accepted in the UBS<sup>4</sup> discreetly affect Christian doctrine in an adverse way. For a more thorough evaluation of such readings, one should refer to Appendix C.

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<sup>112</sup>John Burgon, "Proof of the Genuineness of God Manifested in the Flesh," in Unholy Hands on the Bible (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, 1990), E-1-30.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., E-30.

## CHAPTER 6

AN EVALUATION OF THE *JOHANNINE COMMA* AS AN EXAMPLE OF  
MISREPRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE IN THE UBS TEXT.

Perhaps one of the most important doctrinal omissions that is worthy of consideration is I John 5:7-8, the famous “Trinity Declaration.” Unfortunately, this has been perchance one of the most hotly debated passages, especially with regard to modern textual criticism. At this point, it is only appropriate to endeavor upon an extensive discussion of this passage to see whether or not the UBS editors have been completely honest in their evaluation of the evidence. The purpose of this chapter is to utilize this passage as an example of the UBS<sup>4</sup>’s misrepresentation of evidence. In doing so, Bruce Metzger’s claims in his Textual Commentary to the Greek New Testament, the argumentative companion to the UBS<sup>4</sup> which seeks to defend the UBS’ selection of variant readings, will be evaluated. The different points of his argument will be analyzed and refuted because they reflect the views of the UBS committee leading to their exclusion of the Comma. It is the opinion of the author that the *Johannine Comma* is an authentic part of the Holy Scriptures. However, such a claim is not the main issue in this chapter. Although this conclusion will be substantiated through the evidence presented, the primary motive is to expose the subtle deceit of Bruce Metzger and the UBS editors.<sup>114</sup>

A Closer Look at the Issue

In the Textus Receptus, I John 5:7-8 reads:

<sup>7</sup>ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατήρ, ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα; καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσι. <sup>8</sup>καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῇ, τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα; καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν.

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<sup>114</sup>For a presentation of the author’s defense of the *Johannine Comma* from an internal perspective, one should consult appendix F.

<sup>7</sup>For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. <sup>8</sup>And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one (AV).

The UBS<sup>4</sup>, on the other hand, renders:

<sup>7</sup>ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, <sup>8</sup>τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν.

<sup>7</sup>For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup>the spirit, the water, and the blood; and the three are in agreement (NIV).

As anyone can clearly see, this is a substantial omission and subsequent alteration of the text. How does the UBS arrive at such a rendering? First of all, verse 7 as found in the Textus Receptus is completely removed; then the first phrase of verse 8 (ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες) becomes verse 7 and “ἐν τη γῇ” is omitted. Thus, the entire arrangement and sense of the passage is altered. Unfortunately, such an alteration has caused many a student to pace his study for hours struggling with the question as to whether or not the *Comma* is a legitimate part of the Holy Scriptures because it is one of those few verses included in the *Received Text* which has a weak attestation from Greek manuscripts. Because of such weak attestation, modern textual critics hastily and eagerly dismiss the passage as a scribal addition. The UBS<sup>4</sup> is a prime example of hasty dismissal, and as a result their assertions regarding this verse are misleading and deceptive to the average reader.

#### A Closer Look at Metzger’s Argument

Metzger’s presentation of the manuscript evidence is misleading.

The first claim that Metzger makes is that the Comma “is absent from every known Greek manuscript except eight . . . the eight manuscripts are as follows . . .”<sup>115</sup> Next, he proceeds to list the manuscripts, but only catalogues seven (61, 88, 221, 429, 636, 918,

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<sup>115</sup>Metzger, Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 647.

2318). Where is the eighth manuscript? However, the critical apparatus of the UBS<sup>4</sup> adds Codex Ottobonianus (629) which dates to the fourteenth century, but Metzger fails to mention it. One begins to wonder what his motive for doing so would be. Four of these eight manuscripts contain the Comma written in the margin (88, 221, 429, 636), while the other four include it as part of the text.<sup>116</sup>

It is also interesting to note that both Metzger and the UBS editors fail to list the Codex Britannicus as evidence for the Comma.<sup>117</sup> Their reason for doing this is probably the same reason that all modern textual critics ignore the codex--they equate it with Codex Monfortianus (61). The so-called “evidence” for this miscalculation centers around Erasmus, the man whose *Novum Testamentum Graecum* served as the basis for the Greek text used by the AV translators. The story says that Erasmus was criticized for omitting the Comma from his first and second editions. He argued that no Greek manuscripts contained the reading and supposedly challenged his critic, Edward Lee who charged him with being an Arian for omitting I John 5:7-8, to produce a manuscript with the passage. Only then, would he include it in his edition.<sup>118</sup> Codex Monfort is supposedly the manuscript that was hastily drawn up to meet Erasmus’ demands. As a result, he inserted the verse and defended it by stating that he had received a transcript of

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<sup>116</sup> Oftentimes, the marginal readings are hastily dismissed. However, what are they doing in the margins. It makes more sense that someone would put them there because they recognized the passage to be missing.

<sup>117</sup> The reading of the Comma found in Codex Britannicus is given by Orlando T. Dobbin in *The Codex Monfortianus: A Collation* (London: Bagster, 1854) on page 10. His source is Erasmus’ *Apologia ad Jacobum Stunicam* (1522), reprinted in the Basle edition (1540) of Erasmus’ works, pp. 238-296. Codex Britannicus reads:

“<sup>7</sup>οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω ο πατηρ ο λογος και το πνα <sup>8</sup>και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισι, και τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τη γη το πνα, το υδωρ, και το αιμα και οι τρεις εις το εν ε ισι ει την μαρτυριαν των ανων λαμβανομεν.” The underlined phrase is not found in Codex Monfortianus, so the two manuscripts cannot be the same. Furthermore, Erasmus could not have gotten the Comma from the Monfort Codex.

<sup>118</sup> William Combs, “Erasmus and the Textus Receptus,” in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Spring 1996), 49.

the *Comma* from Codex Britannicus (what is believed to be the Codex Monfort).<sup>119</sup> First of all, the argument that Erasmus challenged Lee is completely unsound. A careful perusal of Erasmus' words in his *Liber tertius quod respondet . . . Ed. Lei* yields evidence to the contrary:

Is it negligence and impiety, if I did not consult manuscripts which were simply not within my reach? I have at least assembled whatever I could assemble. Let Lee produce a Greek MS. which contains what my edition does not contain and let him show that that manuscript was within my reach. Only then can he reproach me with negligence in sacred matters.<sup>120</sup>

Erasmus does not challenge Lee to produce a manuscript. Rather, he simply argues that Lee can legitimately reproach him with negligence of manuscripts only if he can demonstrate that he could have consulted manuscripts containing I John 5:7-8. As Henk J. de Jonge states, "Erasmus does not at all ask for a MS containing the *Comma johanneum*. He denies Lee the right to call him negligent and impious if the latter does not prove that Erasmus neglected a manuscript to which he had access."<sup>121</sup> In light of these facts, there never was a manuscript produced to convince Erasmus. If there had been, Erasmus would have surely been smart enough to detect such a forgery.

At this point, it is only appropriate to refute those such as the UBS editors who criticize Desiderius Erasmus for his inclusion of the *Comma* and corresponding work on the text of the Greek New Testament. In his Word Pictures of the Greek New Testament, A.T. Robertson claims that the *Comma* got into the Textus Receptus "by the stupidity of Erasmus."<sup>122</sup> If Erasmus was so stupid, as Robertson and many other so-called "Bible-

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<sup>119</sup>Michael Maynard, A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8 (Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995), 76.

<sup>120</sup>Desiderius Erasmus, *Liber tertius quo respondet reliquis annotationibus Ed. Lei* (LB IX 199-284) [May, 1520]. Translated by Henk J. de Jonge in "Erasmus and the *Comma Johanneum*" (Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 56 [1980], 381-389).

<sup>121</sup>Henk J. de Jonge, *Personal Letter Addressed to Michael Maynard* (June 13, 1995).

<sup>122</sup>A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the Greek New Testament. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1933, rep 1960), 6: 241.

scholars” so ardently claim, please explain why both the King of England and the King of France offer him high positions in government if he would just become a citizen of their nation? Furthermore, why did the Pope offer him a cardinal’s hat? This is far more than can be said for any modern scholar (Aland, Metzger, Nestle, Westcott, Hort, Robertson, et. al.). David Otis Fuller writes:

Erasmus could do the work of ten men. He was that brilliant. And such an indefatigable worker. He was courted by kings. The reigning king of England offered him anything in his realm if he would become a citizen of that nation. The king of France did the same thing. Holland made great preparations to advertise him as their own native son . . . we are told that he had access to Codex Vaticanus and was offered it to be used in his studies. He rejected it because he had found it untrustworthy. He was offered the cardinal's hat by the pope of Rome. This he refused. It is also said that he could have become pope if he had engineered it in the right way and pulled the right strings, but he refused to do this because in his famous book, *In Praise of Folly*, in a very satirical way he exposed the terrible sins of the Roman Catholic Church of that day.<sup>123</sup>

Although Codex Monfortianus is dated by modern critics to the sixteenth century (ca. 1520), one must wonder where the reading of I John 5:7-8 came from. It did not come from Ximene’s Polygot, for it was not published yet.<sup>124</sup> It did not come from Erasmus because it does not match his Greek in scores of places.<sup>125</sup> Rather, the literal affinities of Monfortianus are with the Syriac Version which was not known in Europe until after 1552.<sup>126</sup> Besides, this codex has been dated by Adam Clarke to the thirteenth century.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>David Otis Fuller, “Which Bible is Preserved of God?” in O Timothy Magazine Vol. 9, Issue 9 Ed. by David W. Cloud (Oak Harbor, WA: Way of Life Literature), 6.

<sup>124</sup>The reading of the *Comma* found in the Monfort Codex could not have come from Ximene’s Polygot. Although this edition was first printed in 1514, Cardinal Ximenes did not get permission from Pope Leo X to publish the work until 1520. It was not until 1522 that this edition actually began to circulate and eventually come into Erasmus’ hands.

<sup>125</sup>Erasmus first included the *Comma* in his third edition which did not appear until 1522. The reading of the *Comma* as found in the Codex Monfort does not match Erasmus’ reading in his third edition in several places. For example, the last clause (and these three agree in one) is not in the Monfort, but included in Erasmus’ third edition. Furthermore, the six articles are omitted and *αγιον* and *πνευμα* are transposed. Erasmus included the articles and did not swap *αγιον πνευμα*.

<sup>126</sup>Peter Ruckman, “James White’s Seven Errors in the King James Bible--Errors 6 & 7,” Bible Believer’s Bulletin (March 1996), 3.

<sup>127</sup>Adam Clarke, The New Testament: A Commentary and Critical Notes (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, n.d.), 6: 928-929.

As far as Codex Britannicus is concerned, it cannot be equated with the Monfort, because the respective renderings of I John 5:7-8 are quite different. On the one hand, the Monfort omits the articles in verse seven (ο, ο, το) and transposes “αγιον πνευμα.” In verse 8, the articles (το, το, το), a conjunction (και), and the last phrase (και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν) are missing. Britannicus, on the other hand, includes the articles and the final phrase but omits the adjective “αγιον” in verse 8. Where did Erasmus acquire the last clause for his third edition? He surely did not get it from Ximene’s Polygot or Codex Monfort, but from Britannicus. This is why Monfortianus “cannot possibly be the same with the Codex Britannicus.”<sup>128</sup> At this point, no date as been assigned to this manuscript. Already, Metzger’s argument against the *Johannine Comma* is beginning to crumble.

Metzger’s presentation of evidence from the Early Church Fathers is misleading.

After promulgating his faulty catalogue of Greek manuscripts containing the *Comma*, Metzger claims that “the passage is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers.” Such a bold assertion is also misleading because Gregory of Nazanzius (a Greek Church Father from the fourth century), although not directly quoting the passage, specifically alludes to the passage and objects to the grammatical structure if the Comma is omitted (Metzger, on the other hand, would have one to believe that the Greek Church Fathers knew nothing of the passage). Gregory writes:

What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he says that there are Three that bear witness, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has ventured to reckon under one numeral things which are not consubstantial, though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are consubstantial. For who would assert that these are consubstantial? Secondly, because he had not been consistent in the way he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three words which

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<sup>128</sup>Charles Forster, A New Plea for the Authenticity of the Text of the Three Heavenly Witnesses, (Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co., 1867), 126.



are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and then adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use the Three not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of Deity?<sup>129</sup>

In this brief excursus, Gregory objects to the use of a masculine plural participle with three neuter nouns ( [7] m:pl = [8] n+n+n ) which, of course, is the case if the *Comma* is omitted. In other words, “Gregory of Nazianzus objected to the omission of 1 John v.7f.”<sup>130</sup>

Gregory was definitely onto something because if the *Comma* is omitted, John’s word choice seems extremely awkward and unusual with respect to the general rules of the Greek language. The masculine article, numeral, and participle (There are three that bear witness<sup>131</sup>) are made to agree with three neuter nouns (Spirit, water, and blood<sup>132</sup>). As Robert Dabney argues, “This is an insuperable and very bald grammatical difficulty.”<sup>133</sup> John most definitely would not have made such a connection, for his structure and syntax are altogether simple and understandable. In attempting to excuse this awkward choice of words, Daniel Wallace states that “the fact that the author has personified water and blood, turning them into witnesses along with the Spirit, may be enough to account for the masculine gender.”<sup>134</sup> However, the personification of the water and blood does not become evident unless the *Comma* is present. It is true that the Spirit (πνευμα), a neuter word, is sometimes used in connection with masculinity because the author is referring to the Holy Spirit as a person, a member of the Godhead; but inanimate objects are rarely, if

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<sup>129</sup>Gregory of Nazianzen “On the Holy Spirit,” XIX, “Fifth Oration”--The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 7: 323-324.

