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IRENÆUS AND SCRIPTURE:
ORTHODOX CORRUPTIONS OR REVERENTIAL ALTERATIONS?

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

By
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May 2011

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
Chapter	
1. TEXT CRITICISM'S USE OF CHURCH FATHERS: A HISTORY	1
2. IRENAEUS' CITATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH	14
3. A FRESH LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE	33
4. THE VALUE OF IRENAEUS' NT CITATIONS FOR NT TEXTUAL CRITICISM	50
5. IRENAEUS' VIEW OF SCRIPTURE IN LIGHT OF HIS CITATION METHODS	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	80

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is to be noted that the majority of this thesis was written in the midst of the hustle and bustle of parish life rather than in the university. Though it has taken several years to complete, I take great consolation from a similar story of academic work being juggled with the demands of parish ministry. This anecdote appears in the preface of the quintessential treatment of Irenaeus' citation of the NT text.

When Dr. Sanday returned to Oxford in 1883, I used to spend a large part of my vacations with him (I was on the teaching staff of Durham University from 1879 to 1886), and this led to my helping him occasionally in the collation of MSS. The idea of the *Novum Testamentum S. Irenaei* was broached (I think) in 1884; and Dr. Sanday suggested that I should collate the three accessible MSS at Leyden, the British Museum, and the Claromontane at Cheltenham. This I did in the summer vacations of 1885 and 1886.... In October 1886 I gave up University life and took charge of a large colliery parish, where I stayed for twenty-nine years ... it meant an end of my work on Irenaeus. I realized this early in 1888, and wrote to Dr. Sanday to that effect, and he very kindly relieved me of it all.

I stand on the shoulders of such great scholars who had already collated the material which I only had to check before attempting to discern what their collated evidence actually means. I am thankful to Dr. Jeff Kloha who spent copious amounts of time overseeing this project and for his friendship. I am thankful to the Grad School of Concordia Seminary which allowed me the extra time to complete this project and to the library for all their assistance with hard to find, dusty volumes. Most of all, I give thanks for my wife who has supported me through this long endeavor.

¹ Cuthbert H. Turner, preface to *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis* (ed. William Sanday and Cuthbert H. Turner; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), vii.

ABSTRACT

This thesis will explore Irenaeus' citation of New Testament texts containing Christological titles, in order to determine their worth for New Testament textual criticism. The critical apparatus of NA²⁷ lists Irenaeus as citing John 1:18, as well as other passages, in more than one way. Did Irenaeus carelessly quote Sacred Scripture? Was he motivated by his theological polemics against the Gnostics to intentionally alter the text of Sacred Scripture? The history of textual criticism and its use of church fathers has only listed Irenaeus' citations without giving any explanation for how he could cite the same verse in multiple ways. A fresh examination of the evidence will be made by collating Irenaeus' citations from the Gospel of John which contain Christological titles. Then, by exploring Irenaeus' general use of such titles in his theological polemic, the context in which each citation is found, and his own discussion of textual variants he knew of at the time, we will be able to understand the variants in Irenaeus' citations. I will argue that Irenaeus intentionally altered the text of John 1:18 in order to guard against a gnosticizing interpretation of the text. With this conclusion, I will argue that Irenaeus' various citations of John 1:18 have no place in the critical apparatus of a Greek NT. Although Irenaeus made such reverential alterations of the text, he by no means saw the text as a waxen nose to be manipulated at will but used the authoritative text of Scripture within the bounds of the creeds of the Church.

CHAPTER ONE

TEXT CRITICISM'S USE OF CHURCH FATHERS: A HISTORY

This thesis will explore Irenaeus' citation of New Testament texts containing Christological titles, in order to determine their worth for New Testament textual criticism. The critical apparatus of NA²⁷ lists Irenaeus as citing John 1:18, as well as other passages, in more than one way. Did Irenaeus carelessly quote Sacred Scripture? Was he motivated by his theological polemics against the Gnostics to intentionally alter the text of Sacred Scripture? The history of textual criticism and its use of church fathers has only listed Irenaeus' citations without giving any explanation for how he could cite the same verse in multiple ways. A fresh examination of the evidence will be made by collating Irenaeus' citations from the Gospel of John which contain Christological titles. Then, by exploring Irenaeus' general use of such titles in his theological polemic, the context in which each citation is found, and his own discussion of textual variants he knew of at the time, we will be able to understand the variants in Irenaeus' citations. I will argue that Irenaeus intentionally altered the text of John 1:18 in order to guard against a gnosticizing interpretation of the text. With this conclusion, I will argue that Irenaeus' various citations of John 1:18 have no place in the critical apparatus of a Greek NT. Although Irenaeus made such reverential alterations of the text, he by no means saw the text as a waxen nose to be manipulated at will but used the authoritative text of Scripture within the bounds of the creeds of the Church.

It is important to explore and elucidate such issues for two reasons. First, scholarship is still interested in arriving as closely as possible to the original text. By evaluating how faithful Irenaeus was in citing Scripture, we can make a determination as to whether he is more or less

helpful toward this original goal of textual criticism. Second, recent textual critics have begun to tell the history of textual transmission as an end in itself. They are now asking such questions as how the Fathers interacted with and quoted Sacred Scripture. This thesis will contribute to both of these academic endeavors in an original way by discussing the heretofore unanswered question: why are there two different citations of John 1:18 in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* (hereafter, *AH*)?

There are basically three types of evidence used in the practice of textual criticism: Greek manuscripts, early versions, and citations of passages preserved by the Fathers of the Church. This paper will work with the third kind of evidence, which has not always been used and studied as much as the other kinds of evidence. In this chapter, we will see how the importance of patristic citations for textual criticism has grown in the last couple decades. We will see this as we explore the history of text critics' use of patristic citations.

The first textual critic to employ the assistance of the Fathers for his work was Francis Lucas of Bruges.¹ Living at the close of the sixteenth century, he used patristic evidence alongside the evidence of Greek manuscripts and early versions to support his discussion of selected variant texts. His collections of such evidence were primarily printed as appendices to polyglot editions of the Bible. The following seventeenth century was relatively quiet in its use of patristic quotations for text critical purposes.

In the eighteenth century, however, exegetes began to use patristic evidence more and more. John Mill published an edition of the New Testament in 1707 which contained an impressive thirty thousand variant readings. Among these, several were supported by Church Fathers but were referenced only by the name of the Father, rather than by the actual title of the

¹ This history by and large follows the contours laid out in Bruce M. Metzger, "Patristic Evidence and the Textual Criticism of the New Testament," *NTS* 18 (1972): 379–400.

writing. J. A. Bengel was also familiar with patristic quotations and used them frequently throughout the apparatus of his 1734 Greek New Testament. J. J. Wettstein employed such evidence even more in his 1751–52 edition, often citing the Father’s particular treatise in his apparatus. Toward the close of the eighteenth century, J. J. Griesbach published the first serious research using patristic citations for textual criticism. He collected and published from 1785–93 the citations of Clement of Alexandria and Origen under the title *Symbolae Criticae*.

The next textual critic to come on the scene and use the Fathers was Karl Lachmann. Lachmann produced a Greek New Testament in Berlin from 1842–1850. He included many more Fathers than Griesbach, citing from Irenaeus, Origen, Cyprian, Hilary of Poitiers, and Lucifer of Cagliari. This edition cites the evidence quite accurately and precisely, including the edition, volume and page number from each Father. Just a few years later, Samuel Tregelles published his own edition of the Greek New Testament. For this, he gathered anew all the citations from Irenaeus and Origen and then compared them with those collected and published by Lachmann and Griesbach. Tregelles is the first to supply not only the citation but also the context of the citations.

As an aid to this work of citing Fathers in the critical apparatus of a Greek New Testament, new work with patristic citations came on the scene at the end of the nineteenth century. Dean Burgon, that “doughty defender of the Textus Receptus” as Metzger calls him,² collected patristic citations into a vast index arranged by the books of the New Testament. He found some 86,439 quotations.

In the twentieth century, many large-scale, collaborative efforts were begun to catalogue these patristic citations. A comprehensive index was begun in 1975 called *Biblia Patristica*. It aims to catalogue every patristic citation by order of the canonical books of the New Testament.

² Metzger., “Patristic Evidence,” 383.

Gordon Fee, however, has cautioned users of this reference work because it does not differentiate between explicit citations and mere allusions to a passage.³ Nevertheless, such an index is helpful to scholars as a rough and quick guide for finding patristic citations.

The twentieth century continued the scholarly work of broadening and correcting the critical apparatus in editions of the Greek New Testament. Such work as the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNTP), which has produced a full critical apparatus for the Gospel of Luke, has carried this method of collecting patristic citations into critical apparatus to its fullest conclusion. Metzger points out that some 8,500 index cards were created, each containing some portion of Luke which was cited by a Father.

Such projects, while amassing an enormous wealth of data, have been found to be lacking in quality. In three articles collected into a book, Gordon Fee has shown the flaws in methodology with which many of these endeavors were undertaken. He personally calls into question the accuracy of the patristic citations of the above-mentioned IGNTP's volume on Luke's Gospel. In a footnote, Fee recounts the many errors he found in 1969 when he edited and checked the patristic citations of the project. Most citations had been taken from Migne rather than critical editions and others had simply been inaccurately cited. Fee admits that he was only able to correct 90 to 95 percent of these errors. He therefore has pleaded for a new way of studying patristic citations, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

It can easily be seen that the textual critics of Bruce Metzger's generation were still very much interested in using patristic citation to help find the original. One of Metzger's main goals in his work with patristic citations was "to consider several of the more noteworthy passages for which patristic testimony has been accorded predominant weight." The "weight" he speaks of is

³ Gordon Fee and Eldon Epp, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 348.

the weight which is useful for determining the original text. Nevertheless, Metzger alludes to a debate in textual criticism in a succinct statement:

Over the years not only the welcome discovery of New Testament manuscripts earlier than those heretofore available, but also the fresh insights concerning the significance of patristic quotations have enabled scholars to make progress in two respects: (a) in the closer approximation to the original text, and (b) in the clearer delineation of the history of the transmission of the varying forms of that text. Whereas patristic evidence may or may not contribute to attaining the former goal, it always elucidates the latter.⁴

This interest in finding the “history of transmission” still lent to the overall goal of finding the original text. Much attention has been given to the “Western text”, the “Alexandrian text”, the “Caesarean text”, and the “Byzantine/Majority text”. It is in the context of such study that Kirsopp Lake famously remarked that the primary worth of patristic citations “consists in the opportunity which they afford us of localising and dating various kinds of text in mss. and versions.”⁵ One such example of using Irenaeus’ citations in order to further the goals of text type theory is a work by Benedikt Kraft.⁶ The work was published in 1924 and aims to understand the tendencies of Irenaeus’ citations in order to compare them to a dominant text type.

In the 1960’s, Colwell and Fee pioneered a way to analyze the relationships of text types and the texts of the Fathers’. The method is a quantitative analysis which determines the percentage of agreements between a text type and the text of a particular church father. Since this only establishes rough relationships, Ehrman and Fee devised even more extensive methods in the 80’s.

⁴ Metzger, “Patristic Evidence,” 400.

⁵ Cited in Fee and Epp, *Studies*, 306.

⁶ Benedikt Kraft, *Die Evangelienzitate des Heiligen Irenaeus* (Biblische Studien 21/4; Freiburg Breisgau: Herder, 1924).

Nevertheless, this line of study has proven problematic for several reasons. The most glaring difficulty of using the Fathers for such an endeavor is that many Fathers lived in more than one locale throughout their careers. For example, Irenaeus moved from Asia Minor to Gaul and thereby had access to two different textual traditions. It is impossible to know which tradition he depended upon in writing *Adversus Haereses*. It is also presumptuous to claim that a particular Father used the same copy of the Scriptures during his life. For such reasons, along with a growing distrust of text-type theory, this use of patristic citations has waned.

For many of these reasons, several text critics at the end of the 20th century diverged from the one main goal of textual criticism: the search for the original text.⁷ David Parker even argues that making primary the goal of discovering the original text has led to a serious misunderstanding of textual criticism and its separation from the rest of the theological disciplines. Parker states that seeking the original text is “neither appropriate nor possible.” It is in some respects not appropriate because the original authors specifically intended for later generations to appropriate and make use of it in the church. That it is not possible is more of a commentary on the present state of affairs in the discipline. Parker points out that the editors of NA²⁷, which many consider to be *the* Greek New Testament, maintain that it is only a “working text” and by no means the original.⁸

As we have seen, some have shed serious doubt on the possibility of discovering the original text. Others still cling to it tenaciously. Nevertheless, many textual critics have taken up the discipline for pure historical research. Their goal is not to determine the text of the

⁷ “For me, the most exciting thing about being a textual critic over the past 15–20 years has been seeing how textual criticism has moved beyond its myopic concerns of collating manuscripts and trying to determine some kind of ‘original’ text to situating itself in the broader fields of discourse that concern an enormous range of scholars of Christian antiquity.” Bart Ehrman, “Interview with Bart Ehrman,” n.p. [cited 1 February 2010]. Online: <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2006/09/interview-with-bart-ehrman.html>.

⁸ David Parker, “Textual Criticism and Theology,” *ExpTim* 118 (2007): 585–86.

autographs of the biblical documents but to understand historically how variations came about and what possibly motivated them.⁹ Already in 1923, Souter could declare, “Even where (patristic citations) contribute little or nothing to the restoration of the actual words of the New Testament they are sure to be of value in illustrating its history.”¹⁰ Peter Head has shown that this kind of work, which began with Wettstein, was carried on through the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries and by no means started with Bart Ehrman. Parker notes,

At quite an early stage in the development of a challenge to the so-called Received Text, the textual critics found themselves in an unpleasant situation, and from the early eighteenth century were at pains to stress that textual variation was not theologically motivated, and indeed that no article of faith was affected by any variant reading.¹¹

Though Ehrman did not give rise to this line of investigation, illustrative is this explanation of his project in *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*:

To be sure, the explicit goal of the study is itself traditional. I am interested in seeing how scribes modified the words of Scripture they inherited. The methods I use to attain this goal are also traditional: they are the critical procedures customarily used to establish any text, classical or biblical. But I am less concerned with interpreting the words of the New Testament as they came from the pens of its authors than with seeing how these words came to be altered in the course of their transcription.¹²

With this dawning of the new text critical endeavor, that is to explain historically how variants came about, the use of patristic citation has become increasingly more influential on the discipline. Indeed as more people have joined the discipline and discussion of textual criticism, what once was the means of attaining the goal of the original text has become a matter of debate in and of itself. It is now agreed that the mere stacking up of external evidence is not a sufficient

⁹ For a historical narrative of when the discipline started acknowledging textual variation because of doctrinal concerns see Peter Head, “Christology and Textual Transmission: Reverential Alterations in the Synoptic Gospels,” *Novum Testamentum* 35 (1993): 105–29.

¹⁰ Alexander Souter, “The New Testament Text of Irenaeus,” in *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis* (ed. Sanday and Turner; Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), cxii.

¹¹ Parker, “Theology,” 584.

¹² Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xi.

methodology. One cannot simply add up the witnesses of one reading (external evidence) and pit them against the witnesses of another reading of the text and declare the winner to be the one with the most witnesses.

Bruce Metzger, in his article on patristic citations for use in textual criticism, has demonstrated this adequately. After giving a succinct history of the use of patristic citations, he develops an extensive rebuke of M. -E. Boismard. Boismard attempted to demonstrate the originality of a reading solely found in Fathers by simply amassing several witnesses. By showing that a reading was attested in ten, fifteen, or twenty Fathers he argued that it must be the original reading. Metzger consistently debunks his methodology by pointing the reader to the context of the quotations.

