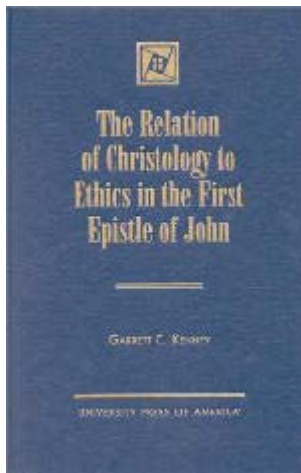


RBL 01/28/2002



Kenney, Garrett C.

The Relation of Christology to Ethics in the First Epistle of John

Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001. Pp. x + 58, Cloth, \$29.00, ISBN 0761818677.

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The main part (17-41) of this brief study of 1 John comprises an expository account of the Epistle, focusing particularly on the way that “ethics,” that which believers do, is integrated with Christology. The introduction, which discusses the conventional questions of authorship, relationship to the Fourth Gospel, and the identity of the secessionists, sets the context by concluding that the letter opposes a docetic Christology that, by failing to take the human life of Jesus seriously, treats the human action “in the flesh” as equally insignificant. The influence of Raymond Brown’s work is evident in the argument and footnotes. The final chapter summarizes the argument and offers as a pastoral application the discernment of ten components of Christian spirituality: the Trinitarian, the christocentric, the Holy Spirit, Scripture-authority, an ecclesiastical dimension, a liturgical dimension, an incarnational dimension, a historical consciousness, and openness to change and new formulations. Some students of 1 John may feel that some of these aspects have only a flimsy anchorage in the Epistle, and it seems that they probably reflect the Roman Catholic context from which the study was written. The book reads like a reflection on the issue in recent scholarship and adds little new to current discussion. The publisher’s advertisement describes the intended audience as “adult layperson, adult professional,” and the book’s main value would be to make 1 John a little more accessible to such readers who are unfamiliar with more detailed studies.