

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.

History of Debating. The art of debate and public speaking is not new and can be traced back to antiquity. In more modern times it can help determine the outcome of presidential elections. Look below at just a few of these historical examples. In ancient Greece, the philosopher Socrates used debate as a way of understanding the world by drawing out answers from his followers.Â Indeed, such was the intensity of the Parliamentary debate on the American Revolution, that Pitt the Elder died of exhaustion while making a speech on behalf of the Revolutionaries. In 1858, the debates for an Illinois Senate seat between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas were famed for their skill and ability to get to the heart of the argument. They have in turn inspired a whole type of modern debating. The First Epistle of John, often referred to as First John and written 1 John or I John, is the first of the Johannine epistles of the New Testament, and the fourth of the catholic epistles. There is no scholarly consensus as to the authorship of the Johannine works. The author of the First Epistle is termed John the Evangelist, who most scholars believe is not the same as John the Apostle. Most scholars believe the three Johannine epistles have the same author, but there is no consensus if this was The grammatical argument has been treated lightly by modern textual critics, but its importance was understood by GREGORY NAZIANZUS (Oration XXXII: Fifth Theological Oration: "On the Holy Spirit," A.D. 390; see Michael Maynard, A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8), FREDERIC NOLAN (An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the.Â This same theme is prevalent in the Epistle, being concisely and clearly stated in 5:7-8. The Comma truly bears coherence with the message of John's Gospel in this sense. It serves as an occasion to introduce the doctrine of the Trinity as the original readers prepared to study the attached Gospel. The Historical Defense of 1 John 5:7-8: The Unjustly Excised Text of the Three Divine Witnesses. Michael Maynard. Paperback.Â "After defining pertinent terms and introducing the textual problem regarding "the Johannine comma" (1 Jn 5:7-8), this volume makes available in a century-by-century format (1st to the 20th) the evidence that is relevant to the debate about the authenticity or inauthenticity of that passage. Thus there are quotations from and summaries of statements on the matter by Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome