

Review.

An Old Testament Commentary for English Readers. By various writers. Edited by CHARLES JOHN ELLICOTT, D.D., Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Vol. II. Cassell and Co. 1883.

The first volume of the "Commentary for English Readers," edited by Bishop Ellicott, was reviewed in *THE CHURCHMAN* as soon as it was published, and we were pleased to recommend it as not only able, scholarly and interesting, with critical replies thoroughly "up to date," but as answering, in some degree, to the particular promises of the honoured editor's Introduction. The second portion of this important work, the volume now before us, also calls for cordial commendation. In not a few respects, indeed, the second volume is better than the first. It contains no commentary of equal weight with that on Genesis by the Dean of Canterbury, but the average is unquestionably high. For many theological students, and for "English readers" of commentaries generally, devout and thoughtful men and women who have no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew, but who study such works with zest and profit, the contributions of Caouons Spence and Farrar will probably prove exceedingly attractive. The commentaries on Deuteronomy and Joshua were written by the Rev. C. H. Waller, who is well-known in connection with the London College of Divinity, and as one of the Examining Chaplains of Bishop Ryle; and these two contributions, we need hardly remark, are thoroughly sound. The Rev. R. Sinker, the learned librarian of Trinity College, to whose contributions to the "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities" reference has been made in these pages, wrote the commentary on Ruth, while that on 2 Samuel was contributed by Dr. Gardiner, Professor of Divinity, Middletown, Connecticut. Viewing the volume as a present-day work, intended to meet contemporary criticisms and supply the needs of students and truth-seekers living in an atmosphere of "modern thought," this commentary has a real value, and a large portion of it is in every way excellent.

The Book of Deuteronomy, it has been remarked, was allotted to Mr. Waller, a tutor of considerable experience, and well qualified, in all respects, for such a work. His notes are sensible, terse, and profitable, though the directly spiritual exposition is occasionally poor. With his Introduction, we confess, we are somewhat disappointed. Considering the importance of the subject just now, when such writings as Mr. Robertson Smith's are so widely read, the Introduction might have been a little fuller; but editorial barriers, of course, are not to be lightly overleaped, and these are secrets into which we may not pry. Mr. Waller's Introduction, no doubt, is as long as Archdeacon Farrar's, but at the present moment certain criticisms on Deuteronomy, too often spoken of with bated breath, seem to call for treatment which is full and emphatically firm. In his expository notes, however, Mr. Waller does good service; and with many readers, perhaps, his comments on particular passages, comparing verse with verse, will have more weight than an examination of rationalistic criticisms in an elaborate Introduction. There is no doubt, indeed, that the mode of reply to modern critical theories which Mr. Waller selected has its own advantages; and, in particular, he did well to lay stress on Rashi, and quote him freely. The quotations from Jewish Commentaries, it may be noticed here, form a feature of this volume which is pleasingly prominent, and likely to be of real service. Canon Spence recognises the value of the great Hebrew

commentators ; and of his very interesting notes a few derive their point from Rashi and other such authorities. To return to Mr. Waller's Introduction to Deuteronomy. The analysis of the Book is clear, and there are marks of originality. On certain points, however, as was said, we desiderate a little fuller treatment. For instance, he touches upon the occurrence of Deuteronomic phrases in the Book of Jeremiah ; but the connection between these two inspired writings is—in view of recent positive assertions—not only interesting but of high importance. He should therefore, we think, have examined this question at some length. He should also have laid more stress, it seems to us, on the testimony of our Lord and His Apostles.

In his note on iii. 23-28 ("Thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness . . .) Mr. Waller says : "Moses evidently did not realize that he might see the works of Jehovah and His glory still more clearly in the other world." Is this remark quite clear? We should rather have compared such passages as Exodus xxxiii. 12.

Mr. Waller's comment on v. 7 runs as follows :

Thou shalt have none other gods before Me. Literally, upon My face, in addition to My presence, or, as Rashi says, "in any place where I am, that is, in the whole world." "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy face?" Idols are, at the very best, only masks which man puts upon the face of God, insulting to His dignity, and tending to conceal Him from our view.

