

thought, but it would be helpful to know where Maynard-Reid would want that thought to take us. Thus a review of the present work must end with a hope that we will see another book that builds on the present to address this extremely important issue in contemporary society and Christian moral thought.

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Nash, Ronald H., *Poverty and Wealth: The Christian Debate Over Capitalism*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1986. 216 pp. Paperback, \$8.95.

According to Ronald H. Nash, Christians need to care about the poor; but, he asserts, they need to do it from a position of knowledge, not one of ignorance. Good intentions are not enough. Those intentions need to be rooted in sound economic theory if they are to avoid disastrous results. Nash has not the slightest doubt that social policies such as the War on Poverty have harmed the poor. He is deeply concerned about what he considers to be the predictable results of all forms of socialism. In particular, his concern focuses on the fact that even conservative evangelical thinkers seem to be allured by various economic theories that are tintured with socialistic concepts. "Evangelical publishers like Eerdmans and InterVarsity," for example, "produce a steady stream of books recommending socialism as the only economic system that is consistent with the Bible" (p. 11). *Poverty and Wealth* aims its guns at all such "error."

The purpose of this book, notes Nash, is not to produce a Christian system of economics, because "there is no such thing as revealed economics" (p. 12). Rather, it emphasizes the distinction between good and bad economics, with good always being defined as unregulated capitalism that is untrammled by governmental attempts to spread the nation's wealth among its citizens. Such tasks are best left to the private sector. Governmental interference, he claims, is a mistake that only leads to the need for greater interference to straighten out the mess. This process goes on *ad infinitum*. The only solution, asserts Nash, is for the government to stand back and let capitalism, informed by Christian principles, do its good work.

The real purpose of *Poverty and Wealth* is to inform conservative Christians on these economic truths, so that they will not be led astray by destructive theories. As a result, the first part of the book is an exposition of the Austrian theory of capitalism as set forth by Ludwig von Mises and his colleagues; the second section is an exposé of anything that partakes of socialism; and the third part discusses what these good and bad theories

mean for poverty in America and the third world. Nash's work might best be defined as a right-wing attack on left-wing economic policies. His special devils are the economic policies associated with liberation theology, governmental intervention in American capitalism, and evangelical authors such as Jacques Ellul and Andrew Kirk, whose writings, he feels, are economically pinkish at best.

Readers looking for theological discussion of Nash's economic proclamations will be sadly disappointed. Not only is there a minimum of theology in this volume, but that which is presented is both shallow and misleading. For example, while the fact of human sinfulness is not absent from Nash's discussions, his treatment of it seems to gloss over its radical nature in its effects on the operation of capitalism in the real world—effects that were blatantly evident in the largely unregulated capitalism of the late nineteenth century. Another example is related to his criticism of government intervention and regulation of American capitalism. Although Nash points out that God made property rights in Israel private, he completely overlooks the fact that God put very definite brakes on the amassing of wealth at the expense of the less fit through such provisions as the year of jubilee and the regular manumission of Hebrew slaves. Thus, the OT sets forth a kind of divine interventionism that provides a mixture of private property with checks and balances on the accumulation of wealth. This is closer to New Deal economics than it is to either the pure socialism set forth by some Christian liberals or the pure capitalism cherished by Nash.

In view of the biblical perspective of the nature of man, neither pure capitalism nor pure socialism works in a world of human selfishness and sin. From what we know of the OT, God recommended both in a system that provided a fine balance between the economic incentives of private property and very definite regulations that prevented the accumulation of excessive capital. This, of course, is the very thing that Nash is arguing against in twentieth-century America. Perhaps, for the sake of preserving his argument, it is best that he did not venture too deeply into theology and the biblical record.

Beyond the avoidance of in-depth integration of theology and economics, the book seems to be flawed in other ways. For one thing, it presents economic theories in a black-or-white manner that seems to make unregulated capitalism totally good and all forms of socialism entirely evil. Many of the shallow characterizations along this line do not seem to be particularly insightful in the light of either history or revelation. *Poverty and Wealth* also seems to be contradictory in some of its prescriptions. While decrying all forms of government interventionism in economics, for instance, the author is not opposed "to policies that *force* younger workers [as individuals] to set aside a portion of their present income to cover their financial needs after retirement" (p. 152, emphasis supplied).

Despite its faults, *Poverty and Wealth* is worthy of a reading because: (1) it represents the opinion of a fairly large sector of the evangelical community; and (2) it is helpful in critiquing errors in present policies, even if it is misleading in providing a Christian platform for solutions.

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Ruegsegger, Ronald W., ed. *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*. Academic Books. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986. xvi + 320 pp. Paperback, \$13.95.

Beginning with the publication of *Escape from Reason* in 1968, Francis Schaeffer attracted considerable attention from the conservative Christian community. Although at first he concentrated on intellectual issues that appealed to young people, by the late 1970s he turned to social issues and used film as well as print to communicate his message, thereby broadening his audience. Even before Schaeffer's death in 1984, evangelical scholars were assessing his thought. That process now continues as an attempt is made to put Schaeffer's life and ideas into perspective.

*Reflections on Francis Schaeffer* brings together ten essays by evangelical scholars who examine various aspects of his thought. The subjects include Schaeffer's intellectual roots (Forrest Beard) and apologetic method (Gordon R. Lewis); his understanding of philosophy (Ronald W. Ruegsegger), art and music (Harold M. Best), and modern theology (Clark H. Pinnock); and his views of history (Richard V. Pierard), ethics (Dennis P. Holinger), America (Ronald A. Wells), and evangelicalism (James B. Hurley). Except for Best's essay, which tends to wander from its topic, the chapters are well-focused and clear, although they often overlap one another.

For the most part, the authors agree in their assessment of Schaeffer. They frequently praise him for encouraging conservative Christians to take ideas seriously and to engage their culture. They portray him as an admirable person, particularly in his work with young people at his L'Abri retreat. And they view him as an evangelist rather than a scholar.

It is Schaeffer's scholarship that most interests these writers. Despite their sympathy with his objectives, they universally agree that Schaeffer's learning was not very deep. Although he had some sense of the general direction of modern thought, several of the authors state that he possessed little knowledge of specific thinkers and ideas. In explaining Schaeffer's scholarly weaknesses, Pinnock points out that his research was often largely limited to newspaper clippings. With regard to an even more fundamental issue, several writers criticize Schaeffer's tendency to reduce everything to world view. This idealistic reductionism, they say, overlooks the impact of