

*Making such music as lives still,
And no one daring to interrupt
Because it was himself that he played
And closer than all of them the God listened.*

Those to whom Christian faith comes easily and who have no problems with doctrine and dogma will find little of interest in Thomas' poems. But people who are clinging to faith by their fingers' ends will find much here to help them reclaim their Christian identity. Those for whom believing is a struggle will identify with Thomas' oblique entry into the realm of God, with his masterly use of metaphor drawn from biblical and theological sources and with his willingness to wrestle with the One whose presence or absence is highly significant, saying with Jacob, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'

Byron Rogers was a personal friend of Thomas, one of the rare visitors allowed into the inner sanctum of the hovel-like cottage of his retirement years. He learned to love the man and to appreciate his eccentricities and foibles as part of the wonderful creative process of a poet of rare power. It is obvious that for Rogers writing this book was a labour of love; reading it is sheer enjoyment.

Denis Campbell,
Dublin



Go, Tell Them: Thoughts Towards a Theology of Preaching,
Robert Hendrie, London: St Paul's Publishing, 2006, pp.
252, ISBN 0854397205. £10.99

Two generations have passed since the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church but some of the revolutionary changes it effected in the life and worship of that Church have still not been recognised by other Christian Churches. How many, for example, still hold to the conventional view that preaching is the badge and property of Protestant or Reformed Churches, Roman Catholics making do with

an optional and hardly significant homily? Yet according to Vatican II, “it is the first task of priests [...] to preach the Gospel of God to all”. Preaching, the sermon, have been given pride of place!

It is in recognition of the changed situation and perspective that Robert Hendrie offers his immensely stimulating “thoughts towards a theology of preaching”. It should be said at once that this book is intended primarily for a Roman Catholic readership but surely the day is long gone since it was treason or sacrilege for non-Catholics to be open to learn from a Catholic text.

Hendrie insists that this is neither a book on homiletics nor a full-blown theology of preaching. But his ‘thoughts’ include an account of the biblical basis and the history of preaching in his tradition, especially the radical change of emphasis wrought by the Second Vatican Council. He reflects most constructively on the Word that is to be proclaimed, on those whose duty it is to proclaim it and on those to whom it is to be proclaimed. He is especially sensitive to the listener or ‘receiver’ of the sermon. In this he has some engaging metaphors, for example tennis, with the preacher as the server and the congregation the receivers, whose duty it is to return the serve. (He adds that “It is preferable that the preacher should dominate by serve and volley rather than by ace!”).

At a time when in not a few quarters of the Reformed and non-Catholic churches there seems to be, despite traditional emphasis, a lack of confidence in the sermon and a consequent lack of proper preparation for it, this book is timely, with much to offer those engaged in or interested in preaching, from whatever tradition. Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that it could stand up to the best of the Warrack Lectures, at one time so familiar to Scottish divinity students.

D. W. D. Shaw,
St Andrews