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THE INTERPRETER'S DICTIONARY
OF THE BIBLE *

"Too much preaching has not been preaching: it has been a web of fugitive ideas spun from the preacher's random thoughts. Preaching, by the very meaning of the word, is heralding, and no preacher can be a herald unless he knows his commissioned word" (p. xx). *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* seeks to provide a comprehensive introduction to the present findings of critical Biblical studies. By and large, this compendious summary of contemporary Biblical scholarship, in which 253 contributors, most of them middle-of-the-road in relation to the extremes of acceptance or rejection of modern Biblical criticism, does an excellent job of making available to the discriminating reader the results of half a century of archaeological discoveries and investigations of the Biblical text.

The editor, George A. Buttrick, was assisted in the overall planning by Thomas S. Kepler, John Knox, Herbert G. May, and Samuel Terrien. No pains are spared to make the contents accessible to the reader. The user of this work will not find himself on a lexical merry-go-round. Sound principles of organization provide the reader with a collection of the genera of a larger species and at the same time offer more detailed separate treatments. Thus the article "Dress and Ornaments" treats all the types of garments worn

by men and women in Bible times, but under the heading "Belt" many additional passages are discussed. The outline of contents prefacing the lengthier articles also makes for quick access to the information stored in these magnificently printed pages. In addition to the 24 multicolor maps at the end of the first volume, the reader will find smaller maps inserted in articles which incorporate geographical detail. Thus the movements of Abiathar can be traced through the various places mentioned in the article without reference to the larger maps.

Besides being a dictionary of specific terms and names found in the English Bible, this work is encyclopedic in scope. The pastor will find valuable information and homiletical material under the headings "Lord's Prayer" (9 cols.) and "Lord's Supper" (8 cols.). Regrettably, the Nunc Dimittis and Magnificat are not discussed. For such items Hastings' *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, is still indispensable. The reader can learn much about education in Biblical times from the two articles on the subject which cover the Old and the New Testament respectively. The two articles on "Biblical Theology" will bring him abreast of modern discussions as well as the history of this discipline. Seminary students, including degree candidates, will find much expert capsuling of the principal areas of critical discussion, in the articles on the text of the Bible, for instance, where "Text, OT," written by B. J. Roberts, runs to 16 columns, and "Text, NT," by M. M. Parvis, runs to 22. (Note that where both Testaments are involved, the Old Testament article precedes the treatment of the New Testament.) Separate treatments are accorded each of the major codices. The discussion in the article "Number" helps clarify many phrases and passages with which the interpreter may experience difficulty. Unfortu-

* *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia Identifying and Explaining All Proper Names and Significant Terms and Subjects in the Holy Scriptures, Including the Apocrypha, with Attention to Archaeological Discoveries and Researches into the Life and Faith of Ancient Times.* Edited by George A. Buttrick. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962. 4 vols., 3,848 pages, plus maps. Cloth. \$45.

nately the use of half numbers in Daniel and Revelation is overlooked in this article, and since other contributors use the Dead Sea Scrolls to good advantage, reference might have been made to the significant light shed on the use of the number 40 by the community at Qumran (see Kurt Schubert, *The Dead Sea Community* [New York, 1959], pp. 105 f.). The author of the article, "Revelation," might well have studied the article "Number," and observed that the 1,000 years in Rev. 20 are probably to be taken symbolically like other numbers in the book. Articles relating to the Bible and the history of issues raised in the Biblical literature are in abundance. Hence an article on "Manicheism," finds inclusion. But why not a cross-reference under Valentinus, especially since "Basiliides, Gospel of" receives separate treatment? Both are discussed under "Gnosticism."

The bibliographies appended to many briefer and to all longer articles offer the reader ample opportunity to explore further the item of his choice. Some of these bibliographies are quite extensive. The one under "Demon, Demonology" covers almost two columns and contains entries under 30 subdivisions. The classical student or historian of Greek and Roman antiquities will appreciate most of the 30 or so entries under "Crimes and Punishments." More of the contributors might well have followed the lead of P. E. Davies (see under "Courage") in referring the reader to further bibliography in Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. But Davies himself would have been of more help to the reader by specifying the Greek words under which the student might find in Arndt-Gingrich the further bibliographical data. References to Emil Schürer's great work on the history of the Jews in New Testament times are now to the German editions, now to the English translation. As a courtesy to the reader who, if he owns Schürer at all, probably has only one or the other, references to this and other

notable publications which have undergone translation should have covered both the original and the translation. Moreover, under "Agrippa" the volume number to a reference in Schürer is missing, and under "Proselyte" no pagination at all is given.

In most cases, as far as we could determine from a cursory survey, the bibliographies aim at maximum helpfulness and include the standard works. However, the student desires more than a reference to M. R. James in the case of "Andrew and Matthias (Matthew), Acts of," especially since "Abraham, Testament of" and other articles on the pseudepigrapha contain more helpful bibliographies and in most cases direct him to the complete texts. Under "Paul the Apostle" some work like W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, 1955), should have been cited and reference made to its full bibliography (pp. 343—349), and certainly E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Berlin, 1923), should not have been missing. Under "Form Criticism" a listing of at least some of the significant critiques of Form Criticism would have been welcome, and under "Mirror," in view of policies practiced elsewhere in these volumes, Norbert Hagedé's work, *La métaphore du miroir dans les Épîtres de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (Neuchâtel, Paris, 1957) should have found mention. Finally, this reviewer is completely mystified by the reference under "Zethar" to Davis and Gehman, *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* (1944). It is annoying to be directed to a work of smaller compass when one secures the much larger work on the assumption that it will offer more than the popular handbook. The one line of etymological information given by Davis and Gehman might well have been included in the present work. The reference here to Paton's *Esther* in the *International Critical Commentary* series is understandable, in view of the editorial restriction on excessive technical detail.

