

ART. II.—BISHOP ELLICOTT'S COMMENTARY ON THE
FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: with a Critical and Grammatical Commentary, by CHARLES J. ELLICOTT, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887.

IT is with the most sincere pleasure that we welcome the Bishop of Gloucester's return to the field of his former labours. Not that his critical and exegetical studies had ceased during the many years which have intervened since the appearance of the last volume in his series of Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul. His continuous interest and work in that department are not only evidenced by the part which he took in the "Revised Version," but appear, if we may be allowed to say so, in the ripened critical judgment manifest in the present volume. It has therefore not been wholly time lost, so far as the interests of exegetical science are concerned, although we honestly grudge the delay which the manifold—we fear, often unprofitable—engagements of the episcopal office have necessitated. It seems one of the unsolved problems of our ecclesiastical polity how to conciliate the fact that eminence in theological study ought to lead to posts of the highest distinction in the Church with this other, that occupancy of such posts renders theological study, at least of the fruitful kind, well-nigh impossible. All the more honour and thanks are therefore due to those who, like Bishops Lightfoot and Ellicott, combine the two: doubtless, at no small labour and self-sacrifice.

But there is an innate love of study which, irrespective of even higher motives, does not allow the genuine student to rest. He loves research and work for their own sake, and this love shows itself in every page of the work which he produces. The hours and days of patient labour which he has devoted to the investigation of what to the superficial reader may seem but secondary points, if not trivial details, have been to him times of real enjoyment. And they will prove of incalculable benefit to those who come after him. We feel that these are perhaps somewhat lower grounds on which to set forth the value of such work. Nevertheless, when, as in Bishop Ellicott's Commentary, we find on every page a mass of accurate details which, as we know, represent an immense amount of scholarly, patient labour, we are glad to remember that it has also its compensation in this, that work is its own best reward. All the same, we gladly recognise that there is a yet much higher aspect of it. To those who receive and reverence Holy Scripture, the highest aim and object must ever be to employ their best powers and their unwearying labour to the fullest

ascertainment of its meaning, and thus to serve, so far as is granted to them, alike the Church and its Head. From this point of view nothing can be small or secondary, and work is no longer merely an inward impulse or a pleasure: it is a privilege and a service.

As already indicated, we recognise all the qualities referred to in Bishop Ellicott's latest contribution to the exegesis of the New Testament. The first Epistle to the Corinthians has received much and very careful commentation, not only in this country, but in Germany and in Switzerland. Still, even by the side of the masterly notes by Canon Evans of Durham (in the "Speaker's Commentary"), and the more recent works of Heinrici and Godet, Bishop Ellicott's Commentary occupies a distinct and distinctive place of its own. Like the previous volumes by the same writer, its chief value lies in the textual and grammatical study of the Epistle, although full attention has also been given to other departments. But in what we may describe as Bishop Ellicott's exegetical *spécialité*, this volume not only maintains but exceeds the standard of its predecessors. Indeed, the careful student of this Epistle will feel it indispensable for his work: he will be equally grateful for what it suggests and for what it gives. Even where he may feel constrained ultimately to dissent from the conclusions of the Bishop, he will recognise the value of the labours of a most accomplished, painstaking, and conscientious scholar, whose contribution will always occupy a foremost rank among those of English exegetes.

It is in nowise inconsistent with the appreciation which we have expressed of this Commentary, that in the final interpretation of passages we feel constrained, occasionally, to differ from the conclusions of Bishop Ellicott, although certainly not without having first given careful consideration to his reasoning. It would be out of place here to give instances, since a full discussion would be impossible, and the mere statement of differences might leave an impression the very reverse of that which it is our wish to convey. But as we are in duty bound not only to speak the truth and nothing but the truth, but also the whole truth, it seems necessary to advert to two other points. We could have wished to have had a more full "Introduction" to the Epistle, and we have missed the illustrations which, in not a few passages, are afforded by ancient Jewish writings. These not only throw light on certain expressions used by the Apostle, but show how completely the forms of thinking of the writer were, even in his statement of highest truth, cast in the mould of his time and people. But on the other hand, it must be admitted that references to Rabbinic expressions and Jewish usages may, unless thoroughly under-