Boismard had argued that the original reading of John 11:48 omitted the words πάντες πιστεύουσιν εἰς αὐτόν καί based on three Fathers' omission of them¹³. Metzger counters cogently with this statement: "By examining the context in which each of the three Fathers quotes the verse, one can understand that to have included the clause in question would have contributed nothing to the argument and might well have diverted the reader's attention from the matter in hand." In other words, Metzger denounces the methodology of using sheer volume of witnesses of a reading to determine its weight.

This debate between Metzger and Boismard shows the evolution of the study of patristic citations for the use of New Testament textual criticism. Up until just a few decades ago, the discipline was interested in merely compiling the evidence. This endeavor has been problematised enough to force a change in the study of patristic citations. Instead of simply amassing patristic citations in a critical apparatus of the Greek New Testament with no

¹³ Metzger, "Patristic Evidence," 392.

evaluation of such citations, Metzger stated, “what is of far greater help to the textual critic is the reconstruction of the New Testament text (or texts) used by an individual Father.”¹⁴

Gordon Fee suggests the exact same thing as a way forward in order to best understand the evidence that patristic citations supply the discipline of textual criticism. Once understood, patristic evidence proves to be immensely helpful, at least in Fee’s estimation. In contrast to many scholars who have argued that the Fathers have only secondary importance,¹⁵ Fee maintains that they can have primary importance, especially for the task of establishing the history of the text, that is, if such evidence is understood well.¹⁶

Fee has made an enormous contribution to the discipline in laying out some principles for how best to do this. Though his end goals of using this evidence for obtaining the original text and for understanding the history of transmission by means of comparing the patristic data with text types¹⁷ has been largely dismissed as an impossible goal or at the very least, far too complicated with the amount of known evidence, nevertheless, Fee’s insistence on better understanding and evaluating the evidence and his proposed methods to accomplish this are extremely helpful.

Fee first sets out some definitions. He praises Robert Grant for stating already in 1950 that “patristic citations are not citations unless they have been adequately analyzed.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Metzger, “Patristic Evidence,” 384.

¹⁵ Metzger, “Patristic Evidence,” 395 states, “In the preceding analyses of passages we have found no reason to abandon the view that, in the nature of the case, it is the Greek manuscripts which provide direct evidence for the text of the New Testament, whereas the versions and patristic quotations provide indirect evidence.”

¹⁶ Fee and Epp, *Studies*, 344.

¹⁷ Metzger, “Patristic Evidence,” 400, cites these same two goals for using patristic citations.

¹⁸ Robert Grant, “The Citation of Patristic Evidence in an Apparatus Criticus” in *New Testament Manuscript Studies: The Materials and the Making of a Critical Apparatus* (ed. M. M. Parvis and A. P. Wikgren; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 117, quoted in Fee and Epp, *Studies*, 351.

Acknowledging this, Fee distinguishes the patristic use of a biblical text into three categories: allusions, adaptations, and citations.

A patristic allusion to a biblical text is a reference to the content of the passage with little to no verbal correspondence. According to Fee, these are useless for the overall reconstruction of the text but nevertheless may give hints to a specific word or phrase. The problem is that *Biblia Patristica*, among other citations of patristic evidence, references such allusions with no difference between these and what Fee calls “adaptations” and “citations.”

An adaptation is a reference to a biblical passage that has clear verbal dependence on the cited passage. Even though such references may also be influenced verbally by the Father’s argument or syntax, they nonetheless retain value for textual criticism.

Finally, a citation is an intentional citation of a passage, whether from memory or by copying. Even in this category, one must distinguish between strict and loose citations. Fee is quick to point out, though, that these three categories do not always go from least to most valuable, as if allusions and adaptations were worthless and only citations have value. When all that a Father gives is an allusion to a passage, it is still sometimes very useful for elucidating what text he read.

One thing Fee points out that makes the use of patristic citation even more challenging is when a Father quotes a text more than once but not in the same way. This paper will be examining this very phenomenon to understand what might be happening. As we will see, sometimes a Father intentionally alters the text in order to make a point. Such examples will be referred to as *alterations* throughout the rest of the paper.

Yet another part of the history of textual criticism’s usage of church fathers is the development of critical editions of the Fathers’ works. In the case of Irenaeus, his citations were first exhaustively collected by Sanday and Turner in the 1920’s. However, they did not use a

critical edition of Irenaeus because such a thing did not exist at the time of their project. They used both Harvey and Stieren for their collations, both of which have been noted to contain errors.¹⁹ Some time after their work was completed, a new critical edition of Irenaeus' *AH* appeared in the series *Sources Chretiennes*. In his above-cited article on how to adequately analyze, evaluate, and present patristic evidence, Gordon Fee notes that "in every case (the patristic evidence) is to be based *only on critical editions of the Father's works*" (his emphasis).²⁰ In the most thorough treatment of Irenaeus' citations since Sanday and Turner, W. C. Price has noted, "The critical text of (*Sources Chretiennes*) is absolutely necessary for an accurate assessment of Irenaeus' text in the Gospels. Before the completion of the SC text, there was no true critical text of Irenaeus' *AH*. This fact makes the SC edition of *AH* indispensable for the study of the textual relationships of Irenaeus' quotations from the NT."²¹ However, Fee is also quick to point out that even critical editions need to be used critically! "For NT textual criticism a note of caution must be struck, since the editors of these editions are not always sensitive to the special nature of the NT citations or to the citing habits of the Father."²²

Such critically collected evidence for Irenaeus has begun to be examined by Bart Ehrman and Ivo Tamm. Colwell's/Royse's examination of scribal tendencies has "contextualized" the weight of manuscripts. Studies like Bart Ehrman's *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* have contextualized the Fathers. The following study of Irenaeus' citations is an attempt to continue such study, so that text critics can use Irenaeus' evidence more responsibly. Scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did the vast work of mining the ore from the Fathers' works.

¹⁹ C. H. Turner, preface to *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis*, ed. Alexander Souter, Cuthbert Hamilton Turner, and W. Sanday (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), xiv.

²⁰ Fee and Epp, *Studies*, 350.

²¹ W. C. Price, "The Textual Relationships of Quotations from the Four Gospels in Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989), 187.

²² W. C. Price, "Textual Relationships, 348.

Text critical scholarship of the twenty-first century has begun to put these citations back into their original mines in order to understand how they came about in the first place. Only after such study has been done can an attempt be made to explain how useful a Father's citation efforts might be for seeking after the original text. However, even if a Father is found to be a poor, inaccurate quoter of Scripture, his citations are nevertheless interesting in and of themselves. For, in evaluating how Fathers cited Scripture, we see their attitudes toward Scripture and their methods of applying it to their various occasional situations. In this way, exploration of patristic citations bridges the disciplines of textual criticism and the history of biblical interpretation.

CHAPTER TWO

IRENÆUS' CITATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

When dealing with the question “How did Irenaeus cite a given NT text?” several complicating issues present themselves. First is that we do not have the original manuscript of *Adversus Haereses*. It has come down to us in a number of different ways. There are several Latin manuscripts, several quotations of *AH* in Greek in the writings of Epiphanius and Hippolytus, and a portion of *AH* books IV and V in Armenian. These mss, though quite close most of the time, nevertheless do differ, oftentimes precisely at the most important moments where Irenaeus is citing a NT text.

It is important, therefore, to use the critical edition of *AH* as found in the *Sources Chretiennes* series. For example in *AH* 4.20.6 where John 1:18 is quoted, Latin Irenaeus has *Unigenitus Filius*, while Armenian Irenaeus has *Unigenitus Deus*.¹ One must now determine which actually represents what Irenaeus originally wrote. It is possible that one of the translators simply translated Irenaeus' text while another translator or transcriber substituted what he knew the NT text to be even if original Irenaeus got it wrong. As Hort points out,

Whenever a transcriber of a patristic treatise was copying a quotation differing from the text to which he was accustomed, he had virtually two originals before him, one present to his eyes, the other to his mind.²

Several opinions have been offered in order to evaluate the relative merit of the three versions of *AH* and how they cite NT texts. Souter thinks Latin Irenaeus is more faithful to the

¹ It should be noted that when the extant Latin, Greek, and Armenian versions of *AH* do not differ, I have cited the Latin for ease and consistency.

² B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *Introduction and Appendix* (vol. 2 of *The New Testament in the Original Greek*; 2d ed.; Cambridge, 1896), 202.

original Irenaeus. In opposition, Hort thinks that the Greek Irenaeus is more faithful to the original Irenaeus and that Latin Irenaeus conformed its citations to the Old Latin versions of the NT. A different argument has split scholars in a similar way. Grabe, Massuet, Turner, and Sanday think the Latin Irenaeus is quite early and therefore a very faithful translation of the original. Hort, Souter, and von Hamack all see Latin Irenaeus as quite late.

Yet another debate is over the extant Armenian version of *AH*. Are the citations of the NT in the Armenian version of *AH* true to the way Irenaeus originally cited the NT, or have they been conformed to some other Armenian version of the NT? C. H. Turner addresses this issue when he is discussing the presentation of the Armenian evidence in the tome he edited.

Where the rendering of the Armenian Biblical citations back into Greek is put in ordinary type, the Armenian Irenaeus agrees with the Armenian Bible, and we cannot be sure that it represents the Greek Irenaeus as well: but where it deviates from the Armenian Bible, heavy type is employed, and it is this residuum of which we can be confident that it reproduces the Greek Irenaeus that the translator had before him.³

J. Armitage Robinson, however, uses examples from the Armenian to show where the Latin MSS are clearly corrupt, where the Latin translation is confirmed against the Greek text preserved in *catenae*, where the Armenian confirms the *A* version of Latin Irenaeus against *C* and vice versa.

To the inquirer who is in search of the Greek text which underlies the citations of St. Irenaeus the value of the Armenian translation is twofold. In the first place it offers a criterion when the Latin MSS are at variance. Secondly, where the Latin translation offers a reading which occurs also in Old Latin MSS of the New Testament, it helps us to decide whether this agreement is due to the Greek text of St Irenaeus, or is merely the result of the familiarity of the Latin translator with his own Latin Bible.⁴

³ Turner, C. H. Turner, preface to *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis*, ed. Alexander Souter, Cuthbert Hamilton Turner, and W. Sanday (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), xiv.

⁴ J. Armitage Robinson, "Variants in the Armenian Version of Books IV and V," in *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis* (ed. Souter, Alexander, Cuthbert Hamilton Turner, and W. Sanday; Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 289.

Therefore, it is not possible to say that the Armenian is either always right or always wrong. All of Robinson's arguments depend on internal arguments based on the context of the argument. He does cite *AH* 4.20.6 where the Armenian has *Unigenitus Deus* rather than the Latin *Unigenitus Filius*. However he does not explain which he believes to have prominence. Simple collation of variants among Latin, Greek, and Armenian Irenaeus are only the first step! It is this problem of simple collation of variants among the Fathers, particularly Irenaeus, which I will discuss in the final chapter on using Fathers for text criticism. In order for Fathers' citations to have any text critical worth, the hard work must first be done which differentiates transcription errors in copying the Father's work from those variants which the Father actually saw in the NT ms(s) before him.

What is most likely is that Latin Irenaeus is at some points quite faithful in its citation and at other times the Greek or Armenian version is more faithful. Though much ink has been spilled over this important debate, little consensus has emerged. It is Souter who provides the capstone on the whole endeavor when discussing such questions. "These fundamental questions, however, will perhaps never be answered with absolute certainty: the difficulties in the way are so great."⁵ In chapter three, I will explain why I think that *Unigenitus Filius* is Irenaeus' original reading based on internal evidence.

Though almost every question concerning Irenaeus' varying translators and Irenaeus' own citation are thoroughly questioned in Sanday and Turner, the one question they simply do not deal with is what to do with John 1:18. Souter even admits as he lists the evidence for John 1:18, "add. *nisi* before *μονογενης*, once *filius*, once *deus*, once *filius dei* in place of *θεος* (*υιος*)." Souter does not explain how Irenaeus could have used all three different variants. Many times he is able

⁵ Alexander Souter "The New Testament Text of Irenaeus" in *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis*. (ed. Souter, Alexander, Cuthbert Hamilton Turner, and W. Sanday; Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), cxii.

to explain which was Irenaeus' original reading and which was corrupted by a transcriber or translator wishing to harmonize Irenaeus' citation with what he knew the text to be, but in the case of 1:18 Souter assumes that Irenaeus cited that text in three different ways, and as we will see below, two other scholars Ehrman and Tamm seem to join Souter in seeing all three citations as original to Irenaeus.

Yet another scholar, William Craig Price, dealt with Irenaeus' citations of the NT for the purposes of text-type theory. Price is interested in statistical analyses of Irenaeus' citations and how they compare to the text-types and therefore does concern himself with the phenomenon of Irenaeus citing the same text in divergent ways. This phenomenon threatens to skew Price's statistical analysis. For example if Irenaeus cites a text in two ways, one having relation to the Western Text and one having relation to the Caesarean text, this takes away from the statistical consistency Price is trying to use to build his case. He therefore notes, "A total of ninety-one usable units of variation were discovered in Irenaeus' text of Matthew. Irenaeus is divided against himself four times."⁶ Price is simply reporting anything that might potentially destroy the credibility of his results and is happy to report that he sees it happening rarely. He is not interested in what might have caused this phenomenon, and he does not explicitly state where he sees this occurring.

Reading through his critical apparatus, however, one finds the following four occurrences: two in Matthew 3:16, one in 11:28, and one in 23:34. In Matthew 3:16, Greek Irenaeus (Greek Fragment 9.3–5) has *ἀνεώχθησαν αὐτῷ*, and Latin Irenaeus omits the pronoun. The other division against himself in Matthew 3:16 is where Greek Irenaeus has *καὶ ἐρχόμενον* and Latin Irenaeus omits the *καί*. In 11:28 Latin Irenaeus has *onerati estis*, and Greek Irenaeus only has

⁶ Price, "Textual Relationships," 37.

πεφορτισμένοι, leaving out ἔστε. In 23:34 at 3.18.5 Greek and Latin Irenaeus have the equivalent of an extra *καί* whereas a citation of the same passage in 4.9.1 omits the conjunction. It should be noted that the citation in 3.18.5 is a paraphrase which splices Matt. 10:17 with 23:34. Because of this, the example should be excluded since it is more of an allusion than a clear citation with a definitive variant. Therefore, of the places which Price notes Irenaeus being divided against himself, they only involve conjunctions and pronouns. We will see in the next chapter that Irenaeus often substitutes pronouns and paraphrases freely, and so these instances have little worth for textual criticism.

Price does not list any places where Irenaeus is divided against himself when he quotes Mark because he concludes there are not enough citations from Mark to warrant a statistical analysis. “There are one hundred and twenty-four useable units of variation from the Gospel of Luke. In these units of variation Irenaeus is divided against himself twice.”⁷ Both of these occurrences are in Luke 13:16. One involves the omission of a paraphrastic particle and the other a pronoun.

“There are seventy useable units of variation and Irenaeus is divided against himself only twice.”⁸ One is in John 1:4 and the other 1:18. The occurrence in 1:4 involves changing the tense of the verb from past to present. Again, we will see that Irenaeus does this kind of thing (changing tense) quite often when he is paraphrasing a passage. It is by no means a firm indication that Irenaeus’ NT ms represented the variant which Price is claiming, and in my opinion it is of no use for text-type comparison. Only in John 1:18 does Price identify a legitimate division of Irenaeus. He identifies the same variants in the same places which I will discuss later, but Price provides no explanation for this phenomenon. The occurrences of

⁷ Price, “Textual Relationships,” 105.

⁸ Price, “Textual Relationships,” 151.

Irenaeus dividing himself was a deterrent to Price's text-type analysis; he had no further interest in the matter and therefore does not explain how this came to be.

One author, Edward Burton, does venture this conjecture of how it came to be that Irenaeus could cite John 1:18 in two different ways.

