

ANCIENT
CHRISTIAN
DOCTRINE

2

We Believe in
One Lord Jesus Christ

EDITED BY

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A GUIDE TO USING THE COMMENTARIES IN THE ANCIENT CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE SERIES

Several features have been incorporated into the design of this commentary series. The following comments are intended to assist readers in making full use of each of the volumes.

Sections of the Creed

The five commentaries are first and foremost a phrase-by-phrase commentary on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The portion of the Creed for each individual volume has been set in three languages—Greek, Latin and English—with the appropriate phrase under consideration highlighted in bold font in each language. Numerous English translations have been developed in recent years; we have used the ICET version of 1975 because of its current wide use.

Historical Contexts and Overviews

Following each section of the Creed is a short section labeled HISTORICAL CONTEXT. Where wording of the Creed reflects the culmination of discussions of highly controverted issues, readers are offered a brief summary of the controversy and the issues at stake in order for them to make more sense of the selections set forth. Where doctrine developed harmoniously without much controversy, that fact is noted and a brief description of the development of the doctrine is supplied. Following the historical context is a section labeled OVERVIEW, designed to provide a brief précis of the ensuing section's excerpts. It tracks a reasonably cohesive thread of argument among patristic comments, even though they are derived from diverse sources and generations.

Topical Headings

An abundance of varied patristic comment is available for each phrase of the Creed. At the same time the Creed itself forms a skeleton for supporting the larger doctrinal convictions of the church. Thus the commentary on the Creed can show the full range of the church's systematic theological concerns. For this reason we have broken the sections of the Creed into two levels. First are subsections that group common themes within the patristic comments. Then each individual patristic comment is tagged by a key phrase, metaphor or idea that suggests the essence of the excerpt.

Identifying the Patristic Texts

Following the topical heading of each excerpt, the name of the patristic commentator is given. An English translation of the patristic comment is then provided. This is immediately followed

by the title of the patristic work in English and the appropriate textual reference—usually book, section and subsection. If the notation differs significantly between the English-language source footnoted and other sources, alternate references appear in the notes.

The Footnotes

Readers who wish to pursue a deeper investigation of the patristic works cited in this commentary will find the footnotes especially valuable. A footnote number directs the reader to the notes at the bottom of the right-hand column, where in addition to other notations (clarifications or biblical cross references) is found information on English translations (where available) or standard original language editions of the work cited. An abbreviated citation (normally citing the book, volume and page number) of the work is provided. A key to the abbreviations is provided in the front matter. Where there is any serious ambiguity or textual problem in the selection, we have tried to reflect the best available textual tradition. Where original language texts have remained untranslated into English, we provide new translations. Wherever current English translations are already well rendered, they are utilized, but where necessary they are stylistically updated. A single asterisk (*) indicates that a previous English translation has been updated to modern English or amended for easier reading. A double asterisk (**) indicates either that a new translation has been provided or that some extant translation has been significantly amended.

Outline of Contents, List of Ancient Authors and Texts Cited, and Index

In lieu of a subject index, a full outline of the sections and subsections has been included in the back matter of each volume. This should aid readers in finding specific theological content and make the volumes all the more useful for the study of historical and systematic theology. Each volume contains a list of ancient authors and texts cited, as well as a full Scripture index.

Biographical Sketches and Timeline

Many readers will find helpful brief biographical sketches of the patristic writers as well as a timeline placing them within the proper century and geographical location. Rather than repeating the sketches and timeline in each volume, we have decided to gather them at the conclusion of volume five. Similarly, we have supplied the general introduction to the series only in volume one. For any readers who have not purchased the whole set, the general introduction, sketches and timeline may be found online at www.ivpress.com by searching for the series information and following the appropriate links.