

The Johannine Comma  
Critics' Theories Debunked  
KJV Verses Vindicated  
Greek & Latin w/ Translations

By

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*Πάτερ, Λόγε καὶ πνεῦμα· Τριάς, φύσις μία*

Theodore the Studite (759-826 AD)

# The Johannine Comma - Critics' Theories Debunked - KJV Verses Vindicated

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## **The Johannine Comma - Critics' Theories Debunked - KJV Verses Vindicated**

### **Introduction**

This is the eighteenth paper of the series. This essay has selections from my paper "The Witness of God is Greater." In this essay, my goal is to highlight some of the amazing evidence that I have discovered in collating sources for my paper. I give some comments in order to direct my readers through these points.

- For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89)
- 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)
- Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)
- Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matt 24:35)

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### Brief Remarks : Allusions in the Church Fathers' Works

It is my opinion based on faith and a mountain of evidence that John's first letter contained the Heavenly and Earthly Witnesses (I John 5:7,8). I have presented many facts that demonstrate this to be true. When Scripture provides truths about God in inspired words, the Christian community uses these concepts and words in their discussions and controversies. The Heavenly Witnesses can be divided into three parts: **i)** Three witnesses being the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; **ii)** "Father, Word, Spirit" (Greek: πατήρ, λόγος, πνεῦμα) as a phrase to indicate the persons of the Godhead; **iii)** and "the three are one" (Greek: οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι).

The first part is alluded to by **Clement of Alexandria** (in Greek) found in this citation:

- Prophetic Extracts. 13.1: "**By two and three witnesses every word is established.**" **By Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, by whose witness** and help the prescribed commandments ought to be kept. (Clement of Alexandria. Prophetic Extracts. 13.1; ANF, vol 8)

ο **Greek:** Πᾶν ῥῆμα ἴσταται ἐπὶ δύο καὶ τριῶν μαρτύρων, ἐπὶ πατρός καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ἐφ' ὧν μαρτύρων καὶ βοηθῶν αἱ ἐντολαὶ λεγόμεναι φυλάσσεσθαι ὀφείλουσιν.

(Clement of Alexandria. Eclogae ex Scripturis prophetis. 13.1; Migne Graeca PG 9.703-704)

The second part is alluded to by **John Chrysostom** (in Greek) found in this citation:

- [De Cognitione Dei et in Sancta Theophania] But, **O Father, and Word, and Spirit**, the triune being and might and will and power, deem us, who confess you as the unconfused and indivisible substance, also worthy to be the ones standing at your right hand when you come from heaven to judge the world in righteousness, for rightly yours is the glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for always, and for eternity."(Chrysostom, About the knowledge of God and the Holy Theophanies; Translation kjvtoday.com,

<[www.kjvtoday.com/home/the-father-the-word-and-the-holy-ghost-in-1-john-57](http://www.kjvtoday.com/home/the-father-the-word-and-the-holy-ghost-in-1-john-57)>)

ο **Greek:** Ἄλλ', ὦ Πάτερ, καὶ Λόγε, καὶ Πνεῦμα, ἡ τρισυπόστατος οὐσία, καὶ δύναμις, καὶ θέλησις, καὶ ἐνέργεια, ἡμᾶς τοὺς ὁμολογοῦντάς σου τὰς ἀσυγχύτους καὶ ἀδιαιρέτους ὑποστάσεις, ἀξίωσον καὶ τῆς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου στάσεως, ἡνίκα ἔρχῃ ἐξ οὐρανῶν κρῖναι τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ· ὅτι πρέπει σοι δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. (Chrysostom, De Cognitione Dei et in Sancta Theophania; Migne Graeca, PG 64.6A).

The third part alluded to by **Origen** (in Greek) is found in this citation:

- Scholia on Psalm 122:2 "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress."The Spirit and the body are servants to their masters (the Father and the Son); the soul is the maiden to her mistress (the Holy Spirit); and the Lord our God is the three [persons], **for the three are one**. So, the eyes of servants look at the hands of their masters while they issue orders through gestures. It could also be that the hands of the masters, who are the Father and the Son, are the angels belonging to them both, while the hands of the mistress, who is the Holy Spirit, are the powers that are proper to the Holy Spirit. . (Origenis Selecta in Psalmos CXXII)

ο **Greek:** Ἰδοὺ ὡς ὀφθαλμοὶ δούλων εἰς χεῖρας τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν, ὡς ὀφθαλμοὶ παιδίσκης εἰς χεῖρας τῆς κυρίας αὐτῆς, οὕτως οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν πρὸς Κύριον Θεὸν ἡμῶν, ἕως οὗ οἰκτειρήσῃ ἡμᾶς, κ. τ. ἐ. Δοῦλοι κυρίων Πατρός καὶ Υἱοῦ πνεῦμα καὶ σῶμα· παιδίσκη δὲ κυρίας τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἢ ψυχῆ. Τὰ δὲ τρία Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστίν· **οἱ γὰρ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν**. Ὁφθαλμοὶ

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γοῦν δούλων εἰς χεῖρας κυρίων ὀρώντες, ὅτε διὰ χειρῶν νεύοντες κελεύσουσιν. Ἡ χεῖρες κυρίων μὲν Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ οἱ ἑκατέρου ἄγγελοι· κυρίας δὲ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος αἱ οἰκεῖται αὐτοῦ δυνάμεις. (Origenis Selecta in Psalmos CXXII, Migne Graeca, PG 12.1633).

Sometimes we can find a combination of these unique parts:

- **Father, Word, Spirit, Trinity, one nature,**
  - Greek: Πάτερ, Λόγε καὶ πνεῦμα· Τριάς, φύσις μία
  - **Theodore the Studite** (759-826 AD) : Epigrams
  - <[www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrences/18874](http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrences/18874)>
  - <[www.dbbe.ugent.be/types/3088](http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/types/3088)>
  - 244 COD. 100 : A.D. 1111 : Plate 440 (K. Lake, 1936, VI, p. 14)

There are many more in my paper ***"The Witness of God is Greater"***

Prayers

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### Acts of John (circa 150-200)

• [Attridge] To explore the phenomenon, I shall focus on the Acts of John, a work of Christian fiction written sometime in the second century, perhaps as early as the second quarter of that century. Eric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* (CChrSA 1-2; 2 vols.; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1983), 2:694-700, date the work to the second half of the second century, arguing that it was used by Acts of Peter, Acts of Thomas and Acts of Paul. Lalleman, *Acts of John*, 208-212, 268-270, dates the work to the second quarter of the century, arguing that it influenced the final form of the Apocryphon of John and Apocalypse of Peter, that its Christology, with its intense focus on Christ and its portrait of him as polymorphic and polyonymous, is attested for the first half of the second century, but not later, and that the kind of Gnosticism it attests is pre-Valentinian. Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 259, dates the work to around 150. ...Most scholars agree that what can be reconstructed is a composite work with strong affinities to some of the less "orthodox" varieties of second century Christianity. Exactly how the work was composed and what the precise affinities are has been a matter of continuing discussion. (Attridge, "The Acts Of John And The Fourth Gospel". in *From Judaism to Christianity: Tradition and Transition*., 2011, p. 256-257.)

### HIT:

- Again with me say thou:  
Glory be to thee, **Father**;  
Glory to thee, **Word**;  
Glory to thee, **Holy Ghost**.
- <[gnosis.org/library/actjohn.htm](http://gnosis.org/library/actjohn.htm)>.
  - **Greek:**  
96. πάλιν ἐμοὶ λέγε·  
δόξα σοι **πάτερ**·  
δόξα σοι **λόγε**·  
δόξα σοι **πνεῦμα ἅγιον**.
  - *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha Post Constantinum* Tischendorf Deno Edidervnt Ricardvs Adelbertvs Lipsivs Et Maximilianvs Bonnet, 1891, p. 199.

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### Clearing the Way

The critics' paradigm begins with an assumption. This first section will remove that obstacle.

### Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (circa 200-258 AD)

Cyprian's understanding of how to interpret Scripture and how it is used is thoroughly researched in Michael Fahey's work "Cyprian and the Bible: a study in third-century exegesis". This work is still the standard for Cyprian research. In his dissertation "The Christian North African debate on aspects of the church, ministry, and sacrament with special reference to the use of scripture", Samuel Kirkpatrick gives a summation and short introduction to the work of Fahey as well as states that Cyprian's use of Scripture is "commonly the employment of a proof text".

- [Kirkpatrick] Specific references to Cyprian's use of Scripture in the secondary literature are rare. His exegesis is perceived to be unexceptional, most commonly the employment of a 'proof text' to prove a point. The most valuable secondary source for Cyprian's use of Scripture is the work of Michael Andrew Fahey, 'Cyprian and the Bible: a Study in Third-Century Exegesis'. This is the most useful reference work. The bulk of this book, almost 500 pages, consists of an orderly examination of the books of the Bible, highlighting the references quoted by Cyprian. However, Cyprian's method of exegesis is only one of a number of important subjects condensed into a brief chapter of twenty six pages. The main value of this work therefore is as a source of reference for Cyprian's use of Scripture. (Kirkpatrick, Laurence Samuel, The Christian North African debate on aspects of the church, ministry, and sacrament with special reference to the use of scripture, 1994, p. 47)

Fahey writes concerning Cyprian's use of Scripture and allegory.

- [Fahey] To what extent can Cyprian's exegesis be called allegorical? The fanciful allegorizing associated with the Alexandrian school, especially Origen, is almost totally lacking from Cyprian. (Fahey, Cyprian and the Bible: a study in third-century exegesis, 1971, p. 49)
- [Fahey] Cyprian hardly ever uses a Scriptural citation without identifying the text as biblical, by means of an introductory formula. In this respect Cyprian differs notably from his predecessor Tertullian who frequently intersperses Scriptural passages into his own text and even personally translates biblical passages from Greek to fit his own context. Cyprian takes pains to separate the Scriptural text from his own, not merely because the literary quality of his Latin Bible must have jarred his sensibilities for cultivated style, but also because of his reverence for the Word of God. The most frequent introductory formula for both OT and NT texts is the expression used by the NT writers themselves: "scriptum est." (Fahey, Cyprian and the Bible: a study in third-century exegesis, 1971, p. 29)

The passage in question written by Cyprian is in his "Unity of the Church". The text gives no indication that Cyprian was using some allegorical interpretation of Scripture.

- [Cyprian] He who breaks the peace and concord of Christ, does so in opposition to Christ; he who gathereth elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ. 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." (Cyprian. Treatise. On the Unity of the Church. Book 1.6, ANF, 1995, vol. 5, p. 423)

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For the reader's benefit, here is the classic passage often presented as an example of Cyprian using allegory to interpret Scripture:

- [Cyprian] This sacrament of unity, this bond of a concord inseparably cohering, is set forth where in the Gospel the coat of the Lord Jesus Christ is not at all divided nor cut, but is received as an entire garment, and is possessed as an uninjured and undivided robe by those who cast lots concerning Christ's garment, who should rather put on Christ. Holy Scripture speaks, saying, "But of the coat, because it was not sewed, but woven from the top throughout, they said one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots whose it shall be." John 19:23-24 That coat bore with it an unity that came down from the top, that is, that came from heaven and the Father, which was not to be at all rent by the receiver and the possessor, but without separation we obtain a whole and substantial entireness. He cannot possess the garment of Christ who parts and divides the Church of Christ. (Cyprian. Treatise. On the Unity of the Church. Book 1.7)

In this passage on the Robe of Christ, Cyprian proposes that Robe (undivided) represents the Church's "unity" and "concord inseparably cohering". Knittel examines the assumption of the critics concerning Cyprian's quote of I John 5. Knittel's full examination and refutation of this claim I have appended to this paper. Knittel proposes the following analysis of Cyprian's allegorical presentation:

- [Knittel] In short, in every passage which he cites as allegorical proof, *he first quotes the Text literally*, and then *states what it signifies mystically*. If an example be wanting, observe how he quotes and explains Canticles 6:8; John 19:23,24; Joshua 11:18; etc. (Knittel, *New Criticisms on the Celebrated Text*, 1 John V. 7. Published at Brunswick in 1785. Translated from the Original German, by William Alleyn Evanson, 1829, p. 23)

However, Knittel demonstrates his analysis of Cyprian's typological/allegorical method using an OT verse. The critics use a NT example of John 19:23-24. I asked Sarah Van der Pas to examine Knittel's claims using John 19:23-24.

