

a result, the self-confessed ignorance of Jesus, expressed in Mark 13:32 about the date of the end (hence the Latin title of the book) means that he expresses himself in a way that raises the possibility of an imminent end, while leaving open the eventuality that it might also be more distant. As a result, the warnings to 'stay awake' are equally relevant to Jesus' initial hearers, to the audiences of the gospels, and to us today.

This is a very useful book, although it will be inaccessible to many British and American students because it is in German. Unfortunately, it may prove difficult for continental students to find this as it is published by a small Finnish press. Many English-language readers may find many of the key issues on this vital topic addressed in a similar way in C.E.B. Cranfield's works: see for example his commentary on Mark (Cambridge, 1959), and the essay 'Thoughts on New Testament Eschatology', in his *The Bible and Christian Life* (Edinburgh, 1985).

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### *L'évangile selon saint Luc 15,1-19,27*

**François Bovon**

Genève: Labor et Fides, 2001. P.b., n.p..

ISBN: 2-8309-1008-7.

#### SUMMARY

The third volume of F. Bovon's major French commentary is characterized by clarity of presentation; literary and theological sensitivity; careful attention to the history of interpretation of the Gospel as well as to contemporary scholarship; and a sense of the importance of the biblical text for the modern Christian community. It is weakened at certain points by Bovon's unwillingness to accept that all the material attributed to Jesus derives from the historical Jesus which necessarily leads him to rather speculative source- and redaction-critical reconstructions. Generally, however, Bovon is willing to wrestle with the text as it stands.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der dritte Band von F. Bovons großem französischen Kommentar zeichnet sich durch folgende Charakteristika aus: Klarheit der Präsentation, literarische und theologische Sensibilität, sorgfältige Aufmerksamkeit gegenüber der Auslegungsgeschichte des Evangelium und der gegenwärtigen Forschung, und einem Sinn für die Wichtigkeit des biblischen Textes für die moderne christliche Gemeinde. Eine Schwäche, die hier und da zutage tritt, besteht in Bovons Unwilligkeit, alles Jesus zugesprochene Material als vom historischen Jesus stammend zu akzeptieren, was ihn notwendigerweise zu recht spekulativen quellen- und redaktionskritischen Rekonstruktionen führt. Im allgemeinen ist Bovon aber willens, mit dem Text in der Form zu arbeiten, in der er gegeben ist.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Le troisième volume du commentaire majeur de François

Bovon sur l'Évangile de Luc se signale par la clarté de sa présentation, sa sensibilité littéraire et théologique, son attention à l'histoire de l'interprétation de l'Évangile, en même temps qu'aux travaux contemporains. Il a aussi le sens de l'importance du texte biblique pour la communauté chrétienne d'aujourd'hui. Son point faible réside dans le refus de Bovon d'accepter la valeur historique de certains des faits et gestes, ou des propos, attribués à Jésus. Cela le conduit à échafauder, à l'aide des méthodes de la critique des sources et de la critique rédactionnelle, des reconstructions au caractère plutôt spéculatif. En général, cependant, Bovon accepte de traiter le texte tel qu'il se présente.

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François Bovon is Professor of New Testament at Harvard Divinity School, having previously taught at the University of Geneva for many years. Bovon has already published on Luke, including a respected history of interpretation. This is the third volume of Bovon's major four-volume commentary, the first volume of which was published (in German) in 1989. It is being published in both German and French, and the first volume has now been translated into English in the Hermeneia series (2002).

The format of the commentary is very user-friendly. Each major section begins with relevant bibliography, which augments the general bibliography found at the beginning of each volume. Bovon's bibliographies are extensive (for example, more than five pages of specific studies on the parable of the Unjust Steward alone) and generally representative of Lukan scholarship, including a good number of evangelical works.

A French translation of the Greek text is provided. This appears to be a fresh translation by the author although I could find no explicit declaration that this is the case. (No doubt, some of these fundamental matters are dealt with in the first volume of the commentary.) Brief annotations indicate how the translation relates to the underlying Greek text.

Bovon divides his comment into 'analyse' and 'explication'. In the former section he considers issues relating to literary context, parallel passages, etc.. In the latter section Bovon explains the words and phrases of the unit of text and draws out theological significance. The comments are written in clear prose and are arranged in paragraphs which relate to units of thought (whether composed of a single verse or a group of verses). Bovon writes with a light touch which makes the commentary more readable than many.

