

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, NT Volume 9)

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>> A 2001 Christianity Today Book of the Year While patristic commentary on St. Paul's shorter letters--Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, the Pastorals and Philemon--was not so extensive as that on his longer letters, certain passages in these letters proved particularly important in doctrinal disputes and practical church matters. Pivotal in controversies with the Arians and the Gnostics, the most commented-upon christological text amid these letters was Colossians 1:15-20, where Jesus is declared "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." In other texts scattered throughout the Pastorals, the fathers found ample support for the divinity of the Son and the Spirit and for the full union of humanity and divinity in the one redeemer, the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). These early Christian commentators also looked to the Pastorals, where Pauline authorship was assumed, for important ethical and moral teaching, as well as explicit qualifications for choosing church leaders and guidelines for overseeing the work and behavior of widows. Chief among the Eastern commentators and widely excerpted throughout this volume is John Chrysostom, praised for his pastoral insight and shrewd, generous empathy with the apostle Paul. Other Greek commentators whose works are cited include Theodoret of Cyr, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Severian of Gabala, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. Among Western commentators Augustine dominates. His work is joined by that of Ambrosiaster, Pelagius, Jerome, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Novatian, Cyprian of Carthage, Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose, among others. Of particular interest for their ascetical and devotional insight are works from Syrian and Egyptian churches, including Aphrahat, Ephrem the Syrian, Isaac of Nineveh and Philoxenus of Mabbug. This volume opens up a treasure house of ancient wisdom that allows these faithful witnesses, some appearing here in English translation for the first time, to speak with eloquence and intellectual acumen to the church today. Gorday (Ph.D., Vanderbilt) is a clinical staff member with the Georgia Association for Pastoral Counseling and priest-associate at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Atlanta. "This volume continues the valuable exploration of patristic interpretation." (Mark Bilby, Religious Studies Review, September 2009)

"A 'must' for all theological libraries." (International Review of Biblical Studies, Vol. 55, 2008-2009)

"A wealth of information for the classic Bible scholar." (Ravonne A. Green, American Reference Books Annual, 2006, Volume 37)

"Contemporary Christians would do well to draw the hermeneutical circle broadly enough to include not only cross-cultural voices from around the world but also the voices to be found in the Ancient Christian Commentary series. This is an excellent sermon-preparation resource for pastors." (Christian Century, May 2, 2006)

"All who are interested in the interpretation of the Bible will welcome the forthcoming multivolume series Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Here the insights of scores of early church fathers will be assembled and made readily available for significant passages throughout the Bible and the Apocrypha. It is hard to think of a more worthy

ecumenical project to be undertaken by InterVarsity Press." (Bruce M. Metzger, professor emeritus of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary)

"For those who think that church history began around 1941, when their pastor was born, this commentary will be a great surprise. Christians throughout the centuries have read the biblical text and nursed their spirits with it and then applied it to their lives. These commentaries reflect that the witness of the Holy Spirit was present in his church throughout the centuries. As a result, we can profit by allowing the ancient Christians to speak to us today." (Haddon Robinson, Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)

"There is no shortage of new books on the market and it may be a surprise to some to see IVP producing the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series. But, bearing in mind C. S. Lewis's admonition, 'It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between,' this series will fill a great need that many of us may not even be aware of--the need to read those who have gone before us." (D. Stuart Briscoe)

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"The Scriptures have been read with love and attention for nearly two thousand years, and listening to the voice of believers from previous centuries opens us to unexpected insight and deepened faith. Those who studied Scripture in the centuries closest to its writing, the centuries during and following persecution and martyrdom, speak with particular authority. The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture will bring to life the truth that we are invisibly surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses." (Frederica Mathewes-Green, commentator, National Public Radio)

"Composed in the style of the great medieval catenae, this new anthology of patristic commentary on Holy Scripture, conveniently arranged by chapter and verse, will be a valuable resource for prayer, study and proclamation. By calling attention to the rich Christian heritage preceding the separations between East and West and between Protestant and Catholic, this series will perform a major service to the cause of ecumenism." (Avery Dulles, S. J., Laurence J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society, Fordham University)

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