

JESUS WITHIN JUDAISM. New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries by J.H. Charlesworth. *SPCK*, 1989, pp. xvi + 265, black and white photographs, line plans. p/b £9.95.
JUDAISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY, Issues in Religious Studies by Hyam Maccoby, *Sheldon Press*, 1989, pp. 136, p/b £4.95.

The two books under review are intended to provide an introduction to Judaism in the first century C.E., and then to place some of the gospel stories about Jesus and other New Testament passages into their appropriate historical settings.

Charlesworth's *Jesus within Judaism* has a laudable aim—to examine the relevance of archeological evidence discovered since the Second World War for our knowledge of Jesus—but most of the material cited is already well known to those interested in Jews or early Judaism, and in other studies is assessed more carefully and integrated into a coherent argument about the nature of Jesus' ministry. In his annotated bibliography, Charlesworth mentions, for example, a book by E.P. Sanders: 'His *Jesus and Judaism* (1985) is the most important work on Jesus published in the eighties, although he unfortunately tends to read back into first century Palestine the "normativeness" of post-Jamnia Judaism. Also his work is somewhat tendentious and idiosyncratic.' But Sanders does not 'read back into first century Palestine the "normativeness" of post-Jamnia Judaism', and if his work is 'somewhat tendentious and idiosyncratic', in what respects is it so? We are left in the dark about such matters because Charlesworth's book is concerned mostly with drawing out parallels between apocalyptic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jewish prayers, the Gospel of Thomas, the testimony of Josephus, first century buildings and passages in the gospels. Where he does provide brief sketches of the life of Jesus, almost all his worthwhile points are derived from Sanders' book. To those, he adds the possibility that Jesus thought of himself as 'God's son' in the sense already defined in G. Vermes' *Jesus the Jew* (1973).

Charlesworth explains his method in the following terms: 'The N.T. scholar today must use the proper methodologies in order to ensure that the conclusion is discovered inductively and not posited deductively' (p. 18). But the work of a competent historian is both inductive (inferring the general from particular instances) and deductive (inferring the particular from the general), especially so when, as Charlesworth admits, we can construct the general contours of Jewish life in its variety in the first century before 70 C.E. but cannot be sure about the precise context in which Jesus said this and did that.

Charlesworth's misconceived definition of his task accounts for his exaggerated claims for his own work, in which quantity seems to be more important than quality. In the preface, he states, as if it is something new: 'what is now universally recognised seems clear: in the early Jewish pseudepigrapha and in the Dead Sea Scrolls we breathe the intellectual atmosphere that was once known only in and through the sayings of Jesus preserved by the evangelists' (p. x). But similar remarks were made by Bertrand Russell when he read R.H. Charles' *O.T. Pseudepigrapha*, published in 1913. Charles is mentioned only twice in Charlesworth's book, incidentally on p. 40 and in the following words on p. 31: 'In 1913 R.H.

Charles published the first English edition of the O.T. pseudepigrapha. It was selective and directed at scholars.' In comparing this work with his own new edition (1983 and 1985), he states: 'The first English edition contained seventeen pseudepigrapha; the new has 52 documents plus 13 writings preserved only in ancient, sometimes lengthy quotations and added as a supplement to volume 2. The astronomical leap from 17 to 65 documents will disturb some scholars who have grown content with a personal view of early Judaism; other scholars alive to and excited by new challenges, will thrive on the vast territory for exploration' (p. 31). We are all indebted to Charlesworth and his collaborators for making the texts available in English in a 2-volume compendium. But what Charlesworth is required to show in *Jesus within Judaism* is that the new material qualitatively affects our knowledge of Judaism before 70 C.E. Charles' edition and the earlier publications of the Dead Sea Scrolls made us aware of the great variety of Jewish beliefs and practices at the time of Jesus. Charlesworth's book cites nothing from the newer material which affects our earlier assessments. Even his contention that the gospel of John contains some accurate historical traditions is hardly new, and his identification of the site of Jesus' healing described in John 5 (p. 119–120) is probably wrong (see J.A.T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*, 1985, pp. 54–59).

