

The Blessed Virgin Mary. By Tim Perry and Daniel Kendall, S.J. Guides to Theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013. Pp. vi + 118. \$18.

If one were to state succinctly this book's aim, it is clearly that stated by the authors in the introductory chapter, namely, to demonstrate that the Blessed Virgin Mary "does in fact matter" to all who are committed to Jesus Christ (3). In this compact volume, Perry and Kendall have consolidated some of the various strains of interpretation available in the biblical, patristic, medieval, Reformation, and modern periods regarding the Blessed Virgin. If for no other reason than the mere range and scope of historical thought that is summarily presented in this volume, even the casual reader should come away with the realization that the Blessed Virgin Mary simply cannot be ignored or left out of any serious consideration of systematic and historical theology.

Aimed toward not only the general reader but also university students, this volume introduces many questions and themes that should lend themselves to further reading and investigative research by interested parties. This is especially true regarding the volume's narration of the biblical tradition of the Blessed Virgin, both as it stands on its own and as it is interpreted during the patristic era. While the volume explores key biblical verses and themes from the standpoint of modern exegetical questions, other strains of biblical interpretation readily available from within the long history of sacred tradition regarding Mary that would certainly need to be acknowledged for a complete history of Marian doctrinal development both East and West.

Likewise, while the volume offers interesting perspectives on the development of Marian thought prior to and at the point of the Reformation, the material surveyed by P. and K. for this period is scant, compared to the significance of the period for the development of Marian doctrine and devotion from a Catholic viewpoint. In this regard, the manner in which the contributions of Aquinas are presented should be complemented by other accounts, especially on his understanding of the Immaculate Conception.

P. and K. have chosen to devote the bulk of their mariological narrative to the modern period. While they offer thought-provoking takes on what happened at Vatican II and beyond, they seem to give disproportionate weight to exegetical questions and theological concerns rising from the contemporary preoccupation with personalist philosophy, feminism, and liberation theologies.

Surprisingly absent from the volume's discussion of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is the breakthrough theological contribution of Duns Scotus. He provided key concepts that enabled the Immaculate Conception to be understood as the most perfect instance of redemption—a preservative redemption—of any human person by Jesus Christ. The omission of Scotus is especially noticeable in a volume attempting to help bridge the ecumenical divide. In light of the Reformation, understanding the Immaculate Conception to be Mary's unique, entirely unprecedented and unrepeated, preservative redemption by Jesus Christ would not only underscore that everyone needs redemption, including Mary; it would also demonstrate her Immaculate Conception to be the most pronounced and profound example of *sola gratia* ever to occur in salvation history.

To be commended is the volume's treatment of the significant Marian interventions by John Henry Newman to help Protestant Christians fill in the gaps of their understanding of Mary. The authors duly note that the primary aid Newman offered to our understanding of all the Marian prerogatives acknowledged by Catholic tradition is the realization advanced by the church in the second century that Mary is the Second Eve (55).

Although this is certainly an interesting volume and ecumenically accessible, I would recommend that this survey of Mariology be complemented by Michael O'Carroll's *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (2000).

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Les Pères de l'église et la théologie chrétienne. By Michel Fédou, S.J. Paris: Facultés Jésuites de Paris, 2013. Pp. 351. €25.

Unfolding against a background of unprecedented cultural and political upheaval, the rediscovery of the theological, spiritual, and literary legacy of the patristic period was one of the most significant developments in the history of twentieth-century Catholicism, marking the end of the protracted intellectual ascendancy of medieval Scholasticism, and paving the way to the institutional renewal by Vatican II. Fifty years after the council, however, the theological landscape has undergone an even more dramatic transformation: traditional European—or Eurocentric—theology has entered into conversation with the many “local” theologies emerging from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, while classical doctrinal formulations—no less than claims of traditional, natural law ethics—have become the target of criticism from sources as diverse as critical theorists, feminist and LGBT theologians, and proponents of different currents of postmodern thought.

In this intellectual context, Fédou, a Jesuit who teaches patristics and dogmatic theology at the Centre Sèvres in Paris, raises the question of the enduring relevance of patristic studies for the church of the early twenty-first century (10). F. acknowledges that today's academic sensitivities and ecclesial climate are very different from those that gave rise to the *Nouvelle théologie*. Nevertheless, he sets out to argue that patristic theology can still contribute to the theological endeavor in a way that is both meaningful and constructive. On the one hand, a better appreciation of the sources of the tradition can only deepen and strengthen our understanding of the faith; on the other hand, the formulation of new, culturally specific theologies in conversation with non-European cultures will benefit from an awareness of the contextual character of early Christian thought, which was developed in conversation with the legacy of Hellenistic philosophical thought.

F. distinguishes between the terms “patrology” and “patristics”: the former is associated with the philological study of the literary legacy of the first centuries of the church, in light of their cultural and historical context; the latter, first used by