

SHORT STUDY

WHY THE OMISSION OF THE THREE HEAVENLY WITNESSES?

No. 2

As we continue to search for answers to this question by gleaning from the early so-called orthodox Christian apologists of the Anti-Nicene era, we must confess that they did not use the Disputed Text in I John 5:7, or at least if they did, we do not at this time, have any record of it. However, if we consider several *indisputable facts* this will prove to be an invalid argument for the following reasons:

1. First John is among the earlier N. T. General Epistles; Horne suggests that it may have been written about A. D. 55. Others may assign an earlier or later date.
2. Secondly, it is a small General Epistle and many of the ancient copies do not go to the Fifth Chapter, some complete only including the Third Chapter.
3. The so-called Orthodox Divines began to use *already corrupted texts* early in the second century.
4. During the early Christian-Trinitarian Controversies, *Monarchianism, Patripassionism, and Sabellianism*, the Orthodox divines would not have used it, but the Oneness apologists would have used it.
5. The earliest Trinitarian controversy was between the Christian apologists and the Jews. The Old Testament was the text used so, therefore, neither the Jews nor the Christian Apologists would have used I John 5:7.

I want to discuss facts 3 and 4.

The Orthodox Divines and the Corrupted Manuscripts

First, the so-called Orthodox Apologists were already using corrupted texts during the Second Century of the Christian era. If we note the writings of Ignatius, early Bishop at Antioch, and others of that era who used both versions of John 1:18, we can document that the true *Only Begotten Son* appears as does the corrupted *Only Begotten God* statement. Or do they? In the Anti-Nicene Father I use and quote from, they appear, but that does not make them authentic. See my work, *Biography of the Early Fathers*, wherein the Encyclopedia Britannica disproves the genuineness of these enlarged versions of both Ignatius and Irenaeus. More of this will follow.

I shall attach my larger study, *Usages of the Only Begotten Son and Only Begotten God, in Early Textual Criticism*, to this short study. But let me quote from Ignatius showing his remarks to Hero, future Bishop of the Gentile Church in Antioch.

THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO HERO A DEACON OF ANTIOCH

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to Hero, the deacon of Christ, and the servant of God, a man honored by God, and most dearly loved as well as esteemed, who carries Christ and the Spirit within him, and who is mine own son in faith and love: Grace, mercy, and peace from Almighty God, and from Christ Jesus our Lord, *His only-begotten Son*, "who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from the present evil world," and preserve us unto His heavenly kingdom. (page 218)

CHAPTER 7

SOLEMN CHARGE TO HERO, AS FUTURE BISHOP OF ANTIOCH

Keep God in remembrance, and thou shalt never sin. Be not double-minded in thy prayers; for blessed is he who doubteth not. For I believe in the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in *His only-begotten Son*, that God will show me, Hero, upon my throne. Add speed, therefore, to thy course. I charge thee before the God of the universe, and before Christ, and in the presence of the Holy Spirit, and of the ministering ranks [of angels], keep in safety that deposit which I and Christ have committed to thee, and do not judge thyself unworthy of those things which have been shown by God [to me] concerning thee. *I hand over to thee the Church of Antioch*. I have commended you to Polycarp in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Page 221)

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUDING SALUTATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Salute Cassian, my host, and his most serious-minded partner in life, and their very dear children, to whom may “God grant that they find mercy of the Lord in that day,” on account of their ministrations to us, whom also I commend to thee in Christ. Salute by name all the faithful in Christ that are at Laodicea. Do not neglect those at Tarsus, but look after them steadily, confirming them in the Gospel. I salute in the Lord, Maris the bishop of Neapolis, near Anazarbus. Salute thou also Mary my daughter, distinguished both for gravity and erudition, as also “the Church which is in her house.” May my soul be in place of hers: she is the very pattern of pious women. May the Father of Christ, by *His only-begotten Son*, preserve thee in good health, and of high repute in all things, to a very old age, for the benefit of the Church of God! Farewell in the Lord, and pray thou that I may be perfected. (Page 222)

(p.224)

saith [the Scripture], “is one Lord.” And again, “Hath not one God created us? Have we not all one Father? And there is also one Son, God the Word. For *“the only-begotten Son,”* saith [the Scripture], *“who is in the bosom of the Father.”* And again, “One Lord Jesus Christ.” And in another place, “What is His name, or what His Son’s name, that we may know?” And there is also one Paraclete. For “there is also,” saith [the Scripture], “one Spirit,” since “we have been called in one hope of our calling.” And again, “We have drunk of one Spirit,” with what follows. And it is manifest that all these gifts [possessed by believers] “worketh one and the self-same Spirit.” There are not then either three Fathers, or three Sons, or three Paracletes, but one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete. Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to “baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honor.