Those people who are completely ignorant of the archaeological discoveries mentioned by Charlesworth may find the book useful in drawing attention to their existence, but they will need to look elsewhere for critical acumen in assessing their value in relation to N.T. writings.

Hyam Maccoby's *Judaism in the First Century* makes no grandiose claims and serves as a valuable antidote to the influential caricature of Pharisaism in the N.T. It admirably illustrates the Pharisaic ethos of justice and mercy, its religious humanism and egalitarianism. Chapters 3–10 take up the themes of historical origins, its reforming zeal, its synagogue practice, its emphasis on education, its calendar of special days, its distinction between ritual impurity and sinfulness, its revolutionary ideology based on the Exodus story in the past and on a hope for the world to come after death, and its attempts to implement the love command. The final chapter indicates why Pharisaic traditions became central for Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. I wish he had developed further one of the details briefly mentioned. He suggests that women took a much more active role in synagogue services in the first century than in later centuries (p. 61), referring to inscriptions which call women heads of synagogues or elders. But this is all the evidence he supplies and he does not discuss what led to the change in women's status at a later period.

As part of his discussion, Maccoby examines stories of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees which are found in the gospels. He argues, for example, that the accounts of healings on the sabbath fail to show that any contention could have been caused since they involved no work and hence did not break the sabbath (p. 45). Plucking corn on the sabbath would also have been allowed by Pharisaic tradition if it happened to alleviate the hunger of people who were in perilous circumstances, and this Maccoby takes to be the actual circumstances, reflected in Matthew but altered by the Gentile church (Mark and Luke) (p. 46–51). N.T. scholars who recognise these difficulties in making sense of the gospel

stories often suggest that they reflect polemical tension between the later church and the synagogue rather than the realities of Jesus' ministry. But this only postpones the problem without solving it. Maccoby proposes that these stories originally involved Sadducees as Jesus' opponents, not Pharisees, but does not explain why the change took place, and, in any case, his study denigrates Sadducees so that they become easy scapegoats. We seem to be led to the inescapable conclusion that the gospels and the Christian communities they served were ignorant of Judaism and unreliable in their accounts of disputes.

Maccoby's concentration on Pharisaism and Rabbinic Judaism puts other first century Jewish groups in the shade. They are briefly described in chapters 1 and 2. In particular, he seems grossly to underestimate the influence of the priests during the period when the Temple was the central sanctuary of Judaism, visited by thousands of Jews at the pilgrim festivals and supported by all Jews through tithes or gifts of money. He even calls the Sadducees 'a heretical group' (p. 8), adopting the perspective of a period long after the Temple was destroyed. He notes that Josephus estimates the numbers of Pharisees as 6,000, but interprets this figure, without warrant, as the number of Pharisaic leaders, insisting that Pharisees were the only teachers of the whole people of Israel, i.e. of the 3–4 million Jews inside Judea and Galilee and a similar number in the diaspora (p. 11). He does not mention the research of Vermes and others which shows that there were probably no Pharisees in Galilee. He maintains that priests had solely a sacerdotal role, and he never wonders what these many thousands of professionals, learned in the Torah, did when they were not on duty in the Temple. In other words, his portrait of first century Judaism is coloured by second and third century developments.

These two books concentrate on different bodies of literature which together show us something of the varying interests of Jewish groups in the first century—Charlesworth's on apocalyptic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Maccoby's on pharisaic and rabbinic literature. Neither, however, tells us much about the Temple, its priests and their importance before 70 C.E.

MEG DAVIES

CHRIST OUR MOTHER: JULIAN OF NORWICH by Brant Pelphrey, *Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1989. Pp. 271. £9.95.*

Dr. Pelphrey is lecturer in systematic theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. He sees Julian as a 'frontier' theologian, holding together elements in Christian understanding which can all too easily fly apart, and being ahead of her time in that she speaks to some of the preoccupations of our own day, and even opens the door to dialogue with other faiths.

The author is familiar with the various critical editions, but he addresses himself to the non-technical reader, making his own modernisation of Marion Glasscoe's edition (Exeter 1976) of the *Long Text*—the version which was completed some twenty years after Julian received her Revelations in May 1373, and which includes her mature theological