<sup>130</sup>Maynard, 41.

<sup>131</sup>οι τρεις μαρτυρουντες

<sup>132</sup>πνευμα, υδωρ, αιμα

<sup>133</sup>Robert Dabney, The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: Banner of Trust, 1967), 306.

<sup>134</sup>Daniel Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 332.

at all, “masculinized” for the purpose of personification. If the disputed verse is allowed to remain, the three neuter nouns agree with the two masculines (Father and Word<sup>135</sup>) and one neuter of verse 7 (Holy Spirit<sup>136</sup>), and, according to the rules of syntax, the masculines among the group control the gender over a neuter connected to them. Such is termed the “power of attraction” and is well-known in Greek syntax throughout the New Testament.

Metzger’s presentation of evidence with regard to the Trinitarian Controversies is misleading.

Bruce Metzger also claims that if any of the Greek Fathers had known of the *Comma*, they would have “most certainly employed it in the Trinitarian controversies (Sabellian and Arian).”<sup>137</sup> There is some truth to this statement in that Metzger is referring to specific controversies that had taken place by A.D. 323 (e.g., Council of Nicea). There is no evidence that the *Comma* was ever cited in these particular Trinitarian controversies. However, Metzger completely ignores the fact that the verse was employed in a Trinitarian controversy between the Arians (led by King Huneric the Vandal) and a group of bishops from North Africa at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 484. By refusing to mention this fact, he would have one to believe that the *Comma* was never used as proof of the Trinity and/or the deity of Christ in the numerous debates that arose and plagued the Church over these issues. Historical evidence, however, pleads the contrary. I John 5:7-8 was insisted upon by Eugenius, the spokesman for the African bishops, as he confessed his faith and the faith of his brethren:

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<sup>135</sup>Πατηρ, Λογος

<sup>136</sup>Αγιον Πνευμα

<sup>137</sup>Metzger, Textual Commentary to the Greek New Testament, 648.

...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>138</sup>

In spite of this fact, those that oppose the verse remark that the unanimous testimony of the 400 bishops in no way proves that the *Comma* was in all of their copies. Secondly, they assert that as no dispute took place, but the conference was broken up immediately; therefore, the Arians did not accept the passage. Charles Butler, in *Horae Biblicae*, offered an interesting 12-point rebuttal to the opposers of the *Comma*. Such is a lengthy treatise and will not be employed word for word at this juncture. Rather, the twelve point argument will be adequately summarized.

Charles Butler pointed out that the Catholic Bishops were summoned to a conference where they most certainly expected the tenets of their faith to be attacked by the Arians (the Arians denied the deity of Jesus Christ). Therefore, they would have been very careful about what they included in their proposed confession, seeing as all power was in the hands of their angry Arian adversaries. The bishops included the *Johannine Comma* as a first line of defense for their confession of Christ's deity. If the Arians could have argued what present-day opposers of the verse say (The *Comma* was in no Greek copy and in only a few Latin copies), what would the bishops have replied? If we are to believe that they were unable to hold out one Greek copy, no ancient Latin copy, and no ancient father where the verse could be found, the Arians could have rightly accused them on the spot of following a spurious passage and being guilty of palpable falsehood. It is almost certain that these bishops would not have exposed themselves to such immediate and indelible infamy. They volunteered to include the *Comma* in their confession despite the

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<sup>138</sup>Victor of Vitensis, *Historia persecutionis Africanae Prov*, 2.82 [3.11]; CSEL 7, 60. Translated by Michael Maynard in *A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8* (Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995), 43.

existence of many long treatises that had been written by the ancient defenders of the Trinity in which the verse had not been mentioned. Such treatises would have served as ample evidence, but the bishops cited I John 5:7-8 instead. Obviously, they had no fear that any claim of spuriousness could be legitimately dashed upon them. If the verse were attacked, the bishops could have produced Greek copies, ancient Latin copies, and ancient fathers in its defense. The *Comma*, however, was not attacked by the Arians and the Catholic bishops (302 of them) were exiled to different parts of Africa, exposed to the insults of their enemies, and carefully deprived of all temporal and spiritual comforts of life. It is ludicrous to think that these men could undergo such persecution and suffering for their belief of the deity of Jesus Christ only to insert a spurious verse into God's Word as their first line of defense.<sup>139</sup> The Spanish bishops must have had weighty testimony to the *Comma* in their manuscripts. As a result, they were able to successfully employ the passage as they defended their faith before the Arian accusers.

Metzger's presentation of evidence from ancient versions is misleading.

Bruce Metzger goes on to make another misleading claim in his textual commentary. He claims that "the passage is absent from the manuscripts of all ancient versions (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic), except the Latin . . ."<sup>140</sup> This allegation is misleading because, as Scrivener asserts, "scarcely any Armenian codex exhibits it, and only a few recent Slavonic copies, the margin of a Moscow edition of 1663 being the first to represent it."<sup>141</sup> F. H. A. Scrivener opposes the inclusion of the verse, and in that

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<sup>139</sup>Charles Butler, "To Rev. Herbert Marsh," in *Horae Biblicae* (London: W. Clarke and Sons, 1817), 403-406.

<sup>140</sup>Metzger, *Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, 648.

<sup>141</sup>Scrivener, 403.

aspect, agrees with Metzger. However, he does admit that it appears in a few copies of the Armenian, an ancient version. Metzger's blanket statement overlooks this fact.

As far as the Old Syriac is concerned, there is good evidence that the *Comma* appeared in its early manuscripts. First of all, it must be noted that when Metzger or the UBS editors refer to the Old Syriac, they are simply alluding to a collation of "five printed editions [sy<sup>s</sup>(1910), sy<sup>c</sup>(1904), sy<sup>p</sup>(1920), sy<sup>h</sup>(1909), sy<sup>r</sup>(1788)(1803)(1889)], each of which is based on one or two MSS, or a slender portion of all extant Syriac MSS."<sup>142</sup> Just because I John 5:7-8 does not appear in any of these five editions does not mean that it was not present in any Syriac copies. In fact, the evidence yields quite the contrary. For example, Jaqub of Edessa, a well-known church writer from the seventh century who wrote in Syriac, inscribed, "The soul and the body and the mind which are sanctified through three holy things; through water and blood and Spirit, and through the Father and the Son and the Spirit."<sup>143</sup> Here, Jaqub is clearly making reference to the three earthly witnesses in conjunction with the three heavenly witnesses as promulgated in I John 5:7-8 with the *Comma* inserted. It must have been in some Syriac copies of his day in order for him to be able to make a legitimate allusion to it.

Tremellius' *Grammatica Chaldaea Et Syra* (1569) is also of notable importance with regard to Metzger's blanket generalization of the Syriac version. Tremellius translated the *Comma* from Greek into Syriac and placed it in the margin of his codex, as most modern accounts boldly announce, but he left a blank space in the text where the passage

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<sup>142</sup>Maynard, 15-16. For a specific identification of these five Syriac editions, one should consult page 51\* of the UBS<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>143</sup>Jaqub of Edessa, *On the Holy (Eucharistic) Mysteries*, translated by R.E. Brown in *The Anchor Bible: Epistles of John* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1982), 778.

should appear.<sup>144</sup> Modern scholars such as Scrivener and Metzger will not mention this. If Tremellius was so sure about the spuriousness of the verse, why did he take the time to translate it? Better yet, why did he place it in the margin, hesitate to disturb the verse numbering, and leave a blank space for it? Tremellius must have been aware of its presence in the Syriac tradition. He himself wrote:

But because it was omitted not only in the printed version, but only in the manuscript Heidelberg codex, nor was read in all the old Greek codices, I did not dare to insert it into the text. So in order that there might not be a disturbance of the verses, and so that their numbers may correspond to the numbers on the verses of the Greek text, I have passed from the sixth to the eighth verse.<sup>145</sup>

As Maynard correctly concludes:

How often is a blank space provided for 1 John v.7f in an English translation today, let alone a Greek edition? The four questions together could indicate that Tremellius must have had doubts. His actions are not in accord with his words. Perhaps, with a blank space, he wanted not only to retain the correspondence with numbers but to ensure that a future Syriac editor would not overlook this spot. (Modern editors do not hesitate over a ‘disturbance of the verses.’ They merely split verse six in half.)<sup>146</sup>

Another Syriac edition worthy of consideration is Gutbier’s *Lexicon Syricum conseruatntiale omnes N.T. Syriaci* which appeared in 1664. This version contains the *Comma* as well as Acts 8:37, another non-majority reading from the Textus Receptus that is always omitted by modern scholars, including the UBS editors. Also, of notable importance, is the fact that the Old Syriac has Textus Receptus readings for Matthew 6:13; Luke 2:33; 23:42; and John 9:35, against the UBS<sup>4</sup>.<sup>147</sup> It is very possible that the Syriac also agreed with the Textus Receptus on its rendering of I John 5:7-8 as well. After all, as Maynard shows, several indexes include numerous Syriac manuscripts as containing the fifth chapter of I John, some even dating back to the sixth century.

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<sup>144</sup>Maynard, 96.

<sup>145</sup>Tremellius’ words were provided and translated by Rykle Borger into German in “Das Comma Johanneum in der Peschitta,” in *Novum Testamentum* XXXIX, 3 (1987) 280-284. Michael Maynard, in turn, translated Borger’s German into English (*A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8*, 95).

<sup>146</sup>Maynard, 96.

<sup>147</sup>Ruckman, “James White’s Seven Errors in the King James Bible--Errors 6 & 7,” 3.

Unfortunately, these have been neglected, and it remains unknown as to whether or not they contain the *Comma*.<sup>148</sup> Therefore, Metzger cannot legitimately claim that the passage is not found in the Old Syriac version, especially since he has obviously not evaluated all the evidence. Jaqub of Edessa, Tremellius, and Gutbier had to get the *Comma* from somewhere.

Metzger's presentation of the evidence from the Old Latin Version is misleading.

Metzger also says that the *Comma* does not appear in the Old Latin in its earliest form (Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine). This too, is a deceptive statement, for both Tertullian (ca. 200 A.D) and Cyprian (ca. 250) cite or make an allusion to the passage. If they did not have it in their Latin manuscripts, where did they get it from? Tertullian is not cited as a witness to the *Comma* in the critical apparatus of the UBS<sup>4</sup>. However, less than a century after the death of John the Apostle (possibly as early as A.D. 200), Tertullian wrote:

... which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three *Persons*--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.<sup>149</sup>

This is a clear reference to the teaching found in the *Comma*. Athanasius (ca. A.D. 350)

is likewise not mentioned in the "criticus apparatus." However, according to R.E.

Brown, Athanasius quotes the passage at least three times in his works.<sup>150</sup> Around A.D.

250, Cyprian wrote, "The Lord says, 'I and the Father are one, and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 'And these three are one.'"<sup>151</sup> Cyprian,

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<sup>148</sup>Maynard, 334-339

<sup>149</sup>Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, II-- *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 3: 598.

<sup>150</sup>R.E. Brown, *The Anchor Bible; Epistles of John* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1982), 782.

<sup>151</sup>Cyprian, *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate* (CSEL 3:215)--*Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translation of the Writings of the Church Fathers down to A.D. 325* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 5:423.

less than two hundred years after the writing of I John, is quoting the *Johannine Comma*. He must have got it from the Old Latin which is pretty early in spite of what Metzger says, for even he admits that “Our information concerning the Old Latin translation of the New Testament is very defective . . .”<sup>152</sup>

The Old Latin translations of the New Testament are very important in establishing the authenticity of I John 5:7-8, for Latin was the major language up through the Middle Ages. The Old Latin is not the same as the Latin of Jerome’s Vulgate, which by the way, does include the *Comma*. The Old Latin predates the Vulgate text and is found well into the Middle Ages. Did the Old Latin consistently contain the *Johannine Comma*? For the answer to this question, one must turn to the Tepl Codex, a fourteenth century manuscript written in Middle High German. This Codex is significant because “the Tepl Codex actually predates a pre-Jerome text from a non-Vulgate MS, w.”<sup>153</sup> Metzger acknowledges that *w* contains “Old Latin readings in Acts and the Catholic Epistles.”<sup>154</sup> It comes as no surprise that the Tepl contains the *Comma* exactly as it is found in the Textus Receptus. As Maynard argues, its text “has a remarkable longevity into the 15th century. This indicates that German MSS ought not to be dismissed as mere copies of Latin Vulgate MSS.”<sup>155</sup> According to Elliot, the Tepl comes from the Old Latin and has its affinity with *w* (an Old Latin manuscript from the 15th century).<sup>156</sup> Latin manuscript *w* is dated to the 15th century while the Tepl is dated to the 14th. Had this been reversed, the German Tepl would be regarded with much less value. But, as it is, this Codex

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<sup>152</sup>Bruce Metzger, The Early Versions of the New Testament Text; Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 285.

<sup>153</sup>Maynard, 62.

<sup>154</sup>Metzger, Early Versions, 304.

<sup>155</sup>Maynard, 62.

<sup>156</sup>J. K. Elliot, “Old Latin MSS in NT Editions,” in A Survey of Manuscripts Used in Editions of the Greek New Testament (New York: E. J. Brill, 1987), 280.



actually predates a pre-Jerome Latin text (w). The Tepl and the Old Latin manuscripts together “provide pre-Reformation support for non-majority readings of the Authorized Version.”<sup>157</sup> The Tepl not only contains I John 5:7-8 as it is found in the Textus Receptus, but Acts 8:37; 9:5-6; and 15:34, all of which are omitted in the UBS<sup>4</sup>.