The note on the parallel passage, Exod. xx. 3, in the "Speaker's Commentary" (alluding to verse 23 in that chapter) is very good.

On xii. 5 ("unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose") Mr. Waller remarks that the very form of this order proves its antiquity. "No one who was acquainted with the removal of the 'place' from Shiloh to Nob, from Nob to Gideon, from Gideon to Jerusalem, could have written with such utter unconsciousness of later history as these words imply." This remark is perfectly true ; but it leaves unnoticed the insinuation or assertion that the book was cleverly dressed-up with a "pious" intention, and is either a forgery or a quasi-historical parable. On verses 13 and 14, again, Mr. Waller comments thus :

Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place. . . . An attempt is made by some modern writers to establish a contradiction between this precept and the one in Exodus xx. 24 : "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." But they are not really contradictory. The choice of Jehovah makes the place of acceptance. He need not always choose the same spot. Either this law in Deuteronomy was written by Moses, or it was not. If it was, it must be taken in the same sense as Exodus xx. 24. If it was the work of later times, the writer must have known perfectly that Jehovah had varied His choice from time to time, and therefore the injunction must still bear the same sense.

These remarks are undeniably sound.¹ And it may be remarked, further, that inasmuch as the Book of Deuteronomy contains no mention of Jerusalem, while it gives to Ebal and Gerizim a supreme importance, the absurdity of the notion that Deuteronomy was written when Hezekiah was striving to limit to Jerusalem all ritual worship, becomes tolerably clear. The mention of Ebal in chapter xxvii.² has always seemed to us a strong link in the chain of internal evidence for the Mosaic authorship of this book.

¹ Jeremiah vii. 12, "My place which was in Shiloh" is important. We agree with Mr. Cheyne that the rendering of Judges xviii. 31, "All the time that the house of God in Shiloh existed" is better.

² Hengstenberg remarks that among the Egyptians it was a common practice to depict records on walls with a coating of "plaster" (verse 4).

In commenting on xxiv. 17-22, "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow," Mr. Waller dwells mainly upon the first of these three. "In a very special way," he says, "and for some special reason, all through the Old Testament 'the Lord careth for the stranger.' What the reason is, if we had the Old Testament only, we might find it hard to discover. But when we open the New Testament, we may see that this is one aspect of the love of God the Father to His Son Jesus Christ, Who was one day to come among us as a 'stranger.'" Mr. Waller also refers, with other passages, to "I was a *stranger*, and ye took Me not in." This lengthy note appears to us rather fanciful. The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, surely, are linked together in the Divine command. Verses 17 and 18, indeed, on which Mr. Waller comments, form one of the links of the internal evidence of the Mosaic authorship of the Book of Deuteronomy. "Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the *stranger*," says the inspired writer; "*thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondsman in Egypt.*"¹ Of reminiscences of Egypt this book is full; and a lesson of kindness to strangers is naturally frequent in addresses to those whose remembrance of Egyptian "bonds" was fresh.

On xx. 1 Mr. Waller might have given an explanatory note, touching the "horses and chariots," in reference to the Mosaic authorship. In the period of the Exodus "horses and chariots" were common enough, we know, in the land of Egypt; but when, with the later books of Moses in our hands, we study what is written of the land of Israel, the silence is significant. On xvii. 16, ". . . he shall not multiply horses," with reference to Solomon, Mr. Waller has given a good note; but again he misses the point of connection with Egypt ("*nor cause the people to return to Egypt*").