stood, be misleading. An instance of this occurs in a passage which has of late occasioned some discussion. In commenting on the well-known words *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε* ("do this") in 1 Cor. xi. 24 (compare St. Luke xxii. 19), Bishop Ellicott rightly remarks: "To render the words '*sacrifice* this' in accordance with a Hebraistic use of *ποιεῖν* in this sense in the LXX. (Exod. xxix. 39; Lev. ix. 7, al.; see Schleusner, *Lex. Vet. Test.* s.v.) is to violate the regular use of *ποιεῖν* in the New Testament, and to import polemical considerations into words which do not in any degree involve or suggest them." Impartial readers will probably have no hesitation in agreeing with this remark of the Bishop.¹ But there is more to be said on the subject, and, in view of the importance attaching to it, a few sentences at least may here be in place. It is quite true that not only in the passages quoted by the Bishop, but in many others, alike the Hebrew verb *asah* and its Greek equivalent *ποιεῖν*, are used in regard to the offering of sacrifices—whether to the true or to false Gods (compare for the latter 2 Kings xvii. 32), whether of bloody or of unbloody offerings (compare for the latter Numb. vi. 17, perhaps also Hos. ii. 8). From Biblical it has passed into Rabbinic usage, where both the verb and its derivative substantive (*asiyah*) are used in connection with sacrifices, and notably also with that of the Paschal Lamb (*Mishnah Pes.* ix. 1, 3). But it ought to be observed that, although the term is frequently applied to the sacrificial service of the priest, it is equally so to that of the layman who brings the sacrifice. Unlike some other words (such as notably *zaraq* and *zeriqah*, *nazah* and *hazzayah*, and *nathan* and *mattanah*), *asah* is not a rubrical nor even a strictly ritual term, but refers, as its common Rabbinic usage shows, generally to a legal observance or that of a command. More particularly it is used in such a connection for the observance of any feast, as, for example, that of Esther (or Purim) in *Meg.* 17a (line six from bottom). Secondly, it requires to be remembered that the sacrificing of the Paschal Lamb (to which alone there could be a reference) was not a priestly act, but done by the offerer himself—the *sprinkling* of the blood being the distinctively priestly function. Lastly, since the Holy Eucharist connects itself not with the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, but with the Paschal Supper that followed, it is not easy to see how the *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε* could have reference to anything else. And this seems fully borne out by the repetition of the same expression in the verse following that discussed (see 1 Cor. xi. 25). Thus the rendering "*sacrifice* this," which is

¹ Bishop Wordsworth (on St. Luke xxvi. 19) remarks: "The Apostles could not now suppose themselves to be *Priests*, not being of the line of Aaron."

advocated as "in accordance with Hebraistic use," absolutely fails on Jewish grounds of interpretation. This much may suffice on a point which has, curiously, been put forward by Roman Catholic writers, and which, if unchallenged, might seem open to discussion. On the other hand, it is perfectly certain that no Jewish writer would in this connection have so expressed himself if he had intended to indicate a sacrificial act.

We conclude this brief notice by coupling our acknowledgment of the obligation under which English students are laid by this volume, with the sincere wish that its continuation may not be long delayed.

A. E.



ART. III.—ST. PAUL AND SENECA: THE APOSTLE AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

A CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

I WISH to take one, the highest in this world's wisdom, and compare him with a contemporary guided by the Holy Ghost. In Seneca, the philosopher, we have a man very favourably circumstanced for influencing the world by his teaching. They lived about the same time, being born about four years B.C., and both died under the Emperor Nero—the Apostle a Christian martyr, and the philosopher an enforced suicide.

Seneca, the favourite of fortune, was the tutor of the Emperor and the manager of the State, so to say, to the approval of everyone during the first five years of Nero's reign. The teaching of his "Treatise on Pity,"¹ dedicated to Nero, was fairly well put in practice. The social state of such a teacher and writer at the Court of Rome was certainly very different from that of the Apostle working as a tent-maker at Corinth. The travelling missionary, shipwrecked, gathering a bundle of sticks to make a fire for himself and other shipwrecked passengers, "because of the present rain, and because of the cold,"² on the island of Malta, is far removed in the things of this world from Seneca with his "500 tables of cedar with ivory feet to them, all alike and of equal size." Even allowing a margin for over-statement as to the number, the contrast is still sufficiently marked.

The Apostle, after his shipwreck, was taken on to Rome, and—permitted to labour as a missionary there, as we are told in the end of the Acts of the Apostles—he may have met the

¹ "Ad Neronem Cæsarem de Clementia, liber primus et secundus."

² Acts xxviii, 2.