

volved in establishing a text. No one who has read this book is ever likely to dismiss an *apparatus criticus* as just a dull and irrelevant appendage at the foot of the page. Throughout this section the Greek is translated, and the points explained, in such a way that the argument could be followed and appreciated by a reader with a relatively small knowledge of Greek or Latin.

In the course of this third section due weight is given to the character of the various text types from which the sources used are derived, and the pros and cons of the text type approach are canvassed and exemplified. In a final fourth section, however, entitled *The Future Task*, the limitations of this approach, which have been allowed to emerge in the course of section three, are explicitly discussed, and

some account is given of the alternative methodology advocated by such scholars as Colwell and Tune.

The book is well produced and a pleasure to handle—indeed it might be described as lavish at the price. What is more, it is so written that any teacher who used it with a class could easily incorporate into the argument the evidence of any manuscript material available in local libraries, and so introduce his students to the handling of actual manuscripts. It hardly needs saying that every trained scholar who reads this book will want to quarrel with some point or conclusion here or there, but it seems safe to predict that any student with the slightest aptitude for the subject who is introduced to it by means of this book will be rearing to go and asking for more.

DENNIS NINEHAM

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND JUDAISM, by C. K. Barrett. *S.P.C.K.*, London, 1975. 101 pp. £1.95.

The work of a mature master is always a pleasure to read, for he can criticise without acrimony, and with respect which only adds to the conviction, the theories of the most accepted scholars. One of the charms of this series of four lectures, originally delivered in German at the University of Münster in 1967, is that it has just this power of calm assessment of the work of others. Perhaps the sagest passage in the whole book is on the one-sided enthusiasms of scholars, concluding, 'I believe that the impartial reader will conclude that here, as so often, enthusiastic scholars appear not so much blind in the face of inconvenient facts as sensitive to those facts which are favourable to their particular goals' (p. 62). In short lectures of this kind, as the author repeats perhaps a trifle too frequently, it is possible only to give an orientation with a probe in depth here and there. The most extended of these is in the second lecture (the first is largely a catalogue of views) on the language and so the provenance of the Prologue of John. This gives a standpoint for the rest of the book: each of the more probably alleged semitisms is investigated and an alternative explanation given, the latest (Raymond Brown's) attempt to establish an Aramaic verse form is exploded,

and the vocabulary is examined, to show that, while there is a good deal of LXX influence, the writer keeps a certain independence from the LXX, and is subject also to other religious influences. The *Sitz im Leben* of the gospel is the Diaspora synagogue, and controversy about Jesus as the Messiah, but the author is by no means the prisoner of Judaism.

The third lecture is a careful investigation into developments in Judaism during the Johannine period. Exactitude requires that both Philo (50 years earlier) and the rabbinic sources (a century later) be used with extreme caution, but Barrett does succeed in establishing a surprising cooling of apocalypticism—in marked contrast to the main Christian current—and strong indications of an admixture of gnostic tendencies, especially in Asia Minor. John's message arises out of reflection on the meaning of Christ's revelation against the background of a tension with regard to these currents. He is influenced by them and yet stands against them, using them but not subject to them, with both gnostic and anti-gnostic traits, Jewish traits and Jewish polemic, apocalyptic and non-apocalyptic material, not a superficial polemical fly-sheet, but a true reflective revelation.

HENRY WANSBROUGH