

CITY OF GOD is not the clearest thing in print, it is of interest to see how he understood the role and function of the people of God.

It is important with men such as Augustine to remember their works and not to allow our hermeneutical differences, et al, deprive us of the many good things they offer. His death came in Hippo as the Vandals were attacking the city and threatening the ruin of civilization in North Africa.

Jerome (340-419) --~~Jeronymus~~

Jerome is one of my favorite characters in the sketches of church history, a man of contradictory emotions, scholarly ability, and zealous soul: devoted, censorious, blessed with an argumentative wit. Firm in conviction, he was possessed, as we say, of a "fast gun."

Of cosmopolitan background, Jerome travelled widely while young and was baptized in Rome in 360 AD. He continued travelling and used the opportunity to study and amass great learning and experience. His knowledge was profound in both sacred and secular subjects. He learned Hebrew from a rabbi and lived as a monastic at times. In 379 he was ordained at Rome and labored there in the court of Damasus although he was constantly offended by the excesses (worldliness) of Roman life and the absence of spirituality to say nothing of the disinterest of the clergy. WE might say that he did not observe it silently and at times his life was endangered by those he criticised.

Serving as secretary to Damasus (366-384), he accepted the Bishop's challenge to translate the Scripture from Greek and Hebrew into a better Latin version than was then current (known to us as the Old Latin). This was a thorough work and is known as the Vulgate, the common Bible. Most of it had to be completed after 386 when he left Rome and settled in Palestine, partly due to pressures from his foes. One of his patrons was a wealthy lady, Paula, and she followed his advice and moved to Palestine, bringing her considerable fortune. With her assistance he erected (or had erected) at Bethlehem two monasteries --one for men and one for women. He directed the former and Paul supervised the latter.

Picking up the chronicle of Eusebius, Jerome sought