

this framework, the first and last sections can be relatively brief, with the main focus on exegesis. In my view, engagement with the biblical text is the most important role of a commentary, and certainly one with this heritage, and Lalleman fulfils that role with comments that are both insightful and scholarly, and which help the reader understand the text. Theological significance is also important, though can be overlooked in exegesis. This format is therefore to be welcomed. However, because the theology of a passage is (or should be) integral to its exegesis, it is not always possible to separate these things in a meaningful way, and occasionally the discussion of meaning is quite brief, and may add little to what has already been said. This is evident, for example, in the discussion of Jeremiah 31:1-40, where most of the discussion – including key aspects of the passage's theology – is in the exegetical comment. Overall, though, the format, and the way it is used here, is to be commended. Lalleman sets the text carefully within its immediate context and within the overall structure and theological emphases of the book. Where appropriate, she also links the text to the New Testament – though in a way that does not lose sight of its significance within its Old Testament setting.

Whilst engagement with the text is paramount, introduction is also important, and the material in the introductory sections is helpful, with key issues covered with characteristic insight and understanding – including how the book of Jeremiah originated and its use of the verb *šlb*. Space has probably prevented more substantial discussion in some areas – though there could, perhaps, have been more references, either to support the conclusions stated or for supplementary reading. For example, in the commentary on Jeremiah the discovery of the Book of the Law and its relationship to the dating of Deuteronomy is covered in a couple of sentences with only one reference. The relationship between the Greek and Hebrew texts of Jeremiah is also dealt with quite briefly. These are details that not every reader wants to explore, and this volume is intended to appeal to the more general reader as well as to students, teachers and preachers, but for those who do want to look at these things in more depth suggestions for further reading might be appreciated. Part of this need is met, though, in the substantial and helpful bibliography.

The exegesis and theological comment is all that I might expect from a scholar with Lalleman's considerable expertise in this area. However, there are some points where additional references would have been helpful – for example in relation to the 'divine council' (Jer 23:18, 22) and the 'covenant with the Levites' (Jer 33:21). This is already a substantial volume, and space for further discussion and referencing is limited. It is, though, precisely because this is, in my view, a substantial commentary, and one to which I intend to direct students, that references for further reading would be useful.

Overall, I enjoyed reading this volume, and consider

it to be a very useful addition to the range of commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations. Notwithstanding some of the minor criticisms, it is one that I will use, and will be happy to recommend to others.

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***Jesus Tried and Tested. Why the four Canonical Gospels provide the best picture of Jesus***

**H. H. Drake Williams III**

Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013. 168pp, pb, \$22,  
ISBN 978-1-61097-526-1

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

In diesem einführenden Werk vertritt Drake Williams das Argument, dass die kanonischen Evangelien älter und verlässlicher sind als die außerkanonischen. Er stimmt mit Bauckham darin überein, dass sich erstere auf Augenzeugenberichte gründen. Der Nutzen des Buches wird durch die Tatsache eingeschränkt, dass der Autor kein Experte auf diesem Gebiet ist.

**SUMMARY**

In this introductory book Drake Williams argues that the canonical gospels are older and more reliable than the extra-canonical gospels. He joins Bauckham in arguing that they are based on eyewitness testimony. The helpfulness of the book is limited by the fact that the author is not a subject expert.

**RÉSUMÉ**

Dans cet ouvrage à caractère d'introduction, Drake Williams s'efforce de montrer que les évangiles canoniques sont plus anciens et plus fiables que les évangiles non canoniques. Il rejoint Bauckham en soutenant qu'ils sont basés sur le témoignage de témoins oculaires. L'utilité du livre reste limitée par le fait que l'auteur n'est pas un expert sur ce sujet.

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With this book, Drake Williams enters the debate about the non-canonical gospels and his conclusion is indicated in his subtitle: the non-canonical gospels do not inform us reliably about Jesus and the canonical texts are to be preferred. In the first chapter Williams focuses on the dates of the various gospels. Over against the traditional dates of the canonical ones, he specifically discusses the Gospels of Peter and Thomas, to conclude that they are much later and hence less reliable. This chapter is effective and convincing. Chapter 2 is about the gospels as eyewitness testimonies and leans rather heavily on Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (2006). Williams is less sure-footed here and occasionally he overstates what we know, e.g. about the purposes of Papias' books (48). He shows no familiarity with key secondary literature on Papias.



