

cal), they make a considerable difference to the handling of the passion by teachers and preachers. It is no longer possible to construct a mosaic out of fragments from the individual Gospels. Each evangelist's perception may now be more clearly discerned, and allowed its own worth in relation to the archetype which exercises a guiding but not an excluding authority. In any case, the application of critical procedures can no longer be withheld. Only in recent years has strong historical scepticism about the New Testament taken firm hold in Britain. This book stands midway between radical scepticism which begins from the detection of theological motives in the story-telling and conservative historicism which finds excuses for divergence in the recital of events. Professor Trocmé's judgment that the main features of the passion are historically sound is sensible and welcome, but it is reached by contestable decisions. The absence of the sanhedrin trial in John, apart perhaps for a hint in Jn 18:28, is not to be quickly dismissed; nor

is it easy to limit the ability of Old Testament passages to act as catalysts in the precipitation of incidents. All this, however, may be beside the point if we are dependent on a liturgical text whose truth lies not so much in what happened but in the worshipper's participation in what happened. There are of course professionally interesting questions to be asked. For example, emphasis on the resurrection was certainly present in the primitive kerygma. How soon did reflection on the independent significance of Christ's death take place? According to Professor Trocmé it was already well formulated liturgically by AD 40; but it is scarcely visible in I Thessalonians, and seems to be still in the process of development in I Corinthians. In short, this book clears a good deal of ground, requires close reading (and preferably some knowledge of Greek), and deserves to be studied by all biblical teachers and students.

KENNETH GRAYSTON

SOCIETY AND THE HOLY IN LATE ANTIQUITY by Peter Brown,
Faber & Faber, 1982, £10.50

'There is a time for the evening under starlight
 A Time for the evening under lamplight
 (the evening with the photograph album)'
 [T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*]

In the course of the years during which he taught in Oxford, Mr Brown gave many lectures which, in their academic excitement and their quality of discovery, seemed indeed 'evenings under starlight'. To see many of these lectures combined with his early published works together in this volume of his collected papers is to discover that it is now a time for the 'evening with the photograph album'. The first section brings together his inaugural lecture at Royal Holloway College, 1977, containing his early insight into the value of texts produced by 'the religious imagination', as a balance to that study of the past which is exclusively concerned with the 'discipline of the mind' (p 6), (a theme he has more recently expanded in *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago/London 1981.) with

his comments on historians such as Gibbon, and Pirenne. The second section begins with his critique of Robert Brownling's *The Emperor Julian*, and continues with various studies in the relationship of society to the holy, especially in the world of Late Antiquity which Mr Brown has made uniquely his own. Above all it contains that seminal lecture, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity' (pp 103-153). Other essays range from Mr Brown's understanding of the Mediterranean world as most deeply divided not by East and West but by different concepts of the locus of the holy 'Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: a Parting of the Ways', (pp 66-96) to his analysis of the place of the thaumaturgy of the dead in the world of Gregory of Tours ('Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours', pp 222-251) and the essay containing that brilliant change of perspective by which he applied his concept of the ancient world and its relation to the supernatural to the elev-

enth and twelfth centuries ('Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change', pp 302-332).

'Brilliant', but not always quite right. For it is possible to see now more clearly that in many ways these studies were a new look at old material and not always the full perspective, as indeed Mr Brown suggests in his preface (p vii).

For instance, in re-reading the 'Holy Man in Late Antiquity', one is struck by the external nature of the comments; this is the outsider's view of the saint, the expectations of the visitors who observed and used the holy man, but not the internal view, which would explore the saint's own view of his life. In the essay on relics in the age of Gregory of Tours, it is easy to see now that the contrasts are too sharply drawn, that the cult of relics of the dead and the veneration of the living saint cannot be isolated from one another

in any period or place. And the limitations of the discussion of the twelfth century view of the miraculous and especially of the ordeal seems more clear than when it was first proposed.

But Mr Brown has himself foreseen this criticism, and has added footnotes and references to the original texts which show the reader the progress of scholarship and the light it has thrown upon his work. Often, he himself has expanded and corrected his earlier opinions; but others are generously acknowledged for their work in continuing and rectifying the first inspiration. These are still brilliant essays, conveying after ten years much of the original impact, and showing in an unshakable way the debt we owe to Mr Brown both as original explorer and inspiring guide in these 'new beginnings' these 'raids on the articulate'.

BENEDICTA WARD S.L.G.

A HISTORY OF ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD

by H. Jagersma. *SCM* 1982.

E.T. from the Dutch edition 1979 by John Bowden. pp xv + 304. Limp £9.50

Professor Jagersma provides an excellent introduction to the study of the subject, competent, clear and well set out, covering the period from the patriarchs to the end of Persian rule. Each chapter deals with a specific period, with a series of sub-headings on particular topics. Arguments are set out boldly in the text, with references to further discussion in the footnotes. Professor Jagersma makes the reader aware of the limitations of the evidence available, and in particular he stresses that 'the books of the Old Testament are religious writings. . . . We should not expect from the Old Testament any first

hand information about the history of Israel in the Old Testament period' (p 1).

Three subjects are treated in an excursus: 'Apiru and Hebrews, the Tribes of Israel, and the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah. The last is taken up again in an appendix. Modern scholars, names and subjects, and Biblical references are each provided with an index. There are five line maps.

Sixth formers, undergraduates and those looking for a valuable guide to the subject will find this book the best short introduction available.

MARGARET PAMMENT