

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.

Kathleen M. O'Connor
Columbia Theological Seminary (Emerita), Decatur, GA

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.