Scholarly discussion is addressed, but not in an overpowering way. Most of the main body of the commentary deals with features of the biblical text, with only occasional reference to scholarly views. While the footnotes often simply convey bibliographical information, there are also some substantial comments on scholarship.

Bovon indicates in his Preface that he became more



and more interested in the history of reception (German: *Wirkungsgeschichte*) of the biblical text as the writing of his commentary progressed. Certainly, his substantial surveys of the history of reception of appropriate passages gives this third volume a distinctive character. For example, Bovon provides more than eight pages of discussion of the history of the reception of the parable of the two sons (Luke 15; traditionally, the Prodigal Son), including some brief comment on its impact on art. Although his surveys are very interesting and useful, I would have liked to have seen Bovon draw out more explicitly the significance (if any) of the history of interpretation for his own interpretation.

Bovon's comments are generally very helpful. He is sensitive to the literary coherence of the text and to its theological significance. His brief concluding paragraphs are thoughtful and thought-provoking reflections on the on-going message of the text. He normally treats Luke's work with respect, although he does seem to suggest that Luke is sometimes inconsistent in carrying his fundamental principles (for example, on the role of women) through in his narrative (p. 5). At times I also found Bovon too confident in his source- and redaction-critical claims for my comfort (e.g., p. 246 on the 'development' of the Zacchaeus pericope), and too ready to accept the notion that some words attributed to Jesus in the Gospel may in fact have originated from an early Christian prophet after Jesus' earthly ministry (pp. 67-68: 'Celui qui parle ici n'est pas le Jésus historique mais un prophète chrétien.').

Bovon's comments are characterised by close attention to the features of the biblical text and there are frequent references to specific Greek words and phrases. Although Bovon comments on the Greek text of the Gospel, all Greek script is followed by a translation and so readers without Greek should be able to use the commentary. Greek and Hebrew script is used in the footnotes.

The text seems to be happily free of errors, although I noted a few errors in the bibliographies, such as that Bovon attributes the work by David Wenham to his father John (p. 165).

In summary, this volume is both an important addition to Lukan scholarship and a useful tool for those who are entrusted with the task of teaching the Church.

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***God and History in the Book of Revelation:  
New Testament Studies in Dialogue with  
Pannenberg and Moltmann  
(Society for New Testament Studies Monograph  
Series 124)***

**Michael Gilbertson**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, xiii +  
235 pp., £ 47.50, hb, ISBN 0-521-82466-4

**SUMMARY**

*God and History in the Book of Revelation*, one of the fruits of the recent surge of interest in the relationship between biblical studies and systematic theology, places Jürgen Moltmann's and Wolfhart Pannenberg's respective views of history into a constructive dialogue with the way in which the Book of Revelation uses spatial and temporal categories to account for God's relationship to the world. The book is highly recommended, especially for its deft analysis of how John the Seer places the ambivalent situation of his audience within God's ultimate purposes for both heaven and earth.

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*God and History in the Book of Revelation*, eine der Früchte des neuen Anstiegs des Interesses an der Beziehung zwischen biblischer Wissenschaft und systematischer Theologie, bringt die jeweiligen Ansichten über Geschichte von Jürgen Moltmann und Wolfhart Pannenberg in einen konstruktiven Dialog mit dem Weg, auf dem das Buch der Offenbarung räumliche und zeitliche Kategorien benutzt, um Gottes Beziehung zur Welt darzustellen. Das Buch ist sehr zu empfehlen, besonders für seine geschickte Analyse der Art und Weise, auf die Johannes der Seher die ambivalente Situation seiner Adressaten in Gottes ultimative Absichten mit Himmel und Erde einzeichnet.

**RÉSUMÉ**

Cet ouvrage est le fruit de l'intérêt renouvelé pour la question du rapport entre les études bibliques et la théologie systématique. L'auteur entame un dialogue avec Moltmann et Pannenberg sur leurs vues respectives quant à l'histoire, en considérant la manière dont le livre de l'Apocalypse utilise les catégories spatiales et temporelles pour rendre compte de la relation de Dieu au monde. Le livre se recommande en particulier pour son analyse approfondie de la manière dont le visionnaire de Patmos situe les situations ambivalentes que connaissent ses lecteurs dans la perspective du projet divin concernant et le ciel et la terre.

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In *God and History in the Book of Revelation* Michael Gilbertson constructs a dialogue between the Book of Revelation and Wolfhart Pannenberg's and Jürgen Moltmann's respective views of history. In addition to this theological concern, a methodological question runs throughout the book: how can we relate biblical studies and systematic theology, which have usually been held at