- [Sarah VDP] Intricacies of various wordings aside, Knittel's essential point seems to be simply that, when Cyprian is providing an allegorical interpretation of a Scripture passage, he lets the reader know that that is what he's doing. He will quote the passage in question and say that it signifies such and such. He does indeed do this in the passage about the coat. He won't (according to Knittel) simply write his allegorical interpretation without identifying it as such and without quoting the actual words that it's an interpretation of. So (still according to Knittel) when Cyprian states that *hi tres unum sunt* is written about *Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto*, it must mean that he took those same words, *Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto*, from the scripture text itself (though they would have appeared in a different grammatical case there, they would be the same words). If they [these words] had been an interpretation of "the spirit, the water and the blood", Cyprian would have stated or at least clearly implied as much, following his custom. But you've read all this as I have. Ultimately, if you ask me whether Cyprian's passage about Christ's coat makes sense as a piece of evidence in favor of Knittel's general point, I would say overall yes, though it differs structurally from the one about *pascha et agnus* whose structure Knittel



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focuses on. ("How does Knittel's explanation of Cyprian's use of Typology Apply to the passage on the Robe of Christ?" Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence, January 2022)

Examining Cyprian's writings with the single aim of demonstrating that there was no grounds or evidence for asserting that Cyprian used allegory when he quotes scripture "these three are one".

### Facundus of Hermiane (circa 546-548 AD)

Facundus, fluent in Greek and Latin (and possibly Syrian) wrote a work in Latin called "The Defense of the Three Chapters". In this work he quotes the Earthly Witnesses of I John 5 many times. Facundus claims that this verse should be interpreted about the Trinity. The "three witnesses in earth, the spirit, water, and the blood" represent the persons of the Godhead.

- [Facundus] In fact the apostle John also, in his letter speaks thus of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: "There are three who bear witness on earth - the spirit, the water and the blood - and these three are one," By "the spirit," he means the Father, as the Lord did when he said to the Samaritan woman, according to the Gospel of the same Saint John: "Believe me, the hour will come when it will not be in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem that you will worship the Father. You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know, for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour comes, and it is now, where the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Such, in fact, are the worshipers whom the Father desires. God is spirit, and those who worship him should worship him in spirit and in truth."
- [Facundus] By "water," he means the Holy Spirit, as when he reveals in his same Gospel the words of the Lord who says: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his bosom." He adds immediately after: "Now he said these words concerning the Spirit which those were to receive who would believe in him, for the Spirit was not yet given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified," [11] and by "blood" he means the Son, since it is he of the Holy Trinity who participated in flesh and blood. So the apostle John when he speaks of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit does not say: "There are three persons who testify on earth - the spirit, the water and the blood - and these three persons are one", but rather he says: "There are three that bear witness on earth - the spirit, the water and the blood - and these three are one".
- Facundus, The Defense of the Three Chapters, Book 1.3.9-10.

Facundus claims that the "spirit" represents the Father, the "water" represents the Holy Spirit, and of course the "blood" represents the Son. Facundus provides verses of Scripture to support his claims. Facundus uses John 4:23-24 "God is Spirit" to support the "spirit" should be interpreted as the Father. Facundus uses John 7:37-39 "...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water' ...for this he spake of the [Holy] Spirit" to support the "water" should be interpreted as the Holy Spirit.

Cyprian rejects the idea that John 7:37-39 teaches that the "water" is the Holy Spirit. Cyprian teaches that the "water" in these verses represents baptism. In his Epistle 62 to Caecilius "on the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord", he states as follows:

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• [Cyprian] But as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to, as we see intimated in Isaiah: "Remember not," says he, "the former things, and consider not the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, which shall now spring forth; and you shall know it. I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry place, to give drink to my elected people, my people whom I have purchased, that they might show forth my praise." Isaiah 43:18-21 There God foretold by the prophet, that among the nations, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elected people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism. Moreover, it is again predicted and foretold before, that the Jews, if they should thirst and seek after Christ, should drink with us, that is, should attain the grace of baptism. "If they shall thirst," he says, "He shall lead them through the deserts, shall bring forth water for them out of the rock; the rock shall be cloven, and the water shall flow, and my people shall drink;" Isaiah 48:21 which is fulfilled in the Gospel, when Christ, who is the Rock, is cloven by a stroke of the spear in His passion; who also, admonishing what was before announced by the prophet, cries and says, "If any man thirst, let him come and drink. He that believes in me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And that it might be more evident that the Lord is speaking there, not of the cup, but of baptism, the Scripture adds, saying, "But this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive." For by baptism the Holy Spirit is received; and thus by those who are baptized, and have attained to the Holy Spirit, is attained the drinking of the Lord's cup. And let it disturb no one, that when the divine Scripture speaks of baptism... (Cyprian, Caecilius, on the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord Epistle 62)

Fahey, concurs in this understanding of Cyprian that the "water" in John 7:37-39 indicates "baptism" by the Church with water.

• [Fahey] The texts are mentioned in Cyprians' letter to Cecil, refuting the validity of the Eucharist cup offered only with water. Apparently his opponents had been citing Isa 43:18-19, 20b-21 and Isa 48:21 in their own favor. Cyprian is quick to correct their exegesis and shows that whatever there is question of "water" in the OT it refers to baptism and not to the Eucharist. "But as often as water alone is named in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is preached, as we see signified in Isaiah: "(Quote Isa 43:18-19, 20b-21). God announced there through the Prophet that among the Gentiles in the place which before had been without water, rivers should afterwards abound and should provide water for the elect people of God, that is, those made sons of God through the generation of baptism. Likewise, again, it is foretold and predicted beforehand, that the Jews, if they would thirst and seek Christ, would drink among us, that is, would obtain the grace of baptism. He said: (Quote Isa 48:21). This is fulfilled in the Gospel, when Christ who is the rock is split by the blow of the lance in His passion. And He, warning us again of what was before predicted by the prophet, cried out and says: (Quote Jn 7:37-39). (Ep. 63.8) (Fahey, Cyprian and the Bible: a study in third-century exegesis, 1971, p. 208)

Facundus is mistaken and the exegesis is in direct conflict with Cyprian's teaching John 7:37-39. Cyprian would not understand the "water" as the Holy Spirit. We can see that Facundus claims that Cyprian was interpreting the Earthly Witnesses "spirit, water, blood" of I John 5 as the Trinity is impossible.

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### Euherius, bishop of Lyon, (c. 380 - c. 449 AD)

Euherius writes about various groups who interpret the "spirit, water, and blood" in his work "Instructionum Book". Euherius states that one group does indeed interpret "spirit, water, and blood" as the Trinity.

- [Euherius] Again, John, in his epistle says: "There are three that bear witness; water, blood and spirit." "What does this mean?"
- [Euherius] Yet the majority here understands the Trinity itself by a mystical interpretation, because it bears witness to Christ; by the water indicating the Father for he says of himself, Jer. ii 13 "they have left me, the fountain of living water"; by the blood demonstrating Christ, and referring to his passion; by the Spirit manifesting the Holy Ghost. (Euherius of Lyon, "In John's epistle" in Instructionum Book 1 LXXV)

Although Euherius does not mention Cyprian, Euherius does give us the scripture used by this group to represent the Father (Jer 2:13). Cyprian writes the following concerning Jeremiah 2:13.

- [Cyprian] Cyprian, Liberalis, Caldonius, Junius, Primus, Caecilius, Polycarp, Nicomedes, Felix, Marrutius, Successus, Lucianus, Honoratus, Fortunatus, Victor, Donatus, Lucius, Herculanus, Pomponius, Demetrius, Quintus, Saturninus Januarius, Marcus, another Saturninus, another Donatus, Rogatianus, Sedatus, Tertullus, Hortensianus, still another Saturninus, Sattius, to their brethren Januarius, Saturninus, Maximus, Victor, another Victor, Cassius, Proculus, Modianus, Cittinus, Gargilius, Eutycianus, another Gargilius, another Saturninus, Nemesianus, Nampulus, Antonianus, Rogatianus, Honoratus, greeting. When we were together in council, dearest brethren, we read your letter which you wrote to us concerning those who seem to be baptized by heretics and schismatics, (asking) whether, when they come to the Catholic Church, which is one, they ought to be baptized. On which matter, although you yourselves hold thereupon the truth and certainty of the Catholic rule, yet since you have thought that of our mutual love we ought to be consulted, we put forward our opinion, not as a new one, but we join with you in equal agreement, in an opinion long since decreed by our predecessors, and observed by us — judging, namely, and holding it for certain that no one can be baptized abroad outside the Church, since there is one baptism appointed in the holy Church. And it is written in the words of the Lord, "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns, which can hold no water." Jeremiah 2:13 And again, sacred Scripture warns, and says, "Keep you from the strange water, and drink not from a fountain of strange water." It is required, then, that the water should first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may wash away by its baptism the sins of the man who is baptized; because the Lord says by Ezekiel the prophet: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Ezekiel 36:25-26 But how can he cleanse and sanctify the water who is himself unclean, and in whom the Holy Spirit is not? Since the Lord says in the book of Numbers, "And whatsoever the unclean person touches shall be unclean." Numbers 19:2 Or how can he who baptizes give to another remission of sins who himself, being outside the Church, cannot put away his own sins? (Cyprian, To Januarius and Other Numidian Bishops, on Baptizing Heretics. Epistle 69.1)

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As Cyprian indicated above "But as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to", he again indicates here that Jeremiah 2:13 is also about baptism only offered in the Church. Fahey also states the following concerning Cyprian's interpretation of Jeremiah 2:13:

- [Fahey] ...Jer 2:13b, is cited as proof that heretical baptism is invalid. After describing heretics in the light of the false prophets mentioned in Jer 23:16-17 and 23:21-22, Cyprian continues: "It is these same men whom the Lord again indicates and censures when He says: '(Quote Jer 2:13b)'. Whereas there can be but one baptism, they think they can baptize. They have abandoned the fountain of life, yet they promise life and the grace of the waters of salvation." (Un 11; 219.16) Jer 2:13b, with its reference 'me dereliquerunt fona aquae...' is also used with Prov 9:18c in a baptismal context in Cyprian's letter on that theme written after the the Fifth Council of Carthage (A.D. 255) "...there is one baptism established in the Holy Church. And it is written in the words of the Lord: '(Quote Jer 2:13b).'" (ep 70.1; 767.10). (Fahey, Cyprian and the Bible: a study in third-century exegesis, 1971, p. 219-220)

Again, we can see that Cyprian would not agree with the interpretation that Eucherius gives of the one group concerning the Trinity. Cyprian understands the "water" in Jeremiah 2:13 as "baptism" offered by the Church. And this is consistent with Cyprian's previous statement that "water" is indicative of "baptism".

### Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD)

After the event of debating the Arian bishop Maximinum, Augustine composed a version of the debate where he was able to answer any of the points made by Maximinum as well as add other points of his own. In this debate, Maximinum brings up I John 5 "spirit, water, and blood". Augustine gives his allegory interpretation of this verse as follows:

- [Augustine] But if we will inquire into the things signified by these, there not unreasonably comes into our thoughts the Trinity itself, which is the One, Only, True, Supreme God, Father and Son and Holy Ghost, of whom it could most truly be said, "There are Three Witnesses, and the Three are One" so that by the term Spirit we should understand God the Father to be signified; as indeed it was concerning the worshiping of Him that the Lord was speaking, when He said, "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24) by the term, blood, the Son; because "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14) and by the term water, the Holy Ghost; as, when Jesus spake of the water which He would give to them that thirst, the evangelist saith, "But this said He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive." (John 7:39) (Augustine, Contra Maximinum, Lib. II. C. 22 §3)

Augustine's interpretation did not reference Cyprian. Further, Augustine considered "water" to represent the Holy Spirit using John 7:37-39. Here again, we see that this interpretation could not possibly be one that Cyprian would agree with. Although Augustine and Facundus are in agreement that "spirit" is the Father (John 4:24) and "water" is the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39), we have seen that both of these interpretations are contrary to Cyprian. Again, the critics assumption concerning Augustine's allegory interpretation of I John 5 "spirit, water, and blood" fails.

### Conclusion:

In examining the claims of critics concerning the possibility that Cyprian was giving an allegory of I John 5 "spirit, water, and blood", has found no basis in fact. Cyprian considers John 7:37-39 and Jeremiah 2:13 as the

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"water" of baptism. Therefore, Augustine, Facundus and the "many others" mentioned by Eucherius cannot be examples of how Cyprian "might have" used allegory to understand the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" to be represented by "spirit, water, and blood". What is also apparent, is that Facundus and "many others" mentioned by Eucherius are in conflict concerning the "allegory". Facundus interprets the "water" as the Holy Spirit while Eucherius' "many others" considers the "water" to be the Father. Following the arguments of the critics has resulted in not a single assertion has been validated. The critics' arguments and suppositions have all failed when examined in light of the evidence.

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### Omission and Transposition

One of the songs that is often sung by the critics is to claim that when the verse "spirit, water, and blood" does not have "in earth" indicates that the manuscript used does not have the Earthly witnesses in his biblical manuscript. Another claim is that when a Father gives verse 6 then directly verse 8 "spirit, water, and blood", this, claim the critics, indicates that the Heavenly Witnesses do not appear in the Father's biblical manuscript. Further, the critics claim that these instances demonstrate to other Fathers that biblical manuscripts with the Heavenly and/or Earthly witnesses are corrupt. We will investigate these claims in this section of the paper.

### Haymo, bishop of Halberstadt (d. 853 AD)

Eucherius gives us an example of verse 8 "spirit, water, and blood" and a group that interprets the verse as the Trinity. Note that Eucherius gives verse 8 in a very convoluted manner "Again, John, in his epistle says: 'There are three that bear witness; water, blood and spirit.' What does this mean?". Eucherius presents the verse with a different order of the three witnesses, which agrees with the interpretation of the "majority" (the Father is said to be the "water", and the "spirit" to be the Holy Spirit). It is an open question whether verse 8 has been corrupted in Eucherius' biblical manuscript. However, this fact that the verse appears corrupted is consistently ignored by the critics during this discussion. Whatever the reason that Eucherius presents the verse in this convoluted manner, our expectation would be that he would also truncate or omit parts that are not relevant to his discussion (i.e. "in earth", etc.).

Haymo, bishop of Halberstadt, gives a homily on the same verse that Eucherius writes about. Haymo has the same convoluted order "water and blood and the spirit". However, in this case, Haymo also presents us with the preposition "on earth" (Latin: "in terra"). Reading this homily, we can see that Haymo seems to reference back to Eucherius' work concerning this verse with the Trinitarian interpretation of "water and blood and spirit". The same "some people" and the same verses are also mentioned supporting this allegorical interpretation. Later in the homily Haymo speaks about the "earth" and "heaven" relative to this verse and salvation referring to the preposition "in earth" and possibly the Heavenly Witnesses that may also appear in his biblical manuscript.

- [Haymo] "For there are three who give witness on earth: water and blood and the spirit" (1 John 5.8). Some people understand that it is the holy Trinity here, in a mystical way, who bears witness to Christ. In the water, they understand the Father to be signified, who says of himself, 'they have abandoned me, the fountain of life' (Jer 2.13); in the blood, Christ himself, who poured out his blood for the salvation of the world; in the spirit, the Holy Spirit himself. So this holy Trinity bears witness to Christ, as he himself says through the Gospel, "I am one who bears witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me." "And when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from my Father, the Spirit of truth, he will bear witness concerning me" (John 8.18; 15.26). "And these three are one," namely the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: one in nature, one in divine substance, coequal in all things, and coeternal through all things, in no way dissimilar. In this substance of the Trinity, there is nothing created because nothing has a beginning; nor is anything recognized there as superior, because nothing is found to be prior or later. In the fact that it is a Trinity, it is one, it is eternal, it is true. ...So we receive eternal life through the holy Church. Only in this Church is there eternal life, because her King is eternal life. Part of this Church rejoices already and reigns in heaven, but part of it is still on

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pilgrimage and labors on earth. She is one holy Church, in which we are now justified, in which we will then be glorified. Like good sons, let us love this good mother with one heart. Let no one despise the groans of this mother, then; let no one devalue her advice, let no one leave her side. For she will come to the inheritance of God the Father, who will preserve the unity in faith and love of Mother Church. (Haymo bishop of Halberstadt, Homily 80, for the Octave of Easter; Translated by Brian Daley, correspondence, August 2020.)

Eucherius' presentation of the verse in his work omitting "in earth" is presented by Haymo here as well. There is no indication that Haymo thought Eucherius' work points to corruption in his biblical manuscript. Haymo gives the verse with "on earth" as well as speaks to this in his exposition of the verse referencing the incarnation, resurrection, salvation in Christ. Haymo further makes a point of the Church yet on earth as well as in Heaven. With such a very close likeness to Eucherius' work (including the convoluted order "water and blood and spirit"), it is clear that the claim concerning the omission in Eucherius' work has not had any effect on Haymo's homily. Nor has Haymo sensed any problem with Eucherius' omission of "in earth". We conclude that the critic's claim has been completely contradicted by the facts.

### Leo The Great (400-461 AD) : Tome to Flavian

One of the most well known critics of the verse, Richard Porson (1759-1808) in his work "Letters to Archdeacon Travis" (1790) writes: "But the strongest proof that this verse is spurious may be drawn from the Epistle of Leo the Great to Flavianus upon the Incarnation. This epistle has been translated into Greek, read in churches, sent round to the Councils both in the East and West, defended by several authors in set treatises, and consequently more generally known than most of the writings of the Fathers. In this epistle he quotes part of the fifth chapter, from the fourth to the eighth verse, and omits the three heavenly witnesses." (Porson, Letters to Archdeacon Travis, 1790, p. 378-379)

Leo the Great was a pope in Rome (440-460) and his letter on the incarnation of Christ became a standard work on the doctrine in the Church. This letter was written in Latin.

- [The Tome] Leo's Tome refers to a letter sent by Pope Leo I to Flavian of Constantinople<sup>[1]</sup> explaining the position of the Papacy in matters of Christology. The text confesses that Christ has two natures and was not of or from two natures.<sup>[2]</sup> The letter was a topic of debate at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 being eventually accepted as a doctrinal explanation of the nature of the Person of Christ. The letter was written in response to Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had excommunicated Eutyches, who also wrote to the Pope to appeal the excommunication. (Leo's Tome. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo%27s\_Tome>)

So, why is it that with all the critics declaring the mantra "not in Greek MSS" do we get a Latin work by a Father that knows no Greek as the "strongest argument" concerning the validity of this verse in I John? Here is a very good example of critics changing horses in the middle of the race. Likewise are the defenders of the verse able to demonstrate the veracity of this verse(s) with Latin examples written by Fathers that know no Greek? There are plenty of examples which have been presented over and over again in this discussion. But alas, no, no such consistency is allowed by the critics. Nevertheless, we will examine this "strongest argument" from Mr. Porson.

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### Refutation of Porson

#### 1. Context: "Epistle of Leo the Great to Flaviatus upon the Incarnation"

- [Burgess] Mr. Porson's strongest proof of its spuriousness: drawn from the omission of the Verse in the Epistle of Leo the Great to Flavianus."In this Epistle", (says Mr. Porson) he quotes part of the "fifth chapter, from the fourth to the eighth verse, and omits the three heavenly witnesses."The Letter is on the Incarnation of Christ, and was written against the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches, to both of whom the human nature of Christ was an insuperable stumbling-block. The sixth and eighth verses of the passage which are quoted by Leo, relate to the human nature of Christ, but the seventh exclusively to his Divine nature, which was not denied by either Eutyches or Nestorius. The seventh Verse, therefore, was irrelevant to his subject. (Burgess, An Introduction to the Controversy on the Disputed verse of St. John as Revived by Mr. Gibbon, 1835, p. xvii-xviii)
- [Burgess] Again: the unity expressed in the passage of St. John, according to Leo's acceptance of it, is an unity of nature, not of testimony only:"because the three [tria] are one, and remain undivided, and none of them is separated from this connection"(Latin: tria unum sunt, et individua manent, nihilque eorum a sui connexione seiungitur). The "three"(Latin: tria), in Leo's sense of the passage, are,"The Spirit, that is, of sanctification, and the blood of redemption, and the water of baptism"(Latin: Spiritus sanctificationis is, sanguis redemptionis, et aqua baptismatis). Understanding the passage, as expressive of the death and human nature of Christ, Leo interprets the words of the Apostle not of the Trinity, but of the benefits of Christ's death through sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by baptism in the name of Christ, which are inseparably united; there being no regeneration without sanctification, nor redemption without both sanctification and regeneration. (Burgess, An Introduction to the Controversy on the Disputed verse [I V. 7] of St. John as Revived by Mr. Gibbon, 1835, p. xxxii)

#### 2. "read in churches, sent round to the Councils both in the East and West"

##### a. The Second council of Ephesus (449) refused to read Leo's Tome.

- [R. Price] Pope Leo refused to accept the decrees of the Second Council of Ephesus of August 449, which restored Eutyches and deposed a number of bishops, including Flavian of Constantinople, Domnus of Antioch, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ibas of Edessa;1 and the pope was personally insulted at the council by the suppression of his Tome condemning Eutyches: the document was received but not read. In consequence he famously condemned the council as a latrocinium or 'den of robbers' (as in Document 11, below). (Council of Chalcedon, Richard Price, and Michael Gaddis. The acts of the Council of Chalcedon, 2005, vol 1, vol 1, p. 87)

##### b. The first public reading

- [R. Price] Leo's Tome, read out at the second session of Chalcedon (II. 22). (Council of Chalcedon, Richard Price, and Michael Gaddis. The acts of the Council of Chalcedon, 2005, vol 1, p. 100, fn. 44)

#### 3. "translated into Greek"

##### a. The Tome was originally written in Latin & Leo could not read Greek.

- [R. Price] Very soon after the council, a copy of the minutes in Greek was brought to Rome, where neither Leo nor his staff could read it with ease. In March of 453 Leo wrote to Julian of Cos, who had represented him at the council, and complained that he still knew very little about



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what had actually taken place at Chalcedon. These linguistic difficulties – along with his opposition to the twenty-eighth canon – help explain Leo's long hesitancy (much to the consternation of Marcian and Anatolius) to endorse the council's decrees. He asked Julian to arrange for a full translation of the acts into Latin, but there is no evidence that this task was ever begun or that subsequent popes of the late fifth and early sixth centuries had access to a Latin version.<sup>287</sup> (Council of Chalcedon, Richard Price, and Michael Gaddis. The acts of the Council of Chalcedon, 2005, vol 1, vol 1, p. 83)

b. The Greek translation demonstrates that 1 John 5:6,8 was an allusion from memory.