The third chapter discusses the reception of the gospels in later centuries and it is here that the problems begin. Williams regards the Apostolic Fathers as a kind of unified group – which they are not. He seems to imply that we still have the Diatessaron and states: ‘The reception of Tatian’s *Diatessaron* witnesses further to the widespread acceptance of a fourfold gospel.’ Charles E. Hill’s *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* is underused in this chapter. Chapter 4 displays how the ‘other’ gospels depict Jesus, showing that their contents tell us nothing about the historical Jesus. In doing this Williams quotes a passage from *The Gospel of Philip* 55 which raises numerous questions that are left unanswered. A footnote on page 110 refers to the Gnostic texts *Apocryphon of John* and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* as gospels; the former is not a gospel and the second is not normally seen as one. Again on page 117 the *Epistle of the Apostles* is referred to as a gospel and the impression is given that we have many manuscripts of it.

Williams has the habit of stating the same idea in two consecutive sentences, the second repeating the content of the first in different words. This makes the reader feel underestimated. The book reflects the culture of the USA, not that of Europe; for example, the importance of modern books is indicated by saying that they were New York Times bestsellers. The cover designer who put a crown of thorns on the cover clearly misunderstood the book’s title and probably never saw the subtitle.

As a primer on the subject this book can be recommended with caution; the ten-page bibliography points readers to further literature.

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### *Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism*

Christopher M. Hays and Christopher B.  
Ansberry (eds)

London: SPCK, 2013; 241pp, pb, £17.99;  
ISBN 978-0-281-06732-9

#### RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage, les auteurs tentent d’intégrer les résultats de la recherche historico-critique à une position théologique évangélique. Ses nombreux auteurs y traitent en neuf chapitres de divers aspects relatifs à l’Ancien Testament, à Jésus et au Nouveau Testament. Ils s’accordent sur le point de vue selon lequel l’approche historico-critique de l’Ancien Testament peut s’harmoniser avec une position évangélique mais se montrent plus réservés concernant le Nouveau Testament. Ce livre aurait été plus utile s’il avait présenté divers points de vue.

#### SUMMARY

This book is an attempt to combine the results of the

historical-critical investigation of the Bible with the evangelical faith. In nine chapters the many contributors discuss aspects of the Old Testament, Jesus and the New Testament. They agree that critical views of the Old Testament can be harmonised with an evangelical faith but they are more reluctant regarding the New Testament. The book would have been more useful if it had contained a diversity of views.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch stellt einen Versuch dar, die Ergebnisse historisch-kritischer Forschung zur Bibel mit evangelikalem Glauben zu verbinden. In neun Kapiteln diskutieren die beitragenden Autoren Ansichten zum Alten Testament, zu Jesus und zum Neuen Testament. Sie stimmen darin überein, dass kritische Perspektiven zum Alten Testament in Einklang mit einem evangelikalen Glauben gebracht werden können, doch sie sind eher zurückhaltend im Blick auf das Neue Testament. Das Werk wäre hilfreicher gewesen, wenn es eine Vielfalt von Meinungen berücksichtigt hätte.

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So does it matter that Moses did not write Deuteronomy, that the exodus never happened, that many prophecies were written after the event and that Paul did not write all thirteen letters attributed to him? Can we still be evangelical Christians if we accept such results of critical scholarship? In the present volume a group of young biblical scholars attempts to bring together the results of the historical-critical investigation of the Bible with their evangelical faith. Most of them appear to be Americans who are working in Western Europe and much of the literature cited is American. The questions they ask are legitimate but the book as a whole is disappointing.

Chapter 1 (by Hays) sets the agenda, stating that ‘it is the goal of the present volume to illustrate that historical criticism need not imperil any of the fundamental dogmatic tenets of Christianity’ (5). Hence the book tries to stimulate evangelicals to engage seriously with this method. Chapter 2 (Hays + one other) discusses the fact that Genesis 1-3 is not historical and asks what this means for the doctrine of sin. This chapter has the same pattern as the subsequent chapters on the Old Testament in the book: at the outset the hypothetical conclusions of critical scholarship are accepted, then the effects on our theology are assessed. I found it disappointing that this particular chapter has more to say about Romans 5 and Augustine than about Genesis 1-3. Chapter 3 (Ansberry) seems to swallow the critical conclusion that the exodus was probably not a historical fact, although something must have happened (72), and then again asks what this implies for the faith. The writer concludes that ‘As Christians, our commitment to the fundamental dogmatic tenets of the faith may preclude us from adopting this radical position and its nihilistic view of history’ (73).

Chapter 4 (Ansberry + one other) focuses on Deu-