

## INTRODUCTION

Israel. This is followed by various exhortations (4), an account of the giving of the Ten Words at Horeb (5), and the Great Exhortation, expounding the central truth of Hebrew religion, and calling for intelligent faith and consistent obedience (6-11). In the body of the book (12-26) we have the Deuteronomic Code given by Moses "this day" (11:32). In Chapter 27 Moses gives commands that are to be carried out after the crossing of the Jordan; and in the closing chapters of the book, along with a slight narrative, there are exhortations, a song, and a series of oracles, all attributed to the great soldier and legislator. As these speeches and laws are, later on in this Introduction, examined from various points of view, and a full analysis is given at the close, this brief account of the contents and structure may here suffice. To introduce oneself or another to a book means to set it in its true place in history, so that it may receive light from preceding events, and throw light on those that followed. This task is difficult, and cannot be perfectly accomplished, but it yields rich rewards to all our diligent and sympathetic toil.

## II. ITS PLACE IN HEBREW HISTORY AND LITERATURE

*Hebrew Literature.* Hebrew history and literature, so far as they are the direct concern of the Old Testament student, cover a space of a little over twelve centuries, from the Mosaic period, or the entrance of the people into Palestine, until the beginning of the Christian Era. During the greater part of this time their literature was in process of growth. We know now that writing and literature are very much older than the Hebrew people, and we can no longer regard the Bible as the most ancient specimen of Oriental history and legislation. This literature begins with particular narratives or poems, such as Gen. 2; 3; 11; Judg. 5: 11; 2 Sam. 1: 19 ff.; Deut. 33, which are afterwards taken up into larger collections, embracing a more extensive period of history. It has passed through three stages: