

BOOK REVIEWS

Browne, S. G. *Leprosy in the Bible*. 3rd ed. Christian Medical Fellowship Publication, 1979, 36 pp. Price: 60p.

This third edition is a revised and enlarged reworking of Dr. Browne's exhaustive study of the intertwining etymological, semantic, and medical histories of the word "leprosy." He points out that the specific disease known in modern times as leprosy is not the same as that denoted in the Hebrew and Greek scriptures as *šāra'at* and *lepra* and that, in fact, true leprosy "is not explicitly or indubitably referred to in the Bible" at all.

The Hebrew word *šāra'at* appears in the Old Testament to describe the situation in which a person possessed such varied symptoms as swellings, skin nodules, crusted or scabbed skin rash, inflammation of the skin, and scurf of the scalp or beard area. Additionally, the term refers to mildew on wool or linen or as pigmented fungus or lichen on the walls of dwellings. When a person possessed any of these symptoms, he would be brought before the Temple priest who would examine him for specific indications of ritualistic uncleanness and defilement such as a whiteness of the pigmentation of the skin and hair, thickening or infiltration of the skin, extension of abnormal skin, or ulceration. If these characteristics were discovered, the person would be deemed unclean, a condition inflicted by God and which could ultimately only be cured by Him.

Additional sections of this study carefully record the historical mention of leprosy both during Old Testament and New Testament times. Particularly valuable is the explanation of the historical accident by which a group of Jewish Alexandrian scholars from about 300–150 B.C. in translating the Septuagint into Greek chose the term *lepra* for *šāra'at*, thus giving rise to the historical misconception that leprosy is referred to in the Bible. Another section of the book details all references to leprosy in the Gospels; again, none of these references can in any way be inferred to refer to leprosy. After briefly tracing the history of leprosy during the European Middle

Ages, the author deals with the problem of how a number of recent English versions of the Bible deal with translation of *šāra'at* or *lepra*. Finally, the author discusses the role of missions in the treatment of leprosy in the contemporary world and presents an up-to-date summary of general information about the prevalence and chemotherapy of leprosy as well as some of the research activities currently in progress.—G. Gordon

Workshop on Human Aspects in the Treatment of Leprosy Patients. Berne: Leprosy Relief Work Emmaus Switzerland, 1979, 75 pp.

This publication contains the full record of the activities of Committee 6: Workshop on human aspects in the treatment of leprosy patients, held at the XI International Leprosy Congress in Mexico in 1978, the workshop report of which was previously published in the JOURNAL (47 Suppl. [1979] 307–309). It begins by reprinting the workshop report as well as the workshop's program, organization, and participants along with photographs. The next section of the booklet contains speeches on "General aspects of the treatment of leprosy patients" by Dr. G. R. Ochoa, Sr. S. G. Mariam, and Prof. Dr. T. Saylan. These addresses deal with topics such as socialization, social deviation, recent trends in patient care, displacement of patients from their communities, governmental attitudes, and prejudice. The next group of speeches, by Dr. V. P. Macaden and R. S. Mani, deals with the "humane treatment of leprosy patients during case finding" and discusses subjects such as record keeping, creating patient confidence in the medical team, health education, and health worker techniques in dealing with patients. The third group of papers, by Dr. G. Warren and A. Kaufmann de Swiec, deals with "humane treatment of leprosy patients in care centres," treating subjects such as the various types of cure centers, dehumanization, overcare, and medical sociology. The fourth group of speeches, given by Rev. R. Serra and Dr. M. M. Gimenez, deals with "rehabilitation of patients and their reintegr-

gration into society after treatment'' and considers the problem of social integration of former patients as well as the involvement of health worker teams at this point. The next address, by I. Bijleveld, presents a case study on social rehabilitation in Northern Nigeria. The final paper, by M.

Farine, summarizes the totality of the problem of humane treatment of leprosy patients worldwide.

This booklet provides an excellent source for fleshing out the original workshop report and merits being read in its entirety.—G. Gordon