

wards hope is encouraged for the restoration of Jerusalem. However, it is the old Jerusalem community and their descendants whom the traditionalists condemn in favour of the exiles.

There can be no doubt of the importance of this work, nor of the many insights which Carroll offers. As to the main thesis, it is clear that the book of Jeremiah is a literary creation, though like Jesus the prophet must have made a considerable impact for his oracles to have become the vehicle of the traditionalists. More attention needs to be paid to other exilic and post-exilic theology in contrast to the deuteronomistic, and consideration given as to whether some of this is reflected in the book of Jeremiah. But Carroll has deliberately left many questions unanswered, some of which may be answered in his commentary.

Carroll concludes his work with a sceptical note on the contemporary relevance of the book of Jeremiah. It is true as Carroll earlier points out that prophecy carries no proof of its validity which can only be established by subsequent events.

Its value lies in that it both shows the continual care and concern of God for his people and provides that continuity of faith which subsequently enables the community at large to embrace again that faith. While the book of Jeremiah takes its shape during a particular crisis in the history of a particular people, it encourages those individuals who in any age believe that they are called by God to speak out against contemporary thought and practice to do so regardless of the consequences. The disciple who takes up his cross in obedience to his Lord and suffers for it has no proof that his cause is right, and must be prepared to utter the complaint of Jer. 20: 7ff. or Ps. 22. But in so doing he enters into that continuity of faith described as 'Moses and the prophets'. But without such continuity there would be no tradition for in the end God relies on individuals like Jeremiah to provide that critical expression of faith we call prophecy through which alone his kingdom of equity and justice can be realised.

ANTHONY PHILLIPS

HALLOWING THE TIME by Geoffrey Preston O P Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980 pp 163 £4.50.

Preaching, like acting and cookery, is an ephemeral art. Nothing can recapture the exact flavour after the event. The performance is all. Fr Preston must be among the handful of preachers whose sermons bear reading in cold print long after their delivery. This is the second book in two years presenting samples of his word. He has certainly been well served by his editor, who has arranged thirty-five selections in one coherent form, following the march of the liturgy from Advent to Trinity Sunday.

But the main reason for the successful transfer from thin air to compositor's block undoubtedly lies with the author himself. No one was more aware of the problem. In an article in this magazine, (*New Blackfriars*, No 51 (1970) "Wrestling with the Word - I") he said: "To print a sermon is to ask it to live and

breathe in an atmosphere in which it was not evolved" (p 123). No doubt in writing out his sermons and preserving them Preston had more than an inkling of publication one day. But it was the demands of the sermon itself, as Preston saw them, that made the composition so painstaking and resourceful. He knew that every sermon is a "once-for-all event", but he insisted that it had to be prepared with care and industry. The 1970 article describes to what lengths he expected such industry to go. Preston had no wish to turn sermons into ponderous treatises: "people are not concerned to hear of the preacher's intellectual ability, but only to listen to the word of God" (p 125). Preston explained that in the true sermon "the authorities consulted, the Greek and Hebrew background, the Patristic interpretations, the modern commentaries, all fall away and disappear from view".

The present book vindicates these theoretical ideas. Many can testify how his addresses were true proclamations of the word, and any reader can see for himself that there are "authorities" in plenty behind these words, and yet are made unobtrusive. A few remarks may be made about the references. They prove Preston's wide reading and eccentricity. Preston paraphrases Scripture in places, not always recognised by the printer (Psalm 80 takes a remarkable form on p 132). He glosses a number of patristic quotations in the interests of relevance and clarity (notably 17th Ode of Solomon p 98), making it difficult to track them down. He quotes at least two different translations of the Bible — RSV usually, but surprisingly RV in some important places. The notes are not always reliable and there are inaccuracies in the quotations from poets. *Autobasileia* cited from Origen (p 10) is in PG 13,1197B. "His blood upon the rose" (p 115) is from a poem by J M Plunkett. There is a curious aptness about Preston's quotations. Whether he cites Rupert of Deutz, Herrick or *Jesus Christ Superstar*, all seem relevant to the point made. His preference for John Donne (pp 32, 72 and 115) is notable.

Preston considered himself a theologian (p 51) living by a monastic rule (p 24). But he was much more than that. His interest in and knowledge of liturgy and Church history go far beyond the ordinary needs of his call. There is a feeling for form and discipline in liturgy that was perhaps alien to the age. It is revealed in his loving description of the grand occasion for the announcement of Christmas (p 47-8), the side glances at how things are done in Benedictine houses (p 15) and the numerous references to liturgy in past times. It is revealing that when Preston sees man as made for festivity, he describes him as "a being *à la Mozart*", and not *à la Berlioz* or some more reckless and romantic genius. (p 131).

All in all Preston's work is as much literary as oral. There is far more in what are now essays than would ever be required for a mere talk. It can not be said of many sermons that they repay study in the way

these do. Yet there are anecdotes and unusual phrases that remind the reader that the words were not only or primarily intended to be read: "faith must always be earthed" (p 78), "God being racked with thirst for us" (p 83), "how do we practise dying? By going to sleep properly night after night" (p 110). "In Lent we remember how exciting it can be to be a Christian" (p 85).

The preface offers a moving testimonial by one of Preston's confreres. He alludes to Preston's difficulties and disappointments. This is fashionable revelation. It is perhaps irrelevant. No man who lives escapes a private agony, but it seldom interests anyone else. Obviously someone who favoured the performance of things "solemnly and with dignity" (p 47) was going to have problems amid the bagatelles in the time around the Council. Preston openly stated his belief in the need to be rooted in the past, both as an individual and as a corporate member of something (p 29). There is a kind of "traditionalism that is a altogether necessary for any real renewal". "One would expect the work of the Spirit to produce institutions because it would naturally be a structuring activity" (p 139). Phrases like these, in some contexts, would be received with varying degrees of enchantment. But the only interest posterity has in a writer's anguish concerns the question as to whether the pain works like fire or damp. As far as one can see from these pages, Preston's own problems did not deflect him from the matter in hand: they only deepened his earnestness.

Good cooks like great actors have the privilege of living on in people's minds long after the performances are forgotten. Perhaps it is so with preachers too. The aberrations are consumed in the glow of memory. Many people have borne testimony to the effect of Preston's words, and to the affection aroused by his personality. It is to be hoped that this book will bear the same fruit among those who read it.

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