

# Concordia Theological Monthly



S E P T E M B E R   ♦   1 9 5 7

# A New Lexicon

By MARTIN FRANZMANN

[A GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE: *A translation and adaptation of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur.* Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition, 1952. By William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich. Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, and Cambridge: The University Press, 1957. xxxvii + 909 pages. Cloth. \$14.]

THIS is not to be a review of the new lexicon — is there such a thing as a “new” lexicon? The survey of New Testament lexicography from 1522 to 1957 given by the editors of this lexicon in their Introduction (pp. v—viii) shows how relative the term “new” is in this connection; lexicographers stand strictly in a succession. Much less is this to be a critical review. We shall have to leave critical reviews to men who are less bound up with this work, emotionally and otherwise, than we of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod are. It is hardly to be expected that we can be strictly objective regarding this work, which is certainly one of the most significant ecumenical gestures ever to be made by our church. We could hardly have spelled out our allegiance to *sola Scriptura* more eloquently before men than in this way. And objectivity would be doubly difficult for us who stood close to Dr. Arndt, his colleagues, his students, his host of friends. Our grief at his recent departure is still too fresh to permit an objective, critical judgment on this last work of his, even though we know that he has gone into that bright realm where all God’s golden words are bright with a more than lexical light and all their significance is fully and forever clear.

This is to be, rather, an appreciation and a sort of personal introduction to the new lexicon, especially for those who may be, at first meeting, somewhat abashed by the technical severities and the laconic brusqueness of the work. This book is like a severely disciplined and close-lipped man. Once you get to know him, however, you will value him as a wise man and a good man to be with.

He wears better than many a burbling word-picture romanticist who "makes the New Testament live" for you. This man is content to let the New Testament live of its own vitality, without benefit of galvanic exclamation points. We even cherish the hope that we may, by way of this introduction, gain some new members for that ancient and loosely defined order which one might call the Order of Lexicon Loiterers, or Dictionary Dawdlers, or Synonym Savorers, that fraternity whose members read lexicons because they like to read lexicons, who may best be described by the *via negationis*: these men are *not* like the efficient lexicon user. We all know the type. The lexicon (it is strictly a tool to Mr. E. L. U.) is decisively slapped open, functionally flipped to the right entry; the teleological finger slides down the column, the horn-rimmed eye glares to a halt at the precisely serviceable spot. Mr. E. L. U.'s sharp little mind spears the desired lexical gobbet and pops it away; and bang!, the book is closed, the tool returned to the rack. The lexicon loiterer is to this type as the stroller through the countryside is to the man who walks three miles a day for his health. The irony of it is, of course, that the stroller usually enjoys better health than the man who pursues it. There is probably a corollary to that in the lexicon field, but it need not detain us.

Whether you are an efficient lexicon user or a lexicon loiterer, the new lexicon is a book for you. The last complete entry in the book is *ὠφέλιμος*, "useful, beneficial"; and that is a very suitable seal to place upon this work. I have been testing the Bauer Lexicon, which is the basis of the present work, for almost precisely sixteen years at this writing, since that pleasant June morning in 1941, when the unexpected happened and a graduating student, one of the best of a good, a very good group, stood at my door with a graduation present for his teacher, the Bauer Lexicon. Useful it is, as thousands of users of the German work would agree; and "useful" is not faint praise. The New Testament applies the adjective *ὠφέλιμος* to Scripture itself.

And useful it is in its English and revised dress, too. Not the least among the features which make the new lexicon useful is the inclusion of Walter Bauer's "Introduction to the Lexicon of the Greek New Testament" (pp. ix—xxv), which had been omitted from recent editions of the German work. This introduction makes

plain in massively marshaled detail how completely the New Testament is in the full stream of the Greek of its time. Even if one is inclined to believe that Bauer tends to minimize the all-pervasive Semitic influence, one must be grateful to him for reminding us again that the New Testament was designed to be understood by Greek-speaking people and that we must hear the New Testament with Greek ears. The introduction is at the same time a glimpse into a solitary workshop where the chips have been flying mightily for more than thirty years. I recall asking Dr. Bauer once what assistants he had employed in his work: "Assistants? My dear young man, by the time I've told assistants what they are to do and have checked what they have done, I can do it better myself."

The E. L. U. type will, I suppose, memorize the list of abbreviations, formidable as it is (pp. xxvii—xxxvii !), in cold blood and at one fell swoop; even the L. L. type will want to linger over it. He has acquired a taste for this practically contentless kind of reading, just as some people like to munch practically tasteless tidbits, like sunflower seeds. The pages of the lexicon proper bristle with abbreviations; and the unwary reader, who has skipped the introduction entirely, may be able to extract only an approx. mng from some pass. and perh. susp. that occas. the edd. have given a wrong rdg. or a wrong ref.; otherw. the style would not be so ellipt. But a little patience and practice will usu. solve the difficulty and enable him to come up w. a translit. of a cryptic rdg. And he will be reconciled wholly to the generous use of abbreviations when he reflects that the use of them has enabled the editors to give him a clearer, cleaner-looking, and more readable page than that of the original Bauer, and a smaller, handier volume to boot; that the use of abbreviations has saved him considerable money and will save him considerable time once he has grown accustomed to this apocopated speech—we read only a fraction of freq. used wds. anyway. Besides, the saving in space has enabled the editors to include all the New Testament references in the case of most words and all the references in the literature covered for the majority of words, so that for all practical purposes the reader has a concordance along with his dictionary.