Irenaeus also preserves both readings, and even in the same chapter. In one place, he has *unigenitus Filius*, the only-begotten Son; in the other, *unigenitus Deus*, the only-begotten God; and in a third place he quotes it with still a further difference, *unigenitus Filius Dei*, the only-begotten Son of God. We could hardly suppose that Irenaeus could have been so inaccurate even in the same chapter, and the variations may perhaps have arisen from the circumstance of the Latin translation being alone preserved.⁹

Though Burton tries to dissolve the dilemma by pointing to transcription errors of *AH*, he gives little evidence for his conclusion. Overall, little attempt has been made in the history of textual criticism to explain how Irenaeus could cite the same text in different ways.

Recently however more and more debate has ensued concerning the Fathers' citation techniques. Two scholars in particular, Bart Ehrman and Ivo Tamm, have squared off on the issue and finally have proposed some theories for how Irenaeus could cite John 1:18 in divergent ways.

Bart Ehrman, one of the most well-known and widely published professors in the area of Early Christianity, has spent copious time researching how the early church engaged the text of Scripture. Along with countless articles, he has written several books on individual church fathers' citation of Scripture: *The Text of the Fourth Gospel in the Writings of Origen*,¹⁰ *Didymus the Blind and the Text of the Gospels*,¹¹ and perhaps most the most well-known in

⁹ Edward Burton, *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ* (Oxford: The University Press, 1829), 167–68.

¹⁰ Bart Ehrman, *The Text of the Fourth Gospel in the Writings of Origen* (NTGF 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

¹¹ Bart Ehrman, *Didymus the Blind and the Text of the Gospels* (NTGF 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

academic circles, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*. In order to engage and critique Ehrman's arguments in the next chapter, a brief summary of his work, especially as it relates to Irenaeus, must now be laid out.

Ehrman's focus has been to pick up the mantle of Walter Bauer and continue his legacy by examining the polemic between what have traditionally been called the "orthodox" and the "heretics" in Antenicene Christianity. According to this line of thinking, academia must distance itself from seeing one of those labels as the "correct" and the other as the "incorrect" interpretation of Christianity. Ehrman goes even further, though. He does not argue for an objective, third party examination of the two sides but rather takes up the postmodern, revisionist approach to history by concerning himself with the cause of the "underdog," defending the so-called heretics from the orthodox majority. In one of his more popular works *Lost Christianities: The Battle for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* Ehrman argues that many interpretations of Christianity that were subverted by the orthodox, like Gnosticism, Valentinianism, Docetism, and Adoptionism, ought not only to be given a fair hearing today but should also be embraced as legitimate, faithful interpretations of Christianity for the 21st Century.

There is a sense that alternative understandings of Christianity from the past can be cherished yet today, that they can provide insights even now for those of us who are concerned about the world and our place in it. Those captivated with this fascination commonly feel a sense of loss upon realizing just how many perspectives once endorsed by well-meaning, intelligent, and sincere believers came to be abandoned, destroyed, and forgotten—as were the texts that these believers produced, read, and revered. But with that feeling of loss comes the joy of discovery when some of these texts, and the lost Christianities they embody, are recovered and restored to us.¹²

In *Orthodox Corruption*, Ehrman continues this project by laying out his attack on the "orthodox" arguing that they oftentimes underhandedly changed the text of Scripture in order to

¹² Bart Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 257.

win their theological battle. He explicitly states the thesis of this book as: “Scribes occasionally altered the words of their sacred texts to make them more patently orthodox and to prevent their misuse by Christians who espoused aberrant views.”¹³ The implicit and underlying message of the book is that Scripture even to the orthodox was nothing more than a “waxen nose,” to quote Luther.¹⁴ Of course Luther was referring to interpretation and commentary of Scripture treating it as a waxen nose. But Ehrman infers that the “orthodox” even treated the text itself in this way. The canonical Scriptures and their exact wording were not an authoritative source in and of themselves but were rather a propaganda tool used to promote the “orthodox” version of Christianity. The reaction of the evangelical community has eschewed Ehrman’s explicit and implicit theses in *Orthodox Corruption* and have drawn all sorts of conclusions from Ehrman’s work. Examples will be given in chapter four.

Ehrman’s version of how this all happened might go something like the following. The original authors penned the texts, but the autographs were not retained. Shortly thereafter in the 2nd and 3rd centuries the party calling themselves “orthodox” altered the texts as they were copied in order to support, undergird, and even promote their particular theological views, especially those with which the “heretics” disagreed. At the same time, they began to gather the texts into an official canon in order to give even more support to their views. While acknowledging that these writings were not gathered into a fixed 27-book New Testament, Ehrman does argue that most of the writings were afforded scriptural status and had begun to be collected into collections of writings (Gospels, Epistles, etc.). This early coming together of the canon is for Ehrman yet

¹³ Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xi.

¹⁴ Martin Luther, *The Pious and Learned Commentary of Martin Luther on the First Twenty-Two Psalms* (vol. 3 of *Select Works of Martin Luther*; trans. Henry Cole; London: T. Bensley, 1826), 446.

another tactic the “orthodox” used to undergird their theological position. Finally, the “orthodox” group argued for a certain (literal) interpretation of these texts.¹⁵

While Ehrman uses mostly manuscript evidence, he does also employ citations by church fathers to make his case. Much time in *Orthodox Corruption* is spent with Irenaeus since he is one of the foremost and earliest opponents of the heretics. After arguing that several books of the New Testament had already been afforded Scriptural status by the end of the First Century, Ehrman uses Irenaeus to further demonstrate the early canonization of Scripture as was mentioned above. “Irenaeus...embraces the Old Testament and insists with some vehemence that four Gospels belong to the Sacred Scriptures... [He] explicitly attacks a variety of heretics, both for creating Gospels of their own...and/or for accepting only one of the canonical four.”¹⁶ Irenaeus also demonstrates for Ehrman how and why the orthodox disagreed with the Gnostic interpretation of Scripture, namely that the Gnostics abandoned the literal, historico-grammatical exegesis of the Scriptures which Irenaeus held on to tightly. Most importantly, though, to demonstrate Ehrman’s thesis is that Irenaeus alters the biblical text in order to further his own theological argument.

Since John 1:18 and the variant readings associated with it figure prominently later in this paper’s study, we will use Ehrman’s treatment of this verse to particularly illustrate how he uses Irenaeus to argue his thesis. Ehrman thinks ὁ μονογενῆς υἱός (the non-Alexandrian reading) is original. One reason among many that leads him to this conclusion is the vast amount of external evidence against the Alexandrian reading μονογενῆς θεός. Ehrman lays out a long list of attestation for the non-Alexandrian reading including Irenaeus. That the non-Alexandrian reading is early and most probably original, Ehrman writes, “There is virtually no other way to

¹⁵ See Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, xii; 3–32.

¹⁶ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 20.

explain its predominance in the Greek, Latin, and Syriac traditions, not to mention its occurrence in Fathers such as Irenaeus, Clement, and Tertullian, who were writing before our earliest surviving manuscripts were produced.”¹⁷

However, after listing Irenaeus in support of this reading, Ehrman nuances this with a footnote, “That Irenaeus and Clement attest the other reading as well is readily explained by its theological usefulness.”¹⁸ On just exactly what the “usefulness” is in Irenaeus’ argumentation Ehrman does not elaborate. Ehrman’s main project as described in the thesis of *Orthodox Corruption* was primarily to explain how scribes corrupted the text. Though he spends a little time with Irenaeus and other Fathers, not enough attention has been given to the Fathers and how they cited texts in theological works.

While it remains highly debated whether scribes did alter texts based on theological motivations, I would argue that it is actually easier to understand the motivations of church fathers as they cite verses within a coherent argument. This paper is particularly interested in the phenomenon of a Father citing the same verse in differing ways. By looking at each citation within the context of the Father’s theological argument, it should become readily clear why the text has been altered in a specific way. There are indeed several examples of Irenaeus doing this, and the evidence will be given serious treatment in the next chapter.

That Irenaeus cites a text in different ways throughout his theological work might seem to undercut Ehrman’s thesis. His thesis simply stated again is that scribes (or for our purposes, Fathers) intentionally changed a certain reading in the New Testament text in order to make the text more orthodox. One would expect then, that the father would always be consistent in his citation of the verse. If a father is trying programmatically to change the text of Scripture in order

¹⁷ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 79.

¹⁸ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 112n162.

to support his theological position, he certainly would not quote the text in different ways, using the “orthodox corruption” at one point and the “heretical original” at another.

In the conclusion to his book, however, Ehrman concedes that the scribes (and Fathers for that matter) were not as consistent as one might expect.¹⁹ Though he concedes this, he maintains that it does not debunk his case. The reason for their inconsistency is the nature of the doctrine that is motivating the variants. Orthodox Christology is paradoxical in nature, affirming that Jesus Christ was (and is) both God and man.

Proto-orthodox Christians had to defend—at one and the same time—Christ’s deity against adoptionists, his humanity against docetists, and his unity against separationists. This, and primarily this, I would argue, is why scribes modified the New Testament text in seemingly contrary directions: some textual changes work to *emphasize* aspects of Christ’s human nature whereas others work to *de-emphasize* it; some work to *heighten* his divinity, whereas others work to *diminish* it. It was precisely the paradoxical character of the proto-orthodox Christology that produced such seemingly contradictory impulses: **texts that appeared to compromise Christ’s humanity were just as subject to alteration as texts that seemed to compromise his deity.**²⁰

Many have questioned whether it is methodologically possible to ascertain motivations of scribes by looking at manuscript evidence. In my opinion, it is quite possible, even probable, that some of the scribes altered the text in order to support their theological agenda. This paper is not **interested in overthrowing Ehrman’s entire case.** Where Ehrman is helpful is in forwarding the provocative and controversial thesis that some early Christians altered the text intentionally because of the doctrinal debates they were having. This thesis stands in contradistinction to the traditional thesis that all textual variants are simple mistakes in transmission. For years the position was steadfastly held that all variants were to be attributed to unintended error in the transmission process.

¹⁹Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 277.

²⁰ Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 278.

Traditionally, based on a previous caveat of scholarship that "there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for dogmatic purposes" (Hort, 1882, p. 42), it has been incumbent on the textual scholar to determine the cause of textual variants by an assortment of scientifically classified scribal proclivities for errors. Ehrman, though he agrees that the majority of textual differences are accidental slips of human nature, argues that there is sufficient evidence to prove that some were intentional.²¹

Some examples of this can be found in the footnotes of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (hereafter, *ANF*) edition of *AH*. One example is given by A. Cleveland Coxe who translated and footnoted *AH* for the *ANF* series. In *AH* where Irenaeus loosely cites or paraphrases Luke 14:27, Coxe notes, "It will be observed that the quotations of Scripture made by Irenaeus often vary somewhat from the received text. This may be due to various reasons—his quoting from memory; his giving the texts in the form in which they were quoted by heretics; or, as Harvey conjectures, from his having been more familiar with a Syriac version of the New Testament than with the Greek original."²² Another example is given in a footnote on Irenaeus' citation of Mark 13:32 in *AH* 2.28.6, where Coxe notes, "The words 'neither the angels which are in heaven' are here omitted, probably because, as usual, the writer quotes from memory."²³ This conjecture, painting Irenaeus as a less-sophisticated quoter of Scriptures, is clearly the opposite of Ehrman's thesis of intentional change. In the following chapter, I agree with Ehrman and give my reason why Irenaeus left the words out.

Beside the traditional thesis of accidental alteration and Ehrman's intentional alteration for doctrinal purposes, another scholar, Ivo Tamm, has offered a third reason why the Fathers might have altered the original text or at least the text before them. He certainly is interested in answering this question as he states,

²¹ Tony S. L. Michael, review of Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the text of the New Testament*, *AThR* 76 (1994): 378.

²² Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.3.5 (*ANF* 1:320n5).

²³ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.3.5 (*ANF* 1:401n1).

How did Irenaeus himself interact with the text? In theologically relevant places, did he intentionally change it in an anti-heretical way, in order to argue against the heretics?²⁴

A graduate student of Barbara Aland, Tamm has specifically taken up the cause of overthrowing Ehrman's *Orthodox Corruption* theory. One main criticism Ivo Tamm has of Ehrman is that Ehrman formulates his conclusion first (namely that scribes altered the text with "orthodox corruptions") and then fits the evidence into his foregone conclusion. This is the proverbial chicken and egg debate. Did Ehrman come up with his thesis and then massage the evidence to fit his conclusion, or did he, after years of examining evidence, come to his thesis and then simply laid out the evidence that led him to his conclusion? One could ask the very same question of Tamm. Did he develop his thesis that Ehrman was wrong and then gather, even massage, the evidence to fit the conclusion, or did Tamm examine closely all of Ehrman's examples and only after close inspection begin to disagree with Ehrman? Modernists maintain that they are always 100% objective and never massage evidence; postmodernists are willing to admit that the formation of the conclusion and the examination of the evidence happen in a complex interplay of object and subject. More important than resolving this intriguing methodological debate is examining Tamm's own evidence and argument, in order to evaluate his conclusion.

Tamm lays out two critical time periods in his understanding of the history of the New Testament text. The first period came before the Edict of Milan (313 AD). The Edict made Christianity a legitimate religion in the Roman Empire and afforded it important legal protections, for example ending persecution of Christians, stopping the destruction of their holy

²⁴ "Wie ist Irenäus selbst mit dem Text umgegangen? Hat er in theologisch relevanten Stellen die Texte bewusst antihäretisch verändert, um so gegen die Häretiker polemisieren zu können?" Ivo Tamm, "Theologisch-christologische Varianten in der frühen Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments?" (Masters Thesis, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 2006), 66.

books, and allowing the church to hold common property. It was before the Edict that few scriptoriums existed for the systematic, organized, and official copying of biblical texts. Therefore in the early period of the church in the midst of persecutions, the text was copied privately, one at a time, and without much ecclesiastical supervision. After the Edict was put into law, nearly every bishop established his own scriptorium where the text could be transmitted in a regulated way. It is in the earlier period that Ehrman claims most orthodox corruptions to have taken place since the text was copied more freely at that time.²⁵

During this early period the text was transmitted in two basic ways: scribes copying the text and Fathers citing the text. Tamm takes as an example P46 and argues contrary to Ehrman that this text was copied for personal use rather than for use in the church as a holy book.²⁶ Because of this the copyist took more liberties than usual. Tamm also argues that the variants in P46 are common mistakes as traditionally argued by Hort like itacism, homoioteleuton, etc. rather than theologically motivated “orthodox corruptions”.²⁷

It is Tamm’s interaction with the father’s citations that brings out a third rationale for textual variants, in distinction from Hort and Ehrman. Tamm is particularly interested in Fathers citing Scripture after 180 AD since he argues that before then the New Testament documents were not considered Scripture.²⁸ When discussing the Fathers after 180 AD, particularly

²⁵ Tamm, “Theologisch-christologische Varianten,” 26.

²⁶ Tamm, “Theologisch-christologische Varianten,” 13.

²⁷ Tamm, “Theologisch-christologische Varianten,” 12–18.

²⁸ Tamm, “Theologisch-christologische Varianten,” 9–10. Tamm argues here that Papias had a low view of Scripture and therefore did not consider there to be a New Testament canon at that time. It is not until 180 AD that Tamm sees a canon formed, taking his cue from Irenaeus’ comments. From this argument Tamm concludes that no father would have undertaken to cite the text word-for-word until 180 AD. Tamm demonstrates his position clearly in this passage: “Der Wandel kam durch die Entstehung des Textbewusstseins um 180 n. Chr. und realisierte sich im Zuge der Kanonisierung des neutestamentlichen Textes. Man sah ein, dass der neutestamentliche Text Offenbarung ist und als solche wörtlich wiedergegeben werden musste. Erst von der Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts an bildete sich bei den christlichen Autoren dieses Textbewusstsein aus, und man zitierte erst dann nach vorliegenden Handschriften.” David Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), has argued that the canon was established by 150 AD, which is also the time when Papias would have written.

