

comes about and the unpleasant implications it has for the school and its staff. In this way he finds himself writing a most effective criticism of a political climate in which such a self-contradictory phenomenon becomes possible. Racial problems cannot be tidied up by dividing people in the way attempted in South

Africa. Apartheid, which is conceived as a solution, gives birth instead to its own problems—it becomes a poisonous medicine. Colander High is the example of a White school which cannot possibly be White just because it has been classified as White.

ROB VAN DER HART, O.P.

BASIC QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY, Vol. 3, by Wolfhart Pannenberg, trans. R. A. Wilson. S.C.M. Press, London 1973. ix + 213 pp. £3.75

This latest volume of Pannenberg's collected essays includes a lengthy article on mythology in the Bible and Christianity and a group of six articles which endeavour 'to identify an anthropological basis for the discussion of the question of God' (p. viii). As it becomes increasingly clear that the background to Pannenberg's attempt to reconstruct a theological anthropology is that of Hegel (just as a critical variant of Hegel's idea of 'history' was proposed in Volume 1 of the *Basic Questions* as the way to overcome the fundamental problem of theological hermeneutic), so it would seem that the central article in this collection is 'The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel'. Pannenberg criticizes and develops Hegel's idea that subjective freedom cannot be realized in the modern age if it breaks away from its historical basis in Christian Freedom in God'. It is precisely this idea which is challenged in modern atheism which claims to be able to construct a philosophical anthropology without resorting to religion, and which claims to offer freedom to man without an appeal to God; as Sartre said: 'Even if God existed, it could make no difference'. Whereas a theology of an authoritative revelation (Barth, Bultmann etc.), or of religionlessness (Bonhoeffer), or of a dead God (Altizer), can only survive the challenge of atheistic criticism by avoiding it, Pannenberg wants to meet this criticism by showing that talk about human freedom leads to religious talk about God. This can no longer be done by assuming, as Hegel did, that 'freedom in God' is the historical origin of subjective freedom, but only by understanding 'the nature of God itself on the basis of the absolute future of freedom, instead of thinking it the other way round' (p. 174). Christianity must be thought of as 'the religion of freedom' (p. 177), and God, like freedom, is to be realized not in the present, but in the future. The task of reconstructing a language about God on an anthropological basis can only come about by thinking out the experience of freedom more deeply than did Hegel.

Because modern atheistic arguments since Feuerbach have been entirely anthropological, Pannenberg argues in 'Anthropology and the Question of God' that any theological interpre-

tation of the human situation will be a positive contribution towards a specifically theological anthropology which can counter modern atheism. But a viable anthropology which includes religious language can only result from a highly professional discussion with the methods and problems associated with human biology, sociology, psychology, and so on. In these sciences, as in theology, the finitude of human experience and the nature of reality as a process make all present knowledge fragmentary and provisional. Consequently, even to think of the unity of all that is, Pannenberg suggests in 'Christian Theology and Philosophical Criticism', is to look to the future in anticipation, and religion does just this. Only in the future, the absolute future, a future in which death is overcome, will we be able finally to interpret the meaning and significance of present experience. In the final article, 'Eschatology and the Experience of Meaning', Pannenberg says that to experience meaning in the present is to experience by anticipation a structural moment of the future which makes absolute meaning possible.

The most startling challenge which Pannenberg offers is his demand that we abandon the untenable scholastic belief in an already existent God who is omnipotent and omniscient. Pannenberg believes that such a God falls before the atheistic challenge that belief in God precludes human freedom, and this he thinks is illustrated in the history of the apparently insoluble problems associated with divine foreknowledge and predestination (p. 107f.). God, then, can only be talked about in terms of futurity, as is also the case with human freedom, where divine omnipotence and omniscience are possibilities not yet realized. The reality of God lies in the future, as does his Kingdom.