(Page 246)

Wherefore the noble soldier of Christ [Ignatius], being in fear for *the Church of the Antiochians*, was, in accordance with his own desire, brought before Trajan, who was at that time staying at Antioch, but was in haste [to set forth] against Armenia and the Parthians. And when he was set before the emperor Trajan, [that prince] said unto him, “Who art thou, wicked wretch, who settest thyself to transgress our commands, and persuadest others to do the same, so that they should miserably perish?” Ignatius replied, “No one ought to call Theophorus wicked; for all evil spirits have departed from the servants of God. But if, because I am an enemy to these [spirits], you call me wicked in respect to them, I quite agree with you; for inasmuch as I have Christ the King of heaven [within me], I destroy all the devices of these [evil spirits].” Trajan answered, “And who is Theophorus?” Ignatius replied, “He who has Christ within his breast.” Trajan said, “Do we not then seem to you to have the gods in our mind, whose assistance we enjoy in fighting against our enemies?” Ignatius answered, “Thou art in error when thou callest the demons of the nations gods. For there is but one God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them; and one Jesus Christ, *the only-begotten Son of God*, whose kingdom may I enjoy.” Trajan said, “Do you mean Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?” Ignatius replied, “I mean Him who crucified my sin, with him who was the inventor of it, and who has condemned [and cast down] all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry Him in their heart.”

Ignatius' remarks show, that he as *Bishop at Antioch*, and the *Antiochian Church* already had the *Textus Receptus version of the Gospel of John*. The Gentile Church at Antioch gathered and preserved the Textual Canon into at least the Syrian and Latin languages very early in the Second Century. Ignatius died about AD 110.

Which Gospel of John did they use? We can determine by their citing of the *correct John 1:18*, that they used the *Greek Textus Receptus Gospel of John*. I am still trying to find the earliest Syrian Text of the Gospel of John or Ignatius's writings.

Now let us turn to the corrupted or Egyptian Text of John's Gospel. Did Ignatius also cite that? There is no proof that he ever cited any corrupted Egyptian version of John, but *he may have known* about the *only begotten God* concept as the following shows:

The Writings of Ignatius To the Philadelphians.

DO NOT ACCEPT JUDAISM

[SHORTER]

But if any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning Jesus Christ, they are in my judgment but as monuments and sepulchers of the dead, upon which are written 164 only the names of men. Flee therefore the wicked devices and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any time being conquered by his artifices, ye grow weak in your love. But be ye all joined together with an undivided heart. And I thank my God that I have a good conscience in respect to you, and that no one has it in his power to boast, either privately or publicly, that I have burdened any one either in much or in little. And I wish for all among whom I have spoken, that they may not possess that for a testimony against them.

Please note that he did not use the objectionable phrase in the shorter version. The longer version cites it, but it has yet to be proven as genuine. In the articles I quote from in my Biography of the Early Fathers, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* claims that corruptors added these longer versions years later. The *Britannica* states that they contain Valentinian concepts. This refers to the *Only Begotten God* dogma.

p. 165

[LONGER]

If any one preaches the one God of the Law and the prophets, but denies Christ to be the Son of God, he is a liar, even as also is his father the devil, and is a Jew falsely so called, being possessed of mere carnal circumcision. If any one confesses Christ Jesus the Lord, but denies the God of the law and of the prophets, saying that the Father of Christ is not the Maker of heaven and earth, he has not continued in the truth any more than his father the devil, and is a disciple of Simon Magus, not of the Holy Spirit. If any one says there is one God, and also confesses Christ Jesus, but thinks the Lord to be a mere man, and not the *only-begotten God*, and Wisdom, and the Word of God, and deems Him to consist merely of a soul and body, such an one is a serpent, that preaches deceit and error for the destruction of men, And such a man is poor in understanding, even as by name he is an *Ebionite*. If any one confesses the truths mentioned, but calls lawful wedlock, and the procreation of children, destruction and pollution, or deems certain kinds of food abominable, such an one has the apostate dragon dwelling within him. If any one confesses the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and praises the creation, but calls the incarnation merely an appearance, and is ashamed of the passion, such an one has denied

