



**Martens, Peter, ed.**

***In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley, S.J.***

Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008. Pp. xii + 290. Hardcover. \$48.00. ISBN 9780268035112.

Nick Norelli

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

Over the past couple of years I've read more than a few *Festschriften* and I've noticed two disappointing trends in the majority of them: (1) they either honor the recipient without reference to their work, or (2) they reference their work without honoring the recipient. So it is with pleasure that I report that *In the Shadow of the Incarnation* has been able to strike the right balance of honoring Brian E. Daley with reference to his work.

For those not familiar with Daley he is a Roman Catholic priest (a Jesuit in fact) as well as the Catherine F. Huisling Professor of Theology at Notre Dame University. For more than thirty years he's been writing on the early Church, amassing an impressive bibliography of articles, books, and edited volumes on Christology, Trinitarian theology, and eschatology, to name just his major interests. His work and his character have had a great impact on not a few individuals. *In the Shadow of the Incarnation* gathers many of these individuals to honor Daley with a collection of fantastic essays on early Christology.

The essays are arranged in chronological order and cover quite a bit of ground beginning with an early Christian letter from A.D. 177 and moving through the centuries ending with St. Maximus the Confessor, with a healthy dose of Athanasius, Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nazianzus, Eustathius or Antioch, Marcella of Ancyra, Augustine, and Cyril of Alexandria thrown in for good measure. Not surprisingly, Augustine receives the most attention with four of the book's thirteen essays focusing on his Christology. Hilary of Poitiers comes in second with

two essays dedicated to his works. In order to keep this review manageable (as is my custom) I'll briefly comment on three essays that I found particularly enjoyable.

I'll begin with D. Jeffrey Bingham's contribution "The Apocalypse, Christ, and the Martyrs of Gaul" which focuses on the *Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne*, a letter written in A.D. 177 that depicted the persecution of these churches. Bingham traces the apocalyptic themes in the letter before going on to show the significant role that John's Apocalypse played in its composition. The "communities of Vienne and Lyons," proposes Bingham, "understood the Lamb of [John's] Apocalypse as a sacrificial victim" (22) which caused them to view all martyrs as sacrificial victims. Because the Lamb was seen as engaged in a cosmic battle with Satan and his agents, these Christians saw their martyrdom as participating in this combat. Bingham ties together two of Daley's passions (Christology & eschatology) making this essay the perfect blend I spoke of above.

Following Bingham is Khaled Anatolios who is perhaps the most exciting Athanasian scholar writing today. I never tire of his work on Athanasius, especially because he's not afraid to challenge consensus views. He does much of this in "Athanasius's Christology Today: The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ in *On the Incarnation*." He takes as his point of departure an essay written by Karl Rahner entitled "Christology Today" in which "Rahner characterizes 'classical Christology' as preoccupied with 'ontological' categories (such as 'person' and 'nature') that are located in a descending 'incarnational' framework." (29) Rahner thought that this kind of Christology needed to be supplemented with a "functional" Christology that focused on Christ's salvific work. Anatolios works through Athanasius' *On the Incarnation* skillfully showing Athanasius' focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Christ for us and our salvation as a centerpiece of his thought. In other words, what Rahner was calling for in modern Christology had already been a feature of ancient Christology.

The final essay I'll mention is Basil Studer's "Loving Christ According to Origen and Augustine." Studer notes how for both theologians Christ is the "Truth" which is a very personal designation. In Origen's *De principiis* it "signifies Christ as our Lord and Master." (155) For Augustine we need to take into account the relationship between faith and truth. He uses the images of walking, voyaging, wandering, etc. "to depict nothing other than faith in Christ. With this faith we advance on the path that is Christ and arrive at Truth, which is Christ himself." (159) Studer also points out differences in the two theologians, e.g., Augustine is more philosophical than Origen. "Origen devotes more thought to the soul of Jesus than does Augustine, whereas Augustine comes closer to the later conception of the personal unity of Christ." (165). They focus on differing aspects of the renewal of sinners, with Augustine placing more weight on grace and Origen placing more weight on human freedom. But "[f]or both, Christ serves as the

mediator between God and man, the way that leads to Truth. For both, the human quest for the vision of God remains unfulfilled without a faithful love for Christ.” (165)

The book is rounded out with a six-page bibliography of Brian E. Daley’s various books and articles (276-81) as well as biographical info on all the contributors (282-84) and a subject index (285-87). My lone gripe with this project was the decision to use chapter end notes. No matter how many scholarly works I read that use them I’ll never understand why. But I can with a clear conscience recommend this title to anyone interested in early Christology, patristics, or both. Robert Louis Wilken’s comment on the back cover sums this work up beautifully: “For a collection of essays the material is unusually well focused, and the volume will make a fresh contribution to the current state of patristic scholarship on early Christian thinking about the person and work of Christ.”