

THE PENTECOSTALS, by Walter J. Hollenweger. *S.C.M.*, 1972. 572 pp. £6.75.

This is a very impressive book, by the man who probably knows more about Pentecostalism, from inside and out, than anyone else in the world. Based on a German original, this is more than just a translation: Professor Hollenweger has put in three chapters on British Pentecostalism instead of three chapters on Germany and Switzerland, and has also added a considerable amount of new material, including Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal reactions to the German publication. At the back of both stands the monumental 10-volume *Handbuch der Pfingstbewegung* by the same author.

One of the most striking things that emerges is just how very diversified a phenomenon Pentecostalism is in both its practice and its theory (a large section of German Pentecostalism seems not even to accept the doctrine of 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' as a second experience distinct from conversion); this impression is in marked contrast to that given by most books on the subject. In fact, Hollenweger brings out very well, and with unique authority, the tension there is between the genuine and multiform religious vitality of the movement, and its rationalistic and constricting theology. He suggests, and I find this challenging and attractive, that the real contribution of Pentecostalism is not in its pneumatology, as is generally and naturally supposed, but in its preaching and liturgy, both of which manifest a kind of spontaneity within tradition, that enables Pentecostals to make effective contact, all over the world, with people quite untouched by the other Churches. The Pentecostal preacher is felt to be 'one of us', and so can communicate. Now, one of the great needs of our day is obviously for new styles of communication, and in particular non-literary styles; and this is just where the Pentecostals come into their own.

In fact, Pentecostalism represents a kind of grass roots religion, and it is interesting that in Latin America and Africa it seems to enable oppressed native peoples to rediscover their own traditional, tribal styles of religion. Contrary to its own claim, Pentecostalism is, in effect, a revival of *natural* religion—and this is not by any means simply to its discredit: it is surely the *natural* basis of religion that is so unprecedentedly threatened in our modern

world, yet without it there is no hope of any genuinely supernatural religion. Grace builds on nature.

This means that Pentecostalism is a very ambiguous affair. As Hollenweger points out, the same phenomena can serve very different purposes and carry very different significance in different social, political and religious contexts. This is a point I wish he would, and hope he will, develop further in connexion with neo-Pentecostal movements, which seem to flourish in strata of society very different from those associated with classic Pentecostalism. The grass roots religion of the oppressed Latin American is, *a priori*, more likely to be open to the gospel of Jesus Christ than that of the N. American tycoon.

And, in fact, one thread running right through the book is the theological and religious imperialism practised by N. American Pentecostals, who seem to be constantly trying to take over and dominate what is happening spontaneously and in different forms elsewhere in the world. For instance, financial aid was given to the Italian Pentecostals only at the price of theological submission to the Americans.

Now it seems to be the N. American Pentecostals, by and large, who are responsible for the narrowly fundamentalist, sectarian theology of the movement, and even more for the kind of political conservatism and jingoistic patriotism that go with it. In Italy, Latin America and the Communist countries there are signs of a far more radical social awareness developing among some of the Pentecostals; and Italian Pentecostals tend, when they vote at all, to vote Communist. Professor Hollenweger has pointed out elsewhere that without the Pentecostal vote Allende the Marxist would not be in power in Chile.

N. American Pentecostalism turns out to be—and I wonder how widely this is known—involved, in its origins, with British Israelitism; and even today material prosperity is not just an accidental side of its life, but a constituent of its theology. This adds an extremely sinister flavour to its theology of power (cf. Luke 24, 49).

There are all kinds of other interesting things in the book, many of which could provide topics for monographs on their own

(for instance, the role of sex in Pentecostalism), and Professor Hollenweger brings his intensely lively mind to bear on data drawn from all kinds of source, theological, sociological, psychological and anthropological. Let me just draw out a few morals that seem to emerge, and that are important to Catholics, in view of the impending official dialogue between Rome and Pentecostals and of the Catholic Pentecostal Movement in N. America and its offshoots. First, it is not so much in their doctrine of the Spirit (which is, in any case, not nearly as homogeneous throughout the world as is often supposed), but in their style of prayer and preaching that we should try to meet with them; and, secondly, this means essentially a style of prayer and preaching that is unashamedly bodily and emotional. This, it seems to me, casts considerable doubt on the suggestion so often made by Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike, that most of the hand-clapping and shouting and all that, belongs to the 'cultural baggage' that should be discarded. It should certainly not simply be *aped*; but I think Hollenweger gives us good grounds for believing that this emotional de-inhibiting, and consequent rediscovery of deep non-rational, ecstatic and ritualistic capacity in man, is an essential value of Pentecostalism. It is interesting that he uses shamanism to illustrate this, independently of the very similar conclusions of I. M. Lewis. Between them, I

think they build up a strong case that this kind of thing serves a necessary purpose (at the very least) in society. Without this, we shall end up, like many, it seems, of the older Pentecostal Churches, finding in Pentecostalism no longer a wild, transforming power to be experienced, but only an institution, a movement, to be joined. Thirdly, we must try to meet more than just N. American Pentecostalism. Things are *happening* all over the world, and their spontaneity is immensely important, and this means their differences and inconsistencies. As Catholics, surely, we have a special responsibility to see that they are not forced into any monochrome stereotype. It would be tragic if, in our meeting with Pentecostals and in our borrowing and learning from them, we were simply to become instruments of what can only be called U.S. religious imperialism.

In sum, this is a very challenging book; a must for anyone concerned with any kind of Pentecostalism, and strongly recommended for anyone else. Catholics may feel that at times it is a rather 'Protestant' book, but then, the author is a Protestant. More discussion of neo-Pentecostalism would be welcome. The chapters on demonology and eschatology are a little too negative, I think, and a bit thin. The drift of one or two passages is a little unclear, as is the translation at times. But on the whole it is a book at once important and readable.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

THE COVENANT FORMULARY, by Klaus Baltzer, translated by David E. Green. *Basil Blackwell*, Oxford, 1971. £3.75.

In this handsome and fascinating work Professor Baltzer maintains all that could be desired in high standards of scholarship. When treating of the Covenant Formulary, he is handling a particular and precise aspect of what is knowable on the subject of covenants in Israel and elsewhere. He limits himself strictly to an examination of formularies in the light of form and redaction criticism. His work is a wholesome corrective to much of that vague writing on the covenant and other 'themes' which so often passes for biblical theology.

The Covenant Formulary is first of all studied in the parallels which our author has found in Hittite international treaties. Why the biblical texts should, in form, resemble these Hittite treaties is simply 'a striking and historically unexplained fact', and there, seemingly, we must be content to leave the matter.

The structure of formularies in Hittite international treaties is a constant whose simplest

form is (1) 'antecedent history,' i.e. *Vorgeschichte*; (2) statement of substance concerning the mutual relationship of the covenanting parties; (3) the individual stipulations of the covenant; (4) blessings and cursings.

Professor Baltzer discerns this series first of all in Joshua 24, and then in a number of covenant texts. He goes on to treat of covenant renewal, and notably of covenant recitation. This last is also explained by reference to Hittite parallels. A recitation of this sort occurs in Deuteronomy 31, 9. The purpose of such recitations is that texts may be known and adhered to. Something of this rehearsal or recitation appears, e.g. in Psalms 77, 12 or 118, 17, etc.

Yet, as our author so well recognizes, the Israelite covenant is as far removed in content from the Hittite treaties as it is closely related in form. 'The historical portions of the treaty formulary and the covenant formulary can be