The Old Latin from which the Tepl descended is also found in the manuscripts of the Waldensians. History teaches that the Waldensians were those Christians who lived in the Vaudois valley in northern Italy. The Waldensian Church has been dated back to about A.D. 120. Their Old Itala Bible dates back to the early second century. The Waldensians were severely persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church between the fourth and thirteenth centuries. As Jack Moorman argues, “Research into the text and history of the Waldensian Bible has shown that it is a literal descendant of the Old Itala. In other words, the Itala has come down to us in Waldensian form, and firmly supports the Traditional Text.”<sup>158</sup> Gail Riplinger, goes on to promulgate, “It [the Waldensian Bible] was a translation of the true text into the rather rude Low Latin of the second century . . . the Bible of the Waldensians was used to carry the true text throughout Europe.”<sup>159</sup> The translators of the AV 1611 King James Bible had four Waldensian Bibles on the table as they translated.<sup>160</sup> All four contained the *Johannine Comma* as contained in the Textus Receptus. Fuller argues:

This later edition of the Received Text [the Textus Receptus] is in reality a Greek New Testament brought out under Waldensian influence. Unquestionably, the leaders of the Reformation -- German, French, and English--were convinced that the Received Text was the genuine New Testament, not only by its own irresistible history and internal evidence, but also because it

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<sup>157</sup>Maynard, 62.

<sup>158</sup>Jack Moorman, Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version. (Collingswood, NJ: Bible for Today, n.d.), 29.

<sup>159</sup>Gail Riplinger, Which Bible is God's Word (Ararat, VA: AV Publications, 1995), 53.

<sup>160</sup>Benjamin Wilkinson, “Our Authorized Bible Vindicated,” in Which Bible? Ed. by David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975), 212.

matched with the Received Text which in Waldensian form came *down from the days of the apostles* [emphasis mine].<sup>161</sup>

In relation to the Old Latin, Waldensians, and the *Johannine Comma*, it is only appropriate to summarize a rather lengthy discourse by Frederick Nolan. In Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, he argues that the Old Latin derived its name from the Italick Church (distinguished from Roman Catholic). The principal copies of this version have been preserved in that diocese, the metropolitan church of which was situated at Milan.

Remains of the primitive Old Latin version can be found in the early translations made by the Waldensians, who were the lineal descendants of the Italick church. They asserted their independence against the usurpations of the Church of Rome, and consequently, enjoyed the free use of the Scriptures. All of this provided Nolan “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>162</sup>

The Old Latin was translated in the second century, but from what? Seeing as the New Testament was originally written in Greek, the translators had to have copies of Greek papyri not too far descended from the original autographs. It is interesting to note every single one of the papyrus manuscripts are silent with regards to I John 5:7-8. The passage has been lost from every one of them. There is no way to know if they contained the *Comma*, but the translators of the Old Latin had to get it from somewhere.<sup>163</sup> Studies show that the principal papyrus manuscripts used by modern textual critics as allies of the

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<sup>161</sup>David Otis Fuller, Which Bible?, 210.

<sup>162</sup>Frederick Nolan, Integrity of the Greek Vulgate (n.p., 1815), xvii-xviii.

<sup>163</sup>For a complete listing of Old Latin manuscripts which contain the Comma, one should consult Michael Maynard’s A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8 (332-348).

minority text of Aleph and B (P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>66</sup>, and P<sup>75</sup> in particular) agree with the Textus Receptus to a greater extent. Together, these three papyri agree with the TR in 20 places as opposed to 18 places with B and 4 places with Aleph.<sup>164</sup> It is conceivable that these manuscripts once contained the *Comma*. Besides, Maynard shows that at least 6000 Old Latin manuscripts have been neglected and consequently remained unexamined. It is very probable that many of these also contain the *Comma*.<sup>165</sup>

Metzger's presentation of the evidence from the Latin Vulgate is misleading.

The next statement that Metzger makes is that the *Johannine Comma* is not found in the earliest form of the Vulgate as issued by Jerome.<sup>166</sup> True, it does not appear in Codex Fuldensis (A.D. 546), one of the oldest extant Vulgate manuscripts, but Jerome, the author of the Vulgate, died a little over a century before this codex was copied. How can Metzger legitimately argue that this codex is the exact text that came from Jerome? In fact, Jerome himself, in the fourth century, claimed that irresponsible transcribers left out I John 5:7-8 in the Greek codices.<sup>167</sup> If they were cutting it out in the Greek manuscripts, what would stop them from doing it in the Latin Vulgate manuscripts? Seeing as Jerome views such an omission as irresponsible, it is only logical to believe that he included it in his translation. Later, it was cut out as is evidenced by Codex Fuldensis, but reappears again in well-known Vulgate manuscripts such as Ulmensis (ca. 850) and Toletanus (988).

As has been adduced, Bruce Metzger's external evidence for the omission of I John 5:7-8 in the UBS<sup>4</sup> is extremely misleading and deceptive in almost every point. This

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<sup>164</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 482.

<sup>165</sup>Maynard, 343-348.

<sup>166</sup>Metzger, Textual Commentary of the New Testament, 648.

<sup>167</sup>Jerome, The Canonical Epistles. Translated by Michael Maynard in A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8 (Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995), 41.

being the case, one is forced to wonder how much more deception underlines the UBS text. Besides what has been mentioned in this excursus, there is a lot more evidence for the authenticity of I John 5:7-8 as retained in the Textus Receptus of the AV 1611 King James Bible, although the UBS's misrepresentation of information is enough proof for anyone. One should not be so hasty to dismiss it as Metzger and the UBS editors are. For a far more extensive discussion on the *Johannine Comma*, one should consult Michael Maynard's astounding work, A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8.

If I John 5:7-8 is genuine, why is it missing from so many Greek manuscripts? Better yet, does its absence constitute disproof? No, it does not, for no modern textual critic argues that a majority of manuscripts is the sole sufficient proof. In fact, there are readings accepted in the UBS<sup>4</sup> that are accepted on far less evidence than that of I John 5:7-8 (cf. Matthew 1:19; II Corinthians 5:3; James 4:14). Even Aland admits that the true text can hypothetically exist in one manuscript.<sup>168</sup> The majority, however, is not as extensive as most people think. Oftentimes, the statement is made to the effect that there are only four Greek manuscripts out of 5000 that contain the text of the *Comma*.<sup>169</sup> Such a statement implies that 5000 manuscripts contain I John 5. This is most definitely not the case, for less than 525 even contain this chapter. Of these, only 496 are hostile to the *Comma*. This is quite a significant difference from 5000. Of those 498 manuscripts, only 14 of them predate the ninth century.<sup>170</sup> These same scholars that reject the *Comma* criticize the Textus Receptus for following so-called "late manuscripts" when they use

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<sup>168</sup>Aland and Aland, 281.

<sup>169</sup>Stewart Custer made such claim in The Truth About the King James Version Controversy. (Greenville, SC: BJU University Press, 1981). He, however, argued that only 2 manuscripts contained the *Comma* out of 5000. Similar claims have been made in the classrooms of many colleges and universities across the country.

<sup>170</sup>There are only 14 Greek manuscripts hostile to the *Johannine Comma* that predate the ninth century. They are as follows: Aleph, A, B, Ψ, K, L, P, 048, 049, 0296, 1424, 1841, 1862, 1895. Maynard lists these fourteen manuscripts in A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8 (pp. 333-335).

the same manuscripts as the bulk of their evidence against I John 5:7-8. In other words, 97 per cent of their evidence is late. Maynard asserts:

In other words, opposers of 1 John v.7f are not admitting, that after four centuries (the 17th to 20th) of scholars searching for MSS they could not even muster 3% of all their evidence against 1 John v.7f as being significant, *by their standards* [emphasis mine]. Only 14 Greek MSS (2.8%) of the 482 hostile MSS [Maynard arrives at this number from the fact that Metzger considers 16 of the 498 manuscripts to be worthless and irrelevant] they would consider boasting about, were dated from the ninth century or earlier.<sup>171</sup>

One should also consider another “reason that the absence of 1 John 5:7-8 in Greek MSS before the sixteenth century does not constitute disproof is that God is not obligated to have a regular transmission through Greek MSS for every authentic verse.”<sup>172</sup> Why couldn’t God have preserved His words through the Old Latin, the Waldensians, and the German Bible, all of which correspond almost exactly to the Received Text? God may have allowed I John 5:7-8 to fall out of 14 Greek manuscripts prior to the ninth century and many thereafter for the purpose of drawing our attention to the doctrine of the Trinity, for after all, the *Comma* is the most concise and clear statement regarding this subject throughout all of Scripture.

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<sup>171</sup>Maynard, 286.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER 7

A BETTER APPROACH TO TEXTUAL CRITICISM IN LIGHT OF THE  
INSPIRATION/PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTUREImportant Principles

Because of all the uncertainty, false presuppositions, and inconsistency that underline the United Bible Societies' Fourth Edition Greek New Testament, one is forced to question the entire approach of modern textual criticism. Is there a better approach? This chapter will be dedicated to considering a better approach to textual criticism in light of the biblical doctrines of inspiration and preservation.

Questioning is the starting point of apostasy.

First of all, it is important to note that the questioning of the Bible's preservation is the starting point of all kinds of apostasy. In Genesis 3, it was this sort of questioning that led to the fall of mankind. Satan did not argue with Eve about whether or not there was a God, or whether the doctrine of the Trinity was true, or even whether God's Word was inspired. No, apostasy began when Satan tried to change God's Word and place doubt in Eve's heart. Even Jesus warns in Mark 4:15, "Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts." When doubt is given a beachhead, all other defenses soon fall. This same principle applies today, for the modern practices of textual criticism which underlie the UBS<sup>4</sup> have served to do nothing but question the very words of God. According to Jack Moorman, the entire matter boils down to one question: "Has God preserved His word and kept intact His original work of inspiration or has He not? It is a fact that the one common denominator in all the varied errors,

deviations, and heresies is that their advocates will first criticize the standard received edition or translation of Scripture.”<sup>173</sup>

The importance of the doctrine of preservation.

Any proper approach to textual criticism must take into account the doctrine of preservation. In Psalm 12:6-7, God promised to preserve His words for every generation. The same God who inspired the original Greek autographs is most certainly powerful enough to preserve them in the copying process as Greek manuscripts multiplied. If this is not true, what would have been the purpose in inspiring the Scriptures if men were just going to mutilate and corrupt them? Preservation does not just extend to the general message of the Bible, but to the very words themselves (cf. Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 24:35). This being true, the perfectly preserved Word of God existed down through the ages and will be in existence until Christ returns. It is true that not even two out of the five thousand extant Greek manuscripts agree with each other 100 per cent of the time. However, this body of manuscripts most definitely does not represent all of the manuscripts that ever existed. Many have since rotted away. Therefore, in light of God’s promise of preservation, it is not illogical to think that manuscripts once existed that completely agreed with the traditional text of the Textus Receptus. Maybe Erasmus, Luther, Stephanus, Beza, the Elzivir Brothers, and the King James translators did not have such manuscripts, but why couldn’t Almighty God have guided them into selecting the right words from the body of manuscripts they did possess? After, all God is in control of His words. Elmer Towns writes: “If an all-powerful God cannot control the vehicle of His self-revelation, then His power and nature can be questioned.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Jack Moorman, “Principles of Bible Preservation,” O Timothy Magazine (Vol. 9, Issue 8, 1992), 2.

<sup>174</sup>Elmer Towns, Theology for Today, 2nd Edition (Lynchburg, VA: University Press, 1994), 49.

A common assertion among conservative evangelicals is that the inspiration of Scripture only applies to the original autographs. This, however, cannot be true in light of God's promise of preservation.<sup>175</sup> The word "Scripture" is never used in the Bible to refer to the originals (cf. Acts 8:32; 17:11). Besides, in II Timothy 3:16, when Paul discusses the inspiration of Scripture, he does so in a context in which he says that Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures as a child (cf. 3:15). Paul is not referring to the original autographs of the Old Testament, for they had passed out of existence long before the Apostle was even born. Paul was saying that the Scripture Timothy had read as a child were inspired. They were not the original autographs, but they were inspired in the sense that they had been perfectly preserved by God Almighty. Some might argue that this interpretation is faulty because it calls for the fusing together of two verses. The "scholar" may see it that way, but the Bible was written for the common man (cf. Psalm 119:99-100). A simple reading (minus grammatical analysis, verb parsings, theological presuppositions, etc.) of this passage clearly shows that Paul is not limiting inspiration to the originals. Such a faulty interpretation is based on theological presupposition.<sup>176</sup>

Elmer Towns writes, "The Bible . . . is as perfect as God, and its perfection extends to every word."<sup>177</sup> Most evangelicals will accept this statement as truth, but such a statement is meaningless if there is not immediate access to these perfect words.

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<sup>175</sup>Some might criticize this perspective, claiming that inspiration cannot be equated with preservation. However, the two are inseparable. Preservation reflects inspiration. In other words, the words contained in the Received Text are inspired in the sense that they are preserved.

<sup>176</sup> The "scholar" might go on to argue that no copies are perfect, so they cannot be inspired. Therefore, it is concluded that God's words are preserved in manuscript copies only as far as these copies agree with the original manuscripts. Such an argument is nonsense. When is the last time that anyone saw the original manuscripts? They passed out of existence almost 1900 years ago. Such a viewpoint essentially says that we cannot know God's very words because we do not have the inspired originals with which to compare manuscript copies to. This clearly goes against God's promise in Psalm 12:6-7 and downplays the absolute authority of Scripture.

<sup>177</sup>Towns, 49.



Immediate access is available by way of divine preservation. Not only is God's Word perfectly preserved after the Original Autographs, but according to Psalm 119:89; John 12:49-50; 17:8, it precedes them.