The opening article, 'The Later Dimensions of Myth in Biblical and Christian Tradition', stands apart from the themes of the later discussion, though it is not ultimately without its connections. Pannenberg's purpose is to reconsider the place of myth in the Bible and in christology. Bultmann, whose demythologizing programme still dominates much New Testament work, gets short shrift, and Pannenberg prefers to adopt the concept of myth

used in comparative religion, particularly by Malinowski. This concept is 'the religious interpretation of myth as the expression of the consciousness of the continuing actuality of the primal age on which the present world order is based' (p. 17). Pannenberg justifies this concept in the context of German philosophy since the Enlightenment and re-examines the Old Testament on the basis of it. He finds there considerable use of the myth of the primal age of the exodus and the entry into the promised land, though this myth is historicized and so made contingent and once-for-all. In post-exilic eschatology, however, there is a marked opposition to mythic thought, for myth knows of no future which surpasses the primal age. Here there is a typology or correspondence between the promise contained in the primal age and the future which surpasses it. In the New Testament Pannenberg thinks that the archetypal significance of the life of Jesus for the Church was bound to lead to a mythic interpretation, one form of which we find as early as Paul in the redeemer who

has come down from heaven (e.g. Phil. 2.6—11)—a theme which subsequently created many problems in Chalcedonian christology. However, "the mythic language remains only that of an interpretative vehicle for the significance of an historical event' (p. 74), an event which Christian eschatology believes will be surpassed in the final resurrection. In Christianity, the future is not bound by a mythic primal age. And it is with Christianity's transcendence of myth that Pannenberg returns to the theme of the futurity of God and human freedom.

The ramifications of what Pannenberg discusses in this book are enormous. The language is very dense and the thought is complex which makes reading it hard work. To what extent these ideas will be sustained in future debate remains to be seen, and certainly they do need to be subjected to rigorous criticism. But this book is of considerable importance in helping to lay a basis for a theological anthropology which can speak of a 'God' who can legitimate Jesus's proclamation of the future kingdom of God. GEOFFREY TURNER

AUGUSTINE AND MODERN RESEARCH ON PELAGIANISM, by Gerald Bonner. The St. Augustine Lecture, 1970. 84pp.

POLITICAL IDEALISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE THOUGHT OF ST. AUGUSTINE, by Ernest L. Fortin. The St. Augustine Lecture, 1971. 58 pp. Both published by the Augustine Institute; Villanova University Press; Villanova, Pa.; 1972.

Professor Bonner's 1970 Augustine Lecture—an introduction to the present state of knowledge of the Pelagian Controversy—is a masterly condensation of a great bulk of material into an extremely compact form. As an introduction, its virtues are obvious: the course of the Controversy is presented lucidly and concisely; new additions to knowledge, along with gaps and uncertainties, are clearly sketched and placed in perspective; and the roles of the participants are presented as extensively as knowledge and space permit. Space, however, is the dominant factor. The areas which receive the most attention are those which are the most controversial, rather than those which are—perhaps—the most complex. When they coincide, as in the section on Rufinus the Syrian and his influence on Caelestius and Pelagius, the space devoted seems appropriate; when they do not, as in the very brief section on Pelagius's theology, the result is less useful to the general reader.

While Professor Bonner apparently seconds Dr. Evans' warning against any 'over-hasty rehabilitation' of Pelagius, his examination of Pelagius' role in the movement which came to bear his name is sympathetic: Pelagius emerges as a man who regarded himself as an orthodox theologian and whose primary contribution was to provide a theological defence of an elitist asceticism. Holding that the focus of the Pelagian movement was not theological but ascetic—that the Pelagians

'sought to make the Christian Church one great monastery' (p. 14)—Professor Bonner argues that Pelagius provided 'a theological basis to defend Christian asceticism against any charge of Manichaeism and (justified) the assurance that a virtuous life is possible for the Christian if he will only try.' (p. 34). He goes somewhat further in suggesting that some of the heretical aspects of Pelagius's thought were accidental: assuming that 'Pelagius was not very interested in babies' and that by 'concentrating on adult psychology the Pelagians were able to avoid consideration of the theological issues raised by infant baptism', he argues that Pelagius simply used the denial of the physical transmission of original sin as a supporting argument for the possibility of not sinning, and that Pelagius encountered difficulties only when his dispersed friends were embroiled in the North African Donatist Controversy, in which infant baptism was a major issue. While Pelagius' character is not over-attractive—'he would rather disown a friend than expose himself to danger' (p. 30)—he is presented by Professor Bonner as a man more moderate than the movement he supported and whose primary fault lay in making careless mistakes.

If this is so, then his greatest error lay in citing Augustine himself as an authority in his book *De Natura*. While Augustine seems to have been reluctant to attack Pelagius himself before then—deterred by Pelagius' reputa-