Irenaeus, he points out that they were schooled in the Greco-Roman tradition²⁹ which has great implications for how they cited texts.

The classical citation technique was, for the most part, rather precise and faithful to the text. Nevertheless, it was acceptable for an author to make insertions, omissions, or to change the word order of the text being quoted.³⁰ This technique allowed the author to emphasize a particular phrase or word while at the same time devaluing other words which were not pertinent to the argument at hand. Tamm points out, therefore, how important it is to understand the author's use of the citation and how the citation fits into the author's wider argument in order to understand why the citation was altered from its original state.³¹

With these quotes, Tamm is indeed pointing us in the right direction. The Fathers believed they were being more, not less, faithful to the text when they omitted, added, or altered words and phrases here and there in order to highlight their argument. Similar is Richard Bauckham's argument that the Gospel of John is more, not less, historical because faithful history in antiquity always ruminated on the actual events and gave a deeper interpretation than just reporting the straight facts³².

²⁹ Tamm, "Theologisch-christologische Varianten," 57–58. Though some light has been shed specifically on the topic of Irenaeus' Greek background and education (see Robert M. Grant, "Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture," *HTR* 42 [1949]: 41–51 and William R. Schoedel, "Theological Method in Irenaeus [*Adv. Haer.* 2.25–28]," *JTS* 35 [1984]: 31–49), there is good evidence that Irenaeus was raised in a Jewish settlement in Asia Minor and therefore might also carry some Jewish background in his approach to the Scriptures (see Roland H. Worth, *The Seven Cities of the Apocalypse and Roman Culture* [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999], 52).

³⁰ Note the examples of Irenaeus using similar techniques in the following chapter.

³¹ Tamm, "Theologisch-christologische Varianten," 58. "Bei den christlichen Autoren kann angenommen werden, dass sie ab etwa 150 n. Chr. griechisch bzw. römisch gebildet waren, da sie ihre Zitate oft auf diese Weise einfügen. Das antike Zitat charakterisiert sich durch Zitatsabbrüche, Omissionen und Umbildungen, die in den Kontext des jeweiligen Autors eingefasst werden. Bei der Analyse der Zitate wird deutlich, dass sie größtenteils genau sind, obwohl sie stilistische Veränderungen am Text vorweisen. Die Textveränderungen sind mit einer bestimmten Funktion verbunden. Beispielsweise dienen Omissionen dazu, ein bestimmtes Wort besonders hervorzuheben oder den ganzen Versteil zu betonen, wobei kleinere Varianten sogar für das Verständnis der Textstruktur eines ganzen Abschnittes oder Buches entscheidend sein können.¹⁶⁴ Bei der Analyse der Zitierweise ist es wichtig, auf den Inhalt der Argumentation, in die das Zitat eingebettet ist, zu achten."

³² Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 358–83.

But, does Tamm follow this helpful logic to explain the variants in Irenaeus?

In order to demonstrate that Ehrman is wrong and that the Fathers cited the New Testament text in the way he is proposing, Tamm proposes to examine Irenaeus' citation of the Johannine Prologue. He explains that he will restrict his study to an analysis of Irenaeus' citations of the Johannine Prologue as found in *AH*.³³

Tamm begins to answer this question by laying out what he calls a collation done by W. Bluemer in Muenster. First, Tamm tries to dismantle Ehrman's argument that there are "orthodox corruptions" at all by maintaining that Ehrman's "orthodox corruptions" are most likely the earlier and therefore the non-corrupted texts. In relation to John 1:18, Tamm argues that *μονογενής θεός* is the original (contrary to Ehrman who thinks that *υἱός* is original), because *θεός* is actually the more difficult reading and because it fits the internal evidence of the Prolog. The word *υἱός* is nowhere used in the Prolog, and *λόγος* is actually referred to as God earlier in 1:1.³⁴

Therefore, when Irenaeus uses *μονογενής θεός*, it is not as Ehrman charges, an orthodox corruption, but rather Irenaeus is simply citing the earlier and original text. According to Tamm, Irenaeus' motivation to use this variant is not because he is trying to argue for the deity of Jesus by changing the text of Scripture but rather because Irenaeus sees *μονογενής θεός* in the manuscript directly before him.

This being said, Tamm must still deal with the phenomenon of Irenaeus citing not only *Unigenitus Deus* but also *Unigenitus Filius* and also *Unigenitus Filius Dei*. Tamm sees four

³³ Tamm, "Theologisch-christologische Varianten," 66. "Dieser Frage soll anhand der irenäischen Zitate aus dem Johannesprolog nachgegangen werden. Dabei soll die Aufmerksamkeit vor allem auf die Texte fallen, in denen der neutestamentliche Text verändert wird. Um den Gebrauch des Textes des Neuen Testaments darstellen zu können, wird die Analyse auf die Zitate des Prologs des Johannesevangeliums (Joh 1,1–18) bei Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses* beschränkt."

³⁴ Tamm, "Theologisch-christologische Varianten," 33, 36–38.

places where John 1:18 is cited. He reports that *AH* 1.8.3 (it is actually 1.8.5) and 4.20.11 have *Unigenitus Deus* in their citation of John 1:18. 4.20.6 has *Unigenitus Filius*, and 3.11.6 has *Unigenitus Filius Dei*. This is where Tamm relies on his thesis that the Fathers used the classical citation technique which allowed some variation from the original text being cited so long as it does not alter the overall argument. Tamm explains 1.8.5 as only a debate about interpretation and not the text itself, therefore it does not matter in Tamm's eyes how the verse is actually cited. In 3.11.6, 4.20.6, and 4.20.11, Tamm argues that the context is only talking about how Jesus makes God known, and therefore concludes, "Irenaeus is not necessarily interested in 'God' or 'Son' as a title of Jesus...The intention to designate Jesus as God, like Ehrman wants to see it, is not present here."³⁵

However, what will become more apparent in chapter three is that Irenaeus does not necessarily always support Tamm's thesis. Irenaeus is actually very interested in christological titles and uses them in quite a precise way. A fresh look at the evidence is necessary and a new theory for understanding Irenaeus', and perhaps other church fathers', citation of Scripture is needed.

³⁵ Tamm, "Theologisch-christologische Varianten," 68–69. "Irenaeus ist also am Deus oder Filius als Bezeichnung fuer Jesus nicht interessiert...Die Intention Jesus als Gott darzustellen, wie Ehrman es sehen will, ist hier nicht vorhanden."

CHAPTER THREE

A FRESH LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE

Having discussed the secondary literature and its treatment of Irenaeus' citation of Scripture, we come to a discussion of the evidence itself, or rather my interpretation of it and how this differs from both Ehrman, Tamm, and other scholars. Before we look at the passages where Irenaeus cites the same verse in divergent ways, it is important to state that Irenaeus can and often does cite a text verbatim. A few examples will suffice which Tamm helpfully lays out in his paper.¹ Verses from the Johannine Prolog which Irenaeus cites faithfully are: 1:1 in *AH* 3.11.1 and 5.18.2, 1:2 in *AH* 3.11.1 and 5.18.2, 1:3 in *AH* 3.11.1, 1:5 in *AH* 3.11.1, 1:6 in *AH* 3.11.4, 1:8 in *AH* 3.11.4, 1:11 in *AH* 3.11.2 and 5.18.2–3, 1:12 in *AH* 5.18.2, and 1:14 in *AH* 5.18.2. Also to be noted are the times where Irenaeus' citation diverges from the Vulgate but nevertheless has ample witness in other manuscripts. Such examples still demonstrate that Irenaeus is possibly citing the manuscript before him.

In *AH* 3.11.2 and 5.18.2 he cites John 1:10–11 as *In hoc mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est, et mundus eum non cognouit. In sua propria uenit, et sui eum non receperunt*. First, it is important to note that Irenaeus cites these same verses in the two aforementioned places in his work in precisely the same way, which excludes this example from the cases below where Irenaeus cites the same verse in different ways. The Vulgate does not have the demonstrative pronouns *hoc* and *sua* as does Irenaeus' citation of this verse, but these pronouns are attested in

¹ Tamm, "Theologisch-christologische Varianten," 66.

several other Old Latin MSS. Therefore it can be concluded that Irenaeus' version of John 1:10–11 is faithfully cited even though the citation diverges from the Vulgate.

Another example is where Irenaeus cites Mark 1:2. The Vulgate has *in esaia propheta*, but Irenaeus has *in prophetis*. One might conclude that Irenaeus could not remember which prophet Mark 1:2 quoted and so simply wrote “prophets”, but there are some manuscripts that also have this variant, including the Greek manuscripts A, W, the *f*¹³ family, and the majority manuscripts. It is at least possible that Irenaeus knew Mark 1:2 from one of these manuscripts or from one of their no longer extant ancestors, and therefore this citation of Irenaeus' still lends support to the argument that he is able to cite word-for-word from Scripture.

These examples show that Irenaeus was not simply sloppy or forgetful when he cited Scripture as some have traditionally argued. Some may counter that a few examples of Irenaeus' word-for-word citation do not guard against the possibility that his memory faltered in other places. This is true, but my concern thus far is only to demonstrate that Irenaeus is at the very least capable of word-for-word citation even if he does not do this all the time. We may not therefore dismiss him as an unsophisticated user of Scripture who played fast and loose with its wording. In the next chapter, I will even discuss Irenaeus on a text critical problem he himself identifies in manuscripts of heretics (616 as the number of the beast in Rev. 22:19), which is yet another reason to believe that Irenaeus was quite aware of the importance of the wording of Scripture. Since Irenaeus is able to cite passages in a straightforward, word-for-word manner and report on textual variants, we need to reexamine the Irenaeian passages which do diverge from traditional word-for-word citation to better understand what might have happened in those situations.

There are plenty of these times when Irenaeus does diverge in his citation from any extant manuscript. As Tamm argued in the previous chapter, it was the practice of classical authors to

cite a text but thereby also appropriate it to their own context. For example, it would have been completely acceptable among an ancient crowd if a speaker cited a text using the pronoun “these” and the speaker altered the text and used the word “those”. Like all other classical authors, there are several texts where Irenaeus paraphrases to match his contextual argument.

An example is Irenaeus’ citation of John 2:21 in *AH* 5.6.2. He first cites verse 21 as follows: *Hoc autem, inquit, dicebat de corpore suo*. With the insertion of *inquit* it is clear that Irenaeus is citing 21 intentionally. Nevertheless he uses the demonstrative pronoun “this” in both Latin (*hoc*) and Greek (τούτο) when both the Vulgate and the Greek NT use “that” (*ille* and ἑκεῖνος, respectively). Though he changes the pronoun, we may not conclude that Irenaeus is citing from memory and cannot remember which is the correct reading. Nor can we argue that Irenaeus has a complete disregard for the text altogether and therefore can cite it any way he pleases. He is rather using the freedom that classical authors were afforded in citing texts, especially when the variation is of no consequence to his argument.

Another example is when Irenaeus quotes John 2:21 in *AH* 5.6.2. The Vulgate has *ille autem dicebat de templo corporis sui*, and there are no variants listed for that first demonstrative pronoun. Irenaeus, however, uses the pronoun *hoc*. Again, he can do this because it was acceptable at that time (as it is still today, actually) to do some paraphrasing of a minor nature such as involving pronouns when citing a text (the only difference between the classical age and today in this regard is that we require parentheses when we make changes to an author’s own words). It is for these reasons that Price’s work, as discussed in the last chapter which depended so heavily on variants involving conjunctions and pronouns, is nevertheless so problematic and must not be admitted for use in text critical studies.

This paper is primarily interested in what happens when a Father, in this case Irenaeus, cites a verse more than once and cites it in different ways in different locations, especially when

this happens with more substantial variants like those involving Christological titles. There are two examples of this just in Irenaeus' citations of John chapter one.

One example of an Irenaeian misquoted verse which involves a Christological title is John 1:14. Irenaeus cites the verse as it is widely attested, *Verbum caro factum est*, in several places including *AH* 1.8.6, 1.9.2, 3.10.3, 3.11.2, 3.11.3, 3.16.2, 3.16.8, 4.20.2, 5.18.2. Yet in *AH* 1.9.2, 1.9.3, 1.10.3 and 3.11.3, 3.20.2, 5.14.1, 5.16.2, 5.18.3 Irenaeus writes *Verbum dei caro factum est*. To my knowledge, this reading is no where attested in either Greek or Latin manuscripts. It is such a quoted verse, in fact the most quoted by Irenaeus of all the verses of this gospel, that it is surprising how often Irenaeus misquotes the verse. Surely the argument cannot be used that Irenaeus is citing from memory and had in these places a sometimes lapse.

Instead, I would make the argument that these are all allusions. In allusions, Irenaeus is especially interested in clarifying terminology. Especially in 3.11.3 is it especially clear that Irenaeus is going to great lengths to keep the title of Logos connected both to Jesus as Word and to the one and only God (his Gnostic opponents wanted to see three distinct beings in the three distinct terms—Logos, Word, and God), and so Irenaeus calls the Logos the Word of God. Just a few lines later Irenaeus does demonstrate that he knows the passage as is everywhere else cited when he says, "Therefore the Lord's disciple, pointing them all out as false witnesses, says," and then quotes John 1:14. This is clearly the citation, and the previous occurrence where Irenaeus has *Verbum Dei* is the allusion. In this case, this allusion, being a reverential but deliberate alteration, is not useful for the traditional goal of textual criticism, that is of finding the original text. However, the example does instruct us on how Irenaeus used Scripture.

The other example which was addressed already in the previous chapter is Irenaeus' treatment of John 1:18. I will now lay out my own interpretation of Irenaeus' John 1:18 citations in order to distinguish them from Tamm's interpretation which was discussed in the previous

chapter. The reader will recall that Tamm relegated the variation in Christological titles to the same category as the pronouns I just described, that is, to meaningless variation. This is certainly not the case once one begins to understand the broader context of Irenaeus' argument surrounding the citation as will be seen in *AH* 1.8.5, 3.11.6, 4.20.6, and 4.20.11 below.

In 1.8.5 Irenaeus is arguing against Ptolemaeus and actually quotes Ptolemy in order to disagree with him. It is within the Ptolemaic quote that John 1:18 is cited or actually alluded to. Irenaeus writes, *Itaque principium quoddam subiecit quod primum factum est a Deo* (and note especially the following clause:) *quod etiam [nunc vocat, et] Filium et Unigenitum Deum vocat, in quo omnia Pater praemisit seminaliter*. It is unclear in this sentence just who it is who is calling this being both "Son and Only begotten God". *Vocat* does not have a subject supplied. So, is Irenaeus writing this as an aside, noting that he himself calls this being both titles? Is Irenaeus saying that Ptolemy calls this being both titles? Or is Irenaeus saying that known manuscripts call this being both titles? Answering this question is irrelevant and probably cannot be answered definitively.

What is relevant is that Irenaeus is aware that *someone* is using both titles. What is more, this statement occurs in the midst of a discussion of the Ptolemaic interpretation of the Johannine Prolog. Since *Filium* is used nowhere else in the Prolog beside the variant in 1:18 and likewise for *Unigenitum Deum*, it is quite possible that Irenaeus is alluding to 1:18 and the fact that the two variants existed already in his time. The whole discussion of *AH* 1.8.5 is around titles in the Johannine prolog and how they are to be interpreted and to whom they are to be assigned. Irenaeus quotes John 1:1–2, 3, 4, 5, and 14 all in this little section in discussing the titles of the Ogdoad. *AH* 1.8.5 starts out this way: "Further, they teach that John, the disciple of the Lord,

indicated the first Ogdoad, expressing themselves in these words..."² He goes on to list several titles which comprise the Ogdoad, the first tetrad of which is Father, Charis, Monogenes, and Aletheia, the second of which is Logos, Zoe, Anthropos, and Ecclesia. All these titles come directly from the Johannine Prolog, and this Ogdoad is the Ptolemaic way of understanding John 1:1–18. So when Irenaeus says in *AH* 1.8.5 that Jesus is called both *μονογενής θεός* and *μονογενής υἱός*, he is referring to titles for Christ specifically in the Johannine prolog because all the other titles discussed in this section are specifically titles from the Prolog. Since these two titles are not found anywhere else beside 1:18, it is quite possible that Irenaeus in this allusion to 1:18 is giving evidence of his awareness that the two variants existed already in his time.