- Greek: Καὶ τοῦ μακαρίου δὲ Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἀποστόλου τῆ μαρτυρία μὴ ἀνθιστάσθω λέγοντος· “Καὶ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ καταρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀμαρτίας” (1 John 1:7)· καὶ πάλιν· “αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἢ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἢ πίστις ἡμῶν.” (1 Jn 5:5) καὶ τί ἐστίν, ὃς ἐνίκησε τὸν κόσμον, εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ· οὗτος ὁ **ἐρχόμενος** δι’ ὕδατος, καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός· οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον, ἀλλ’ ἐν ὕδατι, καὶ αἵματι· καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ μαρτυροῦν, **ἐπειδὴ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια. [ὅτι Χριστὸς ἐστὶν ἡ ἀλήθεια - in marg. edit. Rom.]** Τρεῖς γὰρ εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα **καὶ οἱ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσι**, (1 Jn 5:6-8) τὸ πνεῦμα δηλονότι τοῦ ἁγιασμοῦ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῆς λυτρώσεως, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦ Βαπτίσματος· ἅπερ τρία ἓν ἐστι, καὶ ἀμέριστα μένει· καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῶν χωρίζεται συναφείας· ἐπειδὴ περ ἡ καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία ἐν ταύτῃ ζῆ, καὶ προκόπτει τῆ πίστει. “Ἴνα μήτε διχα τῆς ἀληθοῦς θεότητος ἢ ἀνθρωπότης, μήτε διχα τῆς ἀληθούς ἀνθρωπότητος ἢ θεότης πιστεύηται. (Pope Leo's letter to Flavian Bishop of Constantinople; Migne Latina, PL 54.775-776) <earlychurchtexts.com/main/leo/tome\_of\_leo\_05.shtml>
- The Greek translation above was done by the scribes during the Council of Chalcedon. The variants bolded above indicate that these Greek words are different from the Greek text of 1 John. Further, there is a significant variant reading: “Because Christ is the truth”, rather than “the Spirit is the truth”. Also, the last clause of the verse usually reads “**οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσι**”. Note how the preposition “**εἰς**” is absent in this Greek translation. The variants **ἐπειδὴ** and **γὰρ** are the conjunctions that join the allusions together. This would indicate that the Greek scribes translated the text as an allusion (i.e. there was other text passed over or the order was transposed, etc.) Finally, these variants indicate that 1 John 5:6,8 were regarded by the Greek scribes as simply memory allusions to some of the text of 1 John 5:6,8, and not a quote of the verses. This was later affirmed by the writings of Facundus and Flugentius. (see below)

4. "defended by several authors in set treatises"

a. Facundus (fluent in Greek) knew the Tome and used it to defend Ibas.

- [R.B. Eno] Facundus builds his principal defence of Chalcedon on the prestige of Leo the Great, a truly apostolic man who stated plainly that nothing need be added to the perfection of the council of Chalcedon. He was a true and faithful fighter for the Church, who did not fear the onslaught of heresy. In attacking the council, the heretics are seeking to undermine the honored position of this man [i.e., Ibas]. Facundus repeats the last theme, as if by doing so, to drive home the enormity of what the revisionists are attempting to do. [Facundus writes] in defence of the letter of Ibas, in particular, it suffices to say that "...so great a council and the instigator of that council, the apostolic man, the one most noted in the world for true doctrine, approved it." (fn. 44.

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Facundus, Defense of the Three chapters, Book 5.4.1) (R.B. Eno, Doctrinal Authority in the African Ecclesiology of the Sixth Century: Ferrandus and Facundus, 1976, p. 108-109)

b. Facundus (fluent in Greek) quoted the Tome in his work "Defense of the Three Chapters"

- [Facundus] Now since it has been proven by manifest and manifold evidence that it is a falsehood to deny that the letter of the venerable Ibas was declared orthodox by the synod, and since it has by the same token been made apparent that blessed Leo did not judge the letter to be Nestorian (for he would doubtless have condemned it with a clear and forceful sentence), it suffices for our defense of the letter that such a great synod and its initiator, an apostolic man famous throughout the world for the teaching of truth, approved it. This is our foremost, unshakable, secure reason, which protects and strengthens us against all the questions of gainsayers. (Facundus, Defending the Three Chapters, Book 5.5.1; Translated by Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence, August 2020)

- [Facundus] ...And therefore, if also omitting the rest of the acts, the same most devoted and prudent man, Leone, replied to Flaviano thus: 19."I am surprised that so absurd and mistaken a statement of his should not have been criticised and rebuked by his judges, and that an utterance which reaches the height of stupidity and blasphemy should be allowed to pass as if nothing offensive had been heard: for the impiety of saying that the Son of God was of two natures before His incarnation is only equalled by the iniquity of asserting that there was but one nature in Him after 'the Word became flesh.' And to the end that Eutyches may not think this a right or defensible opinion because it was not contradicted by any expression of yourselves, we warn you beloved brother, to take anxious care that if ever through the inspiration of God's mercy the case is brought to a satisfactory conclusion, his ignorant mind be purged from this pernicious idea as well as others." [Leo the Great, Tome to Flavian, Epistle 28.6] (Facundus, Defense of the Three Chapters, book 4, Translated by Sara Petri, 2007, p. 155-156)

c. Fulgentius (fluent in Greek) quotes the Tome in his works.

- [Fulgentius] Therefore, what has been taken up by the Son of God is proved to have been taken up by his divinity, by his majesty, by his power, by his eternity. In order that the truthful assertions of the holy Fathers may show this, we first bring forward the letters of the most blessed Pope Leo, glorious pontiff of the Apostolic See, writing to Flavian, bishop of the city of Constantinople. In this letter, because he marvelously expressed the true faith concerning the Incarnation of the Lord, he destroyed every error of heretical depravity. For in this letter, the same glorious bishop, no less endowed with the truth of the apostolic faith than outstanding because of the dignity of the Apostolic See, said this: "In the preservation, then, of the real quality of both natures, both being united in one person, lowliness was taken on by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by the immortal. And in order to pay the debt of our fallen state, inviolable nature was united to one capable of suffering so that (and this is the sort of reparation we needed) one and the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, could die in the one nature and not die in the other."(fn. 70. Leo Epistola 28; N. Tanner, Decrees I.78b; FOTC 34.95–96.) (Fulgentius, Letter to Ferrandus #14.18; Translated by Robert B. Eno in Fulgentius selected works, 1997, p. 522)

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### 5. Greek Fathers Quote Leo's Tome

#### a. Facundus (fluent in Greek) : Quotes verse 8 with "in earth"

- Which one of the Trinity suffered (Defense of the Three Chapters, Book 1, Chapter 3).
- 9. In fact, the apostle John also in his letter writes about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: "There are three who testify on earth, spirit, water and blood and these three are one" (1 Jn 5, 8). With "spirit" it indicates the Father, as does the Lord, who in the Gospel of John himself says to the Samaritan woman: "Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe me that the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father. You adore that which you know not: we adore that which we know. For salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore him. God is a spirit: and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth." (Jn 4: 21-24).
- 11. By "blood" instead it indicates the Son, since he was part of the flesh and blood of the Holy Trinity. So the apostle John speaking of Father, Son and Holy Spirit does not say that there are three persons who testify on earth, that is spirit, water and blood, and that these three are one, but rather says: "There are three who testify on earth, spirit, water and blood and these three are one." (1 Jn v. 8)
- 23. However, by carefully examining the problem and looking more deeply into the cause, it would emerge that we do not say "one" for "one person", but rather one says "one person" for "one of the Trinity". In fact, the Church of Christ, even when the name of persons was not yet used to distinguish Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has always believed and preached three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as we have shown before with the testimony of the apostle John where it says: "Three are who testify on earth, spirit, water and blood, and these three are one." (1 Jn 5: 8)
- 24. However the name of person was not assumed in the use of preaching except out of necessity when Sabellio began to fight against the Church, so those in whom it has always been believed and who have been called [PAGE 71] three (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are now called together with the common name of "person". Then subsistences were also said, as the Church liked, to indicate the Trinity and to attribute this name to the distinction of "persons". Once upon a time there was a discussion about the new name of "person" or of "subsistence", if it were to be admitted to indicate the Trinity which is God, as the name of Trinity itself was also admitted; but there was never any discussion about what the Church has always held firm and preached, namely that there are three who bear witness on earth and "these three are one."

#### b. Facundus (fluent in Greek) : "in earth" is at the heart of Facundus argument

- [Brownlee] And on inspecting the pages of Facundus, it will be seen that the phrase is not only often repeated, but interwoven into the argument. For the nature of the heresy which Facundus was combating, made it essentially necessary that the phrase "in [the] earth", should be in the sacred passage opposed to that heresy. He is proving that one of the persons of the Most Holy Trinity came into the world, and lived "in [the] earth" (Latin: in terra), in order to redeem us. If the words, therefore, "in [the] earth" (Latin: in terra), be left out, as Porson proposes, and zealously insists that they ought to be; then the very force and life of the argument of Facundus is utterly destroyed. (Brownlee, "Gleanings and Hints Towards an Argument for the Authenticity of John v. 7" in The Christian Advocate vol 3, September 1825, vol. 3, p. 400-401)

