

A MONUMENTAL WORK FOR BIBLE STUDENTS.*

Volume I. of "The Expositor's Greek Testament" gives us the first instalment of a monumental work, under the general editorial supervision of Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, which is intended to do for Bible students of to-day what was done for those of a former generation by Alford. In point of size the work bids fair to surpass its ambition, and in mechanical execution it cannot fail of such good fortune. In

* THE EXPOSITOR'S GREEK TESTAMENT. Volume I. The Synoptic Gospels, by the Rev. Alexander Balmain Bruce, D.D., Professor of Apologetics, Free Church College, Glasgow; The Gospel of St. John, by the Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D., Professor of Exegetical Theology, New College, Edinburgh. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

all the improvement seen in the manufacture of theological works, there is none more marked than that which distinguishes this sumptuous volume from its literary ancestry.

In reality, the present volume contains two separate commentaries, each by as eminent a biblical student as Scotland can boast. Between the two treatises there is naturally a general similarity in method. Each has its Introduction, and each its interpretative portion. To examine any one of these four portions in detail is quite impossible; but each has its excellences and its insufficiencies. Chief among the latter is that which is common to both — the use of the *Textus Receptus*. Why this astonishing relapse of scholarship is permitted, is very lamely explained. It is true that critical readings are inserted below the text; but why, in this stage of the textual criticism of the New Testament, it is necessary to force every student to make his own critical text, is hard to see.

So far as the Introductions go, there is a surprising conservatism in that of Professor Dods, who devotes over twenty-three pages to a learned and elaborate establishing of the unmodified Johannine authorship of the gospel, of which space only a page and a half deal with the hypothesis that the book as it stands is of Johannine origin but written by one of John's disciples. It is disappointing to see the off-hand fashion in which this position is pushed aside in what seems a sort of postscript to the real discussion. In Professor Bruce's Introduction we have a characteristically graphic presentation of the synoptic problem, which is admirably brought down to date. In fact, it would be difficult to find elsewhere so good a statement of the entire matter in the same space.

In the exegesis, it will perhaps be found that the relative worth of the two parts will be higher. Professor Dods is thoroughly at home in working as an exegete within the limits set him in a brief running commentary, and the work of Professor Bruce has preserved, even in its conciseness, much of its attractive literary quality. Neither author could be guilty of unscholarly writing, though there is a decided difference between the somewhat formal exegetical studies of the one and the flowing comment of the other. There may be some question whether in either case the compression of Alford has been equalled, and one cannot help regretting occasionally that the perspective of interpretation has not been better kept, and that Professor Bruce's critical positions have not been of greater service in exegesis. But,

taken all in all, if we are to have Alford *redivivus* it is probable that the present volume is as good as we could expect. Certainly it is eminently usable, and much of its exposition is stimulating and illuminating; while, apart from the matters above indicated, its insufficiencies are due to the endeavor to get text and comment within certain fixed limits of space. At all events, it is no small advantage to have the opinions of two such men as the present authors upon the four gospels, even though we may not be able to know all the data upon which these opinions are based. SHAILER MATHEWS.