

collections of sayings, miracle stories, and the like, it is not reasonable to isolate them to particular groups. Mack recognizes the likelihood that there was "some overlapping of people, ideas, activities, and the production of texts," but still insists that "each memory tradition does stem from distinctive social experience and determined intellectual response localized somewhere" (p. 96). Mack's bias is evident at this point; for he denies any ability of the historian to reach the historical Jesus in the texts, but generates communities which should rightly be just as unreachable since they too "lie on the other side of limits set by the nature of the texts" (p. 3).

A Myth of Innocence is a tour de force. While not every scholar, particularly those of a conservative bent (this reviewer included), will hold to Mack's presuppositions and thus be able to accept all of his conclusions (as Mack himself is very well aware), none will be able to ignore this study, which makes an important contribution to research on Mark's Gospel and early Christian origins. Mack is particularly helpful for his ability to summarize and synthesize the results of a significant and large body of research on the Gospels and the origins of early Christianity. On the other hand, one may find Mack's "ruse" of addressing "any interested reader" hard to swallow, since his study is so densely packed with information that it would tend to give mental indigestion to anyone not firmly committed to NT studies.

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Nash, Ronald H. *Faith & Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988. 295 pp. \$17.95.

Faith & Reason is an introduction to Christian rational apologetics that may be used as a textbook in colleges and universities. Ronald Nash guides the reader through the complex argumentation and counter argumentation that apologetics necessarily involves. Old apologetical aspects of natural theology are brought into view in a clarity of style that is commendable, yet Nash defends theism within the Reformed tradition. His theism is broader than natural theology in that it includes the defense of Christ's historical resurrection. Nash defends theism over against atheism as expressed in contemporary naturalism.

The introduction sets a very important rule for the debate when Nash distinguishes between negative apologetics (playing defense) and positive apologetics (playing offense). Negative apologetics challenges "the view that Christian belief is irrational unless it is accompanied by supporting reasons or arguments" (p. 18). The "burden of proof" is on the side of the believer only in positive apologetics.

Part I further sets the stage for apologetics by rightly suggesting that the dispute between theism and naturalism is to be understood as a conflict

between two competing conceptual systems or worldviews. An introductory description of what a worldview is and criteria for choosing between conflicting worldviews are provided. Part 2 introduces the reader to an exercise in negative apologetics. Evidentialism's claim that belief in God is irrational because no conclusive evidence can be provided in favor of God's existence is analyzed and found groundless (chapter 5). Foundationalism's claim that "only beliefs that are evident to the senses, self-evident, or incorrigible may be properly basic" is criticized on the basis of Alvin Plantinga's arguments (chapter 6). And the contribution of natural theology for Reformed apologetics is briefly discussed in chapter 7. The rest of the book deals with the defense of two foundational tenets of Christian theism: (1) the existence of God (parts 3 and 4) and (2) the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ (part 5).

In comparison to traditional pre-Kantian theistic apologetics, Nash's approach appears to be less ambitious. For example, before being introduced to the polemics on the arguments for the existence of God, the reader is warned not to have an excessively "high standard" of proof (pp. 113-116). In other words, no single argument will decisively prove the existence of God. Sound argumentation will reach only a degree of "probability" (p. 115). Additionally, we are told that, since arguments are always person-relative, "it seems highly unlikely that there is such a proof for God's existence that will convince every one" (p. 110).

The contrast with pre-Kantian apologetics is clear, since arguments bear neither necessity nor universality; yet Nash's rational optimism leads him to see "nothing wrong with reaching a decision based on a cumulative argument" (p. 115) as used by any lawyer building up a courtroom case. That is precisely the way Nash builds up a case in favor of Reformed theism. It is difficult, however, to see how such an approach will convince naturalists that theism is "true" and naturalism is false. As Nash proceeds in his analysis of the various arguments regarding the existence of God, theodicy, and the resurrection of Christ, one gets the impression that by building his case through "cumulative evidence" he is claiming the victory of theism over naturalism. Explicitly, however, he never claims victory, but apparently regards his defense as adequate against naturalism's proof for the nonexistence of God. Nash, nevertheless, fails to explicitly recognize this fact, which in itself questions the relevancy of a rational positive apology that fails to achieve its goal.

On the other hand, in his closing statement Nash himself declares that "the argument of this book . . . is that such a faith [Christian theism] is a *rational faith*" (p. 285). That statement seems to suggest that Nash recognizes that the contribution of his book is to be seen in the area of negative apologetics; namely, in the claim that Christian theism is essentially rational in its main tenets. That much, I think, Nash is able to demonstrate as he draws from the rich heritage of Christian apologists, including, in particular, Augustine, Descartes, and Plantinga. Therefore, naturalists and

secularized persons are not consistently rational themselves if they dismiss theism as irrational only because it does not match the presuppositions of their own system.

The rational effectiveness of such an apology, however, does not appear so impressive when one realizes that the "rationality" of a system does not necessarily entail its "truth." Nash is aware of this fact when he correctly explains that "people have in the past behaved quite rationally with regard to beliefs that we know to be false" (p. 75). Additionally, naturalism is not shown to be either "irrational" or "false." Consequently, the issue regarding a rational basis for choosing between theism and naturalism as systems seems to reach a stalemate.

One wonders whether rational apologetics should argue for more than the rationality of theism as a system. An effective apologetics should include the "truth" dimension of the system. Nash fails at that point, yet his "comparison of ideological systems" approach to apologetics could prove to be fruitful if the issue of "truth" is integrated into that system. That would require Nash to develop his thinking from "faith and reason" to "faith and truth." According to this strategy, the opposite views to be considered must first be analyzed on the basis of their systematic presuppositions; second, be developed in their actual theoretical interpretation of reality as a whole; and, third, be compared regarding their "truth" on the basis of the verification of their theoretical claims on the meaning of reality with reality itself. Nash sets the stage for such a strategy in the first part of *Faith & Reason*, but fails to carry it to its ultimate consequence as it relates to the "truth" dimension of the controversy between systems. Such an approach would require not only a critical analysis of theism's presuppositions and components (including ontological, metaphysical, and epistemological structures), but also should include as "the opponent" more than just naturalism. Several different ideological systems that currently challenge not the rationality but the truthfulness of Christian theism should be considered. If followed, this approach could prove to be beneficial not only for apologetic purposes, but for a much needed self-criticism of theism as well.

Despite its deficiencies, Nash's book is helpful. Anyone interested in a clear introduction to the current state of rational apologetics in the Reformed tradition will benefit from Nash's *Faith & Reason*.

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Pinnock, Clark H., ed. *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989. xiv + 318 pp. Paperback, \$14.95.

Clark H. Pinnock was a Calvinistic evangelical until about 1970. Since then he has been on a pilgrimage from "Augustine to Arminius"—