the faith, not less than the Jews who killed Christ. If any one confesses these things, and that God the Word did dwell in a human body, being within it as the Word, even as the soul also is in the body, because it was God that inhabited it, and not a human soul, but affirms that unlawful unions are a good thing, and places the highest happiness in pleasure, as does the man who is falsely called a Nicolaitan, this person can neither be a lover of God, nor a lover of Christ, but is a corrupter of his own flesh, and therefore void of the Holy Spirit, and a stranger to Christ. All such persons are but monuments and sepulchers of the dead, upon which are (165) written only the names of dead men. Flee, therefore, the wicked devices and snares of the spirit which now worketh in the children of this world, lest at any time being overcome, ye grow weak in your love. But be ye all joined together with an undivided heart and a willing mind, "being of one accord and of one judgment," being always of the same opinion about the same things, both when you are at ease and in danger, both in sorrow and in joy. I thank God, through Jesus Christ, that I have a good conscience in respect to you, and that no one has it in his power to boast, either privately or publicly, that I have burdened any one either in much or in little. And I wish for all among whom I have spoken, that they may not possess that for a testimony against them.

Summation on Ignatius' Usages

1. Ignatius' *supposed usage of the Only Begotten God* phrase is in the *disputed* longer version of his *Epistle to the PHILADELPHIANS*.
2. I have not found his citing or using the objectionable phrase anywhere else. So, the question is, did he actually use that objectionable phrase? *It is doubtful at best*. See the 1911 Edition of *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, on line at: <http://1911encyclopedia.org/J/index.htm>
3. We know he *did not cite the corrupted Egyptian text* in any version of his writings we now have, and it is doubtful he even used the *Begotten God* concept. *We do know that he cited the true Textus Receptus text and used the correct only Begotten Son phrase.*

Noting further from my attached work:

There is only one statement we can find containing the Apostolic Father's citing of the corrupted John 1:18, *Only Begotten God*. *Irenaeus was the only Apostolic Father* who cited what we now call the Westcott-Hort or Egyptian Text. This is very noteworthy, only one writer, Irenaeus, cited John 1:18 from the Egyptian Text. *He only did it once. What if Irenaeus, like Ignatius, also cited the true and proper text? Did he, and how many times?* This would seem to prove that these old Fathers had before them two texts and cited them both.

Yes, Irenaeus, like Ignatius, did cite a *Textus Receptus text of John 1:18*. Not only did Ignatius and Irenaeus cite the *Textus Receptus Text*, but others did as well. You can find these citations in the attached work.

Irenaeus

1. (Page 637) For they say that this Enthymesis, desirous of making all things to the honor of the Aeons, formed images of them, or rather that the Savior did so through her instrumentality. And she, in the image of the invisible Father, kept herself concealed from the Demiurge. But he was in the image of the *only-begotten Son*, and the angels and archangels created by him were in the image of the rest of the Aeons.
2. (Page 648) 5. Further, they teach that John, the disciple of the Lord, indicated the first Ogdoad, expressing themselves in these words: John, the disciple of the Lord, wishing to set forth the origin of all things, so as to explain how the Father produced the whole, lays down a certain principle, — that, namely, *which was first-begotten by God*, which Being he has termed both the *only-begotten Son and God*, in whom the Father, *after a seminal manner, brought forth all things*. By him the Word was produced, and in him the whole

substance of the Aeons, to which the Word himself afterwards imparted form. Since, therefore, he treats of the first origin of things, he rightly proceeds in his teaching from the beginning, that is, from God and the Word. And he expresses himself thus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God."

3) (Page 651) 3. Learn then, ye foolish men, that Jesus who suffered for us, and who dwelt among us, is Himself the Word of God. For if any other of the Aeons had become flesh for our salvation, it would have been probable that the apostle spoke of another. But if the Word of the Father who descended is the same also that ascended, He, namely, the *Only-begotten Son of the only God*, who, according to the good pleasure of the Father, became flesh for the sake of men, the apostle certainly does not speak regarding any other, or concerning any Ogdoad, but respecting our Lord Jesus Christ.

4) (Page 583) 6. For "no man," he says, "hath seen God at any time," unless "the only-begotten Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [Him]." For He, the Son who is in His bosom, declares to all the Father who is invisible. Wherefore they know Him to whom the Son reveals Him; and again, the Father, by means of the Son, gives knowledge of His Son to those who love Him. By whom also Nathanael, being taught, recognized [Him], he to whom also the Lord bare witness, that he was "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." The Israelite recognized his King, therefore did he cry out to Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." By whom also Peter, having been taught, recognized Christ as the Son of the living God, when [God] said, "Behold My dearly beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, until He send forth judgment into contention; and in His name shall the Gentiles trust."

