

Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception. By Iain Provan. *Discovering Biblical Texts.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp. ix + 214. \$22.

What is unique about Provan's eminently readable book on Genesis is the major attention he gives to its reception history. Reception history, an increasingly popular approach to biblical studies, investigates ways later readers have interpreted texts. The goal is to expand understanding of texts and ways they are later appropriated. P. selects interpretations of Genesis from the both Jewish and Christian traditions and from art, music, and literature. He begins with his own brief descriptions of the content and context of the book.

Because Genesis has been immensely important in both Jewish and Christian traditions, it has yielded a vast body of interpretation over the centuries. Consequently, P. has to condense a great deal of research for this small book. For example, P. considers Genesis 1 and 2 separately, and then studies how the two creation accounts fit together. Chapter 2 places creation of woman after man, leading Augustine to argue that woman images God only in consort with Adam, while Adam serves as *imago dei* on his own. Yet Genesis 1 contradicts this view because it portrays "joint identity" and "joint authority" of both sexes (76). Basil of Caesarea and Bede contradict Augustine, arguing for equivalence of the two sexes on textual grounds.

An implicit result of P.'s study is the demonstration of the hermeneutical multiplicity of approaches taken across the centuries, but P. does not set any of these interpretations into their own historical contexts. Such a move, perhaps for future study, would make explicit how theological interpretation is always drenched in historical contexts like Genesis itself. Interpretations in art, music and literature are only listed, undoubtedly because of the expense it would be to present them, but the list itself is a strong contribution for teachers, students, and theologians.

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Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650. By Carlos M. N. Eire. New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2016. Pp. viii + 893. \$40.

The Reformation jubilee produced and continues to produce a myriad of books, many of which are only accessible to specialists, others addressing a general audience. Among these many new books there are, however, only a few gems of which not only historians, but also systematic theologians and anyone involved in the life of the church, should take notice. Carlos Eire's book is such a jewel.

What makes this book stand out, though, is not only the even-handed, serene judgment interwoven in a masterful narrative that situates theology in its cultural context, but especially the scope of his work. In the first part the reader is informed about the world of Renaissance humanism, in the second about the Reformers and their movements, in the third about Catholic reactions, and in the last part about the consequences of the Reformation up to the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century.

Most treatments of the Reformation lack a theologically sound and historically fair presentation of early modern Catholicism, but E.'s book is also in this regard a most welcome exception. Even the sixteenth century missions to the New World and the West Indies are covered with admirable accuracy. E.'s even-handed analysis and description of the Protestant and Catholic aspects of early modernity shows a master historian–theologian at work. One critical remark: “earn salvation” might be better put in quotation marks (138).

Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, this book is written in lucid, engaging prose that makes each single chapter fly by. That an 800-page book on religious history can be so richly entertaining and illuminating should provide motivation for all theologians to aspire to such scholarship and style.

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Controversies on the Christian Faith. By Robert Bellarmine. Translated by Kenneth Baker, SJ. Ramsey, NJ: Keep the Faith, 2016. Pp. 1087. \$50.

It is hard to overestimate the influence of Robert Bellarmine, yet despite this influence and his intellectual brilliance, the number of his translated writings is relatively small. In recent years, however, a number of scholars have undertaken to translate him. Here Baker presents us his translation of the first volume of Bellarmine's *Controversies*, the most celebrated of his works. This is the first complete translation ever, and the sheer size of the book, in translation over 1000 pages, must have intimidated other translators.

The book covers themes of the word of God in Holy Scripture, Christ as the head of the church, and the office of the supreme pontiff. Thus, anyone interested in biblical exegesis, Christology, ecclesiology, the role of the papacy, and debates about infallibility should find illuminating B.'s comprehensive argumentation, brilliant logic, and the wide range of sources that he brings together. One criticism: While the translation of the text, the layout, binding etc., are superb, the typesetting process misprinted continuously the Greek rough breathing diacritical (as in ὁμοούσιος) as an acute accent. Unfortunately, Baker did not indicate on what text he based his translation (I assume the *Opera Omnia* of 1870); this should be mentioned as a scholarly reference in future editions.

The greatest value of this edition is that Bellarmine can again speak to a generation of young theologians, many of whom do not have the skills to read him in the original Latin; now, a true conversation with early modern theology becomes possible; it is to be hoped that many pick up this volume, engage and form their own opinions instead of trusting outdated narratives about this time period. Baker's lucid translation is a joy to read and makes one hungry for more. Instructors have now a reliable text for their classes, and libraries should not be shy purchasing this volume.

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