The doctrine of inspiration does not only apply to the original autographs nor does it apply exclusively to the original languages of the autographs. If God preserved his Word as He promised, then inspiration can apply to translations.<sup>178</sup> When is the last time that Greek and Hebrew was used by God to reach someone with the Gospel? If the original languages were the only source of inspired Scripture, then the ancient Hebrews must have been a extremely ignorant, for the Pentateuch could not have originally been written in Hebrew. After all, "Moses was learned in all the ways of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22), and someone had to translate what Moses said in Egyptian to Pharaoh back into Hebrew. Yet, the Jews believed their Hebrew Scriptures were inspired and still do today. Jack Moorman makes a point worthy of consideration: "as so few can read the original languages, God's promise to preserve His Word has no practical relevance if it does not extend to translations. . . If a translation cannot be equated with the actual Word of God, then ultimately this leads to the situation that one must know Hebrew and Greek before they can be saved, or built up in the faith."<sup>179</sup>

#### The importance of faith.

Another principle to keep in mind with reference to textual criticism is that it must be approached with an attitude of faith. As Hebrews 11:6 asserts, "Without faith it is

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<sup>178</sup>Of course, inspiration can only apply to translations that represent the pure line of Scripture. Modern versions represent a corrupt line of Scripture that was born in Egypt (Aleph), moved to Rome (B), and eventually came to England (RSV) and America (ASV, NASV, NIV, NEB, LB, etc.). The pure line of text, on the other hand, originated in Antioch, is represented by the Old Latin, Old Syriac, Luther's Bible, the Textus Receptus, and the AV 1611 King James Bible. For a more detailed tracing of these two lines of Scripture, please refer to Appendix D.

<sup>179</sup>Moorman, "Principles of Bible Preservation," 4.

impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Dean John Burgon once wrote, “There exists no reason for supposing that the Divine Agent, who in the first instance thus gave to mankind the Scriptures of Truth, immediately abdicated His office and took no further care of His work; that He abandoned those precious writings.”<sup>180</sup> The whole crux of the matter boils down to faith, plain and simple. Unfortunately, most modern critics (Westcott, Hort, Nestle, Aland, Metzger, the UBS, et. al,) approach the sacred science of textual criticism with presuppositions against inerrancy. Such an attitude cannot be founded upon faith, and consequently, is not pleasing to God. Do you think the Almighty would honor the work of such men as they mutilate His Word?

#### The importance of translations.

Another important principle to keep in mind, especially with reference to the New Testament which is the focus of the entire argument against the UBS<sup>4</sup>, is that God’s preservation of His Word is not necessarily limited to the Greek language. Dean Burgon once wrote, “It may be laid down that an ancient Version outweighs any single Codex, ancient or modern, which can be named--for example the Peshito, an Egyptian, or the Gothic--can have been executed from a single exemplar. But indeed that is not all. The Peshito and some of the Latin versions are older, perhaps by two centuries than the oldest known MS copies.”<sup>181</sup> In the UBS<sup>4</sup>, supreme authority is always given to the Greek manuscript tradition despite the overwhelming testimony of other versions (Old Latin, Old Syriac, German, English, etc.). In fact, this is the case with I John 5:7-8. The evidence from other versions is so downplayed that the UBS editors cannot even present

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<sup>180</sup>John Burgon, “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, A-7.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid., A-30.

the evidence honestly. It is very possible that God could have preserved His Word in the Old Latin and the German translations. After all, they represent the same text as the Greek Textus Receptus. The Old Latin was used by common Bible-believing Christians such as the Waldensians for ages; and Germany was the birthplace of the Reformation. It makes more sense that God would preserve His word through this line than through the perversion of Origen, Eusebius, or the Roman Catholic Church.

#### The importance of Church History.

Church history also plays an important role with respect to textual criticism. One cannot just cast out the thoughts and practices of the church across the centuries when utilizing textual criticism. This seems to have been exactly what the UBS<sup>4</sup> editors did, for they only list 33 per cent of the Church Fathers, while omitting all of the Eastern Fathers. Contrary to such mishandling of the evidence, Dean Burgon argued:

In and by itself, the testimony of any first-rate Father, where it can be had, must be held to outweigh the solitary testimony of any single Codex which can be named . . . But when we are listening to the articulate utterance of any of the ancient Fathers, we not only know with more or less precision the actual date of the testimony, but we even know the very diocese of Christendom in which they spoke. To such a deponent we can assign a definite amount of credibility, whereas in the estimate of the former class of MSS with their unknown history and origin we have only inferences to guide us.<sup>182</sup>

In many places, they simply cut out the reading that was recognized by the Christian Church for hundreds of years in favor of readings found in a mere handful of manuscripts that were hidden in the sands of Egypt. Besides, how can we really know what manuscripts the Church had access to years ago? They very well could have been collating manuscripts that have long passed out of existence due to the natural process of decay. For example, who is to say whether or not Cyprian had Greek papyri that contained the *Johannine Comma* in A.D. 250 when he cited the verse in his writings? If

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<sup>182</sup>Ibid.

he had them, it is very possible that they were lost or destroyed just as documents are today. We do not have Thomas Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration of Independence, but we do know that it underwent extensive revision based on the testimony of other leading figures of the time. Just because this draft is not around today does not mean that it never existed. In the same way, why would church fathers simply make something up? The testimony of the Church across the corridors of history should be given considerable weight contrary to the thought of the UBS editors. After all, the scholarship of men such as Erasmus, Luther, Stephanus. Beza, the Elzevirs, and the King James translators is far greater than that of modern scholars such as Aland or Metzger. With specific respect to the AV translators, D. A. Waite argues, "The new version people often say that the KJV translators were rather ignorant and didn't know as much about translating as the 'translators/paraphrasers' of today. This is not only prideful, but completely false. Their linguistic qualifications are unequaled."<sup>183</sup> The great scholars of the Renaissance and Reformation periods (Erasmus, Luther, AV translators etc.) can be likened to Gulliver in the well-known story Gulliver's Travels. Gulliver the giant was tied up and bound by the tiny Lilliputians when he was asleep. Upon awakening, he was unable to move. Modern scholars such as Metzger and Aland can be compared to the Lilliputians who seek to bound the giant. However, just as Gulliver won in the end, so too will the superior scholarship of those who brought about the Textus Receptus.

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<sup>183</sup>D. A. Waite, "The Four-Fold Superiority of the King James Version" (kjavwaite.txt at www.aloha.net), 9.

## Important Applications

### The major premise of modern textual critics is false.

Having considered some important principles for approaching the sacred science of textual criticism it is only appropriate to consider application. To begin with, the major premise of modern textual critics such as the UBS editors (The oldest manuscripts are the best and contain the best readings) is false. In fact, this presupposition is quite circular in nature. James Borland argues:

Which readings (or variants, when two texts differ) are best is an assumption used to prove which manuscripts are best. Likewise, which manuscripts are best is an assumption used to prove which readings are best. It is similar to the evolutionist's argument that (1) evolution is proven by the great age of the fossils and conversely (2) the great age of the fossils is proven by evolution. Both are unwarranted assumptions.<sup>184</sup>

Besides, recent discoveries have proven the Textus Receptus readings to be older in many instances. For example, epi-flourescent confocal laser scanning has shown that the Magdeline Papyrus (the oldest fragment of St. Matthew's Gospel dated to around A.D. 60) agrees with the Textus Receptus in 26:22.<sup>185</sup> Carsten Thiede and Matthew D. Ancona argue:

It is self-evident that this original reading preferable on the grounds of internal criteria and now corroborated by the oldest papyrus of St. Matthew's Gospel, must replace the text in the two most widely used versions of the Greek New Testament, that of the United Bible Societies (at present in its fourth revised edition) and the so-called Nestle-Aland, the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (now in its twenty-seventh revised edition).<sup>186</sup>

These so-called "oldest and best manuscripts" (Aleph and B) are supposed to be new-found evidence that was unavailable to textual critics of bygone days. The truth is, these critics knew about these manuscripts but also were aware of their perverted and corrupt

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<sup>184</sup>James Borland, A General Introduction to the New Testament (Lynchburg, VA: University Book House, 1995), 158.

<sup>185</sup>The Textus Receptus renders "εκαστος αυτων" (each one of them - AV) while the UBS<sup>4</sup> reads "αυτω εις εκαστος" (one after the other - NIV). The TR rendering corresponds exactly to the reading found in the Magdeline Papyrus.

<sup>186</sup>Carsten Theide and Matthew D'Ancona, Eyewitness to Jesus: Amazing New Manuscript Evidence About the Origin of the Gospels (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 63.

nature. For example, Erasmus, when compiling his fifth edition of the Greek New Testament, was supplied by Sepulveda, a Spanish humanist and historian, with 365 readings from Codex Vaticanus that differed from the Received Text of his fourth edition. Seeing as Erasmus' fourth and fifth editions hardly differ from each other with reference to the text, "the likelihood is that Erasmus rejected nearly every reading on Sepulveda's list, if not every one."<sup>187</sup> It is also interesting to note that Vaticanus was not enough proof for Erasmus to cut out the *Johannine Comma* which first appeared in his third edition and remained there in the fifth edition. This so-called "oldest and best" manuscript was not even given the time of day by one of the greatest textual critics of all time. Modern editions are hardly based on "new evidence." D. A. Waite promulgates that this minority-type text of modern editions:

has only 45 manuscripts that go along with it as over against 5,210 that go along with the TR that underlies the KJV. This 45 includes 'B' (Vatican) and 'Aleph' (Sinai) and forty-three of their little heretical puppets that follow them. The theory behind the acceptance of these less than 1% is that 'The oldest are the best.' The oldest are not necessarily the best especially if they have been tampered with by heretics!<sup>188</sup>

These manuscripts are not the best, and they were tampered with very early after their composition. Waite goes on to argue that "This is especially true since the heretics had their knives out 'correcting' the Greek NT almost as soon as it was written. The Egyptian scribes and editors of 'B' (Vatican) and 'Aleph' (Sinai) were some of the most vicious 'correctors' of God's Word's; yet these two Greek texts form the very bedrock of the new versions and perversions of our day."<sup>189</sup>

A false premise warrants a better approach.

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<sup>187</sup>Maynard, 89.

<sup>188</sup>D. A. Waite, "The Four-Fold Superiority of the King James Version (kjvwaite.txt at [www.aloha.net](http://www.aloha.net)), 8.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid.

In light of all these facts, a number of factors should be taken into consideration when attempting to discover the true reading of the text. Dean John Burgon, in The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels, laid down seven notes of truth which are worthy of consideration. The first is antiquity: “The more ancient testimony is probably the better testimony.”<sup>190</sup> However, one must not forget that the Scriptures were infected with corruption which sprang up in the second century, particularly in Africa as Tertullian, a well-known Church Father asserted: “Therefore, antiquity alone affords no security that the manuscript in our hands is not infected with the corruption that sprang up largely in the first and second centuries.”<sup>191</sup>

This brings about the next test of truth--number. Unfortunately, most modern textual critics argue that manuscripts should be weighed rather than counted. Dean Burgon asserted that this maxim “may be said to embody much fundamental fallacy.”<sup>192</sup> The traditional text of the Textus Receptus, for the most part, is based upon the readings of the majority of manuscripts. However, these manuscripts are generally late (8th-11th centuries) and consequently discarded by modern critics such as the UBS editors. The question that such critics refuse to ask is where did this great number of manuscripts come from? They must have been copies of earlier uncials and/or papyri that were perhaps lost or destroyed. If ten students were asked to copy a paragraph off the chalkboard, and nine of the ten copies agreed, which best represents the true text? Logic is in favor of the nine copies as opposed to the one disparate copy. The same holds true for New Testament manuscripts. Logic is in favor of the great majority of witnesses. As convincing as this argument is, it must not be utilized as the sole test of truth, for there

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<sup>190</sup>John Burgon, “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, A-22.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid.

<sup>192</sup>Ibid., A-23.

are several passages in the Textus Receptus that are not found in the great majority of witnesses. Therefore, as James Borland argues, “Number must be considered as an important factor, but only as *one* of the tests of truth.”<sup>193</sup>

Variety is another important test of truth: “The greater the variety of witnesses there are, the less chance there is for collusion or deceit to spring from the few.”<sup>194</sup> This, of course, can apply to both locality and age. Dean Burgon argues that this is the strongest ally that any reading can have.<sup>195</sup> For example, the *Johannine Comma* has variety on its side, despite its weak attestation in extant Greek manuscripts. It is found in eight Greek manuscripts, the Old Latin, the Old Syriac, various Waldensian Bibles, numerous German manuscripts, and a few of the Armenian versions.

Another test of truth involves weight or respectability. In other words, “if a manuscript proves itself to be erroneous on a frequent basis by a number of acceptable standards, then it loses its respectability.”<sup>196</sup> It is safe to say that both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do not satisfy this category, for their differences from the majority of manuscripts as well as from each other are horrific. Therefore, they should be overlooked. Maybe the UBS editors should take a lesson from Erasmus when he was approached with readings from Vaticanus; he rejected them.<sup>197</sup>

The fifth test of truth considers the continuity or unbroken testimony of witnesses in favor of a particular reading. As Burgon argued, “this principle is often illustrated in the independent yet consentient testimony of the whole body of the cursives and the later

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<sup>193</sup>Borland, A General Introduction to the New Testament, 162.

<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup>John Burgon, “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, A-27.

<sup>196</sup>Borland, A General Introduction to the New Testament, 162.

<sup>197</sup>Maynard, 89.



uncials,”<sup>198</sup> not the so-called “older and better” readings of the UBS<sup>4</sup>. For the most part, the readings contained in the Textus Receptus has continuity on its side, the UBS<sup>4</sup> does not.

