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1905.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.*

REV. JOHN TUCKWELL, M.R.A.S.; IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following candidate was put forward for election by the Council :—

ASSOCIATE :—Rev. C. V. Fraser, Holy Trinity Rectory, Jamaica.

The following paper was then read by the Author :—

CONFUCIANISM. By the Rev. ARTHUR ELWIN, “Long”
Lecturer on the Religions of China.†

TO-DAY our subject is Confucianism, which is one of what are generally called the Three Religions of China, that is, the three religions which have been handed down from ancient times, viz. :—Confucianism, Taouism, and Chinese Buddhism.

Of course, in the short time we have at our disposal, it will be impossible to go fully into this interesting subject; but we must try first of all to give a short account of Confucius and his doings, and then very briefly examine his writings and his teaching.

Before we pass on, however, we cannot but notice that Confucius was born in the sixth century B.C., which was certainly one of the most remarkable centuries in the world's history. In China, in this century lived Laou-tse, the founder of Taouism; and in India, Gautama, the founder of Buddhism.

* Monday, January 2nd, 1905.

† The author is indebted to the writers mentioned below for information contained in the following paper, viz. : Berry, Davis, Doolittle, Douglas, Du Bose, Dyer, Ball, Elkins, Eitel, Grant, Henry, Huc, Legge, Martin, Medhurst, Moule, Smith, Tisdall, Williams, and, last but not least, Mrs. Howard Taylor.

Had we lived in the sixth century, leaving the east and travelling westward, we should have met with many illustrious persons. We might have listened to the wise discourses of the philosophers, Thales, Anaximander, and Pythagoras; or we might have sat under the newly made laws of Solon and Pisistratus; or we might have heard Sappho, Alcaeus, or Anacreon repeat their verses. We might have watched the building of the first great Temple to Diana of the Ephesians. We might have followed the onward march of the conquering armies of Nebuchadnezzar or Darius, or been present when the messengers arrived, announcing that the Persian armies had been victorious in Egypt. Had we lived in that sixth century B.C., we might have mourned with Jeremiah in Jerusalem, or listened to the words of Ezekiel, by the banks of the river Chebar. We might have accompanied the Jews into their captivity in far-distant Babylon, or, later on, stood with them when they read the proclamation of Cyrus permitting them to return to their own land. We might have travelled with the rejoicing multitudes when they returned to Jerusalem, and have been present at the Feast of Dedication, which was kept when the building of the Temple was completed. We might have followed the career of Daniel, or listened to grand prophecies from the lips of Haggai or Zachariah. Truly it may be said that the sixth century B.C., was one of the most notable in the history of the world.

Confucius was born in the year 551 B.C., at a place called Loo in Shang-tung in North China. The name Confucius, I may remark, is the latinised form of Kong Fu-tse, Kong being the family name, and Fu-tse meaning teacher or master. Of his parents we know but little. His father was a military officer, celebrated for his bravery and strength. He married the second time when he was seventy years old, and in due time the little Confucius was born. For three years only was the aged parent's heart gladdened by the presence of his little son, when he died, leaving his family in poverty. Confucius was brought up by his mother, who early sent him to school, where he soon distinguished himself by his application and industry. Many years after, in a well-known passage, he speaks as follows with reference to his growth in knowledge: "At fifteen my mind was bent on learning, at thirty I stood firm, at forty I had no doubts, at fifty I knew the decrees of heaven, at sixty my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth, at seventy I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right." When

nineteen years of age he married, but his married life was not happy. A son was born, but he soon after divorced his wife. "Of all people," he remarked, "women and servants are the most difficult to manage. If you are familiar with them, they become forward, and if you keep them at a distance, they become discontented."

Shortly after his marriage he was appointed Keeper of the Stores of Grain, and the following year he was promoted to be the Guardian of the public fields and lands, but this employment was not congenial, and he soon resigned his office. At the age of twenty-two we find Confucius devoting his time to the instruction of young men, and in this occupation he took great delight. It may be mentioned that with idle scholars he would have nothing to do. "I do not open the truth," he said, "to one who is not eager after knowledge, nor do I help anyone who is not anxious to explain himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject, and the listener cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson."

At twenty-eight years of age we find him studying music and archery, and at thirty his fame had so increased, that very many youths of distinguished families gathered round him, that they might benefit by his teaching.