The full range of the critical spectrum is

represented in these pages, from the careful documentation of the responsibility of Peter for the writing of 1 Peter to the documentary hypotheses of the Pentateuch. F. F. Bruce is cited frequently, and Robert Dick Wilson is listed under "Daniel." In most cases that we have examined, extreme viewpoints are avoided, and the articles in general represent moderate majority reports from the world of Biblical scholarship, with emphasis on the treasure rather than the digging. Thus Allen Wikgren is at pains to represent fairly two strong lines of interpretation for the word "custodian" in Gal. 3:24, and in the article "Pentateuch" D. N. Freedman writes: "Let no one, Israelite or Egyptian, or anyone else, whether of that time or of any future time, delude himself with the notion that what happened was natural, or explicable in human terms. The decisive, and only truly significant, factor was the hand of God." On the other hand, in the argument for an early second-century dating of the Epistle of James, under "James, Letter of," the literary connections are presented with unconvincing brevity, in contrast to a similar discussion on 2 Peter. The bibliographies ordinarily offer diversified viewpoints, instead of merely echoing the contributor's conclusions, and enable the reader to pursue a problem with some objectivity. Thus, on the Pastoral Letters, Walter Lock is cited on the side of authenticity, P. N. Harrison *per contra*. The second edition of John (not "W.") G. Machen's classic, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, finds citation under "Virgin Birth." Indeed, the general tenor of the dictionary appears to this reviewer as one of reverence and high concern that the Biblical message be understood on its own terms.

Users of both the King James and the Revised Standard Version will find this *Dictionary* designed especially for them. Discussions of names and terms will be found under the form found in the Revised Standard Version, but liberal cross references direct the user of the King James Version to discussion of the

parallel terms found in the Revised Standard Version. In some instances definitions are repeated; "Lo-Ammi" (Hos. 1:9 KJV), for example, receives substantially the same treatment as its counterpart "Not My People" (RSV). We note, however, that "Daddeus" (1 Esd. 8:46) is not listed, whereas from the same context "Addo," "Saddeus," and "Edes" all receive individual mention with a cross reference to "Iddo." Under "Adin" we find no reference to 1 Esd. 8:32, but 1 Esd. 5:12 is cited under "Elam." The editors might have alerted users of their dictionary to consult the article "Obsolete Terms" for obsolete expressions found in the King James Version. In this catch-all article Luther A. Weigle lists approximately 630 terms which might be misunderstood by readers unfamiliar with Elizabethan English, although he might have also included "sackbut" (Dan. 3:5, 7, 10, 15), "rude" (2 Cor. 11:6, meaning unskilled) and "novice" (1 Tim. 3:6, a beginner in the faith). Some of the terms merit and receive special treatment, as for example "Knop," "Ouches," and "Lancets," but without any apparent aim at consistency, for "earring" is omitted, as well as "compass" in the phrase "fetch a compass" (Acts 28:13). Under "Sardine Stone" the Biblical reference is missing!

Developing an acquaintance with these volumes is like walking from an old country store into a brilliantly lighted supermarket, where everything is neatly stacked with maximum eye appeal. Yet there is an old saying, *Quem dii oderunt, lexicographum fecerunt*. And only the composer of a work like this can appreciate the magnitude of the task and the many possibilities of error. A spot check suggests that the contributors, editors, and proofreaders have done their work with considerable care. Nevertheless, in addition to considerations already mentioned, we observe a disturbing lack of consistency in the rendering of the German *umlaut*. The cursory examination also turns up a few names of scholars, including even that of a contributor,

which are rendered incorrectly: Vol. I, p. xvii, read Gehman, not Gehmann; Vol. IV, first entry of bibliography under "Septuagint," read P. Wendland, not Wendlund; in the bibliography under "Transfiguration," Riesenfeld, not Risenfeld; and, on the very last page, M. S. [!] Enslin is the contributor of "Zostrianus, Apocalypse of." Users of the bibliographies are also advised to check carefully the pagination. In the first few pages, we note under "Abomination that Makes Desolate" that the reference to G. R. Beasley-Murray, *A [!] Commentary on Mark Thirteen* should

include p. 61; under "Abraham's Bosom," read Strack-Billerbeck, pp. 225—27. Under the word "Mourning" it is not clear why only pp. 13 and 14 of P. Heinisch's monograph are cited.

We hesitate to appear captious in catching these few drops of error out of so vast a sea of learning, but if any printed work deserves serious attention, it is this *Dictionary*. Phrases like "monumental book of reference" and "priceless contribution of scholarship," trite with application to other books, are here literally true. FREDERICK W. DANKER