The final two tests of truth are pretty self-explanatory and deal with internal evidence (context and reasonableness). It is rather apparent that the UBS<sup>4</sup> likewise fails in this area, for many of their selected readings go against overwhelming internal evidence in favor of “older and better” manuscripts (e.g., Matthew 1:7,10; Luke 23:45; John 5:4; I Thessalonians 2:7; I Timothy 3:16). Context focuses upon the surrounding passages of a reading in a particular manuscript. In other words, if a manuscript can be shown to be faulty in several instances in the context of a particular reading, then it is logical that “mistakes have a tendency to repeat themselves in the same or other shapes.”<sup>199</sup> Reasonableness, on the other hand, focuses more on the grammatical, geographical, scientific, and/or historical possibilities of a reading: “If a particular reading is grammatically, geographically, scientifically, and historically impossible, then it must not be accepted if other readings do not present such problems.”<sup>200</sup> For example, the UBS<sup>4</sup> accepts a variant reading in Luke 23:45 that is a scientific impossibility. Each of the synoptic Gospels contains the phrase “σκοτος εγενετο” (there was darkness) (cf. Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). However, Luke adds an additional phrase regarding the sun. The Textus Receptus reads “και εσκοτισθη ο ηλιος” (and the sun was darkened) while the UBS<sup>4</sup> reads “του ηλιου εκλιποντος” (The sun was eclipsed). Like the UBS’s faulty readings in Matthew 1:7,10, this reading implies an error in Luke’s original autograph: “A solar eclipse is impossible astronomically during the full moon of

<sup>198</sup> John Burgon, “The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels” in Unholy Hands on the Bible, A-32.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., A-34.

<sup>200</sup> Borland, A General Introduction to the New Testament, 164.

the Passover when sun and moon are 180 degrees apart in relation to the earth.”<sup>201</sup> Luke, being an astute physician, would not have made such a blundering mistake. This reading fails the test of reasonableness because it is scientifically impossible. Therefore, it needs to be added to the long list of corrupt readings found in the UBS<sup>4</sup> that should be discarded.

The aforementioned seven tests of truth are valuable in trying to determine a particular reading as opposed to the presuppositions of the UBS editors. If one applies these tests honestly, the result will essentially be the text of the Textus Receptus. However, these should not be applied too mechanically and without consideration of God’s inspiration and preservation. Perhaps the best way to utilize these tests is for the purpose of showing fault in modern Greek editions such as the UBS<sup>4</sup>. When one starts to use them to question readings in the Received Text, he begins to step on shaky ground. Picking and choosing what should be in the Bible as the UBS editors do is equivalent to following David Spangler who argues, “The evolution of the race is for every man not to learn to obey the law but to be the law . . . We can take all the scriptures . . . and have a jolly good bonfire . . . Once you are the truth, you do not need it externally represented.”<sup>202</sup> There are readings in the Textus Receptus that do not pass every test. Nevertheless, they have been preserved. For starters, one should try following the disparate renderings of Colossians 2:2 with its corresponding manuscript evidence:

Colossians 2:2 (at least seven other variations besides ones listed)  
του Θεου και Πατρος και του Χριστου - Byz, D<sup>c</sup>, K, *pm* Lect  
του Θεου και Πατρος του Χριστου - Aleph<sup>b</sup>, Ψ, *pc*, sy<sup>h</sup>  
του Θεου Πατρος και του Χριστου - 0208, 1908, sy<sup>p</sup>  
του Θεου Πατρος του Χριστου - A, C, it<sup>pt</sup>, sa<sup>pt</sup>, bo  
του Θεου Πατρος Χριστου - Aleph, 048

<sup>201</sup>Borland, “Re-examining New Testament Textual-Critical Principles and Practices Used to Negate Inerrancy,” 504.

<sup>202</sup>Russell Chandler, Understanding the New Age (London: Word Publishing, 1988), 285-286.

του Θεου  
του Θεου

Χριστου - P<sup>46</sup>, B  
- D<sup>b</sup>, H, P, 436, 1881, sa<sup>pt</sup>

Such a wide range of variation can also be found in extant Greek manuscripts in passages such as Matthew 10:3; 13:28; 15:14; Mark 12:17; Romans 6:12; I Thessalonians 3:2; Luke 9:10; Luke 12:18; John 8:51. One might be inclined to give heed to Shirley Maclaine's dictum "We are not under the law of God. We are the law of God!" Gail Riplinger promulgates, "So . . . maybe we Christians only throw in the fire several dozen Scriptures relating to the deity of Christ or Acts 8:37 on the eunuch's salvation. These flares may not make a bonfire, but will smolder in our spirits, searing the soul toward God and parching our spiritual progress."<sup>203</sup> As James 3:5 asserts, "How great a matter a little fire kindleth." If God's words are not preserved in the Textus Receptus, then the Almighty hid the true text in the sands of Egypt where it was not utilized until 1881. This is hardly possible.

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<sup>203</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 507.

## CHAPTER 8

## CONCLUDING IMPLICATIONS

Having conducted a cursory analysis of the United Bible Societies' Fourth Edition Greek New Testament while pointing out the apostate editors and the numerous fallacies that underlie the text and accompanying critical apparatus, one is forced to consider the implications and relevance of such a study.

The UBS<sup>4</sup> is not a Reliable New Testament in the Original Greek

First of all, it is obvious that the UBS<sup>4</sup> is far from being a reliable New Testament translation. Perhaps this edition could prove profitable for studying the Greek language, but it should never be substituted for the true text of the New Testament as contained in the Textus Receptus. To refer to the UBS<sup>4</sup> as the "Original Greek" is to be strangely misinformed, for it is a combination of many Greek texts. Also, with reference to the critical apparatus, it can serve as a helpful evaluation of manuscript evidence, but as has been demonstrated, the information contained therein is far from honest and oftentimes proves to be misleading.

It is very unfortunate that the UBS<sup>4</sup> is used in Greek classes in almost every college and seminary in the country, for many young students are being led to believe that the faulty reasoning and haphazard guesswork contained therein is scholarship. More weight is given to the work of men than to the simple and eternal promises of God Almighty. Furthermore, it is sad fact that it is possible for a student to sit through five semesters of Greek at Liberty University and never even hear of an alternative such as the Textus Receptus.<sup>204</sup> It seems as if college professors are subtly leading students to believe that

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<sup>204</sup>The author himself minored in Greek at Liberty University and experienced this particular situation first-hand.

this distorted representation of the Holy Scriptures is the New Testament in the “Original Greek.”

### Modern Versions of the Bible do not Contain the New Testament

This study also proves relevant with regard to modern versions of the Bible. Almost every modern English translation (NAS, NIV, NEB, RSV, etc.) comes from a critical Greek text like that of the UBS<sup>4</sup>, a text based primarily upon the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts as well as the unreliable practices of textual criticism.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, the same problems apply to them. Gail Riplinger argues:

Recent scholarship demonstrates that the majority of manuscripts, as seen in the traditional Greek Textus Receptus and its translation, the King James Version, represent the earliest, broadest (numerically and geographically) and most consistent edition of the New Testament. On the other hand the new versions and their underlying unsettled Nestle’s-Aland type eclectic text [UBS included], use later readings, representing a narrow “fraction of 1%” of the extant manuscripts from one locale. They typify Satan’s meager and shaky attempt to counterfeit the written “word of God” (II Corinthians 2:17, Hebrews 4:12) - just like he tries to counterfeit the living “Word of God” (Revelation 19:13, Isaiah 14).<sup>206</sup>

Satan will always try to change the words of God. He would not do such in a blatant and outright manner, but a subtle manner that would lead many astray. After all, he is the “Father of Lies.” As in Mark 4:15, he “cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.” Just look at the fruit of these modern versions as opposed to the Authorized Version which represents the Textus Receptus. Whatever may have been wrong with these Bibles, “There is one thing that is certain, they produced an

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<sup>205</sup>Of the modern versions, the NKJV sticks the closest to the Textus Receptus. Although claiming to follow the text exactly, it differs in over 1,200 places (e.g., Acts 7:45; Hebrews 4:8; Romans 3:29; Acts 26:17; II Corinthians 7:2; Acts 9:22; II Corinthians 11:29 and many more). Moreover, the NKJV adds words, changes words, changes nouns to pronouns, changes the number of pronouns, changes the person of pronouns, changes plurals, changes pronouns to nouns, and omits the subjunctive mood. Whatever the reason for doing this is irrelevant because these changes deviate from the Textus Receptus. The editors of the NKJV claim otherwise, but check for yourself.

<sup>206</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 503.

ignorance of the CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE THAT IS ABSOLUTELY APPALLING.”<sup>207</sup>

Author’s Conclusion: The Textus Receptus of the Authorized Version is the Best Representation of the New Testament

With respect to the Authorized King James Version, it represents the Traditional Text of the Textus Receptus and God’s perfectly preserved words. If one truly believes in the preservation of Scripture, then he has to believe that the AV exhibits such, for it is based upon a pure text that was passed down from the days of the apostles and was the only English translation that existed for 250 years. Each and every generation of believers has had access to God’s Word in its perfectly preserved form, the AV 1611 being a case and point. As previously mentioned, in the very same context where Paul calls the Holy Scriptures inspired, he said that Timothy knew them from a child (II Timothy 3:15-16). Timothy did not have the original manuscripts, but he had the inspired Word of God in the sense that it was preserved. We too have the inspired Word of God in the sense that it has been preserved in the AV 1611 King James Bible, an English Bible that stands on the best Greek and Hebrew texts. It is quite paradoxical that Bible professors across the country say they believe the Bible to be the Word of God and yet stand up and correct it with the “Original Greek” of texts such as the UBS<sup>4</sup>, an “original Greek” which is completely unreliable.

It all boils down to a simple matter. God preserved His Word, and He wants believers to live by it, not correct it. One should take the AV 1611 and read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. The meaning of God’s Word is not hidden in the Greek and Hebrew languages and one does not have to have a doctorate degree to

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<sup>207</sup>Peter Ruckman, Biblical Scholarship (Pensacola, FL: Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1988), 105.

understand it. Some of the greatest preachers of all time never even darkened the door of a seminary. In Matthew 11:25, Jesus says, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” The Bible is for common people too, not only the wise and intellectual. Jesus disciplined the lowly and the sinners, not the intellectual Pharisees. In the words of Gail Riplinger, “Guesses or God, fear or faith, haughty or humble. These are the perpetual options for the Christian.”<sup>208</sup> Moreover, “the next time this fictitious phrase [The Original Greek says . . .] is flipped at you by some college professor, ‘a modern day Ananias, attempting to advance his ascendancy and authority’, simply say: ‘Save you to be slain in the Spirit like Sapphira, tell me - which Greek?’ . . . A complete list of manuscripts and critical texts will bury the booster in words, with the epitaph, ‘It’s Greek to me.’”<sup>209</sup>

It is only appropriate to conclude with the proclamation of Moses in Deuteronomy 30:11-14:

For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not *hidden* from thee, [in ancient Greek, which you do not understand] neither is it *far off* [in the 5000 or so manuscripts held in the Vatican or museums around the world]. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say who should go up to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it *beyond the sea* [buried in some undiscovered papyri] that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us that we may hear and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, *in thy mouth* [Is the Greek in your mouth?] and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup>Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, 511.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., 502.

<sup>210</sup>Emphasis mine

## APPENDIX A

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UBS<sup>4</sup> AND THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

(These figures were compiled by David Blunt in “The Differences Between the Greek Texts of the New Testament [<http://www.hutch.com.au/~rlister/bible/kjv4.htm>])

SUMMARY OF ALL WORD DIFFERENCES

- Total Greek word count in TR = 140,521
- Total Greek word count in UBS<sup>4</sup> = 138,019
- \*UBS<sup>4</sup> is 2,502 words shorter than TR (1.8% or 1 in 56 words)*
- Greek words in TR omitted from UBS<sup>4</sup> = 3,602
- Greek words in TR substituted in UBS<sup>4</sup> = 3,146
- Greek words not in TR added to UBS<sup>4</sup> = 976
- Greek words in TR spelled differently in UBS<sup>4</sup> = 950
- \*Total word differences between texts = 8,764 (6.2%, 1 word in 16)*

SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES WHICH AFFECT TRANSLATION

1. Places where Greek words in TR omitted from UBS<sup>4</sup> = 1,309
    - Omissions of one or more entire verses = 17
    - Omissions of significant portions of verses = 185
    - Other Omissions = 1,107
    - \*Number of Greek words involved = 2,632*
  2. Places where Greek words in TR substituted in UBS<sup>4</sup> = 587
    - Substitutions of words of dissimilar spelling = 288
    - Substitutions of words of similar spelling = 283
    - Substitutions of several words = 16
    - \*Number of Greek words involved = 603*
  3. Places where Greek words in TR added in UBS<sup>4</sup> = 161
    - \*Number of Greek words involved = 317*
  4. Places where Greek words in TR transposed in UBS<sup>4</sup> = 9
  5. Places where Greek words in TR punctuated differently in UBS<sup>4</sup> so as to affect translation = 11
- \*Total differences affecting translation = 2,077*  
*\*Number of Greek words involved = 3,572*



## SUMMARY OF THE NATURE OF THE DIFFERENCES AFFECTING TRANSLATION

*\*Differences which affect the meaning = 1,658*

*\*Differences that substantially affect the meaning = 481*

- Differences presenting problems in translation = 288
- Differences affecting quotations from the Old Testament = 49
- Differences which involve doctrine = 44
- Names of Deity omitted: *Jesus* = 45
  - Christ* = 44
  - Lord* = 35
  - God* = 32
  - Other names = 26
  - Total = 212
- Pronouns that refer to Deity omitted = 157
- Other differences that downgrade Deity = 41
- Names of Deity added = 29
- Words enclosed in single brackets ('words, portions of words, whose presence or position in text is regarded as disputed') = 642
- Word enclosed in double brackets ("passages which are regarded as later additions to the text, but which are of evident antiquity and importance") = 427

## APPENDIX B

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TAMPERED WITH BY THE UBS<sup>4</sup> AND MANY

## MODERN VERSIONS

(This is by no means an exhaustive list)

MATTHEW

- 1:25 - "Firstborn" is out (speaking of the Lord Jesus).
- 5:44 - "Bless them that curse you" is out.
- 6:13 - "Kingdom, Power, and Glory" is out.
- 6:27 - "Stature" is changed to span of life.
- 8:29 - "Jesus" is out (as Son of God).
- 9:13 - "to repentance" is out (calling sinners . . .).
- 12:35 - "Of the heart" is out (Good treasure . . .).
- 12:47 - Verse is bracketed as doubtful (About Christ's mother).
- 13:51 - "Jesus said unto them" and "Lord" is out.
- 15:8 - "Draweth unto me with their mouth" is out.
- 16:3 - "O ye hypocrites" is out.
- 16:20 - "Jesus" is out.
- 17:21 - Verse is out (about prayer and fasting).
- 18:11 - Verse is out (Tells that Jesus came to save).
- 19:17 - "God" is out (None good but God).
- 20:7 - "Whatsoever is right receive" is out.
- 20:16 - "Many be called but few chosen" is out.
- 20:22 - "Baptized with Christ's baptism" is out.
- 21:44 - Verse is bracketed as doubtful (About Christ the stone).
- 23:14 - Verse is out (Woe to scribes and hypocrites).
- 25:13 - "Wherein the Son of Man cometh" is out.
- 27:35 - "Fulfilled spoken by the prophet" is out.
- 27:54 - "The Son of God" is changed to "A Son of God" in modern versions.
- 28:2 - "From the door" is out.
- 28:9 - "They went to tell his disciples" is out.

MARK

- 1:1 - "Son of God" is bracketed as doubtful.
- 1:14 - "of the kingdom" is out (speaking of the Gospel).
- 1:31 - "Immediately" is out (The fever left . . .).
- 2:17 - "To repentance" is out (call sinners . . .).
- 6:11 - "More tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha" is out.
- 6:16 - "From the dead" is out (John is risen . . .).
- 6:33 - "Him" is changed to "them."
- 7:8 - "Washing of pots and cups" is out.

7:16 - Verse is out (about having an ear to hear).  
 9:24 - "Lord" is out (A believer called Him Lord).  
 9:42 - "In me" is bracketed as doubtful (Little ones that believe).  
 9:44 - Verse is out (about fire not quenched).  
 9:46 - Verse is out (where worm dieth not).  
 9:49 - "Every sacrifice shall be salted" is out.  
 10:21 - "Take up the cross" is out (Jesus said . . .).  
 10:24 - "For them that trust in riches" is out.  
 11:10 - "In the name of the Lord" is out.  
 11:26 - Verse is out (If ye do not forgive . . .).  
 13:14 - "Spoken by Daniel the prophet" is out.  
 13:33 - "And pray" is out.  
 15:28 - Verse is out (Scripture was fulfilled . . .).  
 15:39 - "The Son of God" is mistranslated as "A Son of God" in many modern versions.  
 16:9-20 - Put in double brackets and declared not to be part of the original text.

### LUKE

1:28 - "Blessed art thou among women" is out.  
 2:33 - "Joseph" is changed to "his father" (denies Virgin Birth)  
 2:43 - "Joseph and his mother" is changed to "parents" (denies Virgin Birth)  
 4:4 - "but by every word of God" is out.  
 4:8 - "Get thee behind me Satan" is out.  
 6:48 - "founded upon a rock" is out.  
 7:31 - "And the Lord said" is out.  
 9:54 - "even as Elijah did" is out.  
 9:55 - "ye know not what manner of spirit" is out.  
 9:56 - "Son of Man is come to save lives" is out.  
 11:2-4 - Lord's Prayer is butchered.  
 11:29 - "the prophet" is out (about Jonah).  
 17:36 - verse is out (one taken, another left)  
 21:4 - "cast into the offerings of God" is out.  
 24:49 - "of Jerusalem" is out.

### JOHN

3:15 - "should not perish" is out.  
 4:42 - "the Christ" is out.  
 5:3 - "waiting for the moving of the water" is out.  
 5:4 - verse is out (Pool of Bethesda)  
 6:47 - "on me" is out (He that believes . . .)  
 6:69 - "that Christ the Son" is out.  
 7:53-8:11 - placed in double brackets and deemed doubtful.  
 8:36 - "Father" is out (changed to "he").  
 9:35 - "Son of God" is out.

11:41 - "where the dead was laid" is out.  
 16:16 - "because I go to the Father" is out.  
 17:12 - "in the world" is out.  
 20:29 - "Thomas" is out.

### ACTS

2:30 - "according to flesh raise up Christ" is out.  
 7:30 - "of the Lord" is out (Angel--).  
 7:37 - "him shall ye hear" is out (Christ--).  
 8:37 - verse is out  
 9:5-6 - much is omitted concerning God's call  
 10:6 - "what thou oughtest to do" is out.  
 15:18 - "known unto God his works" is out.  
 16:31 - "Christ" is out.  
 17:26 - "blood" is out.  
 20:25 - "of God" is out (the kingdom--).  
 20:32 - "brethren" is out.  
 23:9 - "let us not fight against God" is out.  
 24:6-8 - much is omitted  
 24:15 - "of the dead" is out (resurrection--).  
 28:16 - half of verse is out.  
 28:29 - verse is omitted

### ROMANS

1:16 - "of Christ" is out.  
 1:29 - "fornication" is out.  
 8:1 - last 10 words are out.  
 9:28 - "in righteousness" is out.  
 10:15 - "of peace" is out.  
 10:17 - "of God" is out, "of Christ" is substituted.  
 11:6 - last 18 words are omitted.  
 13:9 - "shall not bear false witness" is out.  
 14:6 - 15 words are out (regarding the day).  
 14:21 - "offended made weak" is out.  
 15:29 - "of the Gospel" is out.  
 16:24 - verse is omitted.

### I CORINTHIANS

6:20 - last 7 words are out (your spirit, etc.).  
 7:5 - "fasting" is out.  
 7:39 - "by the law" is out (the wife is bound--).  
 10:28 - "the earth is the Lord's" is out.  
 11:24 - "take eat" is out (this is my body--).

- 11:29 - "Lord's" is out (referring to the body).
- 15:47 - "The Lord" is out (Lord from heaven).
- 16:22 - "Jesus Christ" is out.
- 16:23 - "Christ" is out.

## II CORINTHIANS

- 5:10 - "The Lord" is out.
- 5:18 - "Jesus" is out.
- 11:31 - "Christ" is out.

## GALATIANS

- 3:1 - "that ye should not obey truth" is out.
- 3:17 - "in Christ" is out.
- 4:7 - "through Christ" is out.
- 6:15 - "in Christ Jesus" is out.
- 6:17 - "Lord" is out.

## EPHESIANS

- 3:9 - "by Christ Jesus" is out (God created--).
- 3:14 - "of our Lord Jesus Christ" is out.
- 5:30 - "of his flesh and of his bones" is out.
- 6:10 - "my brethren" is out.

## PHILIPPIANS

- 3:16 - "let us mind the same thing" is out.

## COLOSSIANS

- 1:2 - "the Lord Jesus Christ" is out.
- 1:14 - "through his blood" is out.
- 1:28 - "Jesus" is out.
- 2:11 - "of the sins of" is out.
- 3:6 - "sons of disobedience" is out.

## I THESSALONIANS

- 1:1 - "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" is out.
- 2:19 - "Christ" is out.
- 3:11 - "Christ" is out.
- 3:13 - "Christ" is out.

## II THESSALONIANS

1:8 - "Christ" is out.

### I TIMOTHY

1:17 - "wise" is out (The only wise God).

2:7 - "in Christ" is out.

3:16 - "God is out" (was manifest in the flesh).

4:12 - "in spirit" is out.

6:5 - "of thy hands" is out.

### HEBREWS

3:1 - "Christ" is out.

7:21 - "after the order of Melchizedek" is out.

10:30 - "saith the Lord" is out.

10:34 - "in heaven" is out.

11:11 - "was delivered of a child" is out (Sarah--).

### JAMES

5:16 - "faults" is changed to "sins."

### I PETER

1:22 - "through the Spirit" is out.

4:1 - "for us" is out (Christ suffered--).

4:14 - last 15 words are out.

5:10 - "Jesus" is out.

5:11 - "glory and dominion" is out.

### II PETER

2:17 - "forever" is out.

3:9 - "us" is changed to "you."

### I JOHN

1:7 - "Christ" is out.

2:7 - "from the beginning" is out.

4:3 - "Christ is come in the flesh" is out.

4:9 - "begotten" is out.

5:7-8 - many words are omitted and changed.

5:13 - last 13 words are out.

JUDE

1:25 - "wise" is out (referring to God).

REVELATION

1:8 - "the beginning and the end" is out.

1:11 - 10 words are out (Alpha and Omega etc.).

2:13 - "thy works" is out.

5:14 - "him that liveth forever and forever" is out.

8:13 - "angel" is changed to "eagle."

11:17 - "and art to come" is out.

12:17 - "Christ" is out.

14:5 - "before the throne of God" is out.

16:17 - "of heaven" is out.

20:9 - "God out of" is out (Fire came from--).

20:12 - "God" is changed to "throne."

21:24 - "of them which are saved" is out (Nations--).

22:19 - "book of life" is changed to "tree of life."

## APPENDIX C

DOCTRINAL TEACHINGS REMOVED, WEAKENED, CHANGED, OR ADDED IN  
THE UBS TEXT

(This list was compiled by David Cloud in “Myths About the King James Bible  
[<http://www.dsinclair.com/~dcloud/library/tj070003.htm>])

- (1). The doctrine pertaining to the exact purpose, power, and importance of FASTING is removed from the Bible according to the UBS text.
- (2). The teaching of the Virgin Birth is effectively removed from the epistles in the UBS Text (cf. Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 2:16).
- (3). The teaching that Christians are to withdraw from men who “deny the doctrine which is according to godliness,” is removed from I Timothy 6:5. There are other passages which contain the doctrine of separation, but each has different kinds of separation in view. No other passage in the Bible contains the exact doctrine taught in I Timothy 6:3-5.
- (4). According to the UBS text and many modern translations, eagles fly in heaven and give messages from God as opposed to angels (cf. Revelation 8:13).
- (5). The teaching that the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law was immediate is entirely removed from the UBS text by the omission of the word “immediately” in Mark 1:31.
- (6). The doctrine that Jesus came expressly to call sinners to repentance is omitted in the UBS text. The words “to repentance” are omitted in Matthew 9:3 and Mark 2:17. Other passages, such as Matthew 4:17, have Jesus preaching repentance in the modern versions, but only the two referred to say expressly that this was His actual purpose in coming.
- (7). The doctrine that every sacrifice shall be salted with salt is omitted entirely from the UBS text (cf. Mark 9:49).
- (8). The teaching that the young ruler had to “take up the cross” is omitted entirely from the Bible in the UBS text by the removal of the words in Mark 10:21. This account is repeated in Matthew 19:21 and Luke 18:22, but the reference to Christ’s command that the young ruler must take up the cross is not contained in these passages.
- (9). The matter of trusting in riches making it hard for men to enter the kingdom of God is removed from the UBS text (cf. Mark 10:24). Other passages mention the rich man (Matthew 19:23,24 etc.) but no other New Testament passage explains that the wealthy man’s problem was the matter of “trusting in riches.”



- (10). By omitting the words “of the saved” in Revelation 21:24, the teaching regarding these future things is significantly changed.
- (11). The teaching that Mary was blessed among women is removed (cf. Luke 1:28).
- (12). The teaching that Jesus commanded the devil to get behind him is omitted (cf. Luke 4:8; Matthew 4:10).
- (13). The teaching that the apostles James and John were wanting to imitate Elijah in calling fire from heaven is removed (cf. Luke 9:54).
- (14). The teaching that the apostles did not “know what manner of spirit” they were of and that “the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” is removed from the new Bibles in Luke 9:55-56.
- (15). The teaching that Jesus was struck on the face is removed entirely from the New Testament (cf. Luke 22:64).
- (16). The teaching that Peter “wondered in himself at that which had come to pass” is removed from the UBS text (try to find Luke 24:52).
- (17). The UBS text and the new Bible remove the teaching that the disciples worshipped Jesus as he ascended into heaven (cf. Luke 24:52).
- (18). The teaching that Jesus was preferred before John is omitted (cf. John 1:27).
- (19). The UBS text and the new Bibles remove the doctrine that Jesus was in heaven even while he was on earth (cf. John 3:13).
- (20). The doctrine about the people waiting for the angel to come down and move the waters at Bethesda is omitted in John 5:3-4.
- (21). The doctrine regarding the woman taken in adultery in John 8:1-11 is included in double brackets, thereby placing its authority in grave doubt. Much doctrine is contained here, some of which is in no other passage in the Bible.
- (22). That which Philip the evangelist required of those he baptized is removed from the new Bibles, together with the wonderful confession of the eunuch who was saved while riding in the chariot (try to find Acts 8:37).
- (23). The teaching that Paul was being deeply convicted by the Lord is removed from the Bible by the omission of Acts 9:5.
- (24). The teaching of what Paul first said to the Lord Jesus Christ is removed with the omission of Acts 9:6.

(25). Most of Tertullus' speech is removed from the Bible, together with any teaching it contains by the omission of Acts 24:7 and parts of verses 6-8.

(26). The teaching that the Jews left after Paul after his words recorded in Acts 28:25-28 and that they had great reasoning among themselves is removed from the Bible by the omission of Acts 28:29.

(27). The teaching that those who turned from the truth were filled with "fornication" is removed from the Bible by the omission of this words in Romans 1:29. Other Bible passages speak of the fact that fallen man commits fornication, but no other Bible passage says specifically, as this one does, that fallen man became "filled with fornication" when he rejected God.

