

Reviews.

The Chinese Sages and the Golden Rule, by H. H. Rowley, M.A., D.D., B.Litt. (The Rylands Library, 1s. 6d. net.)

Dr. Rowley, who is now Professor of Semitic Languages in the University College of North Wales, spent eight years in China as a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society. It is evident from this fascinating little study that Dr. Rowley has by no means lost his interest in things Chinese, nor his grip of them. He has given us in compact and readable form a valuable comparative study of The Golden Rule as enunciated by Christ, and so-called parallels of the great Chinese sages, Laotzu, Confucius and Motzu.

The discussion of the relative superiority of the positive to the negative forms of The Golden Rule is first dismissed as somewhat academic, as it is thought futile to confine comparison chiefly to the terminology of the precepts.

Laotzu's familiar precept: "Recompense injury with kindness", and Confucius' criticism: "With what, then, will you recompense kindness?" are fully discussed, and the conclusion reached that, because the general teaching of Laotzu is grounded on a calculated indifference to, rather than concern for, the affairs of others, and possesses no truly religious basis, his maxim means less than it seems to mean.

Dr. Rowley then outlines Confucius' doctrine of "reciprocity" and "faithfulness" to one's better nature. It is observed that the scope to which Confucius' teaching applies has definite limitations; that he is over-optimistic as to the influence of personal example; and that he is lacking in conscious religious faith. Dr. Rowley draws the inference that, in such a context, the Golden Rule of Confucius "becomes quite other than that of Jesus".

Motzu, with his doctrine of universal love, and exemplification of this teaching in his person and work, is next discussed. There is much in the character and range of Motzu's philosophy which approaches very near to the Christian ideal. It is considered, however, that in over-emphasising the utilitarian motive so as to make it akin to self-seeking, and by applying religious sanctions in a subordinate rather than in a primary capacity, Motzu is definitely inferior to Christ.

Dr. Rowley rightly argues that each great maxim should be related to the general content of the teaching in which it is found; to the circumstances which led to its being propounded; to the character and purpose of the teacher who enunciated it; and to the motive power on which each depended for the fulfil-

ment of his teaching. When this has been done, the conclusion is reached that Christ is "Lord" in this, as in all other spheres.

Those who are interested in the study of comparative ethics and religion will find in this lecture a well-balanced, logical and fully documented study, based on wide research and literary resources, and yet compressed into thirty-four pages of clear and attractive type.

Dr. Rowley modestly disclaims any title to being a Sinologue, or that he has written for Sinologues. He has, nevertheless, made a very valuable contribution to the study of this most important theme. It occurs to one to suggest that a slightly more generous estimate of the Chinese teaching, especially that of Motzu, might have been made. On that point, however, there is strong divergence of view amongst the authorities, and most readers will find themselves in general agreement with the main conclusion reached by Dr. Rowley.

H. R. WILLIAMSON.

The Origin and Significance of the New Testament Baptism, by H. G. Marsh. (Manchester University Press, 7s. 6d. net.)

This scholarly book by a Paedobaptist can be welcomed and profitably read by any Baptist who desires a larger view of the subject which so intimately concerns him. There is very little in the book to which an informed Baptist could object, for the support given to infant baptism is so slight as to be contained within six pages (174-180), beginning with the significant admission, "The New Testament contains no mention of the baptism of children." The familiar argument from the holiness of believers' children (1 Cor. vii. 14) is rightly dismissed as irrelevant, though there is a plea that the admonition of children to obey their parents (Col. iii. 20; Eph. vi. 1) implies (in an epistle to the Church) that these children must have been Church members, and therefore baptized—a very dubious plea when we remember that St. Paul contemplated the presence even of unbelievers in some gatherings of Christians (1 Cor. xiv. 23). The cited analogy of pagan cults is of little value in regard to those who were consciously striving to lift men out of paganism to personal repentance and faith. The reference to Jewish circumcision (which was an accompaniment of Jewish baptism, not a substitute for it) is no more convincing. The appeal to the solidarity of the family in ancient times is a much stronger argument (notwithstanding the quite inconclusive reference to the baptism of households) and does suggest a probable line of tendency towards infant baptism—but only for those of a later generation who had lost sight of the initial emphasis on personal

faith. The slightness of such arguments is fitly matched by the small space given to them in a book of over 200 pages. The author is obviously not a Paedobaptist on the grounds of the New Testament teaching.

With these few pages out of the way, the book may be warmly commended. It is clearly written, with no unnecessary words or homiletical expansions. It faces the many difficulties of the subject frankly. It shows a wide knowledge of the very extensive literature, English and foreign (of which there is a useful bibliography), and is fully documented.

The baptism of John (regarded as the link between Jewish proselyte baptism¹ and Christian baptism) is treated at considerable, if not disproportionate, length. Five characteristics are found in the Johannine rite. (1) It was "eschatological," pointing onwards to the coming Messianic Age. (2) It was a baptism by water, in contrast with the baptism by Holy Spirit which was yet to come. (3) It was demanded of all, since all had sinned. (4) It was a baptism administered once only, and not to be repeated, as were the Essene baptisms. All this is a useful and, broadly speaking, adequate characterisation.

