

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

arms length in modern academia? The heart of Gilbertson's methodological argument is set out in the second chapter of the book, where he first clearly and concisely analyses a variety of attempts to account for the purpose of and relationship between the two disciplines, and then proposes a dynamic relationship where both the contemporary concerns of modern theology and the historical particularity of the text are given their due weight. Gilbertson justifies his method with an appeal to Alistair McGrath's defence of a modified propositional approach to theology in which dogmatics is seen as an elaboration of what is found in Scripture, where "Christian doctrine is...concerned with the unfolding and uncovering of the history of Jesus of Nazareth, in the belief that this gives insight into the nature of reality." (McGrath, as quoted, 44) Apart from a not uncommon but unfortunate neglect of the church's tradition of reading and interpreting Scripture, Gilbertson's approach is sensible; he neither diminishes the concerns for the historical contingencies which has been the emphasis of biblical studies nor downplays the role of theological construction within the social, cultural and philosophical circumstances in which we find ourselves. In Christian theology, biblical studies and systematic theology need one another because the former always draws us back to the particularity of the biblical texts that the latter is based upon while the latter seeks to articulate a Scriptural view of reality within which we ought to read the text. One may add, which Gilbertson does not state explicitly, that it is perhaps time for Christian scholars to stop viewing the two as distinct disciplines but see them as the exegetical and conceptual aspect of the one theological task—to speak the truth as informed by Scripture within and for the world in which we find ourselves.

Gilbertson's concern to give biblical studies and systematics their due concern shapes the structure of the book's positive theological argument. In the first chapter Gilbertson sets out the modern philosophical and theological concerns which both Pannenberg and Moltmann respond to in their respective views of history, how they try to account for the God-world relation within their intellectual heritage (which basically amounts to accounting for God in history after Troeltsch). In this way the contemporary theological question Gilbertson desires to tackle has been set out in the open. In chapters 3-5, after he has methodologically defended the move in chapter 2, he then proceeds to show how Revelation accounts for the God-world relationship through the way it uses spatial and temporal categories. In the last chapter he then returns to Pannenberg and Moltmann, considering how his interpretation of Revelation may inform their respective views of history. This last chapter, although competent, is somewhat of an anti-climax of an otherwise brilliant study, diffused in comparison to the tight argument of the rest of the book.

Gilbertson has convincingly shown that despite vast conceptual differences, the fundamental concerns of the book of Revelation and those of Pannenberg and Molt-

mann are not simply consonant with each other but can be greatly enriched by one another. The central chapters (3-5) are undoubtedly the high point of the book. Here Gilbertson, through an analysis of the formal characteristics of Revelation and its use of spatial and temporal categories shows how the book "sets the present earthly experience of the reader in the context of God's ultimate purposes, by disclosing hidden dimensions of reality, both spatial – embracing heaven and earth – and temporal – extending into the ultimate future." (i) Even apart from Gilbertson's insightful methodological observations and his competent analysis of Pannenberg and Moltmann, the book is worth every penny of its heavy price tag just for this clear, concise and convincing analysis of how John places the difficult socio-political context of his audience within the larger purposes of God for heaven and earth.

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After Christianity

Daphne Hampson

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SUMMARY

Daphne Hampson abandoned Christianity for two main reasons. First, because Christianity claims to be an historical religion, based on revelation, which requires affirmation of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, which she believes is impossible, post-Enlightenment. Second, because Christianity is not moral, as evidenced by its treatment of women. Hampson has not become an atheist, however. Her 'theism' centres on that 'dimension of reality which is God' and is heavily dependent upon the concept that human beings must exist 'centred in relation'. This is a challenging book and provides much material for reflection. Her critique of feminist and Liberal theologians who remain within the church while themselves ceasing to believe in the historicity of Christianity and the uniqueness of Christ is pertinent. However, her judgement that Christianity is not 'moral' must be challenged. She provides no rational basis for a morality which is anything other than a purely personal and individualised human construct.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Daphne Hampson gab das Christentum aus zwei Hauptgründen auf. Erstens, weil das Christentum behauptet, eine auf Offenbarung gegründete historische Religion zu sein, was die Zustimmung zur Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi verlangt, was sie als unmöglich, nachaufklärerisch ansieht. Zweitens, weil das Christentum nicht moralisch sei, wie sein Umgang mit Frauen belege. Hampson wurde jedoch kein Atheist. Ihr „Theismus“ setzt den Schwerpunkt auf „die Dimension der Realität, die Gott ist“ und ist stark abhängig von