

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF JESUS, by Joachim Jeremias, *SCM Press*, London, 1969, xvi + pp. 405 75s.

The sub-title of this work by Professor Joachim Jeremias, 'An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period', gives some idea of its scope. A Note tells us that it has been translated by F. H. and C. H. Cave, assisted by M. E. Dahl, from the third German edition of 1962, entitled *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu* (Göttingen), with the author's revisions to 1967, and that the present English translation has been compared with the French edition, *Jerusalem au Temps de Jésus*, Paris, 1967.

This attractively produced volume is a fully documented work of scholarship from a scholar of international repute and has for some years now provided an important new work of reference on everything pertaining to the religious, social and economic background of the Holy City in the time of Christ. Professor Jeremias has drawn fully on all available sources, both written and archaeological, every statement being supported by relevant references; in fact, it should prove to be a worthy successor to the works of Edersheim and Geo. Smith at the points where they deal specifically with the Holy City and the Temple within it.

The particular merit of this work is the skill with which Professor Jeremias sifts the evidence of the Mishnah, Josephus and other authorities in order to determine the actual state of affairs in Jerusalem in the first half of the first century of the Christian era. This is an exceedingly difficult and delicate task, but it has been done with a care and restraint that gives credibility to the many interesting conclusions at which he arrives, not least because of the convincing new light he throws on the background of the Gospel narratives.

The work is divided into four parts: Part I, Economic Conditions in the City of Jerusalem; Part II, Economic Status; Part III, Social Status; Part IV, The Maintenance of Racial Purity.

Part I explains and illustrates the advantages, drawbacks and economic problems accruing to the Holy City as a result of its peculiar

geographical and religious position. We learn, for instance, that the usual population of the City was probably no more than 50,000, which however expanded up to something like 125,000 during the Feast of Passover.

In Part II he describes the number, characteristics and customs of the various categories of inhabitants, including the courtiers, the wealthy families, the middle classes, and the poor, and confirms that a large section of the population lived partly or wholly on charity or outdoor relief; Jerusalem was in fact a centre of mendicancy, and even before Christianity intervened there was already a considerable relief organization at work.

Part III describes the clergy, the lay nobility, the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and throws much new light on the relations between all these categories, and thus deepens our background knowledge of the Gospel record, and confirms it.

In Part IV Professor Jeremias develops his opinion that 'up to the present it has not been sufficiently recognized that from a social point of view the whole community of Judaism at the time of Jesus was dominated by the fundamental idea of the maintenance of racial purity'; indeed, 'the entire population itself . . . was classified according to purity of descent'. He finds the structure of the national community divided into (a) families of legitimate descent, (b) families of illegitimate descent with only a very slight blemish, (c) families with grave blemishes of ancestry. He concludes with a detailed picture of the social position of women!

Perhaps the most interesting conclusion to be drawn from this volume is the support it gives to the belief that Jesus faced a humanly impossible task as Messiah. For his life and teaching are here seen to be a direct threat to 'The Establishment'. How could an exceedingly comfortable, wealthy, well-educated, entrenched oligarchy (such as the high priestly families were at that time), holding all the reins of power (save only for certain qualifications by the Roman Governor), yield its authority

to a young Galilean rabbi who lacked all support from the people who counted (save John the Baptist), who was entirely without money, who had not been educated in the Temple, who taught a doctrine of detachment from wealth and from power ('let he who rules be as he who serves'), and who courageously showed no hesitation in expressing his entire disapproval of the means by which the priesthood kept its economic power (e.g. the cleansing of the Temple)—how could these Jerusalem authorities bring themselves to hand over the future ordering of their way of life to this rabbi, however eloquent, however sincere, however committed to the purity of Judaism?

Although their own ranks were not entirely unanimous in opposition (e.g. Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea), yet they had only to wait patiently until they could undermine his popular support, and they would be able to destroy him without trace. This in fact they did quite easily, but they had reckoned without his resurrection from the dead, and the fulfilment of his prediction of the doom of the City that did not understand its hour of destiny.

I hope sufficient description has been given to show that this work is an indispensable aid for serious Bible study, and that it should be in every library.

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A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY, II: The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, by J. Leclercq, F. Vandebroucke and L. Bouyer. Translated by the Benedictines of Holme Eden Abbey, Carlisle. Burns & Oates Ltd, London, 1968. x + 602 pp. 115s.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE, II: The West from the Fathers to the Reformation, edited by G. W. H. Lampe. Cambridge University Press, 1969. ix + 566 pp. 70s.

In the first volume of the *History of Christian Spirituality* (1960; English translation 1963) Père Bouyer defined the history of spirituality as the study of the reactions which the objects of belief arouse in the religious consciousness of men in general and especially of those human actions which have explicit and immediate reference to God. Whereas fifty years ago P. Pourrat in his *Spiritualité chrétienne* concentrated upon the most notable of religious writers, now in this new history the canvas is more crowded and there is greater emphasis upon spirituality as both the nourishment and the creation of civilization as a whole. Thus broadly defined, the spirituality of the period from the sixth to the sixteenth century is now skilfully condensed, although at times with excessive compression of style and with too single-minded an attachment to literary evidence, into some six hundred pages by Dom Leclercq and Dom Vandebroucke and also by Père Bouyer in an evocative appendix on Byzantine developments. Pourrat's survey is now replaced by a more refined and detailed set of historical interpretations which may have the effect of deterring an affective reader without a scholar's energy or at least his *otium*. For him Pourrat should continue to be available, while for others the present volume will prove an invaluable mine of information if they are prepared to overcome the handicap of the lack of an index of topics. The English translators—whose proofs have not been well read—might have been better advised to prepare such an index and thus to

help the seeker of information on, for example, Books of Hours or frequent communion, than try patchily to improve for English readers the basically French bibliographical indications.

Dom Leclercq spans the ages from Gregory the Great to Bernard of Clairvaux, portraying first Gregory's simple, unspeculative synthesis of the treasures of the Bible, the liturgy, the Latin and some Greek Fathers, a source out of which flowed streams which developed and differentiated themselves in the barbarian west. I doubt whether anywhere else can be found a more satisfactory single account of the development in the barbarian age of the now familiar distinctions between the states of life—clerical, monastic and lay—and then of the development of what we call the Gregorian reform in terms of the continuing and competing evolution of the spiritualities proper not only to each of these states of life but also and more particularly to the new forms which sprang so prolifically from within these states. Underneath Dom Leclercq's account can be seen, as in a palimpsest, the viewpoints of the author's beautiful initiation to monastic literature, *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu* (Paris 1957), for, according to Dom Leclercq, the culmination of centuries of gathering appreciation is the flowering of monastic spirituality, contemplation and theology in the age of John of Fécamp and Anselm of Canterbury, of Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St Thierry. With the appearance of the present volume Dom Leclercq's own contributions to the under-