

THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, edited by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger and Allen Wikgren. *British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1966.

The object of the Bible Societies is to provide translations of the Bible into any of the vernaculars of the world. In order that these translations, which are all the time being extended into the remoter vernaculars (e.g. of Africa), shall be as accurate as possible, the British and Foreign Bible Society since 1958 embarked on a *Greek-English Diglot*, with a critically established Greek text of the NT (but without apparatus), and opposite a close translation into plain English, 'clear . . . accurate . . . unambiguous' (preface), as a guide to translators whose knowledge of Greek may be limited, whose own language may not be English, and whose interest is not in English idiom so much as in the possession of an unambiguous guide to the meaning. This *Diglot* 'for the use of Translators', originally printed 'for private circulation only', is now complete, and a similar OT project is under consideration.

This background is important for the appreciation of the edition under review. Since 1955 the American, Scottish and German Bible Societies, later joined by the British and Foreign (London) and Dutch Bible Societies, have set out to provide a careful Greek text of the NT specifically designed as a basis for the work of translators, with (unlike the *Diglot*) a critical apparatus 'restricted for the most part to variant readings significant for translators or necessary for the establishing of the text' (preface p. v.). This means that there are far fewer variants than in most critical editions, since many variants are variants of orthography or

precise Greek usage and do not in fact affect the meaning. For the close study of linguistic usage, therefore, the standard critical editions are still needed; but the advantages of this edition are, first, the selection of the variants that do affect the sense, and, secondly, the very much fuller attestation of these selected variants, from the codices, papyri, patristic citations, Byzantine lectionaries, editors and versions ancient and modern, than is found in the fuller critical texts. A further special feature is a system of estimation of the certainty (A), greater or less probability (B, C), or uncertainty (D), of the reading adopted in the text, compared to the readings in the apparatus. Another original feature is the separate apparatus for variants in punctuation (including, e.g. the question-mark) in different Greek editions and translations.

Within its 'calculated limitations' (preface p. vi) this edition has a special usefulness, and is not 'in competition with other modern editions' (preface p. vii), because of its selection of variants and its fuller attestation in each case. The eminent names of the editors, from Münster, St Andrews, Princeton and Chicago respectively, are sufficient warrant of the scholarship. Finally, the pleasant printing (in 'English' Greek type), a joint effort of Philadelphia and Württemberg, presentation and (smooth plastic) binding, make an attractive volume.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE PUZZLE OF I JOHN, by J. C. O'Neill. *S.P.C.K.*, 1966. 17s. 6d.

All who have commented on I John would agree that it cannot easily, if at all, be divided up in any convincing way, and that, as a piece of writing, it defies all classification. This in effect is the 'puzzle' of I John. Dr J. C. O'Neill suggests in the present work that we have gone wrong in reading I John as a continuous letter. Rather should it be classed as a tract made up

of a number of self-contained sections. One such easily discernible section is in 4: 1-6, or in 1: 1-4 which has been termed 'an apostolic prologue' (Schnakenburg). Dr O'Neill, however, goes much further and maintains that behind the text of I John as we have it can be discerned some twelve hymns or admonitions of purely Jewish origin and confection. The reason why

these admonitions were preserved was because 'the Christian editor treasured them as authoritative'.

The demonstration of Dr O'Neill proceeds section by section (e.g. 1: 5-10, 2: 5-6, 2: 7-11 etc.) and with scholarly virtuosity well nigh carries us along. Yet there are some serious difficulties, as, e.g. at 2: 18 where the terms *Christos* and *Antichristos* are attributed to a hypothetical Jewish source while it is admitted that 'such terms are not found outside Christian writings', and, we might add in rather close proximity at 2: 22 (attributed to the Christian editor). This alone would make us query the whole analysis of 2: 18-27. Then again 1: 5-10 is looked upon as a 'tightly-knit passage which is otherwise solely concerned with the relationship of men and God' (p. 10), and so 'the blood of Jesus his Son' (1: 7) is treated as a gloss 'though there is no textural evidence', and textual evidence must needs come before what is considered 'clear poetic structure'.

Yet even if we conceded the major part of Dr O'Neill's analyses, and agreed that Jewish admonitions had been preserved and re-used by a Christian editor, still we are left wondering about these twelve Jewish documents. No

explanation is given of how they came to be. We have not much idea of what kind of literature is constituted by or gives rise to some twelve such antiphons or admonitions or meditation-like passages. Particular ideas in them (as Dr O'Neill shows well) can certainly be paralleled in Qumran writings and more particularly in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. But apart from particular ideas, are the whole pericopes as such really paralleled in first century Jewish literature?

It would seem too that nothing can be said about the *Sitz im Leben* of such texts, except in the most general terms, e.g. 'one of the Jewish Sectarian communities which flourished . . . in the first Christian century', and, 'since the Christian editing was done in Greek to Greek documents . . . we may safely assume that the community was a dispersion community' (p. 66).

Until more precisions can be made about such a Jewish literature and its background, the puzzle of I John remains. Yet undoubtedly Dr O'Neill has added considerably to our understanding of the literary and thought structure of this writing.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN JUDAISM, by Raphael Loewe. *S.P.C.K.*, 10s. 6d.

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS-ENCOUNTER AND MISSION, by Jakób Jocz. *S.P.C.K.*, 6s. 6d.

The assessment of the position of women in Judaism is based on the memorandum which Raphael Loewe, lecturer in Hebrew at University College, London submitted to the Commission appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to consider the question of Women and Holy Orders. It is a closely packed survey of the orthodox Jewish valuation of women, substantiated not only by ideological, but also sociological, archaeological, historical, juridical and practical data. The picture of the Jewish woman emerging from this scholarly work with its bibliography and three indices is primarily determined by the Jewish social situation at the turn of the era. At that time polygamy was legally recognized, but monogamy was generally practised. Girls married at the age of twelve and had a lower expectancy of life because of the puerperal mortality rate and the insistence on large families. In these conditions there could be no question of an equality of the sexes, though gradually the idea of a difference of function was developed. Woman came to be regarded as creatrix of an atmos-

phere in her home against which the spiritual potentialities of members of her family might achieve maximum realization. It is no mere coincidence that while the Deity in Judaism is masculine, the Divine Presence, the '*Shekinah*' is conceived as feminine. The Sabbath is welcomed as queen and bride, and according to Jewish law a child is to be reckoned Jewish if its mother is a Jewess. All religious prohibitions equally affect both sexes, but a woman is not qualified to take the lead in prayer for congregations including men. The injunction to procreate is understood to be directed to men, and women are allowed contraceptive practices for health reasons. The married woman is the ideal, and the author suggests that if the Church of England were to countenance the ordination of women, marriage might be an essential precondition. This attitude more than any other reveals an at present unbridgeable gap between Jewish and Catholic thought.

It is the contention of the Hebrew Christian Dr Jocz that the Church has the duty of con-