In 3.11.6 Irenaeus cites John 1:18 in a rather unique way. He cites the passage as follows: *nemo uidit umquam, nisi Unigenitus Filius Dei qui est in sinu Patris ipse enarrauit*. No other manuscript or church father has *Unigenitus Filius Dei*. Traditional commentators have dismissed this as Irenaeus citing from memory. Tamm argues in much the same manner, dismissing it as an irrelevant change like other classical authors who took liberties with the text they were citing. There are several reasons why this reading is wrong.

First, Irenaeus is fully aware of Christological titles. The Gnostics had taken the titles, especially those from the Johannine Prolog, and interpreted each title as an entity unto itself. The following discussion is found in *AH* 3.11.1, just a few paragraphs from 3.11.6 where John 1:18 is cited.

John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that "knowledge" falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word; and not, as they allege, that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another; and that the Son of the

² Irenaeus, *AH* 1.8.5 (*ANF* 1:328).

Creator another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma; and that Monogenes was the beginning, but Logos was the true son of Monogenes.³

After Irenaeus demonstrates his knowledge of the dizzyingly complex system of the Valentinians where each title is its own entity, surely Irenaeus could not simply disregard the titles as if they play no important role in his argument. Rather, Irenaeus argues throughout *AH* that these titles point not to many deities but only to one—that is, to Jesus who is both God and man. So when Irenaeus does use titles, he uses them in quite specific ways knowing that his opponents have built an entire theological system based on the different titles of the Johannine Prolog.

After the discussion of titles in 3.11.6, Irenaeus continues to discuss how the Gnostics taught other errors concerning Jesus. One error was that some held Jesus to be the “Son of the Demiurge”, others that he was the son of Mary and Joseph but that the Christ descended on him. This whole discussion of the son takes place in 3.11.3, again just a few paragraphs before his citation of John 1:18. Irenaeus takes up the task in this section of explaining just whose son Jesus really is. In 3.11.4 he says, “And that we may not have to ask, Of what God was the Word made flesh (*cuius Dei Verbum Caro factum est*) John himself teaches us saying...”⁴ Clearly Irenaeus is trying to make it clear *whose* son Jesus really is. This is why Irenaeus quotes the passage in the way he does. It is the *Unigenitus Filius Dei*, the only-begotten Son of God Himself, who has made God known. Because Irenaeus is well aware of how the Gnostics interpret titles and because he is particularly interested in emphasizing that Jesus is the Son of God Himself, he cites John 1:18 with an extra word in order to maintain its orthodox interpretation.

³ Irenaeus, *AH* 3.11.1 (*ANF* 1:426).

⁴ Irenaeus, *AH* 3.11.4 (*ANF* 1:427).

Having looked at these two citations in 1.8.5 and 3.11.6, we turn our attention now to the two citations in *AH* 4.20 (.6 and .11). In regards to *AH* 4.20.6, there is a text critical problem among the manuscripts of *AH* themselves which must first be solved before we can understand this citation of John 1:18. As discussed in the previous chapter, several earlier commentators tried to establish the priority of either the Latin, Greek, or Armenian versions of *AH*. We saw there that no consensus has emerged in scholarship on this issue, and in my opinion there is good reason. It becomes exceedingly difficult to say which, if any, of the versions of *AH* are immune from harmonization with the corresponding versions of the New Testament.

Internal evidence helps to solve the dilemma in *AH* 4.20.6 whether *Unigenitus Filius* or *Unigenitus Deus* is Irenaeus' original reading. Book 4, section 20 starts off this way, "As regards His greatness, therefore it is not possible to know God, for it is impossible that the Father can be measured; but as regards His love (for this it is which leads us to God by His Word), when we obey Him, we do always learn that there is so great a God..."⁵ Irenaeus establishes in this opening statement two very important truths: first, it is impossible to know God the Father immediately, and second, through the Word, we do come to know God. Irenaeus continues this thought later in 4.20.1 by saying, "For with Him (God) were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things..."⁶ Here Irenaeus is careful to point out in Trinitarian language how the invisible, unknown God is the same God but nonetheless distinct from the Word / Son and the Wisdom / Spirit. He continues this argument almost word-for-word in 4.20.4, "There is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things..."⁷

⁵ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.1 (*ANF* 1:487).

⁶ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.1 (*ANF* 1:487–88).

⁷ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.4 (*ANF* 1:488).

In 4.20.5 Irenaeus begins to talk about seeing God while continuing his Trinitarian distinctions. “For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son of God, and the Son leading him to the Father.”⁸ Finally, in 4.20.6 directly before Irenaeus cites John 1:18 he writes,

But as He who worketh all things in all is God, [as to the points]⁹ of what nature and how great He is, [God] is invisible and indescribable to all things which have been made by Him, but He is by no means unknown: for all things learn through His Word that there is one God, the Father, who contains all things, and who grants experience to all, as is written in the Gospel: “No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared [Him]”.¹⁰

Finally, directly after the citation of John 1:18, starts a new section (4.20.7) with these words, “Therefore the Son of the Father declares [Him] from the beginning...” If Irenaeus had originally had *Unigenitus Deus* in his citation, you would have expected him to use this same terminology in his next sentence, but he uses *Filius* in the next sentence.

From these excerpts of *AH* 4.20.1–6, one can see several things. First, Irenaeus maintains that although there is only one God, there are three distinct persons. Second, he refers to each of the three persons of the Trinity using two different but interchangeable terms. There is God who is also the Father. There is the Word who is also the Son. There is Wisdom who is also the Spirit. Never in this section does Irenaeus refer to the Son using the title “God,” though we have seen that he does in other sections of *AH*. Here, however, the second person of the Trinity is never referred to as “God.” It would seem strange then if Irenaeus had originally cited John 1:18 here

⁸ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.5 (*ANF* 1:489).

⁹ It should be noted throughout the rest of this chapter that when square brackets are used in quotes from *ANF*, they represent words that are not found in the Latin or Greek of *Sources Chretiennes*.

¹⁰ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.6 (*ANF* 1:489).

using *Unigenitus Deus* because that would not have fit at all into the general flow of his argument. It makes much more sense in an extended argument where Irenaeus is making a concerted effort to use precise titles for the second person of the Godhead (namely, “Word” and “Son”), that Irenaeus would choose a proof text which would employ the same terminology in order to fully support his argument. Therefore, based on the internal evidence presented, Irenaeus most likely cited John 1:18 using *Unigenitus Filius* as the Latin manuscripts of *AH* attest.

While there was a significant text critical problem among the manuscripts of *AH* 4.20.6, there is only a minor problem for 4.20.11. All the manuscripts have *Unigenitus Deus* here, except one. The Latin manuscript of *AH* labelled *Salmanticensis* (S) omits *Deus*. Since all the other Latin manuscripts, the Arminian, and the Greek agree, it can be concluded that this was a scribal omission, either by pure mistake or by intentional omission. It could be that after the scribe had written *Unigenitus Filius* in 4.20.6, he had a hard time writing *Unigenitus Deus* in 4.20.11, the two citations of John 1:18 occurring so close together, that he simply omitted *Deus*, not wanting to further the divergent citations he found in these two places in the manuscript from which he was copying. Whatever the case, it seems pretty clear that Irenaeus originally cited John 1:18 in 4.20.6 as *Unigenitus Filius* and in 4.20.11 as *Unigenitus Deus*.

Now we must try to understand how Irenaeus could have possibly done something like this, citing the same verse in two different ways so close to each other. As we did with the above citations, we must establish what Irenaeus is arguing against and for, in other words what the contextual argument is in which the verses are cited. This, in turn, will give insight into how Irenaeus could have possibly cited the same verse in two different ways within a few paragraphs of each other. It must again be definitively stated that Irenaeus is not unaware of how he uses Christological titles. In this section Irenaeus continues to debunk the Pleroma schema of the Gnostics where each Christological title is a different entity. Since Irenaeus is aware of how

precisely his opponent uses the titles, he also uses them in very specific ways. This Pleroma system in general is what Irenaeus is arguing against in 4.19–20.

There are two things which Irenaeus is specifically trying to argue for in 4.19–20. On the one hand, Irenaeus wants to establish that there is no higher God besides the God of the Bible, in other words, God the Father's transcendence. On the other hand, he wants to establish that the Son of God has brought God close to mankind by making Him known through the Son, in other words God's immanence. Irenaeus lays out the twofold error of the heretics in this way,

But to allege that those things which are super-celestial and spiritual, and, as far as we are concerned, invisible and ineffable, are in their turn the types of celestial things and of another Pleroma, and [to say] that God is both the image of another Father, is to play the part both of wanderers from the truth, and of absolutely foolish and stupid persons...if man comprehends not the fulness and the greatness of His hand, how shall any one be able to understand or know in his heart so great a God? Yet, as if they had now measured and thoroughly investigated Him, and explored Him on every side, they feign that beyond Him there exists another Pleroma of Aeons, and another Father...but that, on the other hand, the Demiurge does not reach so far as the Pleroma; and thus they represent neither of them as being perfect and comprehending all things. For the former will be defective in regard to the whole world formed outside the Pleroma, and the latter in respect of that [ideal] world which was formed within the Pleroma; and [therefore] neither of these can be the God of all. But that no one can fully declare the goodness of God from the things made by Him, is a point evident to all. And that His greatness is not defective, but contains all things, and extends even to us, and is with us, every one will confess who entertains worthy exceptions of God.¹¹

To summarize, on the one hand, the Gnostics claimed that Father, Son, Spirit (and all the other beings of the Pleroma for that matter) are only images of a higher Pleroma and therefore are not the most high God. Irenaeus disagrees with this because on the one hand, no one is able to understand God Himself. God Father, Son, and Spirit (and all the other names by which they're known which make up the Pleroma like Christ, Wisdom, Jesus, Truth, etc.) are all God almighty and in some way not able to be explored and understood enough to definitively say that

¹¹ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.19.1 (*ANF* 1:486–87).

there is another God higher than Father, Son, and Spirit. Irenaeus' point here is that all three persons are the most high God.

On the other hand, the heretics claimed that the Demiurge or Creator was outside of the Pleroma and therefore could not make the Pleroma known to creation. Irenaeus counters that the God who made all things is both the most high God who also can make the most high God known to creation through created means, like the bodily, incarnated, most high God, Jesus.

Having established these two errors in 4.19, Irenaeus then proceeds in 4.20 to establish his view using Scripture. Throughout 4.20 he goes back and forth between these two points, that on the one hand God is invisible and unknowable and most high, and on the other hand the Son has made God known through creation (the body of Jesus) to creation (namely us). A couple examples of this follow,

There is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things; but this Creator (Demiurge) who has granted this world to the human race, and who, as regards His greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by Him (for no man has searched out His height, either among the ancients who have gone to their rest, or any of those who are now alive); but as regards His love, He is always known through Him by whose means He ordained all things. Now this is His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ.¹²

For man does not see God by his own powers; but when He pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills and as He wills. For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son of God, and the Son leading him to the Father..¹³

These examples demonstrate that Irenaeus continues throughout 4.20 to argue on this two-fold basis, that God is both transcendent and invisible and that He is also immanent and made known through the Son and Spirit.

¹² Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.4 (*ANF* 1:488).

¹³ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.4 (*ANF* 1:489).

The next example then is instructive as we will see that Irenaeus moves from the first point (that God is invisible and unknowable) to his second point (that the Son and the Spirit make this invisible God visible and knowable), and in order to back up this second point, Irenaeus quotes John 1:18 using the “Son” variant, *Unigenitum Filium*.

[God] is invisible and indescribable to all things which have been made by Him, but He is by no means unknown: for all things learn through His Word that there is one God the Father, who contains all things, and who grants existence to all, as is written in the Gospel: “No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared [Him.]” Therefore the Son of the Father declares [Him] from the beginning...¹⁴

After this section, Irenaeus continues his back and forth rhetoric against both of these errors, specifically addressing how the prophets said both that no one could see God face-to-face and that they did see God face-to-face. In 4.20.9, he quotes Exodus 33:20–22 where Moses is told that he cannot see the face of God and live but on the other hand that Moses would be put in the rock and then he would see God’s back parts. Irenaeus has an extremely innovative Christological way of understanding this passage. He interprets these verses in this way,

Two facts are thus signified: that it is impossible for man to see God; and that through the wisdom of God, man shall see Him in the last times, in the depth of a rock, that is, in His coming as a man. And for this reason did He [the Lord] confer with him face to face on the top of a mountain, Elias being also present, as the Gospel relates, He thus making good in the end the ancient promise. The prophets, therefore, did not openly behold the actual face of God, but [they saw] the dispensations and the mysteries through which man should afterwards see God.¹⁵

In other words, Moses was not allowed to see God originally in Old Testament times. However, in New Testament times, Moses did behold the face of God as he conversed with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Here, the Son is not just the one who makes God the Father known, but the Son is actually God Himself, so that when someone saw the face of the Son, they saw the

¹⁴ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.6 (*ANF* 1:489).

¹⁵ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.9 (*ANF* 1:490).

face of God. It is in this same context that Irenaeus writes in 4.20.11 these words,

If, then, neither Moses, nor Elias, nor Ezekiel, who had all many celestial visions, did see God; but if what they did see were similitudes of the splendour of the Lord, and prophecies of things to come; it is manifest that the Father is indeed invisible, of whom also the Lord said, "No man hath seen God at any time." But His Word, as He Himself willed it, and for the benefit of those who beheld, did show the Father's brightness, and explained His purposes (as also the Lord said: "The only-begotten God, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [Him];" and He does Himself also interpret the Word of the Father as being rich and great)^{16,17}

Here Irenaeus is trying to show that seeing the face of the *Unigenitus* is actually the same as seeing the face of God Himself. Unlike the previous context which was trying to establish that it is the Son who makes the invisible Father known, here the concern is to show that *Unigenitus* is actually God Himself. Remember, the original heretical opinion which Irenaeus is countering in 4.19–20 is twofold. On the one hand, the heretics were arguing that the persons of the Pleroma, like the *Unigenitus*, were not God most high, and on the other hand, that the Creator and the Incarnated could not actually make God the most high known. In 4.20.6, he argues that the *Unigenitus* is the incarnate Son who makes the Father known. In 4.20.11, he argues that the *Unigenitus* is God most high, and that when you see the face of *Unigenitus* you see the face of God. It is for this reason that Irenaeus changes how he cites John 1:18, depending on whether he is emphasizing the humanity or divinity of the *Unigenitus*.

In conclusion, we have seen that Irenaeus is very aware of his use of Christological titles and how he uses them. After all, there is much at stake in using these titles. When Irenaeus cites a passage of Scripture like John 1:18, which is full of Christological titles, there is great danger, if he cites it as it stands in the manuscripts, that the Gnostics will continue to misinterpret it according to their schema. In other words, being "faithful" in citing the text in these cases (ie.

¹⁶ These rounded parentheses denote in ANF an editorial decision to show the manner in which Irenaeus was speaking. There is no indication in *Sources Chretiennes* that these parentheses are justified or necessary.

¹⁷ Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.11 (*ANF* 1:491).

citing it the way it occurs in his and the heretics' manuscripts) could actually have been an act of unfaithfulness to the orthodox understanding of the text for which Irenaeus is arguing. Irenaeus is not merely reading his own theology into the text, but rather believes this is how the text wants itself to be read. Therefore, in my opinion, Irenaeus purposefully misquotes the text in order to guard against a faulty interpretation of it.

