

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-

tion for sanctity, afraid of alienating their mutual friends, and preoccupied with other matters—choosing to attack the movement rather than its theologian and maintaining a tone of brotherly admonition, his being quoted in support by Pelagius at least goaded him into action. The North African diplomatic and ecclesiastical anti-heresy machine—despite the blunders of Orosius—did its work of crushing the Pelagians with speed and efficiency. If Professor Bonner here portrays St. Augustine as an old man, bitter, uncompromising, arguing with a 'love grown cold' against an unwelcome attack on fundamentals late in life, his sympathy shows itself in a lengthy quotation from a troubled letter of Augustine to Jerome: 'I ask you, where can the soul, even of an infant snatched away by death, have contracted the guilt which, unless the grace of Christ has come to the rescue by that sacrament of baptism which is administered even to infants, involves it in condemnation. Teach me, I beg you . . . Where therefore is the justice of the condemnation of so many thousands of souls . . .?' (p. 54).

Professor Fortin's 1971 lecture *Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine*, is a very useful outline of the nature and philosophical context of Augustine's political thought, somewhat marred by an attempt to achieve relevance by tracing its relationship to Renaissance and modern political thought.

The outline of Classical political thought which precedes—and is interwoven with—the discussion of Augustine's position provides a valuable context: the relationship between the anti-utopian *Assembly of Women* of Aristophanes and Plato's self-invalidating utopian reply, *The Republic*, is explored to illustrate the essential pessimism of Classical political thought, whose highest achievement is taken to be the 'noble lie' of the *Republic*. Comparison of *The City of God* with *The Republic* and, particularly, with Plato's *Apology* provides some very nice analogies and contrasts between Augustine and Plato, especially with respect to the role of the Christian (Philosopher) in the world.

While Dr. Fortin's competence in Renaissance thought does result in some excellent insights, his attempt to contrast Augustine with modern political theorists fails because he omits the political context of Augustine's thought, barring the Sack of Rome, while placing modern political thought (chiefly the New Left) firmly in the context of American riots, campus violence, and civil disobedience. This is most distressing in the case of relations between Church and State, since in Augustine's time the cessation of official hostility between the two was relatively new, whereas we are now far removed indeed from

general persecutions, and far enough removed from sectarian ones to view them with some detachment.

Augustine's vision of a peaceful cooperation between Church and State, in which their apparent antagonism is transcended by their potential usefulness to each other, must be seen as a response to the constant, direct, personal violence, political and ecclesiastical, which surrounded him in North Africa. As examples, one might cite the mob-murder of the Commander of the Roman Garrison in Hippo by Augustine's own congregation, or Augustine's near assassination by ecclesiastical rivals. It is as a corrective to the general disaffection between Church and State, and to tendency of the Church actively to engage in violence, that Augustine's 'otherworldly' non-polity should be seen.

In contrast, the present situation—which has emerged from the general disappearance of tension between Church and State and the subsequent identification of the secular interests of the Church with the interests of the State and its supportive economic structures—is vastly different from that of Augustine's time. In particular, the Church's role in worldly violence has shifted from that of an independent power, siding haphazardly and fragmentarily with either the State or the Poor as occasion suggested, to that of a firm ally of the State, siding with the Poor only when doing so does not threaten the State's interests.

While this alliance with the State has never rested easily on the Church's conscience (from the days of 'When Adam delved and Eve span/Who was then the gentlemen?' to, in the present, Fr. Torres' 'The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin.'), the Church has generally remained firmly on the side of the State and the *status quo*, salving its conscience by pleading an 'Augustinian' neutrality. That, in practice, this 'neutrality' is a reactionary defence of the privileges of an unjust social order escapes the notice, not only of much of the Church, but also of Dr. Fortin, who sees the Ecclesiastical Left in isolation and not as a corrective to the Ecclesiastical Right. Further, by failing to see the rediscovery of realised eschatology as a desire for the restoration of a fruitful tension between the Church and both the State and the utopian radicals—in short, as a plea for the Church's own separate integrity—he misses the 'Left's' point entirely.

Augustine's vision is predicated on an ethical and moral tension between Church and State: without that tension, cooperation is identification and a betrayal of our Lord, in whom there is 'neither bond nor free'.

ARTHUR LEE