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- c. Fulgentius (fluent in Greek) : Uses verse 7 in his writings and debates.
- [De Trinitate ad Felicem] See, in short you have it that the Father is one, the Son another, and the Holy Spirit another, in Person, each is other, but in nature they are not other. In this regard He says: "The Father and I, we are one." He teaches us that "one" refers to Their nature, and "we are" to Their persons. In like manner it is said: "There are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; and these three are one." (Fulgentius, On the Trinity, chapter 4; Translated by William A. Jurgens, 1970, vol 3, p. 291-292)
  - [Responsio contra Arianos] In the Father, therefore, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we acknowledge unity of substance, but dare not confound the persons. For St. John the apostle, testifieth saying, "There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one." (Fulgentius, Against the Arians; Translated by Thomas Hartwell Horne, 1825; Horne, "IV. Sect. V. On the First General Epistle of John" in Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 1825, vol 4, p. 448)
  - [Contra Fabianus] But the holy Apostle St. John [proceeds further, for he] plainly says, "And the three are one"; which text concerning the Father, the Son [Filio] and the Holy Ghost we alleged, as we did before when ye required a reason from us [our belief]. (Fulgentius, Contra Fabianus, Fragmentum 21; Translated by George Travis, Letters to Edward Gibbon, 3rd edition, 1794, p. 38-39)
- d. Fulgentius (fluent in Greek) : Used verse 7 in his writings and debates.
- [Armfield] Surely it is quite clear from the writings of Fulgentius, both that he had himself seen the verse in the copies of the New Testament; and that those (with whom he argues) had no objection to offer. (Armfield, The Three Witnesses, the Disputed Text, 1883, p.172)
- e. Fulgentius (fluent in Greek) : debates with opponents fluent in Greek and other Languages.
- [Fabianus the Arian] The only time Fulgentius of Ruspe considered it necessary to quote Greek was when writing against the Arian Fabianus. At some point between 523 and 533, Fabianus and Fulgentius had engaged in a public debate, most likely in Carthage. Fabianus published the proceedings in a manner so unflattering to his opponent that Fulgentius composed the ten-volume "Contra Fabianum" in response. In the "Contra Fabianum", Fulgentius quoted Scriptures in Greek as well as in Latin, a practice not followed in his other works. He did so with the expectation that Fabianus would be able to follow the Greek, saying at one point that "I will bring forward the truth of the Greek reading in this place also, so that you might understand this (point) more fully." Fabianus also apparently prided himself on his Latin: Fulgentius quotes Virgil to him and chides him by saying, "I think [PAGE 116] that a man like you who claims to be skilled in latinitas might know that 'subministrare' is not the same thing as 'ministrare'". Fabianus is the best counterpart for the real Pseudo-Origen [author of the Arian commentary on Job] - an Arian scholar of late Vandal North Africa, literate in Latin and Greek, involved in debating the Greek Scriptures with his Nicene opponents. (Dossey, The Last Days of Vandal Africa: An Arian Commentary on Job and its Historical Context, 2003, p. 115-116)

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### Conclusion

Leo's Tome is irrelevant to the question of whether verse 7 was part of the bible. The Greek fathers who knew and used Leo's Tome, quoted verse 8 with "in earth" and verse 7 (the Three Heavenly Witnesses). Fulgentius and Facundus both knew Leo's Tome and quoted it freely without any hesitation or mention of any "omission" in Leo's quote. Obviously, the context of Leo's allusion to verse 8 was to demonstrate the humanity of Christ, and nothing else. Burgess' statement is proved true, that the other parts of the verses were not relevant to Leo's argument. The Greek translation that was done at the Council of Chalcedon translates Leo's quote of verse 8 with significant variants resulting in Greek text very different from the usual Greek text of verse 8. Certainly, if Facundus or Fulgentius (who were fluent in Greek) thought that Leo's Tome allusion to verse 8 was evidence of some kind of omission, they would have noted it in their use of verse 8 "in earth" and verse 7 (the Three Heavenly Witnesses). The witness and works of Fulgentius and Facundus demonstrate that Leo's Tome does not contain any obvious omissions and therefore support the argument that verse 7 was not in his bible.

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### Transposition verse 6, 8, 7

One of the arguments made in defense of the comma, is that the oldest Latin manuscripts often present the order of the verses as 6, 8, 7. Thus, if a Father presents the text of verse 6 then verse 8 that does not mean that verse 7 is not in his manuscript. Below are some examples of this: 1) *Fragmenta Frisingensia* a 4th century Latin MS with transposed verses, and 2) Ambrose's *De Trinitate Alias in Symbolum Apostolorum Tractatus* which matches Codex Cavensis (circa 760 – 842 AD), an early Latin MS with transposed verses.

#### **Aurelius Ambrose (340–397 AD) : Transposition**

• [Of the Trinity] "By this is the spirit of God known. Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God. And this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh: and he is now already in the world." (1 John 4:2-3) And again "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only but by water and blood. **And it is the Spirit which testifieth that Jesus is the truth. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit and the water and the blood. And these three are one.**"(1 John 5:5,6,8) [end of chapter]

• Latin: Quod confirmans beatus Ioannes apostolus et evangelista (I Ioan. IV, 2 et 3), dicit: In hoc cognoscitur Spiritus Dei, omnis spiritus qui confitetur Iesum Christum in carne venisse, ex Deo est, et omnis spiritus, qui solvit Iesum, ex Deo non est: et hic est antichristus, quem audistis quoniam venit; et nunc iam in mundo est; et iterum: Quis est qui vincit mundum, nisi qui credit quoniam Iesus est Filius Dei. Hic est qui venit per aquam et sanguinem Iesus Christus, non in aqua solum, sed in aqua et sanguine. **Et Spiritus est qui testificatur quoniam Iesus est veritas; quia tres sunt, qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua et sanguis, et tres unum sunt.** (I Ioan. v, 5,6,8) (Ambrose, *De Trinitate Alias in Symbolum Apostolorum Tractatus*. VII; Migne Latina PL 17.517)

<b>Ambrose : De Trinitate Alias in Symbolum Apostolorum Tractatus</b>	<b>Codex Cavensis (circa 760 – 842 AD)</b>
>Hic est qui venit per aquam et sanguinem Iesus Christus, >Et non in aqua solum sed in aqua et sanguine >et Spiritus et qui testificature qam IHS et veritas. >Quia tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra. >Spiritus et aqua et sanguis : et hic tres unum sunt. <b>[end of chapter]</b>	>Hic est qui venit per aquam et sanguinem et spirit, IHS XRS >non in aqua solum, sed in aqua et sanguine >Et Spiritus est qui testificatur quoniam Iesus est veritas; >quia tres sunt, qui testimonium dant in terra >spiritus, aqua et sanguis, et tres unum sunt, <b>in XRO IHU.</b> <b>Et tres sunt qui testimonium dicunt in coelo, Pater, verbum. Et SPS. et hii tres unum sunt.</b>

### Conclusion:

So, the argument made by defenders has been demonstrated with evidence of a 4th century Latin MS as well as a 4th century Father's work. Thus, any supposed presentation of verse 6, 8 cannot be assumed to support the supposition that verse 7 has been omitted in the Father's biblical manuscript.

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### Omission : Porson enlists Bede

Another argument that Porson insists on is to portray Bede's commentary on I John 5 as evidence for his argument. Porson articulates his argument as obvious and undeniable.

- [Porson] But if any person will read through Bede's commentary upon the fifth chapter, he must see, unless he be wilfully blind, that Bede was totally ignorant of the seventh verse. (Porson, Letters to Archdeacon Travis, 1790, p. 384)

Porson makes a habit of using negative arguments as a substitute for evidence. Taking a close look at Bede's commentary on the seven catholic epistles, we see that Bede is aware of a work he attributes to Athanasius of Alexandria. However, examining Bede's use of this work we see that he also quotes it again in his commentary on I Peter 3. Scholars admit that the work Bede is quoting has no corresponding text to any of Athanasius' works.

- [Hurst] This statement [by Bede] that 1 Jn was written to the Parthians I have not been able to find among the writings of Saint Athanasius. However, Saint Augustine - In Ioh. ep.; PL 35:1977 and Cassiodorus In ep. apost.; PL 70:1369 both say that it was written to the Parthians. Ancient Parthia lay to the south of the Caspian Sea, and presumably was regarded as an entirely pagan area. (Bede, The Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles. Translated by David Hurst, 1985, p. 3)

Below is where Bede cites Athanasius as the source for the title "to the Parthians".

### Bede the Venerable (672–735 AD)

- [Bede]: Rightly were the Letters of John placed in third, because he wrote to those who came to believe from the gentiles, since neither by race nor by belief had they been Jews. **Accordingly, many church writers, among whom is Saint Athanasius, head of the church of Alexandria, assert that his first Letter was written to the Parthians.** (Bede, The Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles. Translated by David Hurst, 1985, p. 3; Migne Latina, PL 93.010)

- **Latin:** Merito Joannis Epistolae tertio loco sunt positae, quia his scripsit ipse qui de gentibus crediderunt, cum nec natura nec professione exstitissent. Denique multi scriptorum ecclesiasticorum, in quibus est sanctus Athanasius Alexandrinae praesul Ecclesiae, primam ejus Epistolam (0010A) scriptam ad Parthos esse testantur. (Bede, Prologus Super Septem Epistolas Canonicas; Migne Latina, PL 93.9; Bede, Epistola XVI. De septem Epistolis canonicis, Migne Latina, PL 94.710)

And below is the place in Contra Varimadum that the Epistle is said to be "to the Parthians".

### Contra Varimadum (Marvidamun) Arianum

- **And John the evangelist** says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1) **Also to the Parthians: "there are three", he says, "that bear witness in earth, the water, the blood and the flesh (body): and these three are in us." (1 John 5:8) "and there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit: and these three are one." (1 John 5:7)** And so we believe that the Father and the Son are in the nature of divinity, by which they are One; nor (do we think) that the Father preceded in time so that he is greater than the Son, or that the Son was born later, so that the divinity of the Father is diminished in the Son. (Idacius

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Clarus, Contra Varimadum (Marvidamun), Book 1. Chapter 5; CCSL 90:20-21; Migne Latina, PL 62.359)

• **Latin:** Et Ioannes evangelista ait: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Ioan. I, 1) . **Item ipse ad Parthos: Tres sunt, inquit, qui testimonium perhibent in terra, aqua, sanguis et caro, et tres in nobis sunt (I Ioan. V, 8) . Et tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus, et ii tres unum sunt (I Ioan. V, 7, 8) .** Nos itaque in natura deitatis, qua unum sunt, Patrem, et Filium credimus: nec Patrem aliquo tempore praecessisse ut maior sit Filio, nec Filium postea natum esse, ut deitas Patris minoretur in Filio. (Idacius Clarus, Contra Varimadum (Marvidamun), Book 1. Chapter 5; CCSL 90:20-21; Migne Latina, PL 62.359)

What should be obvious to the reader is how the very next lines are of the Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses from I John 5. Bede continues to use Contra Varimadum later in I Peter 3 attributing the author as Athanasius..

### Bede the Venerable (672–735 AD)

• [Bede] I Peter 3:18b "That he might offer us to God, having been put to death indeed in the body but made alive in the spirit." To be sure, **Saint Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria**, relates what is said, but made alive in the spirit, not to the spirit of man—which, when the body has been put to death, is quickened in a better way, since the prophet says of the Lord, That he may quicken the spirit of the humble and quicken the heart of the contrite (Isaiah 57:15) - but rather to the grace of the Holy Spirit who bestows eternal life on those who put their bodies to death. For he uses this as a witness also against the Arians who deny the equality of the Holy Trinity, explaining that by their undivided unity [PAGE 102] of divine operation **the Father quickens, the Son quickens, the Holy Spirit quickens; the Father and Son, namely, because it has been written, For just as the Father raises up and makes the dead to live, so the Son also quickens those whom he will**, the Holy Spirit, however, as is made clear in this witness in which it is said of the Son, That he might offer us to God, having been put to death indeed in the body but quickened in the spirit, and therefore the substance or essence of those whose operation is one cannot be unequal.