This explanation is contrary to Tamm's conclusion as summarized in the previous chapter and is much more in line with Ehrman's thinking. Was this an "orthodox corruption" as Ehrman calls it? It is not as if Irenaeus is arguing that his manuscript actually contains the words *Unigenitus Filius Dei* and therefore this exegetical insight wins the doctrinal debate he is having. Instead, Irenaeus cites the passage in a way that guards against the misinterpretation of the Gnostics. In this way, Irenaeus is being more- not less-faithful to the text by quoting it in the way he believes the text wants itself to be understood. On the other hand, Irenaeus is not arguing that from here on all scribes ought to transcribe the text in this way when they are copying the Gospel of John. The arguments Irenaeus has with heretics are not actually on what wording John 1:18 should have but rather to whom the titles in the Prolog refer. Because Irenaeus wants to make it crystal clear that he believes the *Unigenitus Filius* to be specifically the Son of the Most High God, he intentionally misquotes the verse so that it will be properly interpreted according to his Christology, i.e., the Christology he sees in the Gospel of John.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE VALUE OF IRENAEUS' NT CITATIONS FOR NT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

In the previous chapter, I made a fresh examination of Irenaeus' use of John 1:18 in his doctrinal debates in *AH*. I attempted to show that in all of his varying citations of this verse, it was the contextual argument which shaped his citation of John 1:18. Because of this, I called Irenaeus' different citations of the same verse "reverential alterations". Having determined how Irenaeus was using this verse, we can now begin to ask whether or not Irenaeus' use of John 1:18 has any value or worth for textual criticism.

The most universally used critical text of the Greek NT, NA²⁷, lays out in its introduction a few principles for its use of church fathers.

First, the quotation must be useful for textual criticism, i.e., the New Testament text quoted by the author must be recognizable as such. An author's paraphrases, variations, or sheer allusions have no place in the apparatus of a critical edition of the New Testament. Furthermore, the quotation must be clearly identified as from a particular passage in the New Testament...An advantage of this disciplined approach is the greater reliability of the evidence that is presented.¹

While these principles make for a nice, scientific-sounding rationale for inclusion or exclusion of patristic evidence, they actually ensure a less than accurate and unsophisticated use of Irenaeus' evidence. I will argue, on the one hand, that much of what is supposed to be reliably attested evidence is actually not all that reliable, and on the other hand, that some evidence which is quite reliable was left out. In other words, what the editors included and excluded in their apparatus for Irenaeus will be brought into question.

¹ Kurt Aland et al., eds., introduction to *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th rev. ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 72.

First, it will be demonstrated below that some evidence listed in the apparatus is actually unreliable and should not be used for text critical purposes. The principles said that, “paraphrases, variations, or sheer allusions have no place in the apparatus.” In addition to these three categories, this thesis has sought to establish “reverential alteration” as an additional and necessary category for explaining how church fathers made use of the biblical text. It can be assumed that such reverential alterations would also fall into the category of things that have no place in the NA²⁷ apparatus. However, we will see that such reverential alterations are indeed allowed to stand as reliable evidence in the NA²⁷ apparatus.

On the other hand, some reliable evidence was certainly left out of the apparatus because of the misleading principles outlined in NA²⁷'s introduction. Chapter three of this paper showed how adaptations and allusions can actually be quite helpful for establishing a Father's text of the NT. Though a verse does not get cited in a pure, word-for-word matter, the allusion, adaptation, or paraphrase may faithfully give evidence to the specific word(s) which are under discussion in the textual variant. As was seen in the previous chapter, Irenaeus may change pronouns or verb tense to match his contextual argument. According to NA²⁷'s principles, it seems that such an allusion or adaptation would not qualify for inclusion in its critical apparatus. However, as the previous discussion of these occurrences showed, though the Father may change a pronoun or verb tense, he still is able to cite quite faithfully the remainder of the text.

A discussion of Irenaeus' use of John 1:18 as demonstrated in NA²⁷'s critical apparatus will follow below in order to demonstrate these two criticisms of the principles of inclusion/exclusion, that unreliable evidence was included and reliable evidence was excluded. These two criticisms have sought to show that though NA²⁷ is trying to provide the greatest reliability of the evidence, the editors have not fully presented the patristic data. Because of the incomplete presentation, two problems occur. The data is not faithfully handled and attested, and

the reader begins to doubt the “critical” nature of the apparatus. A few examples will demonstrate what has happened.

One example of this is where NA²⁷ cites Irenaeus twice in the apparatus on John 1:18. This use of Irenaeus evidence undermines the credibility of the apparatus. The first attestation is for “εἰ μὴ ὁ μ. υἱ.” and lists the Irenaeus evidence as “Ir^{lat pt}”, meaning that some places in the Latin version of *AH* (4.20.6) have this reading, while another place in the same patristic work has a different reading. With this ^{pt} notation, the critical reader of NA²⁷ must now ask which Irenaeus citation is to be trusted as accurately portraying Irenaeus’ text. The choice to include Irenaeus’ divergent evidence in the apparatus with the use of ^{pt} is unclear. What is the critical reader supposed to gain from this ^{pt} notation? Are the editors trying to be faithful to the patristic data by listing all the known uses of the verse by the Father? Though it may be more faithful to the evidence, it certainly does not assist the reader. The reader is left questioning which variant is really to be trusted. It was this confusing presentation of data in the apparatus that initially led this author to write the present thesis. Rather than attest positive evidence to support NA²⁷’s editors’ choices at John 1:18, Irenaeus’ evidence actually undermines the reliability of their decision.

The other attestation in NA²⁷ for Irenaeus’ use of John 1:18 is “εἰ μὴ ὁ μ. υἱ. + θεοῦ” which occurs in *AH* 3.11.6. Since no other Greek ms or Father attests this reading, the reader is left to wonder why and how Irenaeus could have done such a thing. Should not this strange, singular occurrence have qualified as one of the “paraphrases, variations, or sheer allusions” which the editors promised to exclude? Because of its inclusion, the evidence’s reliability is further undermined.

Though these are the only two attestations in NA²⁷’s apparatus, there is, however? at least one more significant citation of John 1:18 in *AH*, particularly at 4.20.11. Here Irenaeus has

Unigenitus Deus. The reader of NA²⁷ is left guessing as to why this citation was omitted from the apparatus. Perhaps it was because this citation did not meet NA²⁷'s editorial principles of inclusion. Or perhaps it is because our versions of *AH* are themselves divided on the issue, one having *Unigenitus Deus* and the other *Unigenitus Filius*. Nevertheless, chapter three of this paper demonstrated that 4.20.11 is a legitimate citation of John 1:18 and therefore is important evidence for this discussion. In this case, the editors failed to attest to the evidence most faithfully, because they excluded reliable evidence.

This paper has not sought to argue which of Irenaeus' three readings is the actual reading that he found in his ms of the NT. Partially this is because it cannot be proved conclusively that Irenaeus used only one ms in his lifetime. In fact, chapter three in its discussion of *AH* 1.8.5 raised at least the possibility that Irenaeus was aware of both *Unigenitus Filius* and *Unigenitus Deus* as legitimate readings of John 1:18. Because of this possibility and the evidence demonstrated that Irenaeus used at least three variants of John 1:18, I believe it is unhelpful and misleading to include Irenaeus' evidence at all in the critical apparatus of John 1:18.

Another critical edition of the NT which has Irenaeus in its apparatus is UBS⁴. This edition contains almost word-for-word the same principles as does NA²⁷, which is not surprising since both editions have the same editors. They describe these principles as follows,

The whole field of New Testament citations in the Church Fathers has been thoroughly reviewed. For a citation to be included there were two criteria to be met. The citation must be capable of verification, i.e., the New Testament text or the manuscript cited by the author must be identifiable. Patristic paraphrases, variations, and allusions have no place in this edition. The citation must relate clearly to a specific passage in the New Testament...Yet in spite of the above restriction, the number of patristic citations has been greatly increased. In contrast to earlier editions, emphasis has been placed on offering as complete a survey as possible of the Fathers

through the mid-fifth century, because the citations of these authors are of the greatest importance for reconstructing the original text of the New Testament.²

Although these principles are similar to NA²⁷, namely that it must be a clear citation rather than an allusion and that it must clearly correspond to a specific passage, the editors of UBS⁴ have tried to include more patristic citations which is indeed evident when one compares the apparatus of each of these two editions. The editors of UBS⁴ are to be commended for adding more patristic material, though more is not necessarily better as we will see.

UBS⁴ also does a unique thing when a church father cites the same text in more than one place. For example, at John 1:18, Irenaeus is cited as Irenaeus^{lat 1/3}. The editors explain this notation with the following words,

Superscript fractions indicate the statistics for *variant readings in multiple instances of a passage*. The second number of the fraction indicates the number of times the passage occurs in the Church Father's writings; the first number indicates how many times the reading attested is supported.³

In the apparatus for John 1:18, several church fathers are cited in this way with superscript fractions. For most of them, their fractions add up, so that all the readings of the Father are attested. An example is Eusebius. He is listed as Eusebius^{3/7} for ὁ μονογενής θεός and as Eusebius^{4/7} for ὁ μονογενής υἱός. In this example, all of Eusebius' citations are accounted. Irenaeus, on the other hand is listed as having 1/3 for ὁ μονογενής υἱός and 1/3 for μονογενής υἱός θεοῦ. The other 1/3 is missing in the apparatus. Perhaps the missing attestation is for μονογενής θεός as has been shown earlier in this paper. However, the editors do not specify. This lends doubt to the critical apparatus. The criticisms of NA²⁷ apply, therefore, also to UBS⁴. It is not

² Kurt Aland et al., eds., introduction to *The Greek New Testament* (4th rev. ed., Stuttgart: United Bible Societies), 29.

³ Aland et al., eds., introduction, 37.

entirely faithful to the evidence when it excludes 1/3 of the readings, on the one hand, and it confuses the reader on the other when it includes a Father attesting to two or more variant readings.

Yet another critical edition of the NT, this one of the Latin NT, is Wordsworth and White's *Novum Testamentum Latine* published in 1898. The text of their edition is Jerome's Latin Vulgate rather than an edited and collected text based on editors' favored readings. When a Latin ms of the NT or a church father has the text of the Vulgate, Wordsworth and White do not cite this evidence in the apparatus; they only cite evidence which differs from the Vulgate. While occasionally including Greek evidence which differs from the Vulgate, this work primarily attests to the Latin evidence in its apparatus. As we will see, this apparatus is more faithful to the evidence available than is NA²⁷, although their presentation still leaves something to be desired. Two examples will demonstrate this.

For Irenaeus' use of the main textual variant in John 1:18, Wordsworth and White have two entries in their apparatus. They have Irenaeus attesting both to *unigenitus filius dei* and *unigenitus deus*. In this way, they do include more information in their apparatus than does NA²⁷. In fact, they even list the page number in *Massuet* where the reading can be found. This is more helpful than UBS⁴'s and NA²⁷'s simple listing of Irenaeus^{lat}. Even though *Massuet* is no longer the standard critical edition, the occurrence could still be located and confirmed. Insofar as they list both of these readings, Wordsworth and White are to be commended, but they still do not present all the data available.

Since the Vulgate and therefore their actual text at John 1:18 has *unigenitus filius*, they do not list Irenaeus' attestation of this third possibility. In the case of a Father having the Vulgate reading and at least one other variant reading, this way of presenting the evidence is misleading. One would assume if a Father has a different reading from the Vulgate, that he does not also

have the Vulgate reading. This, however, is not the case with Irenaeus' use of John 1:18. He has the above two readings as attested in Wordsworth and White's apparatus, but Irenaeus also has the reading which corresponds to the Vulgate. Granted, their apparatus is a negative one, listing only where mss and church fathers disagreed with the Vulgate. These were the parameters of their project, and so in one way they cannot be faulted. They were consistent with the project they intended. On the other hand, this negative apparatus is not as helpful as a positive apparatus which attests everything.

Overall, in evaluating the use of the church fathers in critical editions of the NT, we have seen that they fared poorly in presenting and explaining the evidence. Some of the material they include is actually not very reliable. In other places, they excluded material which would have been helpful for the reader and would have more faithfully used the Father's data. There have been other attempts, however, in attesting to patristic data.

Thus far, one of the greatest issues which NA²⁷, UBS⁴, Wordsworth and White and all other critical editions of the NT raise is how they decided on what evidence to include. The evidence presented in critical editions of the NT such as these most likely has used some sort of collation of the Father's NT text. The editors of NA²⁷ write, "The quotations by Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria are fully represented in the apparatus passages, based on a fresh critical collation of their works."⁷ Unfortunately, they do not mention the studies in which these collations and evaluations were published. It would be extremely helpful to the critical reader to be able to see this work upon which the editors make their decisions so that the reader could make their own critical decisions. Perhaps NA²⁸ will give a more extensive bibliography for the patristic evidence which it uses. Since NA²⁷'s collation could not be located, several other collations of Irenaeus' NT text will be assessed and discussed in the next subsection below.

This idea of such a collation has been much discussed recently in text critical circles. In chapter one, it was noted that Bruce Metzger gave this suggestion for a more faithful and fruitful use of the Fathers' citations: "what is of far greater help to the textual critic is the reconstruction of the New Testament text (or texts) used by an individual Father."⁷ In my research for this paper, I came across just this, a reconstruction of Irenaeus' entire NT text. In 1923, Sanday, Turner, and Souter brought forth *Novum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis: Being the New Testament Quotations in the Old-Latin Version of the (AH)*. This text is exactly what Metzger called for. Nevertheless, I found it lacking on a number of occasions. While the authors did posit some probing introductory articles on the manuscripts of *AH* and on the question of which most faithfully produced Irenaeus' original, the commentary dried up quickly thereafter, thus rendering the lengthy work rather useless.

In the main body of the text, they quite simply and straightforwardly presented the text of Irenaeus' biblical citations. My first problem here was to try to synchronize Sanday, Turner, and Souter's list of citations with the list in *Biblia Patristica*, the index of any possible allusion to a NT text in a work of a church father. The overwhelming differences in these two lists present the clear problem of classifying just exactly what is a church father citation of a NT text. Sanday, Turner, and Souter found 36 citations of some portion of John chapter 1, only 3 of which were of John 1:18. Overall, they identified 119 citations of the Gospel of John in *AH*. In contrast, *Biblia Patristica* found 97 citations of John 1, six of which were of John 1:18, and overall they found 286 citations of the Gospel of John. In my opinion and for the purposes of this paper, I prefer and chose to collate all the references in *Biblia Patristica*, which were all in addition to Sanday, Turner, and Souter, because *Biblia Patristica* included so much more data, even if it was at times excessive and the allusion to a passage was no more than a single word.

One of the problems with Metzger's suggestion of assembling for example "the NT of Irenaeus" is that no two lists will agree on what is and what is not a citation. This problem has received attention from other scholars as well. In my first chapter, I noted that Gordon Fee in his article "The Use of Greek Patristic Citations in New Testament Textual Criticism: The State of the Question" established three categories of Scriptural usage among the Fathers? adaptation, allusion, and citation.⁷ The fourth category of "reverential alteration" was introduced by Peter Head.⁷ These distinctions have certainly been helpful and much-needed for a sophisticated use of the Fathers for textual criticism. If Metzger's suggestion of developing "the NT according to..." is to be followed, there has to be a more sophisticated usage of the Fathers. Each supposed entry needs to be labelled as adaptation, allusion, citation, or reverential alteration. It seems to me that Sanday, Turner, and Souter chose only to give citations and *Biblia Patristica* chose to give every possible allusion under the sun even to the point of absurdity where only one word from the supposed verse is being used. Had both of these lists been categorized according to these three labels, scholars might be more able to synchronize and use these lists?

