

A HISTORY OF THE DEBATE OVER 1 JOHN 5:7

By Michael Maynard

Comma Publications - Tempe, Arizona, 1995

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This book is a misguided attempt to defend the KJV, even though the author does not give that as the purpose. The claimed purpose is to give a history of the textual debate over 1 John 5:7. The book does include many valuable historical quotations and statements on the subject (perhaps more than any other), but it is so slanted to Maynard's view, the other side of the debate is missing, or even worse, it is sometimes misstated or simply ridiculed.

There are many typographical errors throughout the book. Only a few early samples are noted, but the book should have been proofread more carefully.

Page 2 - extra spacing after initial parentheses

3 - capitalization errors

4 - typing on the right of contents page numbers

appendices not listed in the table of contents

5 - "John" should be "1 John"

6 - comma error

7 - II Samuel, but 1 John

8 - OMISSION = OMISSION

9 - capitalization inconsistencies

10 - explains MSS after use and then after "manuscripts"

11 - says Critical text manuscripts comprise 15% of the total (should be less than 5%)

12 - mixes American and British comma usage

13 - terms are out of alphabetical order

23 - aleph = Aleph

...

350 - Appendix 13 has no title

These are just some of what one can expect.

The factual and logical errors are also numerous. I will note only a few.

11 - In trying to favor the traditional text, Maynard says there are only a "few differences" between the TR and the Majority of MSS. Yet there are actually almost 2,000 differences and later Maynard ridicules the Majority Text advocates. This is clearly because they are not TR advocates. One always suspects Maynard is trying to prove the KJVO position.

14 - He says Vaticanus "differs from the TR throughout the entire New Testament," but 1) Vaticanus does not have the entire New Testament and 2) the TR and B agree about 44% of the time, or about 6,000 times when there are variants.

14 - Of manuscript Vaticanus he says, "also known as Codex B 1209." He should say it is also known as B or 03. The Vatican Library number is Gr.1209, but it is known as B/03.

There are many other similar problems that detract from the work. Only a few of these need to be mentioned. On page 14, under "definitions," for Sinaiticus and Vaticanus he gives neither the dates, nor the contents, nor the type of manuscript they are. This sort of thing is characteristic of this book. On page 15 under "Pertinent Terms Defined," he lists Textual Criticism as a term, but never defines it. The closest he came was to give Zuntz' purpose and goal of the discipline.

Because he has little good evidence for his views, Maynard resorts to name calling and guilt by association. On page 26 he refers to the minority text advocates as holding "The Naturalist Critical View" and as "Ecumenicals." However a large number of fundamentalists prefer the minority text today.

In the Introduction, on pages 26-36, he discusses four views of the text. It is clear that for Maynard, the beliefs of Baptists, i.e. his personal views, are more important than truth. Therefore Maynard ridicules anyone who knows anything about the text of the New Testament, unless, of course, he happens to hold Maynard's view. Maynard claims his book will demonstrate that the TR has always been widely available because "God did it." The problem is that Maynard has to ignore almost all Greek manuscript evidence to hold his views. He also

makes God to be a false god because God had to do things Maynard's way, despite the fact that there is sometimes zero evidence. Apparently his KJVO presuppositions prohibit him from presenting the facts openly for his readers. Maynard frequently boasts, as on page 285, "only 14 Greek mss" omit 1 John 5:7-8 "in the first eight centuries." However, he never boasts that there are zero (0) Greek manuscripts that contain 1 John 5:7-8 in the first eleven centuries!

In the Conclusion, he gives what he implies are the main arguments against 1 John 5:7, but he ignores the Greek fathers and distorts Greek manuscript evidence. This is not a change from the body of the book; it is a continuation of misinformation.

Appendix 1 is "Theology/character of the opposers of 1 John v. 7f." He cites unitarians and liberals but fails to note evangelicals, fundamentalists, and conservatives. This sort of strawman arguments and the use of guilt by association is found elsewhere in the book. These arguments do not help his cause, but make it appear that his arguments have no foundation. It seems that if one is giving a "history of the debate over 1 John 5:7," he should avoid all such emotional language, and give the actual history.