

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-

teronomy; it gives an overview over positions on the origin of the book and – rightly in my view – argues that the value of the message of a book like this does not depend on its date or authorship. However, the voice of those who don't agree that Deuteronomy is 'a somewhat uneven combination of old and new elements' (88) is not heard. Chapter 5 (Hays + two others) deals with unfulfilled prophecy and defends the existence of numerous *vaticinia ex eventu* in the Bible. The argument is almost as simple as saying that because we find *vaticinia ex eventu* among other nations, they must also exist in Israel, and moreover be acceptable. The Book of Daniel is discussed without any attention to the views of those who argue that the book does *not* date from the second century BC. This is the chapter I liked least because of its simplistic reasoning.

Chapter 6 (Ansberry + three others) is on pseudepigraphy in both parts of the Bible, and discusses the Pentateuch, Isaiah, John's Gospel and the Pauline corpus. The authors are probably right to say that before the Hellenistic period the authorship of texts was hardly an issue, hence the anonymity of much of the Old Testament. Valid points are being made here. Yet the argumentation in the chapter is often weak: the Pentateuch as a whole hardly claims Mosaic authorship and therefore can hardly be used as an example of pseudepigraphy. Once again critical hypotheses are simply accepted as facts and the conclusion 'that the acceptance of pseudepigraphy or pseudonymity in the biblical canon' is not 'outside the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy' (157) is as predictable and inevitable as it is unconvincing.

With chapter 7 on Jesus (Hays + one other) the tone changes: the probability of miracles is defended and the virgin birth is seen as a vital element of the faith (174). Suddenly (at least for the present reader) 'the witness of Scripture and the apostles' (164) is taken as authoritative. Chapter 8 (by two others) deals with the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the Epistles from a chronological as well as a theological perspective. The range of literature used is disappointing; Rainer Riesner is just one of the many who are missing. Finally in chapter 9 the two editors restate the book's plea for an attitude of faithful criticism. For this reader, their positive words could not take away the feeling of disappointment about the previous eight chapters.

The book would have been more attractive – and potentially more convincing – if the many contributors had entered into discussions with each other. Rather than multi-author chapters in unison which spend much time reproducing what critical scholarship says and which in the end give just one view, it would be good to have statements of alternative points of view followed by discussions. Another omission is any interaction with how other evangelicals such as the members of the Tyndale Fellowship, the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians and the Evangelical Theological Society handle the issues at stake. And rather than a reiteration of the well-known critical hypotheses I would have liked

to see a more in-depth discussion of methodology. To repeat what I said at the outset, the questions raised here are real and they will not go away, but the present book is only a modest contribution to the debate. There is no index of authors

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*Biblical Interpretation in the Early Christian
Gospels III: The Gospel of Luke*

Library of New Testament Studies 376

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London, New York: T. & T. Clark, 2010, xii + 228
pp., hb., £65; ISBN 978-0-567-03309-3

SUMMARY

The volume offers eleven essays on various aspects of the use of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel. The authors use various methods and approach the subject from different angles. The book is a representative summary of current scholarship on Luke's use of Scripture, but is not comprehensive and does not present a synthesis or comparison with other ways of usage of the Old Testament in the New.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage se compose de onze contributions traitant de divers aspects de l'usage de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Évangile de Luc. Les auteurs mettent en œuvre diverses méthodes et abordent le sujet sous des angles différents. Ils donnent ainsi un bon aperçu de l'état actuel de la recherche sur l'usage lucanien de l'Écriture. L'ouvrage n'est cependant pas exhaustif et n'offre pas de tentative de synthèse ni de comparaison avec la façon dont d'autres auteurs du Nouveau Testament utilisent l'Ancien.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Band umfasst elf Aufsätze mit unterschiedlichen Aspekten zum Gebrauch des Alten Testaments im Lukas-evangelium. Die Autoren bedienen sich verschiedener Methoden und nähern sich dem Thema aus unterschiedlichen Blickwinkeln. Das Buch stellt eine repräsentative Zusammenfassung der gegenwärtigen Forschung zum lukanischen Gebrauch der Heiligen Schrift dar, doch es ist nicht umfassend und bietet weder eine Synthese noch einen Vergleich mit anderen Möglichkeiten, wie das Alte Testament im Neuen verwendet wird.

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The present book is volume three in a five-volume series on the interpretation of Scripture in the four canonical gospels and on the extracanonical gospels (*The Gospel of Matthew*, LNTS 310, 2008; *The Gospel of Mark*, LNTS 304, 2006). Their aim is 'to situate the current state of research and to advance our understanding of the function of embedded Scripture texts and their traditions in the narrative and socio-religious contexts of early