Even after these readings are sorted and labeled as citations, adaptations, or allusions, this still does not solve all our problems. The labels only describe how much or little of the NT reading is contained in the Father's words. For example, some adaptations which only change a few words change precisely those words which are under discussion. However, some allusions, while using a relatively small number of words from a NT reading, allude precisely to the words under discussion. An example of this was my discussion of the allusion to John 1:18 in *AH* 1.8.5. There we saw that only a few words from John 1:18 were used, but they were precisely the words under discussion. In that way, the allusion in 1.8.5 proved to be quite helpful for the text critical evaluation of Irenaeus.

Yet another problem with Sanday, Turner, and Souter's Irenaean NT is that they do not differentiate when two different versions of the Father's work have two different readings of the citation. For example, at 4.20.6 of *AH* Latin Irenaeus has *Unigenitus Filius*, while Armenian Irenaeus has *Unigenitus Deus*. Sanday, Turner, and Souter's inability or choice not to deal with this issue can perhaps be attributed to their work being published long before the critical edition of *AH* became available in the *Sources Chretiennes* series. While this work might therefore be excused for not citing the problem, the example still poses a problem for the project of establishing a "NT of Irenaeus"? If such a work simply lists biblical citations as they occur in the Fathers, even if it uses critical editions, there still has to be a running commentary that helps the reader to make the decision of which version is most faithful to the Father's original. A "NT of Irenaeus" would have to list separately the reading of Latin Irenaeus and the reading of Armenian Irenaeus, and then it would have to have some discussion explaining to which one it gives precedence, as I did in chapter 3. There I argued, based on internal evidence from the surrounding context of 4.20.6 of *AH*, that Latin Irenaeus and its *Unigenitus Filius* is most likely the original reading.

Another problem I had with Sanday, Turner, and Souter's work and therefore with Metzger's suggestion is that their "NT of Irenaeus" was unable to deal with any of the more complicated issues, such as a Father's citation of the same text in divergent ways. As was noted in my first chapter, the Fathers have long been used in a number of different ways for a number of different purposes but often with little sophistication other than to point to the bald words of the Father's treatise without any understanding of how the Father himself was using the supposed Scriptural citation. This is precisely what Sanday, Turner, and Souter did with Irenaeus' citations of John 1:18. They listed three occurrences of this verse without giving any explanation whatsoever of what they thought might have been going on. What is a student

supposed to do when the “NT of a church father” has three different readings of the same verse? Without giving the reader some guidance here, they do not fully and faithfully present and explain the NT of Irenaeus.? Having pointed out some of the problems with how past scholarship has handled Irenaeus’ citations, the remainder of this chapter brings us back to the question of using citations of church fathers for text critical work in order to use them in a more faithful and helpful way. I would suggest that text critical work with the church fathers be more than just a few, scant, unreliable attestations in a critical apparatus and even more than just a collation of their citations, adaptations, allusions, and alterations of the NT text. Rather, what is needed is a text critical commentary on the NT text of individual church fathers. A commentary on the NT text of Irenaeus would be much more helpful than Souter, Sanday, and Turner’s project. It would actually seek to understand how Irenaeus is using the supposedly cited NT text. In the case of the same verse cited in two different ways, it would explain, based on internal evidence (the contextual argument in which the citation, adaptation, allusion, or reverential alteration is found), which reading more likely was original to the Father, or it would explicitly say when such a determination cannot be made. Only with this added information will textual critics honestly be able to grapple with and use the church fathers in their work of laying open the Scriptures for the church and the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

IRENAEUS' VIEW OF SCRIPTURE IN LIGHT OF HIS CITATION METHODS

In the first chapter of this thesis we saw that church fathers have been used more and more for the discipline of textual criticism. In the past, most scholars and critical editions of the NT using the Fathers have simply amassed their citations in order to further bolster the external evidence for a given reading. This was because textual criticism's primary and sometimes sole goal was to establish the original text of the NT. With the advent of Bart Ehrman's work in *Orthodox Corruptions*, along with many other works of his contemporaries, scholarship has paid much more attention to *how* the Fathers, and likewise scribes, used the text of the New Testament. This new attention has itself become a field of study within textual criticism. The church fathers are no longer just fodder to establish the original NT but are worthy of study in their own right in order to understand their views and use of the Scriptures. While some in the discipline have chafed at this new goal and accordingly rejected some of the conclusions of such work,¹ much of scholarship has given a welcome reception to this endeavor of understanding the Fathers' citation methods.

¹ James White, "James White Comments on Ehrman's Announcement," n.p. [Cited 25 January 2009]. Online: <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2009/02/james-white-comments-on-ehrmans.html>. "What has happened in the past fifteen years that is 'arguably more than in any comparable fifteen year period in the history of...the discipline?' Has there been a discovery of a new Sinaiticus? Something akin to the DSS in OT research? A massive papyri manuscript find? No, actually nothing like that at all. So why the paradigm shift? Simple: the arena has become predominated by post-modernists who have thrown in the towel on the 'original text' and have openly and shamelessly said, 'Hey, let's talk about what we can impute to nameless scribes based upon our mind-reading the reasons for their textual variations!' This is nothing less than an abandonment of the paradigm of preceding generations, a hi-jacking of the discipline itself. While speculation about possible scribal prejudices may have its place, it will always be just that: speculation."

This final chapter returns to some of the concerns presented in chapter one, especially the expanding goals of the field of textual criticism. Scholarship today is not just interested in *what* a church father had for a citation but *how* he was using it and *why* he cited the text in the way he did. The ultimate goals of this thesis, therefore, were not accomplished in the previous chapter where I examined Irenaeus' evidence and its value for the traditional goal of textual criticism, that is, establishing the text of the NT. This chapter will complete my analysis of Irenaeus' citations and contribute to the ongoing contemporary discussion of *how* this church father cited Scripture.

In the previous chapters, we saw that Irenaeus sometimes made reverential alterations of the NT text in order to incorporate Scripture into his doctrinal discussions. Some might therefore think that Irenaeus viewed the NT as nothing more than just another human document, a waxen nose to be massaged into whatever form is needed at the time. This view would essentially strip Irenaeus of seeing the NT as also a divinely inspired, authoritative document, useful for forming Christians within the churches and rebuking those without. The humanistic view of Irenaeus' use of Scripture has been alleged in various ways by other commentators. We will first hear Tamm's and Ehrman's views, and I will argue that they both tend to assign only a human view of Scripture to Irenaeus, though certainly in different ways. I will contradict this view by examining a number of passages from *AH* itself which illustrate Irenaeus' own view of Scripture. Then, I will use a number of modern-day commentators to help us understand theologically how reverential alterations might have been used by someone who views the NT as not just a human document but also a divinely inspired and authoritative writing as well.

Tamm argues throughout his thesis that the earliest Antenicene Fathers loosely cited Scripture and altered wording in order to fit their argument.² They could do this because, according to Tamm, they did not see the text as revelation or divinely authoritative. As an example, he cites the report of Eusebius that the church father Papias preferred the oral tradition of the faith to the written Scriptures. This is proof, for Tamm, that “the Scriptural text during the time of Papias had no high dignity.”³ Because of this view, early church fathers were able to alter the text to fit their context. Tamm adds that in doing so, such Fathers were using the classical form of citation.

Further, the Fathers of the first and second centuries had little concept of a canon according to Tamm. He argues that it was not until around 180 AD that the canon began to take formation. It was at this time that the Fathers first started to treat Scripture as divinely authoritative and thereby to cite it word-for-word according to the manuscript lying open before them.⁴ However, the final process of canonization, for Tamm, was not completed until the fourth century.⁵ He completely disagrees with Ehrman who sees an early canon formation for the purposes of propaganda against heretical groups. Tamm thinks that the canonization was a reaction of the church to Marcion’s reckless use of Scripture.⁶

² Tamm, “Varianten,” 9. “Die ‘frühe’ Zitierweise geschah durch Anpassung des Textes an den Kontext der Schrift des Kirchenvaters, da das Neue Testament noch nicht als Offenbarung und heilige Autorität wahrgenommen wurde. In dieser Zeit wurde der neutestamentliche Text in den laufenden Text eingefügt und ihm angepaßt. Dadurch folgten die frühen Kirchenväter der klassischen Zitierform.”

³ Tamm, “Varianten,” 10.

⁴ Tamm, “Varianten,” 10. “Der Wandel kam durch die Entstehung des Textbewusstseins um 180 n. Chr. und realisierte sich im Zuge der Kanonisierung des neutestamentlichen Textes. Man sah ein, dass der neutestamentliche Text Offenbarung ist und als solche wörtlich wiedergegeben werden musste. Erst von der Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts an bildete sich bei den christlichen Autoren dieses Textbewusstsein aus, und man zitierte erst dann nach vorliegenden Handschriften.”

⁵ Tamm, “Varianten,” 31. “In der Zeit, von der Ehrman ausgeht, dass der Text des Neuen Testaments kanonisiert sein muss, d.h. Ende des 2. Jahrhunderts, entstand der Kanon erst.”

⁶ Tamm, “Varianten,” 30.

With Irenaeus, Tamm begins to see the canon coming together. He assigns Irenaeus a relatively higher view of Scripture than the earlier Fathers as he writes about Irenaeus' overall view of Scripture, but when Tamm gives an account of Irenaeus' individual citations, he seems to tell a different story. Tamm acknowledges that Irenaeus cites John 1:18 in a couple different ways. He makes a few scant references to the context and dismisses any intentional altering of the text.⁷ In fact, he completely dismisses the claim that church fathers and scribes intentionally altered the text. He believes the changes can be explained in a much simpler manner.⁸

Nevertheless, Tamm does not posit any positive reasons why Irenaeus would have done this. He only argues that, although the different citations are Christologically important in and of themselves, they are seemingly unimportant to Irenaeus. Indeed Tamm describes them as “irrelevant” to him.⁹ The reader is left to wonder why a Father who gives such weight to the canon of Scripture, its divine source, and its divine referent in Christ would do something like misquote the text, especially at such a weighty juncture involving Christology.

In leaving this issue unaddressed, Tamm ends up using the traditional explanation of scholarship on how a church father could misquote such an important text from the NT. This traditional explanation is illustrated in a comment made by the editor of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* English translation of *AH*. In a footnote on a Luke 14:27 citation is this note,

It will be observed that the quotations of Scripture made by Irenaeus often vary somewhat from the received text. This may be due to various reasons—his quoting from memory; his giving the texts in the form in which they were quoted by the

⁷ Tamm, “Varianten,” 68–69.

⁸ At the conclusion of his second main chapter, Tamm, “Varianten,” 56 writes, “Aufgrund der oben genannten Gründe ist auszuschließen, dass der Text des Neuen Testaments in der Zeit des 2. bis 3. Jahrhunderts in einer antihäretischen Weise verändert wurde. Die Varianten im Neuen Testament sind auf andere, logischere und einfachere Weise zu erklären. Die These einer Orthodox Corruption of Scripture ist demnach unhaltbar.” Ibid., 56.

⁹ Tamm, “Varianten,” 68. “Diese Zitate werden zwar in einem antignostischen Kontext zitiert, allerdings wird die Erkenntnis Gottes nicht von der Textveränderung abhängig gemacht. Obwohl sie theologisch-christologisch wichtig ist, ist sie im Gebrauch des Irenäus irrelevant.”

heretics; or, as Harvey conjectures, from his having been more familiar with a Syriac version of the New Testament than with the Greek original.¹⁰

Like the *ANF* editors, Tamm ends up inferring that Irenaeus misquotes John 1:18 unintentionally due to memory lapse, lack of precision, or lack of concern about Christological titles.

To assign the traditional explanation of a church father misquoting a text to Irenaeus citing John 1:18 has met with resistance throughout this thesis. In the previous chapter, I showed that Irenaeus used Christological titles with hyper-awareness and that in most all other places, Irenaeus cites other verses with little deviation. He has such a high and reverent regard both for Scripture and the divinity (and of course, also humanity) of its referent, that is Christ, that there must be a different explanation for his alteration of the text. Tamm's explanation borders on assigning Irenaeus a lower, more human view of Scripture, a view which allows for carelessness toward the precise wording of Scripture or carelessness for the referent of the Christological titles. After Ehrman's position on Irenaeus is explained, I will demonstrate that even though Irenaeus altered John 1:18, he nevertheless views the wording of the NT as holy and authoritative.

Ehrman's views are completely different than Tamm's but lead to similar conclusions. After demonstrating that Irenaeus rebuked Marcion for changing the Pauline and Catholic Epistles, Ehrman makes this provocative statement.

Charges of this kind against "heretics"—that they altered the texts of scripture to make them say what they wanted them to mean—are very common among early Christian writers. What is noteworthy, however, is that recent studies have shown that the evidence of our surviving manuscripts points the finger in the opposite direction. Scribes who were associated with the *orthodox* (his emphasis) tradition not infrequently changed their texts, sometimes in order to eliminate the possibility of their "misuse" by Christians affirming heretical beliefs and sometimes to make them

¹⁰ Irenaeus, *AH* 1.3.5 (*ANF* 1:320n8).

more amenable to the doctrines being espoused by Christians of their own persuasion.¹¹

As we saw in chapter three, Ehrman applied this general statement to Irenaeus and his citations of John 1:18 in particular. This statement essentially challenges the view that Irenaeus saw the Gospel of John as divinely inspired, authoritative, and normative for the church. If he changed its wording, how could he see it as authoritative and normative? This charge, that Irenaeus may have wavered in his belief in the authority of Scripture, will be dealt with below.

If it is true that Irenaeus and other early scribes and church fathers who cited Scripture held Scripture's verbal authority in such low regard that they were able and willing to change the text dependent on the doctrinal controversy of the day, this has even more profound implications for the book that we regard as the Bible today. Some would argue that if such early users of the Bible changed its contents, then what we have today cannot be the original, inspired, infallible Word of God. Rather, they would say, it is just some human book which stands as a record of mere human arguments and points of view logged over the centuries by various textual additions, subtractions, and "orthodox corruptions". In his popular work entitled *Misquoting Jesus*, Ehrman admits that this is his view of Scripture.

Eventually I came to see that the Bible is a very human book, written from very human points of view, and that these points of view often differ from one another. The biblical authors were human too! They had likes, dislikes, opinions, views, prejudices, biases, perspectives, and so on, like the rest of us; and all these things affected how they saw the world. The "infallible" book I has based so much of my faith on came to look very fallible.¹²

Not only did Ehrman cease to believe in Scripture's infallibility, inspiration, and divine authority because of the original writers of the Scriptures and their humanity, the Scriptures

¹¹ Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: Harper One, 2005), 53.

¹² Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 246–47.

became even more human for Ehrman when they began to be copied by scribes and cited by church fathers.

If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't *have* the very words of scripture? In some places, as we will see, we simply cannot be sure that we have reconstructed the original text accurately...The fact that we don't have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he (God) did not preserve them for us. And if he didn't perform that miracle, there seemed to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words. In short, my study of the Greek New Testament, and my investigations into the manuscripts that contain it, led to a radical rethinking of my understanding of what the Bible is...my faith had been based completely on a certain view of the Bible as the fully inspired, inerrant word of God. Now I no longer saw the Bible that way. The Bible began to appear to me as a very human book.¹³

The simple logic goes like this: since we do not have the original inspired autographs but only copies which have themselves been corrupted through intentional and unintentional corruptions made by scribes and church fathers, then the Scriptures we have are merely human documents. In other words, any "corruptions" in the received text, whether intentional or unintentional, annihilate any possibility of the text being divinely inspired, divinely normative, in short, the very Word of God. We will see later in this chapter that some Lutheran scholars and teachers of the church were able to acknowledge the human side of Scripture in these "corruptions," or better "reverential alterations," and still held to an orthodox, divine view of Scripture. In other words, they held the human and divine sides of Scripture together without comingling them or letting one dissolve into the other.

Tamm and Ehrman have both logged individual understandings of what Irenaeus did when he cited John 1:18 in various ways. First, Tamm argued that Irenaeus did not intentionally alter Scripture but was rather imprecise or inaccurate in his citation methods. This view will be addressed first. I will show that Irenaeus does have a high regard for individual words of

¹³ Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 11.

