



Hardy, Edward R., ed.

Christology of the Later Fathers

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
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Christology of the Later Fathers (hereafter *CLF*) is one volume among a large body of works in The Library of Christian Classics series. This series includes a number of volumes from some of Christendom's greatest thinkers spanning from the second to sixteenth centuries.

Originally published in 1954 WJK reissued the handsome paperback volume currently under review in 2006. Much like two books I recently reviewed which were part of the Sources of Early Christian Thought series *CLF* offers introductions to, (sometimes) fresh translations, and bibliographies for further study of some ancient patristic texts. This particular volume covers some of the writing of Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus along with a series of ancient documents that figured prominently in the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries (e.g., The Letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia; The Letter of Eusebius of Caesarea Describing the Council of Nicaea; The Dogmatic Letters of Cyril and Nestorius; The Chalcedonian Decree; etc.).

The value of such a volume should be appreciated by any student of Scripture who owns multiple translations. As we all know, multiple translations help to bring out the fuller meaning or range of meanings for any given text. Owning this volume along with the NPNF series and the volumes in the Sources of Early Christian Thought series will prove incredibly helpful, and even more so if you have access to the texts in their original languages and are equipped to judge the accuracy of the translation.

But more important than the translations are the introductions and bibliographies. For quick introductions to the writings and thought of these particular fathers, *CLF* is spectacular, brief but informative at every turn. Unfortunately the bibliographies aren't nearly as excellent, but this of course is an understandable limitation given their original date of composition. So while this volume is a great place to read an introduction to the documents and authors included, one will certainly want to turn to larger and more recent

works like Drobner's *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction* or older but still useful *Patrology* by Johannes Quasten.

I'd also mention that the footnotes in this volume are wonderful. There are translation notes, references to biblical texts and other ancient works cited or alluded to (e.g., Homer's *The Iliad*), cross references, and more. There is also a detailed general [subject] index (387-96) as well as a detailed Scripture index (396-400). Features like this are simply indispensable when engaging in rigorous study of the early fathers and the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Given the date of this review (Dec. 24, 2008 – Christmas Eve), I'd like to close with a quote from Athanasius' *On the Incarnation of the Word* and then my recommendation:

You are wondering, perhaps, for what possible reason, having proposed to speak of the incarnation of the Word, we are at present treating of the origin of mankind. But this too properly belongs to the aim of our treatise. For in speaking of the appearance of the Saviour amongst us, we must needs speak also of the origin of men, that you may know that the reason of his coming down was because of us, and that our transgression called forth the loving-kindness of the Word, that the Lord should both make haste to help us and appear among men. For of his becoming incarnate we were the object, and for our salvation he dealt so lovingly as to appear and to be born even in a human body. (58-59)

I think this is a fantastic volume that would be a welcome addition to any student of patristics' library.