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BOOK REVIEWS

SELLIN'S COMMENTARY ON THE MINOR PROPHETS¹

The new series in which the volume here reviewed belongs is appearing apace. It began with Kittel's notable commentary on the Psalms, 1914, and we now have Genesis, by Procksch, Deuteronomy, by König, and the present volume from the hands of the editor of the series. Jeremiah, by Volz, is in press. The series has its own individual scope, shorter than the exhaustive commentaries, of which the International Commentary is a type in English, but more capacious than the *Kurze Commentare* which German scholarship has lately made its specialty. The present volume is more than a quarter as large again as Nowack's commentary on the minor prophets. There is no series in English parallel to this German enterprise, the "Westminster Series" confining itself rather to the use of the English reader. We must note the interest of German scholarship in producing commentaries that are handbooks for the educated biblical student and also for the intelligent layman, but which do not overawe them with too vast a mass of data.

Theologically the series is *conservatif, positif*. The terms are used comparatively. The authors in no way meet the critical problems from a confessional or dogmatic basis as to the inerrancy of biblical text and doctrine. The present volume is proof of the intelligent and rational treatment of all critical questions, while it demonstrates that the writers are fully equipped with the critical armor of offense and defense. They differ from their predecessors in a fresh and often original treatment of the data of criticism, and do biblical science the favor of showing that many critical conclusions have by no means reached finality. That is, there are other combinations, other points of view, which can greatly modify previous conclusions on such questions as those of integrity of text and book and of authorship and age. In a word, we are reminded that, while philology may be a science, literary criticism is not, that the possible combinations are too manifold and the subjective element in the critic too uncontrollable to allow finality. The very elements of textual and of metrical criticism which have been vaunted by some scholars as

¹ *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch*. Übersetzt und erklärt von D. Ernst Sellin. (*Commentar zum Alten Testament*. Herausgegeben von D. Ernst Sellin. Band XII.) Leipzig und Erlangen: Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922.

scientific tests can be used by other hands to opposite ends. Our judgment on gunpowder or poison gas varies, depending upon whether our enemies use them or we have learned their use.

As we should expect from Dr. Sellin, he has presented a commentary on the Minor Prophets that is fresh and original. It is a tribute to the eternal value of those Old Testament seers that something new can be written on them every few years. It is equally a caution to our biblical learning to mark how we may not rest satisfied with results so far achieved. If a scholar picks up a new commentary on this subject with a certain feeling of satiety, he cannot drop the present volume without breathing a fresh breeze blowing over the dry bones of criticism.

There is not a book of these Twelve Prophets on which Sellin does not present a new point of view, for the whole or in important details. Some of his theories are wholly new, others are modifications or extensions of views of his predecessors. In general he argues for the authenticity of far larger sections of the several books than has been for long the received view. He bases his arguments upon the canons practiced by more radical scholarship, just as radically no doubt, perhaps as arbitrarily, but with the constant wholesome reminder that no soil is so well cultivated but that it can stand fresh plowing.

To give some examples of Sellin's treatment, we may begin with the classic of Amos. He denies the almost dogma of the day that the end of the book, 9:8b ff., is a late addition; canceling verse 8b as an intrusion, he argues for the authenticity of the passage and connects it with the biographical episode at end of chapter 7 on the cue of the second person singular in 9:15. Amos would then, while predicting the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom, have promised the return of Israel's loyalty to the house of David. This method or rearrangement of various pericopes is pursued also in the handling of that *crux interpretum*, the marriage of Hosea, Hosea 1-3. The section on the purchase of the renegade woman, 3:1-5, he boldly transfers to the beginning of chapter 1, as introductory to the story of the prophet's married life—thus involving himself, as he admits as to the authenticity or correct placing of 1:2. Thus, in part with Steuernagel, he overcomes the difficulty of treating 3:1-5 as a subsequent, unexplained episode in the domestic history. In regard to the current cavalier exegesis of making Hosea merely a prophet of doom, he would restore the book as a whole, minus the usual amount of glosses, to the authorship of that prophet.