But the full *ὀφέλιμος* quality of this book is, of course, savored only in the reading of it and the working with it. The student and

sermon forger will appreciate this book to the full. Take the Gospel for Misericordias Domini Sunday, John 10:11-16; any dictionary can give us the meaning of ποιμήν; and the references to Ezekiel 34 and 37 in the margin of our Nestle are enough, perhaps, to remind us that "shepherd" is a more virile and more royal conception than many anemic pink-and-blue church windows have led us to believe; but the reference to Maximus Tyrius in our lexicon gives us the overtones which ποιμήν had for Greek ears, too: "Cyrus is called ποιμήν ἀγαθός, because he protects the Persian 'flock' fr. the barbarian 'wolves.'" And the contrast with the hireling, our lexicon informs us, has its background in the Greek world, too. Themistius in the fourth century contrasts the hireling with the neatherd, and Plutarch in the second century contrasts the hireling with the divine Guide, who is for Plutarch, sadly enough, λόγος, reason. And the lexicon reminds us that τιθέναι ψυχὴν in 10:11, 15 has its plastic parallel in John 13:4, where the same verb is used of removing garments. The Son of God "laid His glory by" so completely that He also laid by His life. And in John 10:12 we are led by our lexicon beyond the rather pale "leave" offered both by the Authorized Version and by the Revised Standard Version to the more vivid "abandon." The hireling "leaves" his sheep as totally and as faithlessly as the disciples "leave" their Lord at His arrest (Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:50).

There is a rich and wonderful browsing everywhere. The word whose meaning the Authorized Version leaves open so neatly in 2 Cor. 11:28, ἐπίστασις ("that which cometh upon me daily"), turns up with more possible meanings than were dreamed of in our earlier philology, and we are subjected to the wholesome agony of choice: Shall it be "daily pressure upon me"? or "the attention or care daily required of me"? or "the burden of oversight, which lies upon me day in and day out"? or even "the hindrances that beset me day by day"? Not so simple as it seemed at first—*Forschung macht bescheiden*.

Or take our old enigmatic friend in Col. 2:18 ἐμβατεύω, "intruding into things which he hath not seen," in the Authorized Version. What *does* it mean, since the "not" read by the AV translators can hardly be part of the original text and "intruding" does not give a really satisfactory sense without it? Inscriptional

evidence from Asia Minor seems to show that the word was a technical term in the mystery religions, and the sense thus indicated fits excellently into the polemical atmosphere of Colossians and into the immediate context: either "taking his stand on what he has seen in the mysteries" or "puffed up without reason by what he saw when he was initiated."

And so on: the word ἄτακτος and its cognate is seen definitely to have the meaning which the context in 1 Thess. 5:14 and especially 2 Thess. 3:6,7 suggests, not merely that of being "unruly" or "disorderly" but specifically that of "idle," "lazy," "not at one's post." That mighty word of comfort and strength, John 5:24, comes even closer to our heart and its needs when we realize the homely immediacy of μεταβαίνω ("change one's place of residence, move") — he who hears the Word of Jesus and believes the God who sent Him has eternal life and does not come into judgment but has moved out of the house of death and has taken up residence in the house of life.

One last example: it is remarkable how much theology can cluster about one little word. Take δεῦρο and δεῦτε, "Come!" In this word we hear the voice of man's revolt against God's last Messenger, His Son ("Come on, let us kill Him!" Matt. 21:38); the voice of God's Judgment (Rev. 19:17); the voice of God, the Giver of the feast (Matt. 22:4); the voice of the Son inviting men to discipleship (Matt. 4:19; 19:21), calling the weary and heavy-laden to His rest under His kindly yoke (Matt. 11:28), calling the dead man from his grave (John 11:43); the voice of the Son of Man, returned in glory for the Great Assize, summoning the blessed of His Father to the eternal inheritance (Matt. 25:34). This occupies less than five inches in one column; but here is enough to repent on, believe on, and die on.

"When in 1947 The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod observed its centennial, a part of the thankoffering was set aside as a fund for scholarly research. . . . The committee, appointed by Dr. J. W. Behnken, the President of the church, to administer the fund, resolved to have Bauer's *Wörterbuch* done into English, with such adaptations and additions as would be required" (p. vii). It was a thankoffering that made this lexicon possible. The publication of the lexicon calls for another thankoffering — this, that

we who paid for it use it with prayer and with devotion, in order that the last entry of all may be a word that finds fulfillment in us. That word is ὤφθη, the aorist passive used so often to record the appearances of the risen Lord to His own (Luke 24:34; Acts 9:17; 13:31; 26:16; 1 Cor. 15:5-8). If we use this work aright, we shall see Him in the words of His disciples, the risen One; and, like them, we shall be glad when we see the Lord.

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