The baptism received by Jesus (very briefly discussed) is regarded as unique in character, marking neither His call nor the discovery of His vocation, but the inauguration of His Messianic ministry. The attitude of Jesus towards baptism during "the days of His flesh" is regarded as one of tacit approval, rather than of explicit command. (The formula of baptism in Matt. xxviii. 19 is not accepted as a command of Jesus, partly because the baptisms of Acts "into the name of the Lord Jesus" seem to rule it out.) The general view here taken is that, prior to Pentecost, baptism was virtually a continuation of the Johannine rite; after Pentecost, it was accompanied by new phenomena associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul's teaching about baptism is taken as implying cleansing from sin, the gift of the Spirit and union with Christ (owing nothing in substance to Hellenistic religions). The emphasis falls on the third of these. "The Pauline doctrine of faith is a sufficient guarantee that the Apostle accepted no ritual act as the sole means of cleansing from sin, or of obtaining any other of the benefits associated with salvation." With this, all Baptists will agree. The Pauline figure of "burial with Christ" in baptism obviously implies "that immersion was probably the customary form of baptism" (as in the case of Jewish proselyte baptism), but the author thinks that perhaps "from the beginning

¹ On this, see Professor H. H. Rowley's valuable contribution to the *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. XV. (1940).

some less difficult form of baptism than total immersion was accepted in certain circumstances."

There are, of course, many other interesting and important matters concerning the New Testament baptism with which this competent book deals. But the main position held is that "it was the spiritual experience, not the act, which was of supreme importance." Perhaps the author unduly stresses the antithesis between an "intensely magical" and an "intensely spiritual" act. It seems more in harmony with St. Paul's teaching to regard baptism as resembling the acts of "prophetic symbolism" in the Old Testament, where they are conceived as part of the effective obedience of the prophet, an initial part of the thing to be done. Such an interpretation of baptismal symbolism, which has the high endorsement of Professor C. H. Dodd, does more justice to the striking terms of Rom. vi. 1-5, Col. ii. 11, 12, and would allow us to regard the baptism of *believers* as a means of grace, through the Holy Spirit.

H. WHEELER ROBINSON.

The Forward March, by Sir Richard Acland. (George Allen & Unwin, paper 2s. 6d. net, cloth 3s. 6d. net.)

Why Another World War? How we missed Collective Security, by George Gilbert Armstrong. (George Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d. net.)

The German Mentality, by Verrina. (George Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d. net.)

There is a questioning spirit in our land to-day. Some of the questions are merely superficial, others lie much deeper. For example, behind the warring of the nations, or rather, in the midst of their warring, are we witnessing the struggle of humanity to emerge from an order which is played out, and to discover a new basis on which human life can be built up?

Here are three thought-provoking works arising out of such questioning. Sir Richard Acland thinks that what has happened in Europe has been the breakdown of hope. Freedom for each man to pursue his own economic self-interest in his own way has failed to produce equality, not even equality of opportunity. Liberals have correctly insisted that the highest value of statesmanship is the well-being of the individual citizen; while socialism was bound to fail for the one supreme reason that it assumed the *economic* motive to be supreme. Nazism established the Service Community *for* the Reich *in* war. Sir Richard proposes to establish the Service Community *for* humanity *in* peace, or, putting it in another way, to transfer to the tasks of

peace the communal enthusiasm which is so readily called forth for the tasks of war.

Lord Baldwin, Sir John Simon, Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Neville Chamberlain have a bad time at the hands of the author of *Why Another World War?* They are indicted for not foreseeing that the policy for which they were responsible was making war certain, and for cutting away the precautions against war which better men than they had skilfully built up. Perhaps we are too near the events for such a sweeping judgment; yet it is becoming increasingly clear that these four—Ramsay MacDonald should be added to them—are the statesmen of this country who were mainly responsible for the breakdown of the League of Nations. The book is more than an indictment of individuals: it is a well-documented record of the international discussions of the last twenty years. The author's conclusion is that the redemption of all the countries engulfed in Hitler's Europe can be permanently achieved only by a return to Collective Security, through their federation with the British Commonwealth in a union with pooled resources, from which all that Nazism stands for shall be excluded.

For a whole generation "Verrina" has been in close touch with the German population, and in the course of twenty chapters he deals with the range of ideas of leading circles and of the man in the street, both before and under the Nazi regime. Many books have described the rise of Hitlerism, but there is something new and bigger in this volume. The morbid mentality of the average German, and the brutal outlook of the young Nazi present Europe with a very sinister problem, and on its successful solution depends the future of Europe. Methods for the cure and re-moulding of the depraved mentality of the Germans are discussed, and the time anticipated when they will have found again their religion, their good qualities, their diligence, their sense of order.

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

A Christian Year Book, 1941. Edited by Hugh Martin and Ernest A. Payne. (Student Christian Movement Press, 2s. 6d. net.)

Three hundred pages concerning places, people and events, societies and churches—including those connected with the Ecumenical Christian Movement. A veritable Baedeker for church workers. Buy it and use it.