Irenaeus stated again:

But as He who worketh all things in all is God, [as to the points] of what nature and how great He is, [God] is invisible and indescribable to all things which have been made by Him, but He is by no means unknown: for all things learn through His Word that there is one God the Father, who contains all things, and who grants existence to all, as is written in the Gospel: "No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared [Him.]" (Pages 976, 977)

Ignatius *did not* cite the corrupted John 1:18. Irenaeus cited two, perhaps three different texts. He may have cited a text containing the *only begotten Son of God* phrase or it may have only his coinage. In the attached work, there are several other citings among these early Christian writers.

Ignatius's reference is important because it takes us to the Gentile Church at Antioch and their usage of the Received Text's *Gospel of God*. There is no evidence that they received or used any of the corrupted Egyptians Texts. I therefore conclude that when they translated the N. T. into Syrian and Latin, they used the Greek Textus Receptus.

I would ask the defenders of the Westcott-Hort system for proof that Ignatius, or the early Antiochian Church, used and translated the Gospel of John containing the disputed phrase, *Only Begotten God*?

The doubtful phrase, the *only begotten God*, is found in the longer version. Their genuineness has been disproven.

Here is the first undisputed of Irenaeus' usage of the disputed phrase and it came near the close of the second century:

11. If, then, neither Moses, nor Elias, nor Ezekiel, who had all many celestial visions, did see God; but if what they did see were similitudes of the splendor of the Lord, And prophecies of things to come; it is manifest that the Father is indeed invisible, of whom also the Lord said, "No man hath seen God at any time." But His Word, as He Himself willed it, and (p.980) for the benefit of those who beheld, did show the Father's brightness, and explained His purposes (as also the Lord said: "*The only-begotten God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [Him];*" and He does Himself also interpret the Word of the Father as being rich and great); V 1, The Anti-Nicene Fathers.

I cannot find that Justin ever used the disputed phrase.

Now let us turn our attention to the next point:

During the early Christian-Trinitarian Controversies, *Monarchianism, Patripassionism, and Sabellianism*, the Orthodox divines would not have used it, but the Oneness apologists would have used it.

The majority of the Orthodox Divines were already using the corrupted Egyptian Texts when these Trinitarian Controversies occurred. They certainly would not have quoted from the true and proper I John 5:7, *because it would not have been in their copy of I John.*

The so-called heretics were only persons who may have used the true and proper I John 5:7. Would they have used it? It is doubtful because each heretic had his own version of his Sacred Books. It is a false assumption that these different groups used and cited only one Text Canon.

Many times when a heretic arose, he drew disciples unto himself, and originated his own private school or academy to teach and train followers in his concepts. This followed the example of the Jewish scholars. One of the first works of both groups was to translate and issue Sacred Books that would support their views. This is why it may be difficult to find ever a heretic who used the true and proper I John 5:7.

Both Noland and Burgon have demonstrated that the Orthodox divines did on purpose edit out of the Sacred Canon verses the Heretics used. Eusebius followed the same procedure when he gathered, finalized, and issued the *Constantine-Eusebius Bible*.

So, I conclude the following:

1. John 1:18 is a standard for identifying the Textus Receptus family of early Greek and Latin Texts.
2. This may be true of the early Syrian texts as well. To do this properly, we must secure a pre-Peshitta text and consider it.
3. The Gentile Church at Antioch and their early Pastors of Bishops used the Textual Receptus version of John's Gospel.
4. They translated the same into the old Syrian and old Latin.
5. The earliest old Latin copies contained both the true and proper John 1:18 and I John 5:7.

From Eusebius's Church History, contained in the writings of the *Post-Nicene Fathers, serious 2*, volume 1, I quote:

(p. 233)

CHAPTER 22.

IGNATIUS, THE SECOND BISHOP OF ANTIOCH.

AT this time, Ignatius was known as the second bishop of Antioch, Evodius, having been the first. Symeon likewise was at that time the second ruler of the church of Jerusalem, the brother of our Savior having been the first.

CHAPTER 36.

IGNATIUS AND HIS EPISTLES.

AT that time Polycarp, a disciple of the apostles, was a man of eminence in Asia, having been entrusted with the episcopate of the church of Smyrna by those who had seen and heard the Lord. And at the same time Papias, bishop of the parish of Hierapolis, became well known, as did also Ignatius, who was chosen bishop of Antioch, second in succession to Peter, (in Rome- REP) and whose fame is still celebrated by a great many.

(p. 279)

CHAPTER 20.

THE RULERS OF THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH.

AT that time also in the church of Antioch, Theophilus was well known as the sixth from the apostles. For Cornelius, who succeeded Hero, was the fourth, and after him Eros, the fifth in order, had held the office of bishop.

