

Tim PERRY and Daniel KENDALL,
The Blessed Virgin Mary,
Guides to Theology Series
(Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2013) pp. vi + 118, Pb, \$ 18.00.

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Authored jointly by an evangelical Anglican priest and a Jesuit priest, this slender nontechnical volume is a very good introduction for those who think Mariology is an outdated devotional subject.

After briefly ‘Introducing Mary’ (pp. 1-15), the book deals with ‘the Historical Development of Marian Doctrine and Devotion’ (4 chapters; pp. 19-100), and offers a helpful ‘Annotated Bibliography’ (pp. 103-113). The preliminary pages (by Perry) that introduce Mary are certainly well written. But I am pained that *the biblical Mary* is too briefly presented here. The reader does not get an ample vision of the apparently simple yet subtly intricate presentation of Mary in the New Testament. I think that ‘Mary in the Bible’ (pp. 6-11) deserved a more detailed treatment in another chapter. On pp. 14-15 there is a ‘Select Bibliography of Monographs, Introductions, and Anthologies’. This is commendable. Importantly, R. E. Brown’s *The Birth of the Messiah*, updated edition (Yale University Press, 1999) and *The Death of the Messiah* (Yale University Press, 1999) are mentioned, but Brown and others’ *Mary in the New Testament* (Fortress Press, 1978) is left out! I would have been happy to find a reference to *even* John McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (DLT, 1975) and I. de la Potterie’s *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant* (Alba House, 1992).

Thankfully, in the historical treatment, Mary in the Church Fathers gets a separate chapter (chapter 1; pp. 19-42). The chapter on ‘The Medieval Era and the Reformation’ (chapter 2; pp. 43-52) is certainly rather brief, but well written. The third chapter (‘Modern Contributions’) will certainly challenge readers to take the Marian factor seriously. It takes us briefly through the contributions of Pius IX to Vatican II, together with the theologians who prepared for Vatican II, and then to John Paul II and Benedict XVI. ‘Modern Protestant Thought’ too gets a brief consideration in this chapter (pp. 78-85).

Chapter 4 has separate concluding observations from both the authors. Kendall’s comments are peppered with a number of judicious remarks from Richard P. McBrien and Raymond E. Brown (pp. 90-94). Kendall concludes by offering two apt quotes: one from Karl Rahner and another from J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI (p. 96). Perry on his part offers five important suggestions, supplementing Kendall’s remarks. He differs with Kendall on more than one issue, but is able agree on the fact that “Mary is a model disciple for all believers” (p. 99). He is convinced that Mary’s being the first Christian or the model disciple is a biblical given, “the witness of the New Testament, and especially of Luke/Acts” (p. 99). His conclusion is that Mary, who contemplated the Word and bore it in her womb, “is or ought to be, even for the most firmly convinced Protestant, a model after which to pattern our own lives of discipleship to her Son, our Savior and hers” (p. 100).

The second section of the book consists of a useful annotated ‘Bibliography of English Language Works on Mary’ and two indexes (names and subjects; Scripture references). Among modern contributions given in the bibliography, Tissa Balasurya’s *Mary and Human Liberation* (TPI, 1997) gets an unexpected mention! However, despite the conditions for selection of books given on p. 103, I think mention could have been made of the following too: Max Thurian, *Mary Mother of All Christians* (Neville B. Cryer, 1963); E. Schillebeeckx, *Mary Mother of the Redemption* (Sheed & Ward, 1964); J. Macquarrie, *Mary for all Christians* (T & T Clark, 2001); J. Ratzinger and H. U. von Balthasar, *Mary: The Church at the Source* (German edition 1997; trans., Ignatius Press, 2005). It is indeed consoling to find important comments on *Lumen Gentium*, *Marialis Cultus* and *Redemptoris Mater*.

These days, good books on Mariology are not easy to come by. Perry and Kendall’s *The Blessed Virgin Mary* is a contribution in the right direction. It helps us take a fresh, realistic, and wholesome look at the Mother of the Lord. Notwithstanding the minor limitations mentioned above, I deem it must read for students of Mariology! Those who have not yet been introduced to Mary and those who have found it hard to befriend her (owing either to confessional biases or to misinformation) will definitely find here a good starting-point. They will at least acknowledge that this book has shown them that Mariology is certainly not something to be discarded as infantile Catholic devotionalism. I am sure that this slim volume will in some way facilitate a critical dialogue between Christians who take Mary seriously and Christians who have chosen to ignore her.

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