(28). The teaching that if something "be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" is removed by its omission in Romans 11:6. Though the first part of this verse is retained and the teaching of the first and second halves of the verse is similar, the teaching of the two clauses is not exactly the same; and the teaching of the second clause is removed from the Bible in the new versions.

(29). Doctrine regarding keeping or not keeping holy days is omitted from Romans 14:6, with the deletion of the words "he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."

(30). The doctrine that we are to glorify God in our spirit as well as body is removed in I Corinthians 6:20 with the deletion of the words "and in your spirit which are God's."

(31). The doctrine that prayer and fasting is the only thing which is to keep married couples from their physical relationship is removed by its omission in I Corinthians 7:5.

(32). By the omission of the words "by the law" in I Corinthians 7:39, the teaching is removed from this passage that it is the law which binds the woman to her husband while he is alive--I Corinthians 7:39.

(33). The doctrine that Jesus is the Lord from heaven is removed by the omission of these words in I Corinthians 15:47.

(34). The truth that the covenant of God promised to Abraham was in Christ is removed from the Bible by the omission of these words in Galatians 3:17.

(35). The doctrine that we are members of Christ's flesh and of His bones is removed by the omission of these words in Ephesians 5:30.

(36). Colossians 2:11 teaches that it is the sins of the flesh which are affected by regeneration and not the body itself. This doctrine is changed in the new Bibles by the omission of the words "of the sins." This changes the entire doctrine of this important passage on salvation.

- (37). The teaching that preachers are to be examples “in spirit” is removed by the omission of these words in I Timothy 4:12
- (38). The doctrine that Jesus “by himself” purged our sins is removed in Hebrews 1:3. Such a truth is nowhere else stated in the Scriptures.
- (39). The doctrine that we love God because he first loved us is removed from the new Bibles by the omission of the word “Him” in I John 4:19.
- (40). The teaching that the fire which destroys the armies of Satan at the end of time is from heaven is removed by the omission of the words “from God out of” in Revelation 20:9.
- (41). The teaching in Revelation 22:19 that those who tamper with God’s Word will have their part taken out of the book of life is changed. The new texts say “tree of life” rather than “book of life.”

*\*These are just a few examples. Many more can be found in the UBS text as well as the modern versions.*

## APPENDIX D

## THE CORRUPTION OF MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

The Line of Corruption

The Apocrypha (ca. 300-350 B.C.)  
 Philo (20 B.C. - A.D. 50)  
 Sahidic (Thebaic)  
 Bohairic (Coptic, Memphitic)  
 Clement of Alexandria (150-215)  
 Origen (184-254)  
 Marcion the Heretic (120-160)  
 Eusebius (260-340)  
 Augustine of Hippo (354-430)  
 Vellum Scrolls w/Apocrypha  
 Vaticanus (B) - 4th century  
 Sinaiticus (Aleph) - 4th century  
 Rev. Alexandrinus (A) - 5th century  
 Jerome (340-420)  
 LATIN VULGATE  
 Cantabrigensis (D) - 5th century  
 Koridethi (θ) - 9th century  
 Latin text of the Roman Church  
 Revised Peshitta  
 Ephraemi Rescriptus (C) - 5th century  
 Sixtina Vulgate  
 Clementina Vulgate  
 LATIN BIBLES  
 The Popes (Leo: 440 - Paul: 1970)  
 J.J. Griesbach (1774)  
 Carl Lachmann (1842)  
 Tregelles (1857)  
 Tischendorf (1869)  
 Westcott & Hort (1881)  
 Revised Version (1884)  
 Eberhard Nestle (1898)  
 Weiss (1901)  
 American Standard Version (1901)  
 Nestle-Aland Text (1950)  
 Revised Standard Version (1952)  
 New English Bible (1961)  
 UBS Greek New Testament (1966)  
 TEB, NASV, NIV, NKJV, et. al

The Biblical Line of Purity

The Masoretic Text of the OT  
 Peter, James, John, Paul, etc. (30-90)  
 Syrian mss in Asia Minor (100-200)  
 Old Latin, Old Syriac (100-200)  
 P<sup>52</sup>, P<sup>30</sup>, P<sup>46</sup> (150-400)  
 The Gothic Bible of Ulfilas (310)  
 The Syriac Peshitta  
 Syrian texts of the Greek church  
 Freerianus (W) - 4th century  
 Alexandrinus (A) - 5th century  
 P<sup>10</sup>, P<sup>15</sup>, P<sup>16</sup> - 4th century  
 P<sup>25</sup>, P<sup>54</sup>, P<sup>40</sup> - 5th century  
 Byzantine text of the Greek church  
 Bibliothecae (L) - 8th century  
 Basiliensis (E) - 8th century  
 Cyprus (K) - 9th century  
 Mosquensis (V) - 9th century  
 Seidelianus (G) - 10th century  
 The Latin Bibles of the Waldensians  
 (1100-1300)  
 The Latin Bibles of the Albigenses  
 (1300-1500)  
 The Latin Bibles of the Lollards  
 (1382-1550)  
 Martin Luther's German Bible  
 (1522-1534)  
 Erasmus' readings (1516-1535)  
 Stephanus' Receptus (1550)  
 Beza's Receptus (1565)  
 Elzevir's Receptus (1624)  
 AUTHORIZED VERSION (1611)  
 Russian, French, Norwegian, Spanish,  
 Italian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Swiss,  
 Swedish, Austrian, and Czech  
 Bibles from Luther's Version  
 (1540-1900)  
 Chinese, Burmese, Malayan, Indian,  
 Japanese, Persian, African, Arabic,  
 Hebrew, and other Bibles that came  
 from AV 1611.

## APPENDIX E

THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

The first edition of the Greek text to be published was that of Desiderius Erasmus printed in Basle in 1516, which was followed by his edition of 1519, which was used by Martin Luther for his German translation. Erasmus also published editions in 1522, 1527, and 1535, the last two of which included some changes from the Complutensian Polygot.

Simon Colinaeus, a printer from Paris, published in 1534 an edition based upon those of Erasmus and the Complutensian Polygot. The work of Colinaeus was never reprinted, but was superseded by the more famous editions of his step-son Robert Stephens, published in Paris in 1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551. The 1550 text was known as the “Royal Edition.” The 1551 Geneva edition was a reprint of the 1550 text in which the present numbered verse divisions first appeared.

Theodore Beza published in Geneva four folio editions of the Stephens Greek text with a Latin translation of his own in 1565, 1582, 1588, and 1598. During this period, Beza also published several octavo editions in 1565, 1567, 1580, 1590, and 1604. The editions of Beza, particularly that of 1598, and the two last editions of Stephens, were the chief sources used for the English Authorized Version of 1611.

The Elzevir brothers, Bonaventure and Abraham, published editions of the Greek text at Leyden in 1624, 1633, and 1641, following Beza’s 1565 edition, with a few changes from his later revisions. The preface to the 1633 Elzevir edition gave a name to this form of the text, which underlies the AV 1611, the Dutch Statenvertaling of 1637, and all the Protestant versions of the period of the Reformation--*Textum ergo habes, nunc ab ominu*

*receptum . . .*” The Elzevir text became known throughout Europe as the *Textus Receptus* or *Received Text*, and in the course of time, these titles came to be associated with the Stephens text of 1550.

The editions of Erasmus, Stephens, Beza, and the Elzevirs all present substantially the same text, and the variations are not of great significance, never affecting the sense. These editions are not revisions in the sense that modern Greek texts such as the UBS are (I have used both Beza’s 1598 edition and Stephens 1550 edition for many months and have never come across a single difference). Therefore, the term *Textus Receptus* is not used to refer to a particular edition, but in a broad sense to the *Received Text* contained in all of the aforementioned editions.

The present printed edition of the Textus Receptus is put out by the Trinitarian Bible Society and follows Beza’s 1598 edition as the primary authority as did the English Authorized Version. Moreover, it corresponds with The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Text Followed in the Authorised Version, edited by F. H. A. Scrivener and published by Cambridge University Press in 1894 and 1902.

## APPENDIX F

## A LITERARY DEFENSE OF THE JOHANNINE COMMA

Introduction

I John 5:7-8, commonly referred to as the *Johannine Comma*, has been one of the most hotly debated passages with regard to its authenticity for over a century. Because it is one of those few verses included in the *Received Text* which has a weak attestation from Greek manuscripts, many a student has paced his study for hours struggling with the question as to whether or not the *Comma* is a legitimate part of the Holy Scriptures. The hasty dismissal of this passage in most modern versions of the Bible is largely due to the fact that it is only found in eight of the five hundred Greek manuscripts that contain I John 5. Consequently, it is almost unanimously regarded among modern textual critics as a later scribal addition.

The primary English translation that contains the *Johannine Comma* is the AV 1611 King James Bible which is based upon the Syrian-Byzantine type text of the *Textus Receptus*. The passage reads:

<sup>7</sup>For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. <sup>8</sup>And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Most modern translations (NAS, NIV, RSV, NEB, LB etc.), on the other hand, are based on the Alexandrian text-type collated by Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton Anthony Hort in 1881. These versions commonly read as does the NIV:

<sup>7</sup>For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup>the spirit, the water, and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

As anyone can clearly see, this is a substantial omission and consequent mix-up of the text. How do the modern versions arrive at such a rendering? First of all, verse 7, as found in the AV, is completely removed; then the first phrase of verse 8 (There are three

that bear witness) becomes verse 7. Thus, the entire arrangement and sense of the passage is altered.

It is not the purpose or intent of this excursus to defend the *Johannine Comma* on the basis of external evidence, although a convincing case could be built. Rather, it is appropriate to approach this so-called “spurious” passage from a slightly different perspective, one that focuses on literary characteristics and internal evidence. Such an approach unquestionably supports the authenticity of I John 5:7-8 as retained by the Authorized Version and casts a shadow of doubt over the integrity of modern translations. The intention of the author is to show how the *Johannine Comma* is evidenced by the genre of I John as well as the epistle’s literary coherence with the Fourth Gospel. Furthermore, supporting evidence can be found in the literary context of the passage, along with John’s style and diction. May Almighty God guide this quest which seeks to magnify and establish his perfectly preserved Word.

#### The Authenticity of the Johannine Comma Supported by the Genre of I John

The Book of I John has long been classified as an Epistle. However, it lacks the external form as is characteristic of other New Testament epistles. I John contains no formal greeting or benediction, and the author and readers are not mentioned or specified. As D.A. Hayes argues, “There is no suggestion of any particular occasion for the writing of I John. It might have been written at almost any time and in almost any place and under almost any conditions. Its contents are suitable for all times and places and conditions of men.”<sup>211</sup> These facts have caused some to cast aside the notion of “epistolary form” in favor of the theological treatise such as is found in the Book of

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<sup>211</sup>D. A. Hayes, John and His Writings (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1917), 161.



Hebrews. However, this classification also has its problems because I John is not “a production sent forth in the form of a treatise, but a thoroughly epistolary outpouring of thought and feelings.”<sup>212</sup>

Perhaps the best genre classification of I John can be arrived at by blending epistle and treatise. Henry Vedder argues that the affinities of this book are with the Wisdom literature. He writes, “The lack of continuity of thought, so perplexing to those who persist in regarding this as epistolary in literary form, becomes appropriate and even characteristic in a composition of the Wisdom order.”<sup>213</sup> In other words, one sees a collection on brief essays or thought, more or less connected to a general theme - the fellowship of the believer. “A brief prologue states this theme, and an equally brief epilogue sums up what the writer regards as the chief things established by what he has written.”<sup>214</sup> One, however, cannot completely dismiss the epistolary connotation. I John is a letter in which the author expresses a personal relation to a definite class of readers. “The writer is concerned throughout with a given situation. He takes for granted that his readers are acquainted with the persons and events he has in mind, and makes allusions, in almost every paragraph, to which the clue has now been lost.”<sup>215</sup> With all of this in mind, the word “Epistolary Treatise” can be coined to fit I John. The Book contains numerous brief discourses dealing with a wide range of subjects. At the same time, however, while the Apostle chooses not to use the set epistolary forms, he approaches the readers as a community, briefly addressing them in the prologue (1:1-4) and the epilogue

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<sup>212</sup>John Ebrard, Biblical Commentary on the Epistles of St. John (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1860), 3.

<sup>213</sup>Henry Vedder, The Johannine Writings and the Johannine Problem (Philadelphia, PA: Griffith and Rowland Press), 99.

<sup>214</sup>Vedder, 101.

<sup>215</sup>Ernest Scott, The Literature of the New Testament (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 260.

(5:21). Furthermore, the theological discussions contained therein are laced with personal emotion and feeling which is common in New Testament epistles.

How does the genre of I John relate to the *Comma*? If the book is properly recognized as an “Epistolary Treatise,” then the theological teaching contained in 5:7-8 fits the structure of the epistle perfectly. Such a statement would be expected. The Book of I John is best broken down in this manner:

- I. Prologue (1:1-4)
- II. Our Advocate (1:8-2:2)
- III. Obedience (2:3-6)
- IV. Purpose (2:12-14)
- V. Love of the World (2:15-17)
- VI. Antichrist (2:18-28)
- VII. Character of God’s Children (2:29-3:12)
- IX. Love (3:13-24)
- X. Test of the Spirit (3:24-4:6)
- XI. God is Love (4:7-21)
- XII. Victory of Faith (5:1-5)
- XIII. Three Witnesses (5:6-13)
- XIV. Prayer (5:14-17)
- XV. Epilogue<sup>216</sup>

Each aforementioned section, excluding the prologue and epilogue, constitutes a brief discourse on a different theological topic. While no particular order is apparent, each discourse serves to heighten the readers understanding of Christian fellowship, the overriding theme of I John.

