



InterVarsity Press Releases Newly Discovered Lightfoot Commentaries

October 17, 2014 | Alisse Wissman | 630.734.4059 | awissman@ivpress.com

WESTMONT, IL – *The Acts of the Apostles*, the first in a three volume set of newly discovered commentaries by J. B. Lightfoot, has been published by InterVarsity Press (IVP) this month. Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828–1889) was one of the great biblical and patristic scholars of the nineteenth century in any language, and certainly in English. IVP is thrilled to make these important volumes available.

Andrew T. Le Peau, associate publisher and editorial director, said of the author, “J. B. Lightfoot was the N. T. Wright of his time – a scholar and bishop of Durham who carved new paths of Biblical study for generations to come.”

Lightfoot is considered by many to be a scholar well ahead of his time and one of the great minds of his or any generation. He is known especially for his writings on Paul’s letters and the apostolic fathers.

“J. B. Lightfoot is universally recognized as one of the most brilliant and important biblical scholars of the nineteenth century, so the publication of his heretofore largely unknown comments on Acts is an exciting publishing event,” said David Congdon, assistant editor for IVP Academic. “We are indebted to Ben Witherington III and Todd Still, as well as Jeanette Hagen. In their rough, unfinished nature, these manuscripts give us a window into Lightfoot’s mind at work.”

Witherington, professor of New Testament for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary and member of the doctor faculty at St. Andrews University in Scotland, found hundreds of handwritten pages of biblical commentary by Lightfoot at the Durham Cathedral Library in the spring of 2013.

Witherington brought Todd D. Still, the William M. Hinson Professor of Christian Scriptures in the George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University, into the project. They began to digitize all the relevant documents with the help of Asbury Seminary and Baylor University. They were also supported by the invaluable transcription and editing help of Jeanette Hagen, a PhD candidate in New Testament at Durham University. Even in their incomplete form, these commentaries represented a goldmine for historians and biblical scholars. The now published documents are sure to provide readers with a new appreciation for Lightfoot’s contributions.

“The past, as Lightfoot would say, is not mere prologue; it is the foundation of our faith and on it we must stand. Lightfoot reminds us again and again that history matters, that nothing can be theologically true that is historically false, that a gnostic sort of spirituality that divorces itself from the original Greek text and context of Acts is not a Christian approach to spiritual formation but a heresy against which the church fathers fought vigorously,” said



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Witherington.

“The discovery of hitherto unknown exegetical works by J. B. Lightfoot is a rare gift, full of potential for fresh insight both about the man himself (acknowledged worldwide as the leading scholar of his day) and, as he would have wished, about texts which he knew so well and which themselves express the heart of the gospel,” praised N. T. Wright, professor of New Testament at the University of St Andrews. “An unexpected and exciting addition to the core library of seminal biblical studies.”

The Acts of the Apostles is the first volume in the set, and the projected second and third volumes will explore the Gospel of John and then 2 Corinthians and 1 Peter, respectively. To learn more about *The Acts of the Apostles* or The Lightfoot Legacy Set, visit ivpress.com/lightfoot.

Founded in 1947 as an extension of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, InterVarsity Press serves those in the university, the church and the world by publishing thoughtful Christian books that equip and encourage people to follow Jesus as Savior and Lord in all of life.

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