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Dictionary
of the
Apostolic Church

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WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
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TO MY WIFE

WHEAT (σίτος, σπειδαλις).—Apart from the Gospels the only books in the NT which contain a reference to wheat are the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the Apocalypse. The reference in Acts (27³⁶) requires no comment. The operation there alluded to completed that began in v. 18. In 1 Co 15³⁷ it occurs in a simile introduced by St. Paul in his dissertation on the Resurrection. The general meaning of the passage is: Thou sowest not the body that shall appear—i.e. the bladed stem with ears of corn—but a naked grain. In Rev 6⁶, the Voice fixes the maximum price for the main food-stuffs. The *denarius* was the daily wage (cf. Mt 20²) and a *χοῖνιξ* of wheat the average daily allowance of the workman. Barley, being much cheaper, formed the main staple of food of the poor, and in NT times the proportionate value of these two different kinds of grain was probably as three to one as estimated here. The Greek measure *χοῖνιξ* was probably something under two pints. The proclamation is addressed to the nameless rider who represents Dearth, and is a prohibition of famine prices.

In the great dirge over the fall of Babylon in Rev 18, reference is made to fine flour and wheat as two of the commodities for which the merchants of the earth are no longer able to find a market. The fine flour was no doubt imported for the wealthy. The word used, *σπειδαλις*, is a *ἀπαξ* λεγ. in the NT. The wheat supply of Rome came largely from Egypt and was conveyed by ship from Alexandria. The land of its origin is a matter of speculation, but Mesopotamia, the enormous wheat-harvests of which were in ancient times proverbial, probably has as good a claim as any other country.

The knowledge of agriculture certainly goes back to pre-Semitic times, for grind-stones belonging to that period have been discovered (cf. the present writer's *Latest Light on Bible Lands*, London, 1913, p. 213). Several varieties of wheat are grown in Palestine, of which the most common is the *Triticum spelta*. Two other important varieties are the *Triticum compositum* and the *Triticum hybernum*. Wheat has been an article of export from very early times (cf. Ezk 27¹⁷, Ac 12²⁰). The principal wheat-growing district is the plain of the Haurān.

See, further, HARVEST, SICKLE.

LITERATURE.—H. B. Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, London, 1911, pp. 488-493; R. B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, do., 1901, p. 490; A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *ICC*, 'First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians', Edinburgh, 1911, p. 369 f.; H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, London, 1907, pp. 88, 234; *The Speaker's Commentary*, iii. [do., 1881] 367; W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 3 vols., do., 1881-86, *passim*; J. C. Geikie, *The Holy Land and the Bible*, do., 1903, p. 53; *DCG* ii. 821; *SDB*, p. 972; *EB* iv. 5299 f.

P. S. F. HANDCOCK.

WHITE.—See COLOURS.

WHORE, WHOREMONGER.—See HARLOT.

WHOREDOM.—See FORNICATION.

WICKED.—The words 'wicked,' 'wickedness' occur 24 times in the AV of the English Bible. The passages are Mt 12⁴⁵ 13⁴⁰ 16¹ 18³² 22¹⁸ 25²⁶, Mk 7²², Lk 11²⁶, 39 19²², Ac 2²³ 8²² 18¹⁴ 25⁵, Ro 1²⁹, 1 Co 5⁵, 13, Eph 6¹², 16, Col 1²¹, 2 Th 2³ 3², 2 P 2⁷ 3¹⁷, 1 Jn 5¹⁹. In eight of these RV has substituted some other reading: 'evil' in Mt 12⁴⁵, Lk 11²⁶, Eph 6¹⁶, Col 1²¹, 1 Jn 5¹⁹, 'lawless' in Ac 2²³ (on the basis of a different reading: *διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων* instead of TR *διὰ χειρῶν ἀνόμων*), 2 Th 2³, 'amiss' in Ac 25⁵. In four of these instances the change from 'wicked' to 'evil' is due to the fact that evil

spirits are referred to; in Ac 2²³, where, with the changed text, *ἀνομος* ceases to be an attribute of hands and becomes a characterization of persons, it naturally resumes its literal meaning of 'lawless'; in 2 Th 2³ 'the lawless one' is preferable, because *ἀνομος* probably rests on pre-Pauline Jewish tradition which represented the Antichrist as an enemy to the Law, so that 'wicked' would be too vague a translation; in Ac 25⁵ 'amiss' reproduces *ἀποτον* more closely than 'wicked.' The change in Col 1²¹ from 'wicked works' to 'evil works' has nothing in the context to recommend it.

