

and inspired for ministry in the present. Robert F. Rea has prepared for us a small appetizer which invites us to the table to enjoy a feast with many other prominent Christians—sages, theologians and ministers—and to taste selected dishes of Ancient, Medieval, Reformation, and all the way to modern theological desserts, prepared by our elderly brothers and mentors such as Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and their works.

Vatroslav Župančić

Zrinka Blažević, Stanko Jambrek and Nataša Štefanec (eds.)

The Reformation in the Croatian Historical Lands:

Research Results, Challenges, Perspectives

Biblijski institut in Zagreb; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb; and the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, 300 pages.

The book, *The Reformation in the Croatian Historical Lands: Research Results, Challenges, Perspectives*, published in the spring of this year, was edited by Zrinka Blažević, Stanko Jambrek, and Nataša Štefanec. The publishers of the book are Biblijski institut in Zagreb, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, and the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek. The book is 300 pages long.

The book is a collection of scientific studies, in the English language, that came about as a result of the international scientific gathering called, “The Reformation in the Croatian Historical Lands: Research Results, Challenges, Perspectives,” which was held in 2013 in Zagreb. A total of 16 authors, historians, and theologians wrote original scientific works regarding the Reformation in Croatia and neighboring countries.

After the editors’ introduction, which is entitled, “The Studies Of The Reformation In The Croatian Context: Possibilities And Prospects,” follow five chapters: “The Reformation In Croatian Historical Areas As An Exploratory Challenge;” “The Reformation Of Ideas;” “(Counter)Reformation;” “The Reformation In Bordering Areas;” and “The Culture Reformation.” Every chapter contains the works of several authors. Finally, there is “Notes About the Authors,” and a phrase index.

Reformation tradition is a part of the Croatian spiritual tradition, which has existed in a predominantly Catholic surrounding for centuries. As a minority, spiritual tradition has generally not been sufficiently explored, especially in terms of interdisciplinary and comparative studies. The reason why the convention was held and this book was published, is the celebration of the 450th anniversary of

the first printed New Testament in the Croatian language.

In their papers, the authors approached various aspects of the Reformation in the regional context of Croatia, as well as those of neighboring countries: Slovenia, Austria, and Hungary. The significance of the Reformation in forming modern Europe is discussed, particularly the significance of those aspects which contributed to the development of liberal democracy and the world in which we live today; the connection between Reformation ideas and development of civil liberties; as well as the affirmation of ethical values and human rights in Europe. Some other aspects of the Reformation subject are discussed as well, which refer to current social and religious changes and other developments in Europe.

The particular value of this book lies in the fact that it sheds light on certain aspects of the Reformation as a phenomenon, whose development over the centuries and its impact on social developments and social changes have seldom been discussed in terms of social and human sciences in Croatia. The scientific discoveries which are elaborated in this book contribute to the fields of history, theology, and religion sciences.

What makes this book so special as a scientific contribution are its comparative, regional, and European aspects, as well as the diversity and the soundness of theoretical concepts. The freshness of this book's approach, apart from the historical and theological dimensions, is seen in its emphasis of the Reformation's influence on the face of the modern world, particularly Europe.

The anthology, *The Reformation in the Croatian Historical Lands: Research Results, Challenges, Perspectives*, is a valuable piece of work in the area of social and human sciences. This is a book which fills one of the gaps in the area of researching the Protestant Reformation in Croatia and the surrounding region. An extraordinary contribution was made in terms of actualization of the significance of Protestant tradition through history and contemporary times, especially in terms of the development of social institutions, as well as the development of European and universal values.

Considering its subject matter, this book will be interesting both to scientists from the areas of history, theology, and religiology; and for faculty professors from various social and human science disciplines, as well as to their students. It shall also be of interest to the corresponding groups in international academia, who are involved in exploring religious phenomena, and especially the phenomenon of the Reformation.

The social significance of this book lies in discussing the phenomenon of the Protestant Reformation, which is insufficiently familiar to the wider Croatian social public, as can be seen in the results of existing sociological surveys regarding religion (regarding Christianity in general, and specifically Protestantism) that was conducted on a representative sample of the adult population in Croatia.

There should be no doubt about the interests of the scientific community, considering the relevance of the topic of the Protestant Reformation, which has been scientifically marginalized or was observed in narrower theological and historiographic senses for decades. This resulted in insufficient approach coverage from the aspect of various disciplines, as well as a lack of appropriate literature.

Ankica Marinović

James W. Sire

Apologetics Beyond Reason: Why Seeing Really Is Believing

IVP, Downers Grove, 2014, pp. 160.

In August of 2014 IVP Academic published a book by James W. Sire, *Apologetics Beyond Reason: Why Seeing Really Is Believing*. Sire can easily be called a veteran apologist because for more than 25 years he has been active in writing books in this field of study. In his latest book, which is, as author himself admits, a mix of autobiography and argument, he once again argues the case for Christianity. However, this time his arguments are not so much geared toward human reason but to the capacity of humans to intuitively and directly perceive the reality that surrounds them.

The book has seven chapters, in addition to a preface, acknowledgments, afterword, notes, bibliography and index. In chapter one, “The past as prologue,” Sire defines the task of Christian apologetics as a need to “lay before the watching world such a winsome embodiment of the Christian faith that for any and all who are willing to observe there will be an intellectually and emotionally credible witness to its fundamental truth” (p. 14). But he also adds that the success of any given apologetic argument is not in winning converts or strengthening the faith of believers, but whether it is faithful to Jesus. Then Sire offers a brief overview of Christian apologetics in the past 70 years. According to him, the foundation of apologetics thus far has been the ability of human reason to reach true conclusions. However, in our postmodern world the arguments of the modern Christian rationalists now seem irrelevant and lifeless. That does not mean that rational apologetics is useless, but for Sire this is not a highly effective approach to apologetics, and it does not always work. Describing his development as an apologist, Sire concludes that apologetics is a messy thing. However, in the midst of all the challenges, he suggests apologetics that is not directed only toward reason. There is no best way that apologetics can be done, since every way has its flaws, but Sire argues that we are all part of the story – the story of creation, the fall, redemption and glorification. The question is, do we see it or not? But to see it is to believe it.