

Hard Sayings of the Bible

Publisher's Preface

WITH OVER A QUARTER million copies in print, the Hard Sayings series has proved itself among readers as a helpful guide to Bible difficulties. The series was launched with the publication of F. F. Bruce's *The Hard Sayings of Jesus* in 1983, with subsequent volumes appearing in 1988, 1989, 1991 and 1992. Those volumes included *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* and *More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, by Walter C. Kaiser Jr., and *Hard Sayings of Paul* and *More Hard Sayings of the New Testament*, by Manfred T. Brauch and Peter H. Davids, respectively. This edition combines the five earlier versions with new material from Walter Kaiser and Peter Davids. Over one hundred new verses have been added to the list of texts explained, as well as a dozen introductory articles addressing common questions that recur throughout the Bible. The result is that all of the Old Testament texts have been addressed by Walter Kaiser; F. F. Bruce's work is confined to the Synoptic Gospels, with one addition to the Gospel of John; Manfred Brauch's work is confined to Paul's epistles; and Peter Davids's contribution ranges throughout the whole of the New Testament. The general introduction that follows distills the key introductory remarks from the various authors of the separate pieces.

The authors share the conviction that the Bible is God's inspired and authoritative word to the church, but careful readers will observe that they do not all agree on the best solutions to certain Bible difficulties. This is as it should be. If everyone agreed on the best solutions to these questions, they wouldn't be hard sayings.

What F. F. Bruce wrote in his introduction to *The Hard Sayings of Jesus* can likely be said of nearly all the difficult texts in this collection: they may be hard for two different reasons. First are those that, because of differences in culture

and time, are hard to understand without having their social and historical backgrounds explained. Second are those that are all too easily understood but that challenge the ways we think and act. As Mark Twain reportedly once remarked, it wasn't the parts of the Bible that he didn't understand that bothered him but those parts that were perfectly clear.

This volume is published with the hope that the former kinds of difficulties may have some helpful light shined on them. We hope, however, in the name of explanation, never to blunt the force of latter kinds of difficulties, where God's Word confronts us to change and conform us into the image of Jesus Christ.