The prevailing Greek equivalent for 'wicked,' 'wickedness' is *πονηρός, πονηρία*. *κακία* occurs only once (Ac 8²²), *ἀθεσμος* twice (2 P 2⁷ 3¹⁷). The *ἀθεσμος* is one who transgresses fundamental Divine ordinances for moral conduct (from *ἀ* + *τιθέναι*). In regard to the specific force of *πονηρός* and its difference from *κακός* the following should be noted: *πονηρός* is derived from *πόνος* and usually explained as 'qui pōnους facit,' 'who causes trouble.' But according to others (Schmidt, Cremer) the connexion between it and *πόνος* would be of a different nature, the poor being called *πονηροί* because their life is laborious, full of *πόνος*, and then, by a not unusual transition, through what Trench calls 'the aristocratic tendencies of the language,' the word for 'poor' becoming also the word for 'wicked.' But, whether etymologically correct or not, the former explanation strikingly illustrates the specific meaning of *πονηρός* and its difference from *κακός*. While *κακός* describes a thing or person as inherently lacking that which is required by its idea, nature, or purpose, either in a physical or in a moral sense, *πονηρός* expresses the positive tendency to do harm in things, and the conscious pursuit of the injury of others in persons. The opposite of *κακός* is *ἀγαθός* (see art. GOODNESS); of *πονηρός* it is *χρηστός* (see art. KINDNESS). This difference between the two words can best be felt in passages where both are combined (1 Co 5⁵, Rev 16², Mt 15¹⁹; cf. with Mk 7²¹). In Mt 7¹⁸ 'evil fruits' = 'unwholesome, injurious fruits'; Ac 28²¹, 'evil words' are 'harmful words'; 1 Co 5¹³, 'the wicked' fornicator is so called because his uncleanness infects the whole Church (v. 6). 'Evil times' are dangerous times (Gal 1⁴, Eph 5¹⁶ 6¹³). Sometimes the word is used in a less serious sense of the harmfulness of inefficiency (Mt 25²⁶, 'wicked and slothful servant'; cf. the *κακός* *δοῦλος* of 24⁴⁵, who is lacking in fidelity and diligence). Especially of Satan and other evil spirits the word *πονηρός* is appropriately used, because they are intent upon doing evil and working harm (Eph 6¹⁶), but for the same reason it applies to men who seek to injure others (Ac 17⁵ 18¹⁴ 25¹⁸). In Col 1²¹ the works of paganism are called *ἔργα πονηρά* because they establish enmity between God and men; the rendering 'wicked works' of AV expresses this better than 'evil works' of RV. Cf., further, 2 Th 3² of the maliciously persecuting Jews, 2 Ti 3¹³, 3 Jn 10.

From the connotation of evil intent it is to be explained that *τὸ πονηρὸν, τὰ πονηρά* are never used of the physical evil of Divine retribution. *κακόν* and *κακά* are the words for this, because, even when God finds it necessary to punish, no evil intent can be predicated of Him. This applies to both the LXX and the NT. It is no exception when occasionally the adjective is used with such things as *ἄλκος, νόσος* in the sense of 'malignant,' for here the evil intent is metaphorically attributed to the disease (Dt 6²²).

In Mt 6¹³, Jn 17¹⁵, 2 Th 3³, 1 Jn 5¹⁹, expositors differ on the question whether the inflected forms are from the masculine *ὁ πονηρός* or the neuter *τὸ πονηρὸν*. Only in regard to the last-mentioned passage is the personal reference to Satan placed

beyond doubt by v.¹⁸; hence the rendering of RV, 'in the evil one,' is to be preferred to the 'in wickedness' of AV. In the other cases where the two versions differ in the same manner no certain contextual indications to decide the question are present.

LITERATURE.—J. A. H. Tittmann, *De Synonymis in NT*, London, 1829-32, p. 19; R. C. Trench, *NT Synonyms*, do., 1876, pp. 303-306; G. Heine, *Synonymik des neutest. Griechisch*, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 100, 106; H. Cremer, *Biblisch-theologisches Wörterbuch der neutest. Gräcilät*, Gotha, 1902, pp. 500-534, 850-853; J. H. H. Schmidt, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, Leipzig, 1876-80. GEERHARDUS VOS.

WIDOWS.—Widows and orphans are alluded to by St. James (1st) as a class specially needing sympathy and support, and those who visit this class and extend to it sympathetic help thereby truly serve God, who is 'a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows' (Ps 68⁹). An emphatic expression of the same idea, viz. of charity to widows as true worship, occurs in Polycarp (*ad Philipp.* 4), who speaks of widows as a *θυσιαστήριον*, 'altar of sacrifice,' on which Christians should lavish their offerings as of old worshippers of Jahweh placed their gifts on the altar in the Temple. The same expression is reproduced in *Apost. Const.* (iii. 6). The same attitude towards widows is found in almost all the literature of the sub-Apostolic Age. In Hermas we find repeatedly such sentiments as the following: 'Instead of fields then buy ye oppressed souls as each one can, and widows and orphans mercifully visit (*ἐπισκέπτεσθε*) and do not overlook them' (*Sim.* i. 8). Fasting is recommended so that by the saving thus effected the widow and the orphan might be filled (v. 3). Deacons who exercise their office wickedly, robbing widows and orphans of their livelihood, are spots on the Church (ix. 26). Heretics are censured by Ignatius because 'they do not care for the love-feast or for brotherly love (*πρὸς ἀδελφούς*), nor yet for the widow nor the orphan' (*ad Smyrn.* 6). As against this, those who do care for this class are praised. Aristides in his *Apology* can say of Christians as a whole: 'From the widows they do not turn away their countenance; they rescue the orphan from him who does him violence' (see Hermas, *Vis.* ii. iv. 3; *Ep. Barn.* xx. 2; Justin, *Apol.* i. 67; *Apost. Const.* ii. 26, iii. 6; and many similar passages). That there was need of such injunctions is clear, because church-officers might selfishly appropriate funds for their own use, and also because widows themselves might in a mercenary spirit take too much and 'make their widowhood a profitable trade' (E. Hatch, art. 'Widows,' in Smith and Cheetham's *DCA* ii. 2033^b; see also *Apost. Const.* bk. iii., where the faults of widows are enumerated).