A similar judgment is passed upon the integrity of the Book of Micah. The book down through 7:7 is attributed to the prophet's hand. He finds the chief trouble with this hypothesis in 4:1-5:8, but over-

comes it, literally by the excision of "glosses," and theologically by comparison with Isaiah's position as to the future salvation of the people. He would also extend the historical scope of the prophet in diagnosing perhaps three stadia in his prophecy, namely about 722, 711, and shortly before Sennacherib's invasion. For Nahum 1, which he keeps for the prophet, he holds that the problem of the unfinished alphabetical poem is met by supposing that the prophet proceeded with the alphabet as far as he desired and then stopped with the letter 'Ain. Sellin is very interesting in the treatment of Haggai and I Zechariah, on whose age his historical studies have thrown so much illuminating light and suggestion. Most original is his new theory of the origin of II Zechariah, chapters 9-14. After a particularly full discussion of previous theories he advances the theory that the chapters (chap. 14 is a *Doppelgänger* to the preceding material) are an apocalyptic work, of about date 300 B.C. (with Stade), in which the writer has assumed the rôle of the prophet Zechariah and given an apocalypse in character like that of Daniel, of which book Deutero-Zechariah would then be early precursor. Joel he would divide into sections of different authorship, chapters 1-2, belonging to the early part of the fifth century, where also he would assign Malachi, and a late apocalyptic addition, chapters 3-4, of date *circa* 400. Obadiah, verses 1-10, is held to be, in its purified form, the eldest bit of written prophecy, harking back to 800 B.C.

These samples of Sellin's very original theories may suffice. They have the same weakness of operating with assumed glosses and numerous transpositions as is the nemesis of all current criticism—a necessary discipline, however unsatisfactory it is. Sellin may be criticized for being too set on working out a fixed scheme for his reconstructions; at the same time it is only so that they can be prepared for judgment, and his positiveness and boldness help forward the critical decision. He pursues the usual makeshift of text corrections, the most unsatisfactory part of our commentary science. There is need here of deeper searching of the heart on the part of philologists, e.g., he "simplifies" Amos 7:4, "he calls to contend by fire," by reading *lahab* for *larib* and deleting the preposition "by," i.e., "he calls for *the flame of fire*." Are not some things too obvious, even for ancient scribes? The root *rîb* has the connotation of the ordeal, and this meaning should be understood here: the Lord calls to the ordeal of fire—and how can Jacob stand?

Two special merits of the book are found in a pair of sections which accompany the introduction to each of the Prophets. The one concerns the origin of the book, and herein Sellin takes much pains in trying to work out the literary history of the document. His treatment of

Amos' part in the literary preparation of his booklet is, for instance, very suggestive. Also the sections on the "religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung" of the several prophets are capital in their insight and expression. The student of theology should refer to these sections at least, if he has not leisure for the whole book. Sellin takes an uncompromising stand as a Christian theologian in interpreting the prophetic books as part of the divine plan in preparing the world for Christ. On this score he has recently taken up the gage against Delitzsch's *Die grosse Täuschung* in his *Das alte Testament und die evangelische Kirche*.

JAMES A. MONTGOMERY

PHILADELPHIA DIVINITY SCHOOL

DOES PSYCHOANALYSIS REALLY INTERPRET JESUS?†

Jesus himself replied on one occasion to those who judged him insane, and his answer has generally been accepted as satisfactory. Of late years, however, the question raised by the Pharisees has been reopened by certain writers in Germany and elsewhere who would have been better employed in consulting the mental specialist on their own account. Mr. Bundy has set himself to examine their arguments and conjectures in the present book. At first we were inclined to doubt whether the work was worth doing, for the writers concerned are for the most part insignificant, and all of them absurd. But after reading the book we are satisfied that Mr. Bundy has done a useful service. He has brought together in a brief and readable survey all that has been written on one possible conception of the life of Jesus, and conscientious students who might otherwise have tried to sift these dust-heaps of literature for themselves will now be spared that dirty and unprofitable labor. In his résumé of opinions with which he himself has little sympathy Mr. Bundy is always clear and fair, and has wisely stated the whole case without attempting to smooth down what might be offensive to Christian feeling. It is difficult to see how any reasonable mind can refuse to accept his conclusions. He points out that at this distance of time, on the strength of a few data imperfectly recorded, no diagnosis of the mental condition of Jesus is possible. He shows that in the literature under review the records have been misunderstood and distorted by men who know nothing of critical methods. He argues convincingly that the emotions and acts of Jesus, when viewed in the proper light, are fully consistent with mental health, and occasionally seem strange only because no allow-

† *The Psychic Health of Jesus*. By Walter E. Bundy. New York: Macmillan, 1922. xviii+299 pages.