The *Comma* is found in the midst of a brief discourse dealing with three witnesses. This discourse contributes to the overall theme of the Book by promulgating a consequence of Christian fellowship, the verification of Christ’s credentials. The *Comma*, perfectly in line with the structure of the entire book, clearly shows that Christ is one with the Father and the Spirit as he bears witness in heaven. At the same time, his baptism, crucifixion, and the earthly ministry of the Holy Spirit bear witness on earth. It

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<sup>216</sup>Vedder, 103-132

is these witnesses that verify Christ's identity as the Son of God. In light of these facts, the believer can have fellowship with God Almighty. If the *Comma* is omitted from the passage, the structure breaks down. The theological argument of 5:6-12 becomes vague and one is left trying to figure out which discourse to place these verses in. They most definitely do not fall in line with the preceding discourse (Victory of Faith) or the one that follows (Prayer).

The Authenticity of the Johannine Comma Supported by the Literary Coherence That Exists Between I John and the Fourth Gospel

The well-known Greek scholar, A.T. Robertson, once wrote, "in the whole of the First Epistle [I John] there is hardly a single thought that is not found in the Gospel [John]." <sup>217</sup> The literary coherence that exists between I John and the Fourth Gospel has even been considered closer than that which exists between Luke and Acts. It is this fact that has led some to believe that I John served as preface or dedicatory epistle to the Gospel of John, for both Books are characterized by repetition, contrast, parallelism, personal elements, profound spirituality, and doctrine. <sup>218</sup> In other words, the Gospel of John was attached to the epistle as it was sent out to the addressees. I John was to be read as an introduction or commentary on the teachings of the Gospel. John Ebrard writes:

It [I John] bears the stamp of a preface or dedicatory epistle. The Apostle addresses himself to specific readers, and holds communion, person to person, with them, in that we mark the essence of the epistle; but he does this on occasion of another communication, to which this is attached, and to which it refers; and therefore, in its form, it is no epistle, no simple and direct substitute of oral speech, but an address uttered on occasion of the reading of another and different communication. <sup>219</sup>

The exhortations contained in I John were uttered by the Apostle on occasion of the contents contained in the Gospel. Having understood the principles of Christians

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<sup>217</sup>A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1933), 6: 199.

<sup>218</sup>Josiah Tidwell, John and His Five Books (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1937), 90-92.

<sup>219</sup>Ebrard, 5.

fellowship promulgated in the Epistle, the reader could proceed to understand the entire basis of his fellowship, the life and work of Jesus Christ as promulgated in the Gospel.

Such a distinct literary coherence fully supports the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma*. The resounding theme of the Gospel of John is the divinity of Jesus Christ. Such is summed up in John 10:30, when Jesus says, “I and my Father are one.” This same theme is prevalent in the Epistle, being concisely and clearly stated in 5:7-8. The *Comma* truly bears coherence with the message of John’s Gospel in this sense. It serves as an occasion to introduce the doctrine of the Trinity as the original readers prepared to study the attached Gospel. Although Christ’s divinity is inferred throughout the epistle, one is not confronted with such concise declaration as is conveyed in the *Comma*. If this passage is omitted, it seems that the theme of John’s Gospel would lack a proper introduction.

It is interesting to note that two of the earliest allusions to the *Johannine Comma* in church history<sup>220</sup> are made in connection to the thematic statement made by the Lord in John 10:30. Around A.D. 215, Tertullian wrote:

... which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the *three* persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.<sup>221</sup>

Likewise, Cyprian writes around A.D. 250, “The Lord says ‘I and the Father are one’ and likewise it is written of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ‘And these three are one.’”<sup>222</sup> The theological teaching of the *Comma* most definitely bears coherence with

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<sup>220</sup>The fact that each of these allusions were made less than two centuries after the completion of the New Testament serves as convincing external evidence for the authenticity of the *Johannine Comma*.

<sup>221</sup>*Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 2:133.

<sup>222</sup>*The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Church Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 5:423.

the overriding theme of John's Gospel. There is no reason to believe that the verse is not genuine in this sense, for it serves as a proper prelude to the theme of the Gospel which most likely accompanied the Epistle as it was sent out to its original audience.

#### The Authenticity of the Johannine Comma Supported by John's Style

The *Johannine Comma* also conforms to the Apostle John's literary style in several aspects. As far as tone is concerned, "there reigns throughout the Epistle a firm and manly tone, the perfect opposite of all effeminate and sentimental enthusiasm."<sup>223</sup> This tone is likewise prevalent in the *Comma* which tersely presents the truth of an important doctrine, leaving the reader with no room to question.

John's writings are also characterized by contrasts. According to Tidwell, "the ordinary contrasts cover almost the same words and ideas of the Gospel such as life and death, light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness with several others and with the addition of Christ and anti-Christ." The *Comma*, in particular, feeds the contrast which John creates between Jesus Christ and Antichrist (cf. 2:18-23). Jesus Christ is God (cf. 5:7-8). Antichrist, on the other hand, is the one who denies this fact (cf. 2:22).

One final aspect of John's style that is worthy of consideration, with respect to the *Comma*, is parallelism. I John is filled with both positive and negative parallelism. For example, the Apostle writes in 1:5, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all," and in 1:9, "Forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 5:7-8, the *Comma* included, also contains parallelism, a synthetic type to be exact. The three heavenly witnesses (Father, Word, and Holy Ghost) and the three earthly witnesses (Spirit, water, and blood) are actually the same three witnesses. As Oliver Greene argues, "Therefore, since the Trinity - the Father, Word, and the Holy Ghost - bear record in heaven, it is

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<sup>223</sup>Ebrard, 41.

these three who also bear record in earth.”<sup>224</sup> In other words, the promulgation of the three earthly witnesses serves to expand or elaborate on the role of the three heavenly witnesses. The earthly witnesses are sourced in the heavenly witnesses. The “blood” refers to the blood of God (cf. Acts 20:28) while the “water” is a reference to Jesus Christ at his baptism. The “Spirit,” of course, is the third member of the Godhead. This particular type of parallelism is very common with John. If the *Comma* is omitted, the parallel structure falls apart.

Altogether, the *Johannine Comma* reflects John’s style in tone, contrast, and parallelism. At this point, one must consider the words of Andrew Fuller. “The connexion of the passage is altogether in its favor. The phraseology is that of the Apostle John; so that if the words are not his, it must have been the most successful imitation of him that can be imagined.”<sup>225</sup>

#### The Authenticity of the Johannine Comma Supported by Literary Context

In his Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Bruce Metzger argues that “as regards intrinsic probability, the passage [The *Johannine Comma*] makes an awkward break in the sense.”<sup>226</sup> Upon close examination of the literary context, however, one finds that this assertion is far from true. For example, if the *Comma* is omitted, verse 6 and verse 8 are thrown together, “which gives a very bald, awkward, and meaningless repetition of the Spirit’s witness twice in immediate succession.”<sup>227</sup> Furthermore, the omission causes the concluding phrase of verse 8 (and these three agree in one) to contain

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<sup>224</sup>Oliver Greene, The Epistles of John (Greenville, SC: The Gospel Hour, 1966), 191.

<sup>225</sup>“Letter IX” in The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 1: 708-709.

<sup>226</sup>Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (Stuttgart, Germany: United Bible Society, 1994), 649.

<sup>227</sup>Robert Dabney, The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: Banner of Trust, 1967), 306.

an unintelligible reference.<sup>228</sup> What is “that one” to which “these three” are said to agree? In other words, “that one” in verse 8 which designates One to whom the reader has already been introduced does not have antecedent presence in the passage. “Let verse 7 stand, and all is clear, and the three earthly witnesses testify to that aforementioned unity which the Father, Word, and Spirit constitute.”<sup>229</sup> The passage makes absolutely no sense if the *Comma* is struck out. The phrase “one earth” in verse 8 as well as the entire ninth verse would also have to be knocked out to regain the sense because both infer that the “witness of God,” as promulgated in the *Comma*, has already been introduced.

In a more broad context, John has asserted in the previous six verses that faith is the bond of the believer’s spiritual life and his consequent victory over the world. Such faith must have a solid warrant, and the truth by which it is to be assured is none other than the Sonship and Deity of Jesus Christ (cf. I John 5:5, 11, 12, 20). This warrant is first presented in verse 6 in the words of the Holy Ghost speaking by way of inspired men. In verse 7, it comes in the words of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, asserting and confirming by miracles the unity of Christ with God the Father. Thirdly, the warrant appears in verse 8 through the work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with Christ’s baptism and crucifixion, all of which verify the atoning work of the Saviour.<sup>230</sup> Finally, as promulgated in verse 10, the warrant lies in the spiritual consciousness of the believer himself, certifying to him his divine charge. “How harmonious is all thus if we accept

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<sup>228</sup>In the Greek, the phrase reads, “οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν” which literally translates “and these three agree to that (aforesaid) One.”

<sup>229</sup>Dabney, 307

<sup>230</sup>The spelling of the word “Saviour” as retained in the Authorized Version is preferred by the author. The modern English translations remove the “u” from this title. As a result, a seven-lettered word (7= the number of God) becomes a six-lettered word (6=the number of man).

the 7th verse as genuine, but if we omit it, the very keystone of the arch is wanting, and the crowing proof that the warrant of our faith is divine (verse 9) is struck out.”<sup>231</sup>

#### The Authenticity of the Johannine Comma Supported by John’s Use of Metaphor

The *Johannine Comma* contains a well-known metaphor with respect to Jesus Christ. The second person of the Trinity is referred to as the “Word.” Such a metaphor is unique to the Apostle John and is frequently used in the first chapter of his Gospel (cf. John 1:1-18). Moreover, in his Apocalypse, Jesus is called the “Word of God” (cf. Revelation 19:13). This fact, in and of itself, argues heavily for the authenticity of the verse. If someone would have added the *Comma* to argue for the Trinity, why wouldn’t they have simply added the common Trinitarian formula as found in Matthew 28:19, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?” The strength of forgery is similarity not uniqueness. As Dr. Peter Ruckman argues, “What would have possibly been gained by inventing a different formula that the one given in Matthew 28, which every Christian knew by heart?”<sup>232</sup> Also, Christ is referred to as the “Son of God” numerous times in the Epistle. A true forger would have no doubt utilized “Son” instead of “Word.” The fact is, there was no forger. John himself made use of the term, despite its lacking in the rest of the Epistle. It, being a favorite of his, was appropriate to use when referring to Christ’s divine eternity with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

#### The Authenticity of the Johannine Comma Supported by Diction

One final literary aspect that is worthy of consideration with regard to the *Johannine Comma* is diction, otherwise known as word choice. In order for such an approach to be completely valid, one must look to the original language of the New Testament, Koine

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<sup>231</sup>Dabney, 307

<sup>232</sup>Peter Ruckman, I John 5:7, Why We Retain It In The Authorized Version (Pensacola, FL: Bible Baptist Bookstore, n.d.), 4.



Greek. If the *Comma* is omitted, John's word choice seems extremely awkward and unusual with respect to the general rules of the Greek language. The masculine article, numeral, and participle (There are three that bear witness<sup>233</sup>) are made to agree with three neuter nouns (Spirit, water, and blood<sup>234</sup>). As Robert Dabney argues, "This is an insuperable and very bald grammatical difficulty."<sup>235</sup> John most definitely would not have made such a connection, for his structure and syntax are altogether simple and understandable. In attempting to excuse this awkward choice of words, Daniel Wallace states that "the fact that the author has personified water and blood, turning them into witnesses along with the Spirit, may be enough to account for the masculine gender."<sup>236</sup> However, the personification of the water and blood does not become evident unless the *Comma* is present. It is true that the Spirit (πνευμα), a neuter word, is sometimes used in connection with masculinity because the author is referring to the Holy Spirit as a person, a member of the Godhead; but inanimate objects are rarely, if at all, "masculinized" for the purpose of personification.

If the disputed verse is allowed to remain, the three neuter nouns agree with the two masculines (Father & Word<sup>237</sup>) and one neuter of verse 7 (Holy Spirit<sup>238</sup>), and, according to the rules of syntax, the masculines among the group control the gender over a neuter connected to them. Such is termed the "power of attraction" and is well-known in Greek syntax throughout the New Testament and John's writings in particular. It is interesting

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οι τρεις μαρτυρουντες

<sup>234</sup> πνευμα, υδωρ, αιμα

<sup>235</sup> Dabney, 306.

<sup>236</sup> Daniel Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 332.

<sup>237</sup> Πατερ, Λογος

<sup>238</sup> Αγιον Πνευμα

to note that around A.D. 385, Gregory of Nazanzius objected to the diction of I John 5:7-8 with the *Comma* omitted. He wrote,

What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he says that there are Three that bear witness: the Spirit and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has ventured to reckon, under one numeral, things which are not consubstantial, though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are consubstantial. For who would assert that these are consubstantial? Secondly, because he had not been consistent in the way he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and then adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use the *Three* not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of Deity?<sup>239</sup>

### Conclusion

All in all, a literary perspective is important when investigating the authenticity of the *Johannine Comma*. Although the external evidence with regard to Greek manuscript attestation is weak, internal probability is high. Not only does the *Comma* fit the structure of John's epistle well, but it is also supported by the literary coherence that it shares with John's Gospel. The *Comma* likewise exhibits characteristics of John's style and fits perfectly in the context and progression of thought present in chapter 5. The use of the particular metaphor in the passage is unique to John and the omission thereof results in awkward and unskillful diction. Based on these facts, it is hard to deny the authenticity of the *Johannine Comma*. The whole issue at hand boils down to two questions. Did the orthodox interpolate the verse in the text, or did the heretics expunge it? Acknowledging the literary evidence, the most Christ-honoring approach is the later. Perhaps such an approach should also be applied to other passages found in the Authorized Version which are commonly accused of being spurious (e.g. Mathew 18:11; Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11; I Timothy 3:16 etc.).

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<sup>239</sup>The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 7: 233-234.

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