• **Latin:** Sane hoc quod dicitur: Vivificatos autem Spiritu: **sanctus Athanasius Alexandriae pontifex**, non ad hominis spiritum, qui mortificata carne melius vivificatur, dicente propheta de Domino: Ut vivificet spiritum humilium, et vivificet cor contritorum (Isai. LVII) , sed ad gratiam potius refert Spiritus sancti, qui mortificantibus carnem suam vitam tribuit aeternam. Utitur enim et hoc testimonio contra Arianos, qui aequalitati sanctae Trinitatis contradicunt, astruens quia individua divinae operationis unitate qua **vivificat Pater, vivificet Filius, vivificet Spiritus sanctus**. (0058C) **Pater videlicet et Filius, quia scriptum est: Sicut enim Pater suscitavit mortuos et vivificat, sic et Filius quos vult vivificat. Spiritus vero sanctus, ut hoc testimonio declaratur, quo dicitur de Filio, "ut nos offerret Deo, mortificatos quidem carne, vivificatos autem Spiritu";** ideoque quorum una operatio est, horum dispar esse substantia vel essentia non possit. (Bede, In I Epist. Petri, Chap. III.; Migne Latina PL 93.58)

### Contra Marivadum (Varimadum) Arianum

• **The Father quickens, the Son quickens, this is the Holy Spirit.** From the Father to the Romans: Just as I have made you the father of many nations before God, whom you believed, who gives life (Rom. IV, 17). Of the Son in Kings: The Lord kills and gives life (1 Kings 2:6). **And in the Gospel: As**



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**the Father raises the dead and makes them alive, just as the Son quickens whom He will (Jn. 5:21). On the Holy Spirit in the Epistle of the Apostle Peter: Put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit.** And the Apostle Paul says: The letter kills, but the spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:6). (Idacius Clarus, *Contra Marivadum (Varimadum) Arianum*, Chapter XLV "Of the common life")

• **Latin: Vivificat Pater, vivificat Filius, hoc Spiritus sanctus.** (0422A) De Patre ad Romanos: Quai patrem multarum gentium posui te ante Deum, cui credidisti, qui vivificat (Rom. IV, 17) . De Filio in Regum: Dominus mortificat et vivificat (I Reg. II, 6) . **Et in Evangelio: Sicut Pater suscitatur mortuos et vivificat, sicut et Filius quos vult vivificat (Ioan. V, 21) . De Spiritu sancto in Epistola Petri apostoli: Mortificatus carne, vivificatus autem spiritu (I Pet. III, 18) . Et Paulus apostolus: Littera occidit, spiritus autem vivificat (II Cor. III, 6).** (Idacius Clarus, *Contra Marivadum (Varimadum) Arianum*, Book 3, CAPUT XLV "De communi vivificatione"; Migne Latina, PL 62.421D)

So, Bede used *Contra Varimadum* in his commentaries on the Seven Catholic Epistles (as can be seen from the Latin text). Schwank affirms that the source for this document is *Contra Varimadum* in both instances.

• [Schwank] The 1 Jo is still titled *ad Parthos*. This heading, probably originally Greek, has survived only in one of Augustine's early writings [PL 35.1977], several times in Cassiodorus [PL 70.1369] and in a Spanish Palimpsest Bible of the 7th century. Bede [Prologue to John's First Epistle : PL 93.9] mentions that he also read this heading in Athanasius. In the writings of Athanasius that have come down to us, however, there is nowhere to be found a corresponding text. I would therefore like to assume that Bede also had *Contra Varimadum* (= *Var*) in mind here, for whose author he also elsewhere [Commentary I Pet 3:18 : PL 93.58] [references] believing to be Athanasius. (Schwank, "Zur Neuauflage von « *Contra Varimadum* » nach dem Codex Paris B.N. Lat. 12217 im *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina XC*", *Sacris erudiri*, Volume 12, 1961, p. 174-175)

Further this can also be seen in the footnotes and cross reference margins of CCSL 90 page 116 where Schwank gives us the reference to Bede's commentary on I Peter 3.

Finally, there is the case of MS Balliol 177 (12th Century) where Bede's commentary on I John 5 does indeed include the Heavenly & Earthly witnesses. In order to get the context of this manuscript, we can first see a list of all the early manuscripts that include Bede's commentary on I John.

### **Bede MSS for I John commentary**

- Bodleian MS. 849 (818 AD)
- Jesus College MS. 69 (11th century)
- Jesus College MS. 70 (12th century)
- Oxford, Lincoln College lat. 31. (Mid-12th century)
- Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries. A catalog of Western manuscripts at the Bodleian Libraries and selected Oxford colleges. <[medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/person\\_61539765](http://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/person_61539765)>

The group is very small, but Balliol 177 has been considered possibly authentic by some scholars because of specific aspects of the manuscript as well as the commentary on the Heavenly & Earthly witnesses.

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- [Jenkins] In a codex given to Balliol College, Oxford, c. 1477, by a former alumnus the generous prelate William Grey Bishop of Ely (d. 1478). MS. Balliol 177 is assigned to the end of saec. xii (12th century), and this date may be accepted, if with a little hesitation. Its text in cases where the manuscripts are divided will perhaps usually be found in association with that of manuscripts like Jesus College MS. 69 and Jesus College MS. 70 and Linc. D. Lat 31 [Oxford, Lincoln College lat. 31], though it occasionally lends support to readings demonstrably ancient represented in e.g. Bodl. 849 (818 AD). (Jenkins, "A Newly Discovered Reference to the 'Heavenly Witnesses' 1 John v. 7, 8 in a Manuscript of Bede", 1942, p. 43)

There are many readings in Balliol 177 that are found in the other manuscripts listed, especially Bodleian MS 149 which is the earliest MSS of Bede's commentary.

- [Laistner] Whether the addition in Balliol 177 is part of Bede's original comment must clearly remain undecided until at least all the early manuscripts have been scrutinized. But the phraseology and even the doctrine of that addition are hardly as unusual as Dr. Jenkins seems to suggest. Bede had used "divine power" (Latin: *potentiam divinitatis*) in expounding 1 John v. 6. With "splendor of eternal blessedness" (Latin: *speciem eterne beatitudinis*) it is natural to compare "everlasting happiness" (Latin: *beatitudinis aeternae dona*) (E.H. ii. 13); and for the use of "speciem" one may refer to Bede's comment on 1 John iii. 6, "until they come to that view of clear vision of him to come" (Latin: *donec ad ipsam speciem apertae visionis eius in futuro perveniant*). The thought, too, can surely be paralleled in Bede's remarks on the Transfiguration in his commentary on St. Luke. [Giles, xi, p. 103] The phrase "one substance, and one unified divine essence" (Latin: *una substantia et unius deitatis essentia*) is called by Dr. Jenkins "linguistically as well as theologically important". But neither the words nor the dogmatic implications were novel in Bede's day. Dr. Souter has shown, in amplification of what is given in the Latin Thesaurus, that the use of both *deltas* and *essentia* was well established in the fourth century. [Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistle of St. Paul*, Oxford, 1927, p. 33 and 201.] (Laistner, *An Addition to Bede in MS. Balliol 177*, 1942, p. 186)

Laistner, indicates that the Latin in Balliol 177 is very old and that it certainly agrees with Bede's usage in other works and places in the commentary.

- [Jenkins] As has been stated, the words between the first 'qui testimonium dant' and 'spiritus aqua et sanguis' have no place in the other manuscripts that we have cited, except that 'in terra' is found in two of them. If it be said that the omission is due to the common fault of nearly all of us in transcribing, that of allowing the eye to stray from a word to the same word recurring later, omitting the intervening passage, it has to be admitted that the initial error must have been very early in view of the date of Bodl. 849. But there is a curious additional difficulty. If in still earlier manuscripts of Bede's commentary than those as yet quoted the passage 'in celo...' stood, it is hard to believe that it was not balanced by 'in terra' before 'spiritus aqua et sanguis'; and if the eye passed from the first 'qui testimonium dant' to its repetition below, then 'in terra' instead of being an interpolation in Bede, as had been supposed, would be a genuine survival of the original text preserved to us by two manuscripts usually judged to be of inferior. (Jenkins, *A Newly Discovered Reference to the 'Heavenly Witnesses' 1 John v. 7, 8 in a Manuscript of Bede*, 1942, p. 44)

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Jenkins declares that "in earth" does appear in some of the other manuscripts in the list. He also suggests that the entire passage could have been omitted by accident. Scribes are notorious for a wandering eye that catches the second instance of a word (homoeoteleuton) and continues to copy from the exemplar omitting the words between them. Below is the text from the MSS. (FYI: Jerome's prologue does appear in Balliol 177 directly after John's first epistle with the heading "Here ends the small work of the venerable priest Bede on the book of Acts of the Apostles. Here begins the prologue of the holy priest Jerome above the 7 Canonical Epistles." (f28.v to f29r))

f82.r.m.16 ...qui eum vel deum vel hominem  
f82.r.m.17 esse verum denegant. "Quia tres sunt qui  
f82.r.m.18 testimonium dant in celo pater verbum et spiritus sanctus.  
f82.r.m.19 et [^hii^] tres unum sunt." Pater dedit testimonium  
f82.r.m.20 deitatis quando dixit "hic est filius meus delectus" Ipse  
f82.r.m.21 filius dedit testimonium qui in monte trasfigu  
f82.r.m.22 ratus potentiam divinitatis et speciem eterne  
f82.r.m.23 beatitudinis ostendit. Spiritus sanctus dedit qui  
f82.r.m.24 super baptizatum in specie columbe requievit vel  
f82.r.m.25 quando ad invocacionem nominis XRI corda credencium  
f82.r.m.26 implevit. "Et hii tres unum sunt" una vide  
f82.r.m.27 licet substantia et unius deitatis essencia. "Et tres  
f82.r.m.28 sunt qui testimonium dant in terra SPS  
f82.r.m.29 spiritus aqua et sanguis. "SPS dedit testimonium  
f82.r.m.30 quoniam IHS est veritas quando super baptizantum descen  
f82.r.m.31 dit. Si enim non verus dei filius non esset, nequaquam in eum  
f82.r.m.32 tanta manifestatione SPS SCS veniret.  
<[www.flickr.com/photos/balliolarchivist/9836945956/in/album-72157635687317016/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/balliolarchivist/9836945956/in/album-72157635687317016/)>

Here is the translation of the passage in Balliol 177 with the context:

- [Bede] 1 Jn 5:6 "This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ."Therefore, he who was the eternal Son of God became a human being in time, that he who had created us by the power of his divinity might recreate us by the weakness of his humility. "He who came by water and blood," the water, namely, of his baptismal cleansing and the blood of his passion."Not in water only but in water and blood."Not only did he deign to be baptized for the sake of our cleansing, that he might consecrate and pass on to us the sacrament of baptism, but he also gave his blood for us, he redeemed us by his passion, that being always restored to health by his sacraments we might be nourished for salvation."And it is the Spirit who bears witness that Jesus Christ is the truth."When the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the appearance of a dove,(cf. Matt 3:16-17) giving witness that he is the truth, that is, the true Son of God,"the true mediator between God and men,"(1 Tim 2:5) the true redeemer and reconciler of the human race, himself truly clean from all stain of sin, truly able to"take away the sins of the world". (Jn 1:29) The baptizer himself also understood this when he saw the coming of the same Spirit and said,"He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'Him upon whom you see the Spirit coming down and remaining is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit' And I saw and have given witness that this is the Son of God."(Jn 1:33-34)"Therefore, because the Spirit bears witness that Jesus Christ is the truth,"he calls himself truth, (cf Jn 14:6) the

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baptizer proclaims him as truth, the son of thunder (cf. Mk 3:17) spreads the good news about truth, let blasphemers who teach that he was a phantom be silent, let the memory of those who deny that he was either God or true man perish from the earth.(cf. Job 18:17)