The OT (Dt 14²⁹, Job 29¹³, Is 1¹⁷, Jer 22⁵, Ezk 22⁷, Zec 7¹⁰, Mal 3⁵), the Apocrypha (Sir 4¹⁰, 'Be as a father to orphans, and in place of a husband to their mother'), and Rabbinical literature (W. O. E. Oesterley, *EGT*, London, 1910, on Ja 1²⁷) all lay stress on the duty of 'practising kindness' towards widows. There were deposits for widows and orphans in the treasury of the Temple (2 Mac 3¹⁰), and from the gospel we learn that even well-to-do widows were robbed by the Pharisees and that others were subject to spoliation without legal redress (Mk 12⁴⁰; see Swete, *in loc.*; Lk 18¹⁻⁸; see also, for widows in the early Church, J. B. Mayor on Ja 1²⁷).

No doubt the poor among the Palestinian saints for whom St. Paul cared so much (*τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν*, Ro 15²⁶), and whom he helped by means of the offerings of the Gentile churches (1 Co 16), would include widows. Of course there were widows who were not poor, such as the mother of John Mark, and there were others for whom their relatives

could provide; but as a class widows were poor, and the Church could not let them starve. From Ac 6^{1ff} we learn that in the Church of Jerusalem there were many widows, not only Aramaic-speaking widows, but also those of Jewish blood who spoke Greek. The latter class was evidently neglected compared with the former, but when this grievance was brought to the notice of the Apostles they appointed seven men to supervise the charity of the Church. This was in intention a temporary and local arrangement. It is possible that seven were appointed because there were seven meeting-places in the city, but one cannot be in any way certain that there was any special reason for the precise number. These men saw to it that the Hellenist widows as well as the others were fed at the daily ministration—probably meals were procured daily wherever the church met for worship. Monetary help and clothing would also be provided. Before this the duty of helping the poor, and among them widows, was left to the dictates of spontaneous individual charity in the daily ministration; now it was partially organized. Nothing is said, however, of a roll of widows or of specific qualifications such as age being necessary before relief could be given. These questions were yet to arise in the expanding Church. Certainly there is nothing here of the nature of a definite Church order. In Joppa Tabitha (Dorcas) had instituted a species of clothing society for the help of widows (Ac 9^{36ff}), and no doubt in other places also this class was helped if not by the Church as a whole then by individuals of an active charitable disposition. In both of these passages widows are brought before us as a needy class who were tended by the charity of their fellow-believers. Christian benevolence would not indeed be restricted to the household of faith, but it had the first claim.

When 1 Ti 5³⁻¹⁶ was written the question of the Church's relation to widows—in Ephesus at any rate—had become a serious problem. There were at least two pressing questions, viz. (1) the wise administration of the Church's financial resources, and (2) the clear enunciation of the basal principles of Christian charity. The Apostle makes it clear that no widows were to be relieved who had children or grandchildren able to support them. This was not simply to save the scanty finances of the Church, but much more in order to enforce a binding moral principle. There is every reason to believe that there were families who tried to evade what was a cardinal obligation of piety by attempting to get their widowed mothers or grandmothers to be supported by the Church. Possibly some widows were themselves eager to do so, so as to gain thus greater personal liberty. Against this St. Paul is emphatic in declaring that descendants ought to support their widowed relatives. He repeats this duty thrice. To neglect it is not only to violate Christian law (Mk 7¹⁰⁻¹³), but also to fall below the moral standard of paganism (cf. 1 Ti 5⁸, 'But if any one exercises no care for his relatives, and especially members of his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever'). The principle is stated generally in vv. 3-4, 'Respect widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let such descendants learn first of all to act piously towards their own households and to requite their parents'; and a specific application of the same principle is thus expressed: 'If any believing woman has widows, let her provide for them, and let the church not be burdened, lest really deserving widows have not sufficient support' (v. 16). The Apostle here lays down a basal principle of Christian charity in general, making it apply specifically to the case of widows. Church support is not a substitute for