

There are, however, at least three problem areas that need comment: (1) Kaiser links the land aspect of the covenant to Rom 11:26, 27 and concludes that the Jewish nation ("all Israel") will be restored to its land again. M. Kline ("Review of McComiskey," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30 [1987]: 77-80) calls this position "halfway dispensationalism." For a more cogent approach to this problem, cf. C. Wright, *An Eye for an Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today* (Downers Grove, IL, 1983), pp. 88-102. On the various views concerning Israel in Rom 11, cf. C. M. Horne, "The Meaning of the Phrase 'And All Israel Will be Saved' (Rom 11:26)," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978): 329-334. (2) Regarding the covenant, Kaiser appeals to T. McComiskey's *The Covenants of Promise* to divide Gen 17 into two separate covenants. This obscures the unity of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Kline). (3) In sections dealing with the Messiah, Kaiser seems to attribute more exact knowledge to the OT prophets concerning final fulfillment than they probably had.

These problems aside, Kaiser has offered a very stimulating volume, one that deserves a large readership, both scholarly and lay alike.

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Mack, Burton L. *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988. xii + 432 pp. \$29.95.

Burton Mack's *A Myth of Innocence* is intended to set a new trend within NT scholarship. In his study of the Gospel of Mark as a source for the understanding of early Christianity, he reads Mark not as a reflection of the life situation of Jesus but solely as a reflection of situations the community of Mark faced and experienced. Thus Mack speaks rather deprecatingly of previous attempts to understand the "novelty" of Christianity as being due to the appearance of Jesus. For Mack, the information needed for such an approach is unattainable to the historian because it lies "on the other side of limits set by the nature of the texts at the scholar's disposal" (p. 3).

Mack's introductory chapter sets forth his goal and purpose. He briefly rehearses the attempts of NT scholarship to account for the origins of Christianity, in terms of both the quest for the historical Jesus and the quest for the earliest Christology. Mack is dismayed by the seeming impossibility of achieving any sort of consensus. That problem, coupled with the "lateness" of the texts at hand (a point he greatly overemphasizes), leads Mack to the conclusions that an understanding of the life situation of Jesus is unattainable and that the texts of early Christianity, with Mark as the focus of his study, have to be understood solely on the basis of the

social circumstances of the community which generated the texts. Thus he is of the opinion that "Mark's story is most probably Mark's fiction" (p. 11), and that it is not so much an articulation of "how it was at the beginning, but [of] how it was or should be at the several junctures of social history through which a memory tradition traveled" (p. 16).

Part one of *A Myth of Innocence*, consisting of five chapters, is a minimalist reconstruction of the historical Jesus and the early "Jesus movements" (Jewish) and "Christ cults" (Hellenistic) that followed upon his ministry. Mack moves beyond form criticism by attaching the pieces of tradition not so much to a life situation as to a life community. Part two, containing three chapters, examines the parables, pronouncement stories, and miracle stories for what they might reveal of the social situation, not only of the earliest Christian communities, but especially, that of Mark as he created his gospel. These composite elements of Mark's gospel are in Mack's view not reflective of Jesus, but are a part of Mark's myth of origins. Part three, also three chapters, examines the passion narrative in similar fashion. The four chapters of part four discuss Mark's overall structure for social illuminations.

For Mack, Mark's myth of Jesus as the founder of a new movement comes in the context of "the synagogue reform movement." Mark has linked the Christ myth with the Jesus traditions and associates Jesus' death with his movement's rejection by the synagogue. He thus created an apocalyptic Jesus who in no way resembles the actual Jesus, who must have been something of a Cynic sage.

Since Mack is Professor of New Testament Studies at Claremont, it will come as no surprise that his work presupposes Markan priority and the existence of Q. This methodological assumption, which goes undefended, represents one of the book's most serious weaknesses. One wonders what sort of reconstruction of early Christianity would be developed if Matthew's gospel were taken as the origin of the Christian "myth." Furthermore, the fact that Q is a scholarly construct obviates much of what Mack says based on Q. Mack needs to take more seriously the ambiguity that exists within NT scholarship over the relationship among the Gospels.

Another shortcoming of Mack's treatment is his focus on the social setting of Mark as he wrote the gospel to the exclusion of that of Jesus. While it is certainly necessary to understand the historical, social, and cultural circumstances that generated the Gospel of Mark, it is more likely that these circumstances influenced the selection and telling of the stories rather than inspiring their creation. This means that Mack errs in his cavalier dismissal of the earliest *Sitz im Leben*, that of the life of Jesus. The gospels do not merely reflect the social situations of their respective authors, however influential those may be, but are rooted in Jesus himself.

Furthermore, it seems doubtful that the various form-critical categories can be isolated to individual movements. While there may well have been

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