the Second Century; evidence from the seven churches collection in Revelation and the letters of Ignatius: all these arguments render plausible the suggestion of "an early edition of Pauline letters presented as a collection of letters to seven churches" (p. 61). It is a theory that is likely to commend itself to an age that fancies fewer genuine Pauline letters and more "original" Gospels. But the view of Roberts and Skeat should not be so easily dismissed. Gamble's assertion that "no known Gospel can be said to have attained by the early Second Century a fixed and general esteem over either oral tradition or other Gospel documents," (p. 58) will need qualification. The four canonical Gospels were probably already standing out from the others in stature and authority, (if indeed there were others at so early a stage).

Such issues will continue to be debated, and Gamble has made a lively and enjoyable contribution to the debate. The breadth of subjects and richness of details he presents (including details about ancient libraries, copy materials, women scribes, etc.) should commend this book to both the specialist and the general reader.

PETER R. RODGERS


The Epistle of Barnabas has, in recent years, attracted much attention from scholars and a useful summary of current work has been provided by J. Carleton Paget, The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background WUNT 2/64 (Tübingen, 1994). Hvalvik sets himself a limited task in this book. His aim is to determine the specific purpose of the Epistle, as against those who argue that it is a redaction of earlier, traditional material with little contribution from the author himself. Hvalvik argues that Barnabas' purpose is shown by a) his attack on the Jews and their religious observance; b) a conviction that Christians possess the true knowledge of God's ordinances and a true insight into the meaning of the OT; and c) an emphasis on the choice between two alternatives, between two peoples and two ways of life. These, it is claimed, show that Barnabas' purpose is to persuade his readers and hearers to make the right choice between Christianity and Judaism, between Christian worship and ethics and Jewish observance of the Torah. The Sitz im Leben of the Epistle lies in the competition between different groups for Christian and Jewish converts, in which Judaism was a threat to the addressees of the Epistle. Hvalvik rejects the view that Barnabas' controversy with Judaism was purely academic and solely based on the reading of the OT for the main topics of the Epistle were derived from actual observance of the Torah among the Jews. This relates to a specific context and the Epistle was a real letter, and not an academic treatise, in spite of the formal nature of much of its literary character.

Hvalvik, however, surprisingly rejects the view that the Epistle was written at a time when expectations of the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem were rife. 16/4 most likely refers to the Jupiter temple erected by Hadrian on the ruins of the Second Temple (Jupiter Capitolinus). A long section of the book (pp. 213-321) is taken up with an examination of the relations between Christians and Jews in the second century C.E. with special reference to competition and rivalry. Hvalvik concludes that Judaism was a strong challenge to the Church and Jews continued to welcome God-fearing Gentiles (σεβομένους) into their synagogues. Judaism too had an impact on Gentile Christians as is shown by the many examples of Judaizing
within Christian communities in the early centuries. Some Gentiles were pro-Jewish even before their conversion to Christianity and this is the situation which Barnabas faced. Hvalvik holds that Barnabas’ addressees were mainly Gentile Christians and he emphatically rejects the view that they were Jewish Christians. Thus 4:6 ὅτι ἡ διαθήκη ἐκείνων καὶ ἡμῶν is “the view. . . expressed by Gentile Judaizers, committed to the Christian movement but not prepared to abandon Judaism or its ways altogether” (p. 328). Hvalvik, however, qualifies this view by stating that the fact that so much space is given in the Epistle to Jewish rites and institutions suggests that Jews too were within the writer’s horizon. He quotes with approval Marcel Simon “there could be no Judaizers if there were no Jews” (p. 327). The fight against Gentile Judaizers was also a fight against Jews. So Barnabas’ main strategy was to capture the treasures of Judaism, their Scriptures and their covenant.

While many of the points made by Hvalvik are valuable, the following criticisms may be made against his thesis:

a) While the study is a welcome reaction to the view that Barnabas was no more than a redactor re-hashing traditions, this can be taken too far. It is surely significant that Barnabas repeatedly claims to be quoting from older material, much of which can be traced to Jewish religious literature. There are almost 100 quotation formulas (“scripture says,” “it is written,” “the prophet says” et al.). One quarter of Barnabas’ explicit quotations derive from the LXX of Isaiah; verses and phrases from the Psalms are also frequent and relate usually to known LXX forms. Blocks of traditional material are also found, halakhic, haggadic, midrash, Hellenic-Jewish etc. and the ways these sources are arranged, sometimes by topics or simply juxtaposed, suggests that the author is drawing on earlier matter. The Epistle reads like an erudite research paper; this however does not go against the view that the author adapted his material so as to address a new purpose and historic situation.

b) I am unconvinced by Hvalvik’s assertion that 4:3-6 has no bearing on the date of the Epistle (p. 26) but merely supports the view that the End is at hand, rather than referring to an actual point in time. Why then should the writer tell his readers “you ought then to understand” if his statement about the ten kingdoms reigning on earth and the king subduing three of the kings at once (or in one) ἐπ’ ἐν has no relevance? I still think that these verses refer to ten Emperors beginning with Augustus to Trajan (omitting Galba, Otho and Vitellius whose reigns covered only nineteen months). The three humbled kings are the resurrected three Flavians, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, who are subdued by Nero redivivus. The Epistle will then have been compiled early in Hadrian’s reign. This coheres with the view that 16:1-4 refers not to Hadrian’s building of Jupiter Capitolinus, as Hvalvik believes, but to the Emperor’s more lenient policy towards the Jews. Promises of a restoration of the Jewish Temple were made by this Emperor (GenR. 64,10; cf. Sibyl. Or. 5,48,421; 10,163) and after the terrible conflict between Jews and Greeks in the time of Trajan, which resulted in Jewish losses on a vast scale, this new policy would have appeared of great significance to Jews in Egypt. I would therefore date the Epistle c. 118-120 C.E. and not after the crushing of the Jewish revolt in 135 C.E. as Hvalvik holds. No Jew, or Gentile interested in Judaism, would be interested in the building of a temple to Jupiter on the site of the Second Temple. This would have been an abomination.

c) Hvalvik’s belief that the author of Barnabas was a Gentile is by no means certain. Would a Gentile, particularly in Alexandria, designate Satan as “the Black One” (4:9; 20:1), speak of the invisibility of God (5:10), the land of milk and honey (6:8), the ritual of the Day of Atonement (7:1-11), the shrub “Rachel” (7:8), the sacrifice of the red heifer (8:1-2), the gematria on the 318 servants of Abraham (9:8), Moses and Amalek (12:1-11), Jacob and Esau (13:1-7) and the celebration of the Sabbath (15:19) inter alia? Moreover, the exegetical method is strongly Rabbinic,