- [Bede] 1 Jn 5:7 "For there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit. And these Three are One."The Father gave testimony of his [Jesus] divinity when He said:"this is my beloved Son."The Son himself gave testimony, for He revealed his divine power and his splendor of eternal blessedness in his transfiguration on the mount. The Holy Spirit gave testimony, for He rested on Him in the form of a dove in his baptism or when He works faith in the heart on calling the Name of Christ."And these three are one". One, namely, in substance and of One divine essence. (Balliol MS 177, f82 recto, margin column of text, 17-27; Translated by Jeroen Beekhuizen, correspondence, June 2020)

- [Bede] 1 Jn 5:8"Because there are three who bear witness in earth, the Spirit and the water and the blood."The Spirit bore witness that Jesus is the truth when it came down upon him as he was baptized. For if he were not the true Son of God, the Holy Spirit would never have come upon him so manifestly. The water and the blood also bore witness that Jesus is the truth when they issued from his side as he was dead upon the cross. This would never have been possible if he had not had the true nature of flesh. But also the fact that when he was praying before his passion his sweat became like drops of blood running down on the ground bears witness to the truth of the flesh he had taken on. Nor must we remain silent about the water and the blood also having borne witness to him when they poured out of his side in so life-like a manner when he was dead. This was contrary to the nature of bodies and on that account appropriate to the mysteries and apt for the witness of the truth, implying namely both that the very body of the Lord would be better [able to be] victorious after death, when he was raised in glory, and that his very death would give us life. That his blood also ran down on the ground like drops of blood by a holiest mystery bore witness to him that he cleansed the Church throughout the whole world by his blood. Therefore,"There are three who give witness to the truth,"and"the three,"he says,"are one."These remain distinct, then, and none of them is severed from its connection with the other, because it must not be believed that his humanity existed without his true divinity or his divinity without his true humanity. But these are also one in us, not by the substance of the same nature but by the operation of the same mystery. Now, as blessed Ambrose, says,"The Spirit renews the mind, the water is of avail for [baptismal] cleansing, the blood points to the cost. 'For the Spirit made us children of God by adoption, the water of the sacred font washed us, the blood of the Lord redeemed us.' The one an invisible witness, therefore, the other a visible, results from the spiritual sacrament." (Ambr., De spir. 3.10.68; CSEL 44:178, 83-179, 88)

### Conclusion:

Porson's insistence and confidence in asserting that Bede was "totally ignorant" has been demonstrated to be entirely false. The use of Contra Varimadum indicates that Bede was indeed aware of the Heavenly & Earthly witnesses. We need no more than that to prove our case. However, Balliol 177 has the passage and commentary and the manuscript is certainly in the running to be considered as a work by Bede. With the references of Contra Varimadum proved, we can be more confident that Balliol 177 might in fact be Bede's work, early, and skipped over in other manuscripts due to a scribal oversight. Whichever way we turn, the evidence in no way supports Porson's assertions and assumptions.

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### Appendix: F.A. Knittel (1721–1792) : Invisible Allegory Refuted

• About the year 241, Cyprian wrote his celebrated Treatise *De Unitate Ecclesiae*. In that work, he says: "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.'" (Latin: *Dicit Dominus, Ego et Pater unum sumus. Et iterum, de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto scriptum est, Et hi tres unum sunt.*) He must therefore have read the clause in 1 John V.7. in his New Testament.

• "No!" it will be said, "No! He only read in his copy the words *"And these three are one"* (Latin: *Et hi tres unum sunt*); and these he took from the 8th verse: but the subject of this predicate quoted by him - I mean the words, 'the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost' - these did not exist in his Bible, but in his imagination. In short, he discovered, mystically, the three Persons of the Godhead, in the three words of the 8th verse, 'spirit, water, and blood.'"

• Nothing of the kind, however, appears in the words of Cyprian. Allow me then to ask, How do you know it? "Oh! because he is sometimes apt to allegorize." Granted. But does he *always* allegorize, when he quotes [PAGE 22] passages of Scripture? "Certainly not always." Well, then, I should think it was quite necessary to prove in the present instance, in the passage quoted, that he actually allegorized the 8th verse, and had it in view in this citation. Do we find any traces in his writings to confirm this surmise, or at least render it in some degree probable? Perhaps, when he quotes passages of Scripture in an allegorical sense, he uses the same *formula of citation* which he adopts in the passage before us? No! he does not. Nay, when he uses this formula, the subject as well as the predicate expressly stands in the Text, and he specifies particularly what the subject signifies, taken in an allegorical sense. I shall be more explicit. In his 69th Epistle [Epistle 75], which begins with the words *"With your usual religious diligence, you have consulted my poor intelligence"* (Latin: *Pro tua religiosa diligentia, consulisti mediocritatem nostram*), he quotes Exodus 12:46 precisely in the same manner as he does in the passage under consideration. These are his words: **"SINCE IT IS WRITTEN** of the sacrament of the passover, and of the lamb, *which Lamb designated Christ*: 'In one house shall it be eaten: you shall not carry forth the flesh abroad out of the house.'" (Latin: **CUM DE** sacramento paschae et agni, *qui agnus Christum designat, SCRIPTUM SIT*, In domo una comedetur, non ejicitis de domo carnem foras)

• Here we perceive,

1. He uses the very same formula of quotation which he does in the passage before us, "of... it is written" (Latin: *de... scriptum est*)
2. The subject *"the passover and the lamb"* (Latin: *pascha et agnus*), as well as the predicate "In one house shall it be eaten: you shall not carry forth the flesh abroad out of the house" (Latin: *in domo una comedetur, non ejicitis de domo carnem foras*), are found *verbatim* in the Text.
3. What he understands mystically by the *"the passover"* and *"the lamb"* (Latin: *pascha et agnus*), he particularly specifies, viz. *"which Lamb designated Christ"* (Latin: *qui agnus Christum designant*)

[PAGE 23]

• **Therefore, if he had quoted the 8th verse allegorically, he would have said, according to his custom:**

• "And again, OF the spirit, and water, and blood, *which designated the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, AS IT IS WRITTEN*, And these three are one." (Latin: *Et iterum, DE spiritu, et aqua, et sanguine, quae Patrem, Filium, et Spiritu Sanctum designant, SCRIPTUM EST*, Et hi tres unum sunt.)

• Would he not?

• In short, in every passage which he cites as allegorical proof, *he first quotes the Text literally*, and then *states what it signifies mystically*. If an example be wanting, observe how he quotes and explains Canticles 6:8; John 19:23,24; Joshua 11:18; etc. [below]

• Hence, his method and manner of quoting passages according to the mystical sense evidently infer the very

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contrary to what your opponents assert. The mode of quotation which they ascribe to Cyprian is completely [PAGE 24] the reverse of his usual habit. Now, I should think that Cyprian ought to be explained by Cyprian. Ought he not?

- But perhaps modes of expression occur elsewhere in his writings, in some measure, if not entirely, to support the opinion of our adversaries.
- I answer, No! nor have our adversaries themselves ever asserted there were. In order to give their opinion the fairest play, I have read Cyprian through and through, with the most minute attention; but I have not found anything that could, in the least, lead one to suppose that the Bishop entertained any mystical views respecting 1 John 5:8.

### Song of Songs 6

- The Unity of the Church: "Which one Church, also, the Holy Spirit in the Song of Songs designated in the person of our Lord, and says, My dove, my spotless one, is but one. She is the only one of her mother, elect of her that bare her." (**Latin:** De Unitate Ecclesiae: Unam Ecclesiam etiam in Cantico Canticorum Spiritus Sanctus ex persona Domini designat et dicit: Una est columba mea, perfecta mea, una est matri suae, electa genitrici suae.)
- He quotes the same text thus: "But that the Church is one, the Holy Spirit declares in the Song of Songs, saying, in the person of Christ, My dove, my undefiled, is one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her." (Latin: Quod autem Ecclesia una sit, declarat in Cantico Canticorum Spiritus Sanctus ex persona Christi, dicens: Una est columba mea, perfecta mea, una est matri suae electa genitrici suae.)

### John 19

- The Unity of the Church: "This sacrament of unity, this bond of a concord inseparably cohering, is set forth where in the Gospel the coat of the Lord Jesus Christ is not at all divided nor cut, but is received as an entire garment, and is possessed as an uninjured and undivided robe by those who cast lots concerning Christ's garment, who should rather put on Christ. Holy Scripture speaks, saying, But of the coat, because it was not sewed, but woven from the top throughout, they said one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots whose it shall be." (**Latin:** Hoc unitatis sacramentum, hoc vinculum concordiae, inseparabiliter cohaerentis, ostenditur, quoando in Evangelio tunica Domini Jesu Christi non dividitur, omnino nec scinditur, sed sortientibus de veste Christi, quis ipsam potius indueret, integra vestis accipitur, et incorrupta atque individua tunica possidetur. Loquitur et dicit Scriptura divini: De tunica autem quia de superiori parte non consutilis, sed per totum textilis fuerat, dixerunt ad invicem: Non scindamus illam, sed sortiamur de ea, cujus sit.)

### Joshua 11

- "Which also we see expressed concerning Rahab, who herself also bore a type of the Church, who received the command which said, You shall bring your father, and your mother, and your brethren, and all your father's household unto you into your house; and whosoever shall go out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be upon him. (**Latin:** Epist. LXIX. Quod item circa Rahab, quae ipsa quoque typum portabat Ecclesiae, expressum videmus; cui namdatur et dicitur: Patrem tuum et matrem tuam et fratres tuos et totam domum patris tui colliges ad te ipsam in domum tuam, et omnis qui exierit ostium domus tuae foras, reus erit. [Epist. 75])

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- \* "Invisible Allegory" coined by wordsmith: Steven Avery.
- Knittel, *New Criticisms on the Celebrated Text*, 1 John V. 7. 1829, p. 21-24.

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### Appendix: Charles Forster : *Adumbrationes* by Clement of Alexandria : Porson Refuted

Note: Porson presents the Latin text of *Adumbrationes* by Clement of Alexandria as an example of an early Greek father who was unaware of the Heavenly witnesses (verse 7). However, the Latin text is a translation from the Greek original done by Cassiodorus. The Latin indicates that there are words skipped in giving the verses of I John 5:6-8. Forster points this out very clearly (below). Furthermore, Porson's claim that the fathers understood verse 8 as referring to the Trinity. It is evident that Clement does not associate verse 8 with the Trinity, rather he associates the spirit, water, blood, with salvation and regeneration, etc. These two facts concerning the Latin text given by Cassiodorus (translating from Clement's original Greek) demonstrate that the critics' claims are not supported by Clement. Neither does Clement understand verse 8 as understanding the Trinity. Finally, we can have confidence in the fact that Clement did know of the Heavenly & Earthly witnesses when he alludes to them as "witnesses" in the above citation.

