

that of parody or satire', Dr Allen is brought to confront a set of most important questions. If we allow *Jonah* to be a literary invention which reveals the divine, do we not have to set ourselves carefully considering the relation of literature generally to the revelation of God for us? This would require some delicacy of critical sensitivity. More so than is revealed by the passage indexed under 'Shakespeare, W.' which turns out to be a quotation from the first scene of *The Tempest* already employed by Perowne. Or by the remark that there are in *Micah* passages of 'majestic whimsicality' which 'writers such as C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien have recaptured for our own age'. And precisely in this small piece of vulgar whimsy there is revealed the need for general literary sense if the scriptural text is to be understood. It occurs in the discussion of *Micah* 1:2-3 where greater service would have been done the reader if the picture of Yahweh coming down to 'the high place' had been clearly related to the arrival of the Ziggurat god who, when he visited his people, landed at the temple on the top of the monument, and then walked down to the temple. This reference might have opened up the nice discussion of how far

the prophet himself was psychologically unable to avoid the pagan language even at the moment when he was denouncing the pagan practices of his culture. This would have allowed Dr Allen to consider lots of other things, for example whether the image of the horned Jerusalem of *Micah* 4:13 might be a literary revision of the figure of the horned goddess of procreation seen on the ivory panel of the royal bed of Ugarit. This lovely lady may, as she suckled her young son, have brought to the editor's mind that Bethlehem saying which he put here. The ancient workings of the literary imagination might, in this place at any rate, have much interested the Christian reader. And other readers might have enjoyed some dependent discussion of how exact the clergyman was in describing Miss Jayne Mansfield as 'the goddess of lust', and how right she was to be delighted by the description. The possibilities are endless. And Dr Allen cannot be expected to entertain each proposal. But he may well be held accountable for his general indifference to such literary openings upon those theological matters which are of enduring interest to the readers of these prophetic books.

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KARL BARTH PREACHING THROUGH THE CHRISTIAN YEAR, edited by John McTavish and Harold Wells. *T. & T. Clark Ltd.* Edinburgh 1978. pp. viii + 279. £3.80.

People respond to Barth in different ways. Usually they either hate or revere him; sometimes they are frustrated by wanting to do both. It is possibly those who favour Barth who will derive most from this book. But those who merely want a convenient Barthian sampler may also find it useful.

The work is a selection of exegetical passages taken from the familiar English version of the *Church Dogmatics* and particularly designed to help in the preparation of sermons. The flavour of the *Dogmatics* is fairly represented by the ex-

tracts chosen, and there is the added advantage that readings have been arranged with an eye on the ecclesiastical seasons.

It is well known that all Barth's theological efforts were directed to preaching the word. One imagines that he would have approved of the present volume. What he might not have approved of is the unexplained manner in which some items are printed. One (p. 70) begins "What are we to make of the divine plural in v. 26?" What indeed.

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