

Bartholomew supplies because it is relevant to the claims of Hoyle and Wickramanasinghe that life on earth is statistically so improbable that it needs explanation from outside. (Actually Bartholomew shows by means of Bayes's theorem that even if it were correct, the slight probability Hoyle and Wickramanasinghe think amino acids had of combining the way they did to form life would not by itself justify the belief that life could not have evolved randomly and would have needed an intelligence to create it. To show that, one would have to show that life could not have evolved randomly in any other way, and also, I would add, that the prior probability of an immaterial God creating a material world was not less than zero.) Nevertheless, the general point that stochastic (indeterministic) processes preclude neither purpose nor predictability is well made.

In fact, Bartholomew thinks that the divine purpose might be better served by a universe exhibiting stochastic processes, than a totally determined one. Such a universe, in his view, would make room for freedom and creativity in intelligent creatures and would represent God as a fellow-labourer and fellow-sufferer in creation. This would not limit God's power had he freely chosen to create such creatures, and such a view accords well with some aspects of traditional theism. On the other hand, the divine plan becomes far more risky if the universe is based on randomness at critical points. While life might have developed with a high probability given the basic properties of matter, I am not clear that intelligent human life can be said to be highly probable. Evolutionary processes are irreversible; one development rules out the possibility of others occurring because it alters the ecology significantly. Moreover, a deeply chancy universe makes it very difficult to make sense of the traditional Christian doctrines of the Redemption and Incarnation, for Mary might have miscarried or Jesus died in an accident at an early age. Indeed, the earth might have been hit by a meteorite before Jesus had been born, and the human race wiped out. Might intelligent life, and falls from grace have been produced randomly in many parts of the universe, or nowhere at all? Bartholomew recognises these difficulties his position has for traditional theology, but I think he underestimates them. I am not sure that it is possible to maintain belief in the specific purposes Christians attribute to God without having God pulling the strings behind the apparently random processes of nature. Nevertheless, Bartholomew's book deserves and will repay attention from those interested in questions of the relations between chance, design and predictability.

ANTHONY O'HEAR

A GALILEAN RABBI AND HIS BIBLE: JESUS' OWN INTERPRETATION OF ISAIAH BY Bruce Chilton, *SPCK* 1984, £15.00 pp. 216

This book is something of a mixture. It begins with a long introductory section on the relation of Jesus to Judaism, and on our understanding of early Judaism in particular through study of the Targums. Dr Chilton warns us against assuming that rabbinic material can be used to give us a picture of Judaism in the time of Jesus, but he argues that the Targums are more likely than other rabbinic documents to contain traditions reflecting Jewish thought of the period before AD 70: moreover, the Targums represent the popular piety of Judaism, rather than the scholarly attitudes of the later rabbis. Building on his earlier study of the Targum of Isaiah, Dr Chilton suggests that this Targum, in particular, gives us important 'insights ... into the theology and faith of early Judaism'. (p. 57).

In the central section of the book, Dr Chilton considers the relationship between Jesus and the Targum to Isaiah. Though acknowledging that the Targum itself took shape much later, and therefore could not have been known to Jesus, he maintains that 'some of the material available in the Targum represents the early Judaism in which Jesus himself believed, and which was the basis of his distinctive preaching' (p. 57). To demonstrate this, Dr Chilton first looks at the theme of the Kingdom of God in the

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Targum and in the teaching of Jesus, and then investigates those passages where Jesus, in citing or alluding to the Book of Isaiah appears to be citing targumic traditions: he concludes that there is evidence to show 'that some interpretative traditions, later incorporated in the Targum, had a formative influence on the wording of some of the sayings of Jesus' (p. 70). The material analysed consists of dominical references to Isaiah in which there is either 'dictional' or 'thematic' 'coherence with the Targum', and other dominical sayings in which, although there is no reference to Isaiah, the same kinds of 'coherence with the Targum' are discovered. 'Dictional' coherence is easier to establish than 'thematic', even though we are comparing Aramaic with Greek, and almost all the passages which Dr Chilton considers important are examples where the wording of Gospel sayings is reminiscent of the Targum.

The third section of the book is entitled 'Jesus' style of Preaching, Scripture as Fulfilled' but its primary concern is with the problem of interpreting the Bible today. Jesus' own use of the Old Testament is appealed to as a pattern for our own attitude to the Bible: Jesus applied scripture to his own situation, and made use also of the targumic interpretation of scripture, but what he preached was primarily the activity of God which he himself experienced, and he uses scripture, in so far as it is appropriate to express that experience.