### Clement's work : Originally in Greek Translated into Latin

- The work entitled "Outlines" (*Hypotyposes*) is likewise believed to be a production of the early activity of Clement. It was translated into Latin by Rufinus under the title "Dispositiones". It was in eight books, but is no longer extant, though numerous fragments have been preserved in Greek by Eusebius, Oecumenius, Maximus Confessor, John Moschos, and Photius. According to Zahn, a Latin fragment, "*Adumbrationes Clementis Alexandrini in epistolas canonicas*", translated by Cassiodorus and purged of objectionable passages. (Clement of Alexandria. <[www.newadvent.org/cathen/04045a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04045a.htm)>)
- [Pearse] The *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria is one of his lost works. It still existed in the 9th century, when Photius read it, but probably perished with so much else in the sack of Constantinople by the renegade army originally hired for the Fourth Crusade. Photius' remarks are here, in the *Bibliotheca*, codex 109. [Codices 110 and 111 deal with the other two works.]
- [Pearse] Only fragments now exist of this commentary on the bible, which Eusebius tells us (HE 6.14.1) also included comments on the apocryphal works of Barnabas and the Apocalypse of Peter. Most of the few fragments are in Eusebius. Others are in the commentary of ps.Oecumenius, and John Moschus *Pratum Spirituale*. The Greek material can all be found in GCS 17, which is online somewhere, and translated here in the ANF 2.
- [Pearse] There is also a Latin translation of a good chunk of it, which passes under the title *Adumbrationes Clementi Alexandrini in epistolas canonicas*. This was made in the days of Cassiodorus. It exists in two manuscripts. The first is in the public library of Laon, no. 96 (L). This is a parchment quarto which dates from the 8-9th century. The *adumbrationes* form folios 1-9 of this manuscript, and is followed by a Latin version of the commentary of Didymus the Blind on the letter of James. Various pages of the manuscript are disordered.
- [Pearse] The other manuscript (M) is in Berlin, part of the Sir Thomas Phillips collection from Cheltenham, no. 1665. This is a parchment codex of 184 pages, of the 13th century. The first 11 pages of the codex contain the *adumbrationes*, followed by a work of Didymus the Blind, Bede on Acts, Bede's retraction on Acts, his tract on the canonical letters, and an *Epistola ad Accam*. The manuscript has a note that it belonged to a monastery of "St. Mary of the mountain of God". It was in Paris in the library of the Jesuits, then passed into the Meerman library, where it was no. 443, and then was bought by Sir Thomas Phillips.
- (Roger, Pearse, *The Hypotyposes (Outlines) of Clement of Alexandria*, Posted on November 28, 2009. <[www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2009/11/28/the-hypotyposes-outlines-of-clement-of-alexandria](http://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2009/11/28/the-hypotyposes-outlines-of-clement-of-alexandria)>



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• [Eusebius] **Chapter 14. The Scriptures mentioned by Him** 1. To sum up briefly, he [Clement of Alexandria] has given in the Hypotyposes abridged accounts of all canonical Scripture, not omitting the disputed books, — **I refer to Jude and the other Catholic epistles**, and Barnabas and the so-called Apocalypse of Peter. (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. VI 14. <[www.newadvent.org/fathers/250106.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250106.htm)>)

• [Dainese] The Adumbrationes are four exegetical texts related to certain passages of the “Catholic” epistles (specifically 1 Peter, Jude, 1 John and 2 John). They have reached us thanks to the Latin translation commissioned by Cassiodorus and—perhaps—made by Mutianus in the 6th century. These four long fragments are traditionally considered part of a much larger work, likely in seven or eight different books, mentioned by sources following Clement, entitled the Hypotyposes. (Dainese, Clement’s exegesis of 1 John in the Adumbrationes, 2017, p. 293-294)

### Adumbrationes:

- He says, "*This is He who came by water and blood;*" and again, "*For there are three that bear witness, the spirit,*" which is life, "*and the water,*" which is regeneration and faith, "*and the blood,*" which is knowledge; and "*these three are one.*" For in the Saviour are those saving virtues, and life itself exists in His own Son. (1 John 5:6-8)
- Clement : Adumbrationes, From the Latin Translation of Cassiodorus. <[www.tertullian.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-74.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-74.htm)>.

### Latin:

- *Iste est inquit qui venit per aquam et sanguinem, et iterum quia tres sunt, qui testificantur: spiritus, quod est vita, et aqua, quod est regeneratio ac fides, et sanguis, quod est cognitio, et hi tres unum sunt.* In salvatore quippe istae sunt virtutes salutiferae, et vita ipsa in ipso filio eius existit. (1 John 5:6-8)
- Zahn, Adumbrationes by Clement of Alexandria in Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur: Th. Supplementum Clementinum Volume 3, 1884, p. 92.

### Comments:

• [Forster] But Porson and St. Clemens Alexandrinus must not yet part company. For this early Greek Father's exegesis of the eighth verse, is utter annihilation to another of the learned Professor's paradoxes, namely, that all the supposed quotations of the seventh verse, were in fact quotations of the eighth, which the Fathers interpreted mystically as applying to the Persons of the Trinity. This fanciful interpretation, it is perfectly well known, originated with St. Augustine, a writer as fanciful on such points as Origen himself. But Porson, nothing daunted, ascribes similar fancifulness, without a particle of proof, to St. Cyprian and Tertullian; and pronounces their literal renderings, *et hi tres unum sunt*, to be mystical applications of the eighth verse, understood allegorically of the Trinity. 'Was this allegorical method of interpretation (he asks) uncommon among the Fathers? No; we know that they employed it without scruple in all points, whether of doctrine \_or morals,' (p. 254.) Upon this Pegasus he rides off in triumph, but Clement arrests his flight. This contemporary of Tertullian, and predecessor of St. Cyprian, fortunately for the truth, does interpret the eighth verse, and unfortunately for Porson, does not interpret it of the Trinity. Here is his interpretation: "*Quia tres sunt qui testificantur: spiritus, quod est vita, "et aqua," quod est regeneratio ac fides, "et sanguis," quod est cognitio.* **According to St.**

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**Clement, therefore, St. John's words, 'the spirit, the water, and the blood,' denote not the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, but 'life, regeneration or faith, and knowledge.'**

• [Forster] ...the passage from Clemen Alexandrinus contains a decisive indication that the seventh verse (omitted by him solely because irrelevant to his purpose) was in his MS. of the Epistle. ...He does not interpret it [verse 8] of the Trinity. According to St. Clement, therefore, St. John's words, "the spirit, the water, and the blood," denote not the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, but "life, regeneration or faith, and knowledge." **His words *et iterum* (καὶ πάλιν) clearly mark the interposition of other topics and intervening text, between the two quotations. That this, in fact, was so, we know from his omission of the last part of the sixth verse, as well as the whole of the seventh. But the point is self-evident: he could not have used the phrase *et iterum* of a continuous quotation. It is *the splice* between two *detached* quotations treating on a common topic.**

• Forster, A New Plea for the Authenticity of the Text of the Three Heavenly Witness ; or, Porson's Letters to Travis Eclectically Examined and the External and Internal Evidences for 1 John V, 7, 1867. P. 54-55.

Appendix: Latin text of *Adumbrationes*

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Adumbrationes in I Jo. 3, 20 — II Jo. 11.

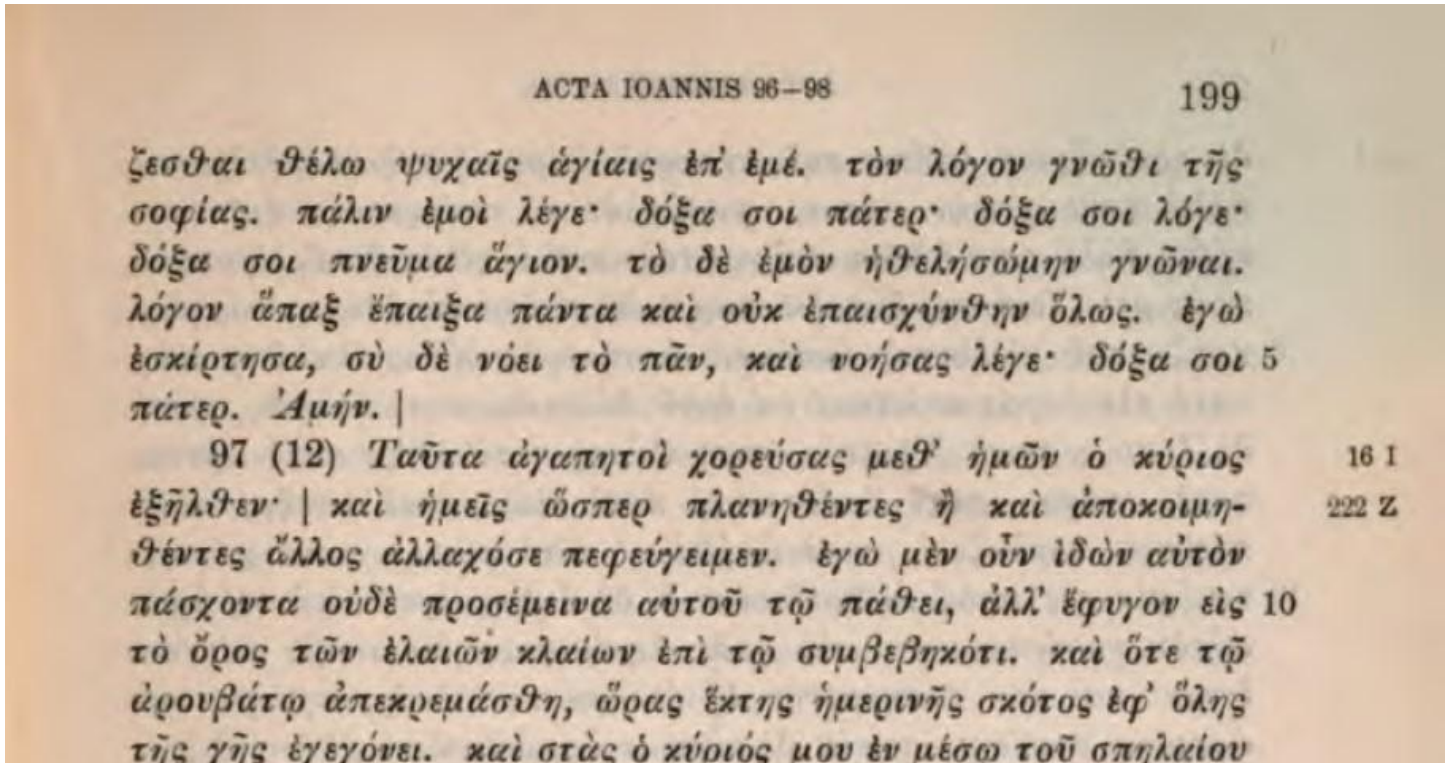
3, 20 *Quia maior est inquit deus corde nostro, hoc est virtus dei conscientia quae subsequetur animam; propter quod subiungit*  
3, 21 *et dicit, quoniam cognoscit omnia. Carissimi, si cor nostrum non redarguat nos, fiduciam habebit apud deum. — In hoc*  
3, 24 *cognoscimus, quia manet in nobis, de spiritu quem dedit nobis,* 5  
secundum episcopatum scilicet et providentiam futurorum.

4, 18 *Perfecta inquit caritas foras mittit timorem; perfectio namque fidelis hominis caritas est.*

5, 6 *Iste est inquit qui venit per aquam et sanguinem, et iterum*  
5, 7. 8 *quia tres sunt, qui testificantur: spiritus, quod est vita, et aqua, 10*  
quod est regeneratio ac fides, et sanguis, quod est cognitio, et  
*hi tres unum sunt. In salvatore quippe istae sunt virtutes salu-*  
5, 14 *tiferae, et vita ipsa in ipso filio eius existit. Et haec est con-*  
*fidentia, quam habemus ad eum, quia si quid petierimus secundum*  
*voluntatem eius, audiet nos. Non absolute dixit „quod petieri-* 15  
5, 19 *mus“, sed „quod oportet petere“. Et mundus omnis in maligno*

Zahn, *Adumbrationes* by Clement of Alexandria in *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur: Th. Supplementum Clementinum* Volume 3, 1884, p. 92.

Appendix: Greek text of Acts of John (circa 150-200)



§96 Line 2 & 3, p. 199.

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