



Reviews by Stephen Rost:

*St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, 1-8*, vol. 8, part 1, with an introduction, translation, and notes by Robert J. Karris (The Works of St. Bonaventure; NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001). Pp. 1 + 796.

*St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, 9-16*, vol. 8, part 2, with an introduction, translation, and notes by Robert J. Karris (The Works of St. Bonaventure; NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003). Pp. lxxi + 1,618.

*St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, 17-24* vol 8, pt. 3 (*Works of St. Bonaventure*), edited by Robert J. Karris, O.F.M. Publisher: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2004). Pp. lxxv + 2459

St. Bonaventure (1217-1274), a towering intellectual figure in the Franciscan Order. He studied under Alexander of Hales at the University of Paris and became a master of theology in Paris. His other achievements included becoming General Minister of the Franciscan Order, and made a Cardinal by Pope Gregory X. He was heavily involved in the preparation of the Council of Lyons of 1274, but died prior to the convening of the council. Eventually he was canonized a saint in 1482, and a century later declared doctor of the Church in 1588. A contemporary of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure was a prolific writer, and his published works, which include commentaries on Scripture as well as theological treatises, comprise nine volumes (*Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*). Thanks to Franciscan Institute Press, Bonaventure's work is available in English

translation, giving students of Bonaventure access to his Scripture commentaries, theological works, and mystical writings.

His commentary on the Gospel of Luke, written when he was in his early thirties, totals 2455 pages (includes indices). It was a monumental achievement for his age, demonstrating how medieval exegetes handled the text. Bonaventure played an important role in the development of thirteenth century Roman Catholic thought, and his Scripture commentaries reflect a thorough grasp of the text and its crucial role in the development of his theology. Though not a technical work in comparison to popular, contemporary commentaries by New Testament scholars such as John Nolland and Darrell Bock (evangelicals) and Raymond Brown and Joseph Fitzmyer (Roman Catholic), it is nevertheless a valuable resource for the study of Luke. His remarkable insights into the text and its application to life make his work especially useful and relevant for today. Of particular importance is Bonaventure's handling of Scripture. He was a master at interpreting Scripture with Scripture, a practice also evident in Aquinas's commentaries on Scripture. He exhibits an extraordinary command of the text and a commitment to allowing the text to speak for itself. Equally important is his belief that the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture and aids the interpreter in the interpretation process. Furthermore, his hermeneutical approach to the text is the literal interpretation of Scripture, along with modest uses of allegory. Students of Patristics will find Bonaventure's use of the early church Fathers a rich source of material showing how they interpreted Scripture. Other sources Bonaventure uses in his study of the biblical text also include philosophers, historians, and jurists such as Aristotle, Cicero, Cato, Epicurus, Seneca, to name a few.

Each volume contains introductory material on the life and methodology of Bonaventure, along with extensive notes and indices (Scripture, church Fathers, ecclesiastical authors). In volume 8, part 1 Karris supplies a brief biographical sketch of Bonaventure's life, followed by guidelines for how to use his commentaries. He addresses the specific issue of Bonaventure's understanding of perfection, and his use of Sacred Scripture. Volume 8, part 2 discusses Bonaventure's verbal playfulness, his dependence on Hugh of St. Cher, interpretation of the Parables, Anti-Judaism. The introduction to volume 8, part 3 serves as an introduction to all three volumes. Karris examines the nature of Bonaventure's commentary on Luke, his hermeneutical method, use of extra-biblical sources, and clever wit exemplified in his writing style.

Of particular interest to anyone engaged in the study of Scripture is Karris's discussion of Gordon Fee's book, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, in which he gives fifteen steps for doing exegesis. With the exception of those steps that involve work in the Greek language, Karris shows that Bonaventure's exegetical method follows closely the steps outlined by contemporary New Testament scholar Gordon Fee.