It was about this time that Confucius journeyed into the neighbouring state of Lo, that he might have an interview with Laou-tse, the founder of the Taoist Sect. Laou-tse was born about 604 B.C., and was therefore fifty years older than Confucius. Historians have handed down to us the conversations that took place between these celebrated men. Confucius and Laou-tse could not agree. Laou-tse proclaimed that retirement and self-suppression were the highest attainable objects. Confucius taught that ceremonial observances and proper respect for the ancient rites were all-important. When Confucius spoke of the worthies, who had lived in ancient times, Laou-tse is said to have answered him: "The men of whom you speak have with their bones already mouldered into dust, and only their words remain! . . . Put away, sir, your proud airs, and many desires, your formal manner and extravagant ideas; these are all unprofitable to you. This is all I have to say to you." Confucius, being unaccustomed to be addressed in this way, retired discomfited. "I know how the birds fly," he remarked, "how fishes can swim, and how beasts run. The runner, however, can be snared, the swimmer can be hooked, and the flyer can be shot with an arrow. But there is the dragon; I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind

through the clouds, and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Laou-tse and can only compare him to the dragon." They could not agree. After this interview, Confucius is said to have remarked, "At the sound of his voice my mouth gaped wide, my tongue protruded, and my soul was plunged in trouble."

According to Mencius, who lived about B.C. 371, China was in a sad state in the time of Confucius, and it was high time that some one should try and remedy the evils. "The world," he says, "had fallen into decay, and right principles had disappeared. Perverse discourses and oppressive deeds were waxen rife. Ministers murdered their rulers, and sons their fathers. Confucius was startled by what he saw, and undertook the work of reformation."

It was at Lo, during this visit, that Confucius saw, in the Ancestral Temple, a metal statue of a man, with a triple clasp on his mouth. On the back of the statue were inscribed these words: "The ancients were guarded in their speech, and like them we should avoid many words. Many words invite many defeats. Avoid also engaging in many businesses, for many businesses create many difficulties." "Observe this, my children," said Confucius, pointing to the inscription, "these words are true, and commend themselves to our reason."

Upon returning to Loo, he resumed his former occupation. His fame increased until, the records tell us, he was surrounded by no less than three thousand disciples. But troubles arose, a rebellion broke out, and Confucius was obliged to take refuge in the neighbouring state of Tse.

It was during this journey that he saw a woman weeping at a tomb, and having compassion on her, he sent one of his disciples to ask the cause of her grief. "You weep as if you had experienced sorrow upon sorrow," said the disciple. "I have," said the woman, "my father was killed here by a tiger, and my husband also, and now my son has met the same fate." "Why then do you not move from the place?" asked Confucius. "Because here is no oppressive government," replied the woman. On hearing this answer, Confucius remarked to his disciples, "My children, remember this, oppressive government is fiercer than a tiger."

After a time he was able to leave Tse, and return to his native state of Loo, where he was made chief magistrate of the town of Chung-too. Here he had an opportunity of putting his principles into practice, and his government was so successful, that he was gradually promoted, until he became

Minister of Crime, a position equivalent to that of Prime Minister. Confucius was now fifty years old. Historians tell us that his theories, when applied, vindicated themselves, and order reigned throughout the land. He became such a terror to evil-doers that crime disappeared, and order prevailed everywhere. "A thing," we are told, "dropped on the ground was not picked up, there was no fraudulent carving of vessels, coffins were made of the ordained thickness, graves were unmarked by mounds raised over them, and no two prices were charged in the markets." Although wonderfully successful, there was still room for improvement. A father, it is said, brought a charge against his son in the expectation, probably, of gaining his case with ease before a judge, who laid such stress on the virtue of filial piety. To the surprise of all, Confucius cast both father and son into prison, saying: "Am I to punish for a breach of filial piety one who has never been taught to be filially minded? Is not he who neglects to teach his son his duties equally guilty with the son who fails in them?"

It is interesting to notice how the Chinese follow this teaching of Confucius, even to the present day. On one occasion I was walking down a street in Hangchow, when a young man standing at the door of a house called me names—foreign devil. Generally we paid no attention to this, the calling of bad names being so common, but as this was an aggravated case, I thought I would see what the boy's parents would say about it. I walked into the courtyard in front of the house and said to two men I found there: "Who called me names?" They answered, "No one called you names here, sir." I said, "You know there was a young man who called me names; where is he?" Just then a man appeared from the interior of the house, dragging along the boy who had been impudent. He said, "This is the boy, sir, and I will now beat him." I said, "Wait a minute; are you the father of the boy?" He answered, "Yes." I then turned to the people who had followed me and said, "This man says his son has been calling me bad names, and he is going to beat him for it. Now I ask you, if the boy has been behaving badly, who ought to be punished, the son or the father?" Those present at once said, the father ought to be beaten. I then turned to the father and said, "You hear what your own people say! Good morning."