The author thus attempts to do two different things, and it is by no means clear that the first—which gives the book its title—provides sufficient basis for the second. The material presented in the central section provides some interesting suggestions about the meaning of particular gospel sayings, and there is good reason to agree with Dr Chilton when he concludes that Jesus knew and used the tradition which was later incorporated into the Isaiah Targum, and that he found the tradition of his day valuable and useful. But this is scarcely the 'striking discovery' Dr Chilton claims. It is only to be expected that Jesus was influenced by the interpretation of scripture current in his day, though it is true that biblical scholars are only just beginning to appreciate the value of the Targums in providing information about that interpretation. Moreover, the conclusions Dr Chilton draws from his analysis of the Gospel sayings are by no means secure. Even if he is right, for example, in arguing that Mk. 4.12 reflects the interpretation of the Targum, one must be wary of drawing conclusions from this about Jesus' own 'style of preaching': though Jesus *might* have appealed to Is. 6 to sum up response to his preaching it is certain that the early Church *did*. This does not, of course, mean that we must exclude from Jesus' own teaching what we find in that of the early Christian communities! But if similarities with the LXX suggest that Greek-speaking Christians have been poring over their sacred scriptures in their attempts to interpret Jesus' life death and resurrection, then similarities with the targumic tradition could reflect similar attempts by Aramaic-speaking Christians. Though it would be foolish to assume that a saying which fits the situation of the Palestinian Church originated there—since Dr Chilton may well be right in arguing that it also fits that of Jesus himself—the task of sorting out who shaped the saying in such a way that it echoes the Targum is enormously complicated. We have an original passage of scripture, written in Hebrew, an Aramaic Targum (written at a later date, though incorporating earlier traditions), and a Gospel saying in Greek, which is the final version of earlier material transmitted (for at least part of the time) in Aramaic! If the saying itself goes back to Jesus, then the links with targumic interpretation *could* go back to him—or they *could* have been introduced in the course of transmission. The problem would be difficult enough if we were comparing the Gospel saying with a Targum which existed in the first century AD and if the influence were clear and direct. But Dr Chilton argues that 'Even when ... the connection with the Targum is obvious ... the deviation from any known traditional rendering is very striking' (p. 170). But how can we argue that it is *Jesus* who has made these alterations? We do not have the targumic tradition of his day—we can only deduce it from the later Targum, or from the Gospel saying, and both are likely to reflect the problems of later periods, and to incorporate changes

accordingly.

If there is need to be cautious about the conclusions drawn from this central section, then it is clear that the argument in the final section is highly suspect. Attractive as the picture of Jesus' method of preaching and handling of scripture may be, the evidence from the Isaiah sayings does not provide a sufficient basis on which to build the hermeneutical method which is here presented. The number of sayings investigated in this book is very small—certainly not enough to make a statement to the effect that 'we have not uncovered a single instance in which Jesus seemed arbitrarily to have departed from the targumic interpretation available in his day' (pp 165f.)—especially since we are *also* asked to believe that 'the evidence consistently suggests that Jesus used the biblical interpretative tradition his hearers were familiar with and that he departed from that tradition at certain key points' (p. 171)! Half a dozen examples—even if we were persuaded by them all—are not enough to make sweeping statements of this kind, especially when we are asked to distinguish between departures from the (unfixed!) targumic tradition which are arbitrary and those which demonstrate Jesus' distinctive theology. At the end of the day, the author's attempt to do two things at once leads us, regretfully, to the conclusion that he has succeeded in doing neither.

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THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN WORLD 200 B.C. TO A.D. 200. Cambridge Commentaries on writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 B.C. to A.D. 200, vol. 7, 1984. A.R.C. Leaney. C.U.P., £25.00 and p/b £8.95 pp. xx and 269.

Designed to complement the first six volumes of a series which provides translations and comments on extracts from non-scriptural Jewish and Christian texts of the period, this student beginner's guide is divided into two parts, the first on the history of the Mediterranean world and the Jewish contribution to it, and the second on writings originating from Judaism or Christianity.

In Part I, there is little to catch the imagination of the students, nothing to make names and places come alive. Of course, limitations of space create difficulties, but detailed lists of rulers could have been supplemented by a narrative sketching in broad strokes social, economic and political developments of the period with typical stories to capture an ethos. This book gives only incidental information about agriculture, trade and cities, and mentions the names and dates of battles without discussing the purposes, organisation and effects of the wars. Even more surprising is the omission of an account of the production and distribution of texts.

Part II contains brief descriptions of contents and historical contexts for sacred scriptures, apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, the Qumran writings, early Rabbinic and Christian writings, together with a short history of the synagogue and an alphabetical list of non-Jewish or Christian writers in the Roman Empire. Appendix II lists books from the period by title without details about editions, and in the bibliography mostly handbooks and popular editions are cited, which means that students are at a loss to discover how to find some of the literature. Unfortunately, J.H. Charlesworth's *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. I, 1983, is not mentioned.

It is a pity that an opportunity to interest students in this period and some of its literature has been squandered.

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