The Encyclopedia Britannica states:

Ignatius . . . died c. 110, , Rome *also called Ignatius Theophoros (Greek: "God Bearer")* bishop of Antioch, Syria, known mainly from seven highly regarded letters that he wrote during a trip to Rome, as a prisoner condemned to be executed for his beliefs. He was apparently eager to counteract the teachings of two groups—the Judaizers, who did not accept the authority of the New Testament, and the Docetists. . . (I Differ here and would say that John's Epistles were against the Jews themselves, not the Docetists. REP)

This source says about the Epistles of Ignatius:

"The collective mass of internal evidence against the genuineness of the letters is insufficient to counterbalance the testimony of the Epistle of Polycarp in their favour. He who would prove the Epistles of Ignatius to be spurious must begin by proving the Epistle of Polycarp to be spurious, and such an undertaking is not likely to succeed." This being so, there is no reason for rejecting the opinion of Eusebius that the Epistles were written in the reign of Trajan. Harnack, who formerly dated them about 140, now says that they were written in the latter years of Trajan, or possibly a little later (117—125). The majority of scholars place them a few years earlier (110—117).l

Ignatius died in about 110 A D. His citations document that Ignatius knew and used the Textus Receptus Copy of the Gospel of John. Therefore, the T R copy of the Gospel of John was in use at Antioch and elsewhere before he left Antioch for Rome to face death. It was the received copy of John's gospel among the Christians Ignatius wrote to.

Concerning Irenaeus

Here are further dates about *Irenaeus* from *The Encyclopedia Britannica*:

born c. 120 , /140, Asia Minor died c. 200 , 203, probably Lyon; bishop of Lugdunum (Lyon) and leading Christian theologian of the 2nd century. His work *Adversus haereses (Against Heresies)*, written in about 180, was a refutation of Gnosticism. In the course of his writings Irenaeus advanced the development of an authoritative canon of Scriptures. . .

But, would have Irenaeus have used the disputed text in John 1:18? I doubt it because he strongly opposed the Gnostic system of Valentinus. Burgon claims that Valentines was the first corruptor of *John 1:18* and placed in the Only

begotten God phrase. Therefore, it is strongly unlikely that Irenaeus quoted from the Valentinian text even though it is contained in many editions of his writings.

Note there about Valentinus:

Valentinus, and the Valentinians (2nd - 3rd century)

Valentinus was the founder of Roman and Alexandrian schools of Gnosticism, an eclectic, dualistic system of religious doctrines postulating the evil origin of matter and the revelatory enlightenment, or *gnosis*, of an elite. Valentinus flourished 136-165 CE in [Rome](#) and [Alexandria](#). Valentinian communities, by their expansion and long standing, provided a major challenge to 2nd and 3rd century Christian theology.

According to [Irenaeus](#), Valentinus was a native of Egypt who studied philosophy at Alexandria. His disciples claimed that he had been educated by Theodas (or Theudas), a pupil of the apostle Paul. He moved to Rome c. 136 CE, during the time of Pope St. Hyginus, where he established a large school and spread his doctrines in the West. He claimed to have received revelations from the Logos in a vision. Later, aspiring to be elected bishop of Rome "on account of his intellectual force and eloquence", he was passed over, whereupon he seceded from the Church and moved away from Rome c. 140, perhaps to Cyprus.

Valentinus' system is an elaborate theogonic and cosmogonic epic. It describes in 3 acts the creation, fall, and the redemption; first in heaven, then on earth. The spiritual world or *pleroma* comprises 30 *aeons* forming a succession of *syzygies* (pairs). The visible world owes its origin to the fall of *Sophia* (wisdom), whose offspring, the *Demiurge*, is identified with the God of the Old Testament. Human beings belong to one of 3 classes, the spiritual people (*pneumatikoi*, or true Gnostics), those who merely possess a soul (*psychikoi*, or ordinary unenlightened church members), and the rest of humankind, who are made solely of matter (*hylikoi*) and are given over to eternal perdition.

Valentinus derived his system from Oriental and Greek speculations (including Pythagorean elements), from Christian ideals, and from his own fertile imagination. By employing fanciful exegesis he attached his own mythological speculations to apostolic words, such as *Logos*, *Only Begotten*, *Truth*, *Pleroma*, *Aeons*, and *Ecclesia*. The Valentinian system developed into Eastern and Western forms in greater complexity, although the earlier structure was similar to Pauline mystical theology, with its emphasis on the instrumentality of Christ's death and resurrection in effecting Christian deliverance. **Taken from the online site: *The Development of the Canon of the New Testament*.**

I shall try to give Burgon's remarks in another study.

Finish