In the "Commentary on Judges" by Canon Farrar, to which we must now turn, we had marked many passages for brief comment and quotation. We must content ourselves, however, with two or three remarks. On Dr. Farrar's theological bias, on his stores of learning and remarkable powers, we have lately, in reviewing his "Early Days of Christianity," made some observations. Of his work now before us, in which there is no doctrinal debate, we are gratified to be able to write in hearty praise; it is singularly interesting and instructive. Few scholars of the day could handle certain passages in the Book of Judges with such felicitous illustrations and pointed phrases as are herein found. For the swing of his usual brilliant style, of course, brief expository notes gave little scope; but the literary grace of a master of thought and language is by no means lacking. A single note may be quoted:

A swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of a lion.—This incident has been questioned, because it is truly said that bees hate all putrescence and decomposition, and that the notion of bees being generated in the rotting bodies of oxen (which we find in Virgil, *Georgic* iv., etc.) is a vulgar error. But it is overlooked that the word "carcase" here means (as the Syriac renders it) "skeleton." The fierce sun of the East dries up all the animal moisture of a dead body, and reduces it to a skeleton with extreme rapidity, and bees have no dislike to dried bones as a place in which to swarm. Thus Herodotus tells us (v. 114) that when the Amathusians cut off the head of Onesilus, because he besieged them, and hung it over their gates, a swarm of bees filled the skull with combs of honey.

The Archdeacon also gives another illustration from Rosenmüller. He adds that unless Samson had considered that a skeleton could not be re-

¹ In Lev. xix. 33, 34, appears a command concerning considerate, even affectionate treatment of "strangers," having this basis: "*for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*" Compare Exod. xxii. 21. In his Introduction Mr. Waller justly remarks that the particulars of the laws in Deut. xii. to xxvi. "evidently breathe the very air of the Exodus."

garded as a dead body, he could not have "taken thereof with his hands," verse 9, without breaking the express conditions of his Nazarite vow (Num. v. 6).

In his Introduction the Archdeacon touches on the moral characteristics of the book, and he says: "It must now be clear to every Christian that the exterminating wars of Joshua, the fearful and indiscriminate vengeance inflicted by Israel on the offending tribe of Benjamin, the treachery of Ehud and of Jael, the wild revenge of Samson, the blood-vengeance of Gideon, and other events herein narrated, are *not to be quoted as examples for modern times.*" The concluding words of this remark, which we have emphasized, are surely not necessary, unless in his opening word "NOW" the Archdeacon desires his readers to look back to periods when the fierceness of strife between Christians, or between Christians and heathen, resulted in sanguinary surprises. Balfour of Burleigh, in Scott's "Old Mortality," might have cried, no doubt, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon;" and at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, or in the Crusades of Palestine and Mexico, blind bigotry gilded with an imaginary Divine sanction deeds of anti-Christian cruelty. The question is, in these days, of real importance. Mozley is, of course, well worth quoting; but for ourselves, nothing so good, so clear and full, in a small compass, has been published as Dr. Boulton's Islington paper.

The "Commentary on 1 Samuel," by Canon Spence, takes up 150 pages of a volume of 510 pages. It is not probable, however, that any of his readers will be of opinion that the learned Canon has taken too much space. His notes are eminently readable—a point of importance as regards the family circle. By all reverent and thoughtful readers, indeed, this portion of the volume is sure to be termed enjoyable as well as informing; and we should gladly, did limits of space permit, give some specimen quotations. A few expressions which we had marked for criticism we must, at present, let pass. One remark we may add. Canon Spence has done well to give some choice quotations from Wordsworth, Payne Smith, Lange, and Keil. Such works as these, and the "Speaker's Commentary" are not to be found, as a rule, on the shelves of "English Readers."

Short Notices.

Universalism; or, the Witness of Reason and Scripture concerning Future Punishment. With an Appendix on Conditional Immortality. By T. M. MACDONALD, M.A., Prebendary of Lincoln, and Rector of Kersal, Manchester. Pp. 47. Hatchards.

This pamphlet has only one fault (if fault be here the proper word): it is short. It is so very good, so prudent, so firm, one wishes it had been longer: on certain points, especially as regards "Conditional Immortality," the treatment—one says with regret—might have been more full. After all, however, the *brochure* is best as it is, if only it may attain, from its *multum-in-parvo* brevity, a worthily large circulation. Many thoughtful people, in these bustling days, will make time for a little book on controversial matters, if—important proviso!—it be really good, whereas a larger publication is apt to be looked at as hopeless. Canon MacDonald's pamphlet, as we have said, is exceedingly good, and it deserves