Scripture and reacts negatively when the wording of a text has been changed. In other words, he is not as careless as Tamm and other interpreters imply. Second, Ehrman charged that Irenaeus did intentionally alter John 1:18, because he saw the Scriptures as nothing more than a tool of propaganda in order to defeat the arguments of heretics. While it has already been demonstrated in the previous chapter that Irenaeus did indeed make intentional, “reverential alterations”, he nevertheless views Scripture as divinely authoritative in my opinion for several reasons which will be outlined below. It is not just any change in the wording that Irenaeus is against but especially when that wording impacts the theological interpretation of the text. He is against corruption that changes or goes against the *regula fidei*, the orthodox explanation of the Christian faith. Finally, I will disagree with Ehrman’s belief that the Scriptures are not the authoritative, divinely inspired Word of God because of “orthodox corruptions” in the text. Using statements made by scholars and teachers of the church, I will show that belief in the Scriptures as the inspired and authoritative Word of God can stand, even in the face of “reverential alterations” as described in this thesis.

Having laid out the positions of Tamm and Ehrman and the three concerns or issues they raise, we must now rethink how Irenaeus could have done what I alleged in chapter three, that is, make “reverential alterations” of Scripture. First, Irenaeus is no adept novice who has a casual disregard for the details of Scripture, especially its individual wording. There are several places in *AH* where Irenaeus pays extra special attention to this word or that in order to demonstrate his point. One instance is when Irenaeus pays specific attention to the wording of Matthew 1:18 in *AH* 3.16.2. In this section, he is trying to argue that Jesus the man and the divine Christ cannot be separated as if they were separate beings, Jesus having only a human nature and the Christ having only a spiritual or divine nature. In order to make this point, he refers to Matthew 1:18. He explains the choice of wording in this way,

Matthew might certainly have said, “Now the birth of *Jesus* was on this wise;” but the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the corrupters [of the truth], and guarding by anticipation against their deceit, says by Matthew, “But the birth of *Christ* was on this wise” ... that we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same.¹⁴

In arguing from this detail in the wording of the text, we can see that Irenaeus does pay a good deal of attention to individual words and is able to build complex theological arguments from them. This is no careless theologian that runs roughshod over the text in order to get to the *real* doctrinal debates of the day. Dealing with the text itself is precisely where the debate lies.

Another example of Irenaeus’ concern for the wording of Scripture comes from his consideration of the number of the beast in Revelation 13:18¹⁵. The issue revolves around whether the number of the beast was 666 or 616. Irenaeus gives a number of rather sophisticated arguments which show he is aware of a number of different issues going on in relation to what we now know as the discipline of textual criticism. First, he argues that 666 must be the correct and original number because it is attested “in all the most approved and ancient copies [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing their testimony [to it].”¹⁶ He goes on to conjecture that this is a fault of copyists who mixed up a couple Greek letters. Irenaeus maintains that “as regards those who have done this in simplicity, and without evil intent, we are at liberty to assume that pardon will be granted them by God.” However, “there shall be no light punishment [inflicted] upon him who either adds or subtracts anything from the Scripture ... Moreover, another danger, by no means trifling, shall overtake those who falsely presume that

¹⁴ Irenaeus, *AH* 3.16.2 (*ANF* 1:441). The *Sources Chretiennes* text is as follows: “Ceterum potuerat dicere Matthaëus: ‘Iesu uero generatio sic erat’; sed prouidens Spiritus sanctus deprauatores et praemuniens contra fraudulentiam eorum, per Matthaëum ait: ‘Christi autem generatio sic erat’ ... neque alium quidem Iesum, alterum autem Christum suspicaremur fuisse, sed unum et eundem sciremus esse.” *SC* 211: 294.

¹⁵ A closer examination of this issue can be found in Neville Birdsall, “Irenaeus and the number of the beast: Revelation 13,18” *New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 349–59.

¹⁶ Irenaeus, *AH* 5.30.3 (*ANF* 1: 558).

they know the name of the Antichrist.”¹⁷ Here Irenaeus shows that he is quite aware of the wording of Scripture, how it is sometimes changed either innocently or with malicious intent, and that there is moreover another danger equally serious in misinterpreting the doctrinal content of the wording of Scripture. All this is to show that Irenaeus cannot be quickly or easily dismissed as a simpleton who is unaware of the wording of Scripture and sees no consequences if it is altered.

While this paper critiques some areas of Ehrman’s work in *Orthodox Corruptions*, it did by and large in the last chapter agree with the conclusion that orthodox Christians, particularly Irenaeus, did indeed intentionally alter the text when they were citing it. The above paragraphs show that Irenaeus by no means altered Scripture unknowingly but rather that his alterations were done with intention. The question must now be answered as to *how* Irenaeus could have done such a thing in view of his statements on Scripture in other passages.

While Irenaeus was highly sensitive to changes in the text especially when it involved heretical doctrine, it seems that he was unable to simply leave Scripture as it was and let someone misinterpret it. For Irenaeus, this would not be a faithful but a very unfaithful way to treat the Scriptures. If the Fathers had to insert words into the texts of Scripture to explain them in a way so they would not be misunderstood, they saw that not as an unfaithful or neutral activity, they saw that as the only faithful response. As one scholar has put it, “‘Theological’ variants are not large scale interpolations or alterations, but clarifications and adaptations, almost always using items from the near context—not wholesale ‘revising’ but ‘disambiguating’.”¹⁸

This is certainly true of Irenaeus’ John 1:18 citations. All three of the variants which Irenaeus uses are best seen as clarifications, adaptations, and disambiguating rather than large

¹⁷ Irenaeus, *AH* 5.30.3 (*ANF* 1:559).

¹⁸ Jeffrey Kloha, “Textual Variation as Theological Editing: 1 Corinthians” (paper presented at the History of Exegesis Senior Seminar of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., 27 January 2005), 4.

scale interpolations or alterations. Another respected scholar has argued precisely the same thing in regard to Irenaeus' citation of John 1:18.

In conclusion, both *μονογενής υἱός* and *μονογενής θεός* fit comfortably within orthodoxy; no seismic theological shift occurs if one were to pick one reading over the other. Although some modern translations have been persuaded by Ehrman's argument here, the argument is hardly airtight. When either variant is examined carefully, both are seen to be within the realm of orthodox teaching.¹⁹

In light of this, perhaps rather than “orthodox corruptions” we ought to refer to these citations as “orthodox disambiguations”. It does not have quite the same ring but is much more accurate to Irenaeus' activity and intentions, that is, he made small alterations to the citations of John 1:18 in order for them to be read in an orthodox manner. The term “reverential alteration” which has been used throughout this thesis has similar intentions. In other words, Irenaeus was not wholesale changing the wording of Scripture in a flippant manner simply to make it agree with his predetermined doctrinal position. Rather, he was using Scripture within its agreed upon and intended meaning by the church who held the *regula fidei*.

Some have referred to this use of the Scriptures as a postmodern approach. I have tried to show that such a postmodern understanding of Irenaeus' citations is by no means an unorthodox engagement with the Scriptures as some have implied. If this is a “postmodern” way of interacting with Scripture, it is also much more the way that the church has interacted with the Lord's Word throughout the history of the orthodox Christian church. This “postmodern” approach to Scripture within the orthodox, catholic Christian church has recently been given serious treatment by James Voelz as follows,

“The Confessions and the sacred Scriptures exist in a reciprocal relationship to one another. On the one hand, as norms, supreme and unchallenged, the Scriptures establish articles of faith and the relation among them. It is they that set forth the revelation of God. On the other hand, the creeds and Confessions were composed for

¹⁹ Dan Wallace, “The Gospel According to Bart: A Review Article of Misquoting Jesus by Bart Ehrman” *JETS* 49 (2006): 346.

the purpose of clarifying the meaning of Scripture on disputed points, and confessional interpreters will interpret the Scriptures according to the Confessions, not vice versa.”²⁰

Yet another scholar, Peter Head, has also grappled with these same issues and has concluded,

The transmission of gospel texts should not be seen as a neutral activity. The scribe of the NT was a participant in the life and faith of the church, and this life and faith clearly influenced the process of transmission... The "improvements" examined here have not affected the general reliability of the transmission of the texts in any significant manner; they do, however, point to the scribe's involvement in his work understood as an act of devotion to the divine Christ.²¹

While Head was making these remarks in regards to scribes, they are equally pertinent to Church Fathers who interacted with the text. The Fathers too were active participants in the life of the church and could not divorce themselves from this as they cited the Scriptures throughout their writings.

This active engagement with the Scriptures has long been the Lutheran approach, as we see in Luther's own engagement with the words of Scripture and his addition of *sola* to Romans 3:28. In his *On Translating: An Open Letter*, Luther gives two distinct reasons for adding the *sola*. First, the German language demanded it.

Here in Romans 3[:28], I knew very well that the word *solum* is not in the Greek or Latin text; the papists did not have to teach me that. It is a fact that these four letters *s o l a* are not there. And these blockheads stare at them like cows at a new gate. At the same time they do not see that it conveys the sense of the text; it belongs there if the translation is to be clear and vigorous...It is the nature of the German language to add the word *allein* in order that the word *nicht* or *kein* may be clearer and more complete.²²

In other words, Luther was concerned for the German reader and let him influence the translation, much the way Irenaeus was concerned for his reader and therefore changed his

²⁰ Voelz, James, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World* (2d ed.; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 359.

²¹ Head, "Christology," 128–29.

²² Martin Luther, *Word and Sacrament I* (vol. 35 of *Luther's Works*; ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and E. Theodore Bachmann; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 188–89.

citation of John 1:18 accordingly. Secondly, Luther argues that the text itself wants to be understood in the way he translated it with *solum*.

Now I was not relying on and following the nature of the languages alone, however, when, in Romans 3[:28] I inserted the word *solum* (alone). Actually the text itself and the meaning of St. Paul urgently require and demand it. For in that very passage he is dealing with the main point of Christian doctrine, namely, that we are justified by faith in Christ without any works of the law.²³

Luther does offer a guard to his translational freedoms with the text. Much like the “orthodox disambiguations” described above which were not wholesale revisions of the text but clarifications of what the text itself wanted to say, Luther also guards what he is saying.

On the other hand I have not just gone ahead anyway and disregarded altogether the exact wording of the original. Rather with my helpers I have been very careful to see that where everything turns on a single passage, I have kept to the original quite literally and have not lightly departed from it...But I preferred to do violence to the German language rather than to depart from the word. Ah, translating is not every man’s skill as the mad saints imagine. It requires a right, devout, honest, sincere, God-fearing, Christian, trained, informed, and experienced heart. Therefore I hold that no false Christian or factious spirit can be a decent translator.²⁴

This last point, that a good translator cannot be totally neutral and wooden but must be fully engaged reading, translating, and citing the text through the lens of the church and her confessions, is precisely what Irenaeus was doing 1800 years ago. That Irenaeus was willing and felt compelled to make “reverential alterations” of John 1:18 in order to defend the confession of the church was, for him, the only possible and faithful use of the Scriptures.

We must now deal with the third charge, that the Scriptures which have at times been altered must necessarily lose their status as holy and authoritative with divine origins. I will argue that it is possible to agree with Ehrman (that the creedal beliefs of the early Christians influenced how they understood and even transmitted the Scriptures, ie. no one approached the

²³ Luther, *Word and Sacrament I*, 195.

²⁴ Luther, *Word and Sacrament I*, 194.

text as an objective scribe or interpreter) and yet maintain that this position does not destroy the discipline of theology or even the orthodox Christian faith.

Other scholars have held a similar position, agreeing on the one hand with Ehrman that church fathers have made alterations to the text but disagreeing with him on the other hand about what this means. On the one hand, David Parker agrees with Ehrman.

While it is possible that one might make alternative suggestions to some of (Ehrman's) examples, and find others to support the alternative, the cumulative effect of his study (*Orthodox Corruption*) is hard to gainsay. Rather than getting locked into an either/or debate, we would be wiser to recognize pragmatically that the central issue is that theological debate led to textual variation.²⁵

Parker, here, admits that this human activity and engagement with the Scriptures has led to some very human results, namely the changing of the actual words of Scripture. Rather than try to sidestep or explain away the issue as Tamm attempted to do, Parker looks at this phenomenon and lets it stand for what it is.

On the other hand, Parker made this comment in an article where he specifically was trying to bring textual criticism and the church's discipline of theology back into accordance with one another. While he agrees with Ehrman that church fathers and scribes often treated the text in human ways by changing its wording, he nevertheless does not think that this destroys the divine, authoritative nature of Scripture at all. As he says,

At the heart of my frustration with a theology of the Bible that ignores all this (the history of the text's reception and an explanation of variants) is the fact that it seems to me to sit so awkwardly with the concept of the incarnation. Given a faith in a God become human, how can one have a Word of God which consistently defies the nature of human existence?²⁶

One Lutheran scholar once framed the issue in very similar terms, trying to get the church to acknowledge and accept both the human and divine side of Scripture.

²⁵ David Parker, "Textual Criticism and Theology," *ExpTim* 118 (2007): 587.

²⁶ Parker, "Textual Criticism," 588.

Just as Christology since the Council of Chalcedon has to steer a course between the Scylla of Nestorianism and the Charybdis of Monophysitism, even so the doctrine concerning the Holy Scripture must be careful not to suffer shipwreck on the cliffs of a rationalistic, history-of-religion's understanding of the Scripture and a super-naturalistic, docetic understanding of the Scripture. The Holy Scripture is God's Word. The Holy Scripture is man's word. But the Word of God and the word of man are not two Holy Scriptures—perhaps, as someone might say, the kernel in the Bible which might be designated God's Word—but one Holy Scripture. This self-same one Holy Scripture is complete, unabridged Word of God, and complete, unabridged word of man, not a mixture of the two, not a synthesis which a person can again disengage.²⁷

There is much at stake in these issues, and this thesis has attempted to wrestle with them.

On the one hand, the church has an obligation to look into these thorny issues, seeking to understand whether and how an orthodox Father of the church could have intentionally altered the divine words of Scripture. For far too long, the church has looked the other way and even denied the human process of transmitting the Lord's Scriptures. It should not, indeed need not, be secular, agnostic or atheist Bible scholars that lead the field in understanding the human process of the transmission of the Scriptures. On the other hand, this human process does not preclude the Scriptures from also being the very inspired, authoritative, divine Word of God. For the church has always believed throughout the ages that the Lord of the Church has used very mundane, down-to-earth means to accomplish His heavenly, saving purposes. I conclude with a statement of faith once made by the Lutheran Church in Australia which summarizes this chapter and thereby brings this thesis to a close,

With the whole true Church of God we confess the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. This inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures cannot be seen with human eyes, nor can it be proved to human reason; it is an article of faith, a belief in something that is hidden and not obvious. We believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God and therefore inerrant. The term 'inerrancy' has no reference to the variant readings in the extant textual sources because of copyists' errors or *deliberate alterations* (my emphasis); neither does it imply an absolute verbal accuracy on quotations and

²⁷ Hermann Sasse, "Zur Lehre von der Heiligen Schrift," in *Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse* (ed. Jeffrey J. Kloha and Ronald R. Feuerhahn; St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1995), 223.

parallel accounts, such absolute uniformity evidently not having been part of God's design. We believe that the holy writers, whom God used, retained the distinctive features of their personalities (language and terminology, literary methods, conditions of life, knowledge of nature and history as apart from direct revelation and prophecy). God made use of them in such a manner that even that which human reason might call a deficiency in Holy Scripture must serve the divine purpose.²⁸

²⁸ Hermann Sasse, "Doctrinal Declarations and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia" in *Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse* (ed. Jeffrey J. Kloha and Ronald R. Feuerhahn; St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1995), 368.

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