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Hayes, John H., ed.

Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation

Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999. Pp. xlix + 653 (Vol. 1); xxxii + 675 (Vol. 2), Cloth, No Price Available, ISBN 0687055318.

Volume: 1: A-J; Volume 2: K-Z

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This welcome reference book is broader in scope than the recent *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (ed. by D. K. McKim; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998). While it includes entries on individual biblical interpreters throughout the ages, the list is broader in scope than the more focused approach in the previous work. Individuals who are included range from Origen to Sojourner Truth to James Barr. Because the cut-off for inclusion was birth before 1930, most of these interpreters are male, although it also excludes medieval women whose work certainly employed biblical interpretation. Beyond individual interpreters, however, the volumes also include entries on various organizations, topics in the field, and biblical books. Articles on organizations, such as the “American Palestine Exploration Society,” provide a brief history of that particular organization. The topics covered range from traditional biblical methods, such as “Form Criticism” to more recent developments in exegesis, such as “Asian Biblical Interpretation.” Again, these entries outline the history of the discipline, including significant practitioners of the field. More importantly, the volumes include entries for every biblical book, including the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books, as well as some extra-canonical texts, which sketch the history of interpretation of that book starting with the question of canonicity and proceeding to modern interpretation. All of the articles in the book are followed by an introductory bibliography to that topic. As with any book of this nature the articles are uneven. Some exclude material I would have expected to find; for instance, the entry on “Art, The Bible and” does not include a discussion of eastern icons, while the article on the Decalogue focuses entirely on the history of interpretation of the material, leaving out an assessment of the current *status quaestionis*. While a few fall short of the mark of clarity, the overwhelming majority are at least adequate, many

excellent introductions to their subject. The bibliographies alone are worth the investment. I would not hesitate to send my students here to begin research on a topic. I highly recommend this volume for both undergraduate and graduate libraries, as well as many personal libraries.