

justified on the right side. While there is no bitterness of tone, the writer is unremitting in his criticism of the West (including the USSR). Inevitably a western reader might wonder what Asia would do without us. Who then would they have to blame? It is bad enough that we seem to have invented sin, greed, exploitation and ambition—things apparently unknown in a pristine continent which up till then had nothing to show but a caste system for its efforts. But apparently the West has foisted on Asia modern medicine, agrarian reforms, rapid transport, science and technology. However, the lasting impression of the book is not of such Manichaeism, but rather of a work which represents yet another step towards an independent Asian theology, increasingly positive and self-confident. As such it makes a fine contribution towards an emerging planetary theology.

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THE QUEST FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS, by Ian C.M. Fairweather and James I.H. Macdonald. *The Handsel Press, U.S.A., 1984. Pp. 275. \$17.50.*

This is a thorough and learned study that, while not suitable as an introduction to the subject, unquestionably merits consideration by those who specialize in it and teach it. The book is divided into four parts. Part 1 (on moral decision-making) considers various moral criteria with reference to the New Testament. Parts 2 and 3 consider the relation between morality and Christian theism, with special reference to natural law and the teaching of the Reformers. Part 4 presents the authors' own views in the light of the preceding survey. The authors cover so much ground that I can only indicate two of their main themes.

Firstly, on the relation between morality and religion (and Christianity in particular) the authors maintain that although morality is an autonomous form of activity it is intrinsically rooted in religion. Thus they write that "religion and morality are related intrinsically or internally to one another, for religious and moral experience interpenetrate" (p. 110). They proceed to show how this interpenetration affects Christian ethics. They sum this up as follows: "The moral claim is autonomous, and cannot be denied by any alleged higher claim, but the Christian *interprets* the moral 'ought' as God's claim on him" (p. 133).

The authors interpret Christian ethics primarily in terms not of principles or rules, but of God's personal claim on believers in particular circumstances. Thus they write on p. 225 that "the divine address, meeting, presence does not come in the form of a universally valid law or norm, and the response we make is not obedience to laws or rules, not even an application of principles given in revelation". However, they admit that "this is not to say that we may throw away all norms and become antinomian" (pp. 225–6) and that "on a personal and relational model, norms for social morality, even rules, will be justified on the grounds of the provision of minimum conditions for personal growth" (p. 253).

On the whole I find the authors' judgments sensible, well grounded and convincing. But I wish that they had discussed more fully, and with more practical examples, the place of principles and rules in Christian ethics with particular reference to "middle axioms" that, on their own admission, are necessary to "mediate between the Christian message and particular actions and social policies" (p. 254).

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