

This book, originally published in French in 1974, is intended to offer a systematic, objective introduction to Catholic Pentecostalism. It is disappointingly lightweight on the whole. This is partly due to the author's evident bias: though he describes himself as a 'participating observer', his sympathies are plainly engaged. He seems to have assembled most of his information from inside the movement, and is insufficiently aware of the casualties of Pentecostalism. For instance, he says that there is abundant evidence of marriages being saved by it, but does not even mention the evidence that marriages are also endangered and wrecked by it. I do not know how many of these there are; R. M. Branch's book, *So Your Wife came home Speaking in Tongues, So did Mine* (reviewed in *New Blackfriars* 1975, p. 142) was probably published too late for Laurentin to use, but the problem was there before that. It ought to be mentioned at least, if only to be explained away. Laurentin does indeed list a variety of dangers, such as spiritual pride and emotionalism, to which the movement is exposed; but he only deals with the dangers widely recognised within the movement. There is scarcely any notice taken of dangers discussed by those outside the movement, and that not only by people hostile to Pentecostalism. For instance, Michael Harper has warned of the danger of over-institutionalisation in Catholic Pentecostalism, and I would add that there seems to be a real danger, not of emotionalism, but of emotional narrowness and conformism. These criticisms have, perhaps, become more articulate since 1974 (though it was in that year that Michael Harper published his remarks), but they were certainly being made earlier. Laurentin only touches very cursorily on the extraordinary authority wielded by the leaders (many of them self-appointed) in the movement, but this too is one of the major problems (not least in

view of Kildahl's conclusions). Only a very theoretical recognition is accorded the psychological and sociological analyses of Pentecostalism, and only conclusions favourable to the movement's own view of itself are taken seriously.

The book suffers also from a very inadequate treatment of the theological difficulties of the doctrine of 'baptism in the Spirit'. Of course a lot has happened since 1974, but even the literature that was available is either ignored (like my articles in *Heythrop Journal* 1972) or misread (Laurentin seems unaware that F. Sullivan in his 1974 Gregorianum articles, to which he refers, was arguing against the prevailing tendency to interpret 'baptism in the Spirit' simply in terms of sacramental theology). The case against the whole doctrine is presented in Aunt Sally fashion, without any real acknowledgement of the central issues. And the claim that the theologians are simply raising problems from within their ivory towers is, frankly, ludicrous.

The most substantial chapters are those on tongues and healing, which contain a great deal of interesting material—on the very difficult question, for instance, of the definition of a miraculous cure, and on the linguistic analysis of glossolalia, and the history of tongues in the Church (though here Laurentin is a bit too hard on the '2nd nocturn' evidence, which is valuable as an indication of what people thought was happening and were prepared to get excited about, even if it is worthless as evidence as to what actually did happen). But it is only the relatively peripheral aspects that receive full treatment. The vital question of Christian sickness, for instance, is not mentioned at all in the chapter on healing.

In general, then, this book does not seem to add much to our understanding of the subject, and it is deceptive in its claim to be a compendious, objective introduction to it.

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