

NEW HEAVEN? NEW EARTH? An Encounter with Pentecostalism, by Simon Tugwell O.P., Peter Hocken, George Every and John Orme Mills O.P. Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976. 206 pp. £2.25. paper.

In a very real and important sense the 'neo' in neo-Pentecostalism only became appropriate when Catholics began to participate in the new movement. Prior to that the penetration of Pentecostalism into the older denominations had been just that—the wider enjoyment of Pentecostal-type experiences interpreted by means of Pentecostal theology. And early apologetic efforts by the new movement were largely attempts to explain and defend the distinctive Pentecostal features in distinctive Pentecostal terms. This is still true of much "Catholic Pentecostal" writing; but with other Catholics, touched in differing degrees by the new movement, there has been a real breaking through the classic Pentecostal categories, a breaking through into something new, which is neither simple "Pentecostal", nor simply "Catholic", but the beginning of an attempt to discover a new synthesis, to integrate the insights of both past *and* present, to create what can with some justice be called a truly 'charismatic theology'. This book by four British Catholics is the best example of this attempt so far to appear from a British publisher.

The first essay, by Peter Hocken of Oscott College, Birmingham, on 'The Significance and Potential of Pentecostalism' illustrates the point excellently. The first half sketches out the distinctive features of Pentecostalism in a manner that at once shows both first hand acquaintance with the subject and independence of judgment. He includes such features as 'the rediscovery of *charismata pneumatika*' (a questionable distinction here), 'receiving God's Word, 'Body and Spirit' (Pentecostal practice has overcome at rather deeper levels the body-soul dichotomy that is our common Western inheritance'—page 26), 'Healing and Salvation' ('This expectation of corporate healing is not to be reduced to the social improvement that results from personal religious conversion and a change to more purposeful moral life'—page 29), and 'Creative Liturgy' ('The particular genius of the Pentecostals lies in achieving forms of worship combining undoubted leadership with real scope for congregational in-

itiative, both individual and corporate'—page 31). In the second half he develops a powerful and important plea for a genuine neo-Pentecostal ecumenism which climaxes for me in this superb definition: 'Ecumenism means that no Church can adequately define itself by exclusion, and that each tradition needs to keep re-defining itself by increasing inclusion.... Dual or multiple allegiance is not a diminution in attachment to one's own Church, but the acquisition of additional loyalties that enrich and deepen the original attachment' (page 50).

The title of the second essay by John Mills, OP, from Oxford, provides the book with its main title, 'New Heaven? New Earth?' Classic Pentecostalism has always included among its principal features a vivid belief in the imminence of the second coming of Christ. This belief has generally been given less prominence within neo-Pentecostalism, and indeed has caused some embarrassment within the charismatic movement. So far as I am aware this is the first serious attempt to grapple theologically with this aspect of Pentecostalism from within neo-Pentecostalism. The two points he makes of greatest significance are to remind us quite rightly that apocalyptic was integral to Christianity in the first place ('When Christianity's apocalyptic element has been virtually absent the result has been a diminished and anaemic form of Christianity page 97), and to suggest that a large part of Pentecostalism's significance may be in its making concrete the hope in a God who breaks into men's little lives and world. This is a valuable insight, but the relation between apocalyptic and Pentecostalism (and Christianity at large) needs to be explored a good deal further before justice is done both to the biblical material and to contemporary beliefs.

In the third major contribution, 'The Speech-Giving Spirit', Simon Tugwell OP, also of Oxford, 'explores, from a catholic point of view, tongues, not as a phenomenon in itself, but as part of a whole system of christian practice and belief' (page 124). This Tugwell succeeds in doing with a stimulating style which draws upon

much learned (often esoteric) scholarship. These quotations give the thrust of his discussion. 'Each one of us is a unique echo of the one Word in which God utters the fullness of himself and the fullness of his creation; it is our role in life to find and to speak that word, that word which is both ours and God's' (page 137). 'To speak, truly to speak, to speak from the heart, is to give ourselves, and if that gift is spurned or slighted, we soon lose the courage to try it again. Then our words, instead of expressing ourselves, will be distorted to express only our desire to please, to be accepted; we shall say only what we think we are expected to say. And the gift or ourselves will remain ungiven. And that is an almost inconceivable tragedy, because man is only himself when he can give himself' (page 138). For Pentecostals 'speaking in tongues is a sacrament in the fullest catholic sense of that word....The essential attitude is one of trust. Here, in their view, there is an act of God, validated by God himself, and therefore safe. It provides the occasion for the believer simply to rest in God, without being anxious about his own response, his own participation. If emotion results, it will come from this resting in God, and therefore will, normally, be genuine and unforced'. (page 151-2)

The least satisfying of the contributions is the last, by George Every on 'Prophecy in the Christian Era'. For me it

started on the wrong foot by setting up the survey in terms of 'the spiritual interpretation of Scripture' as 'the typical exercise of prophecy among Christians'. This is certainly how prophecy has been too often understood in earlier Christian centuries, but it is not how the prophets of Old or New Testament thought of their ministry: (rather as immediate revelation from God through his Spirit). What follows is a rather rambling stroll through Church history with not a few pauses and interesting observations by the way, but not too much to the point.

Not least worthy of mention is the Preface by Walter Hollenweger, Professor of Mission in the University of Birmingham, *the authority on Pentecostalism, entitled 'Towards a Charismatic Theology'*. Three and a half pages of insightful and provocative comment include these sentences with which I conclude: 'So far the traditional churches have made the committee room the principal locus for the re-ordering of Christian ritual and ecumenical relationship, as if the Trinity were organised like an English committee. As long as this is the case we shall be forced to look to churches in the Third World and to prayer and action groups amongst us in order to observe the natural processes at work whereby living worship ritual comes into being and ecumenical grass-root fellowship pushes ecumenical thinking forward' (page 11).

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