I have time only for one more illustration. A friend of mine was sitting in his study at Ningpo one evening, when suddenly his servant ran in to tell him that some people were

just going to drown a man in the canal near the house. My friend at once hastened out, and found a crowd of some hundreds of people gathered near the bridge, which spanned the canal, about two hundred yards from his door. He walked to the bridge to see what was being done. The canal was about twenty feet wide, and the bridge was built high in the centre in order that the boats might pass underneath it without difficulty. On the top of the bridge he found an old woman sitting in a chair, and at her feet lay a young man bound with ropes, so that he could not move. The old woman was the mother, the young man bound with ropes was her son, who, at her order, was about to be cast into the water and drowned. When my friend appeared, men were just arriving with heavy stones, which were to be fastened to the young man to make him sink. He was a bad son, and his mother was afraid he might commit some serious crime, in which case she would be sure to suffer, because the authorities would say that she had not brought him up well. As he would not listen to her exhortations, she decided to have him drowned, and then the danger would be removed. My friend protested against the whole proceeding, but after long consultation the only way he could save the man's life was by becoming surety for his good behaviour, really, by adopting him as his own son. The man was unbound, and my friend was allowed to lead him away; but he turned out to be thoroughly bad, and proved that it was not without reason his relatives had determined to drown him. My friend had an anxious time with him for about three years, at the end of which time the young man died. I heard of a similar case in Hangchow, but then there was no one to intercede, and the neighbours, by the order of the mother, actually dropped the son into the water and drowned him.

It was when Confucius was at the height of his prosperity at Loo, that difficulties arose. He had assured his followers that not only would his methods reform sovereign and people, but that neighbouring states would be so attracted by the spectacle, that they too would imitate the example set them. The result was just the opposite. The order and prosperity of Loo excited only the jealousy of the neighbouring states. The Duke of Tse said: "With Confucius at the head of its government, Loo will become supreme among the states, and Tse, which is nearest to it, will be swallowed up. Let us propitiate it by a surrender of territory." But after consultation with his ministers another course suggested itself. Eighty beautiful girls well skilled in music and dancing, and one hundred and

twenty of the finest horses, were sent as a present to the Duke of Loo. The present was accepted. The girls were taken into the Duke's harem, and the horses removed to the ducal stables. The Prime Minister and the government were neglected, and Confucius mourned that Duke Ting should prefer the songs of the maidens from Tse to the wise sayings of the sages of antiquity. As things did not improve, Confucius gave up his post and left the capital.

Confucius was now fifty-six years old. For fourteen years he was an exile, wandering from state to state, offering his services, but no one would employ him. "Your principles," said one of his disciples, "are excellent, but they are unacceptable to the Empire; would it not be well to abate them a little." "A good husbandman," replied the sage, "can sow, but he cannot secure a harvest. An artizan may excel in handicraft, but he cannot provide a market for his goods. And in the same way, a superior man can cultivate his principles, but he cannot make them acceptable." On one occasion, during his wanderings, he is said to have compared himself to a dog, driven from its home. He remarked, "I have the fidelity of a dog, and I am treated like one! But what matters the ingratitude of men? They cannot hinder me from doing all the good that has been appointed me. If my principles are disregarded, I have the consolation of knowing in my breast that I have faithfully performed my duty."

Although Confucius was not in favour with the rulers, yet he had many admiring followers, who have carefully preserved many particulars of the every-day life of their esteemed teacher. In his dress, we are told, he was careful to wear only the correct colours, viz.—blue, pink, white, and black; he carefully avoided red, as being the colour usually affected by women and girls. At the table he was moderate in his appetite, but particular as to the nature of his food, and the manner in which it was set before him. Nothing would induce him to touch any meat that was high, or rice that was musty, nor would he eat anything that was not properly cut up, or accompanied with the proper sauce. He allowed himself only a certain quantity of meat and rice, and though no such limit was fixed to the amount of wine which he drank, we are assured that he never allowed himself to be confused by it. Whatever the food was that was set before him, he always offered a little of it in sacrifice, with a grave, respectful air. When out driving, he never turned his head quite round, and in his actions as well as his words he avoided all appearance

of haste. We are told that he always had ginger on the table, and when eating did not converse. When in bed, he did not lie like a corpse, and he required his sleeping dress to be half as long again as his body. But during his wanderings he often suffered much. He tells us, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for my pillow, I still have joy in these things. Riches and honours acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud."

Confucius was now growing old, and being weary of wandering from state to state, he had an earnest desire to return to his native place once more. History tells us that he retired to Loo in Shangtung, and spent his time in editing the *Book of History*, studying the *Book of Changes*, and writing the Spring and Autumn Annals. Having a strong presentiment at one time that his end was drawing near, he is said to have burst into tears, exclaiming, "The course of my doctrine is run, and I am unknown." "How do you mean that you are unknown?" asked one of his disciples. "I do not complain of Providence," he answered, "nor find fault with men that learning is neglected, and success is worshipped. Heaven knows me . . . never does a superior man pass away without leaving a name behind him. But my principles make no progress, and I, how shall I be known in future ages?"

One morning in the Spring of 478 B.C., he tottered about the house sighing:—

"The great mountain must crumble ;
The strong beam must break ;
The wise man withers away like a plant."

"If the mountain crumble," said one of his disciples, "to what shall I look up? If the strong beam break, and the wise man wither away, on whom shall I lean? The master, I fear, is going to be ill." The master answered, "My time is come to die." He went into the house, took to his bed, and on the seventh day he died. During his short illness, one of his disciples asked leave to pray for him, quoting from a book of prayers to the effect that prayer might be offered to the spirits of heaven and earth, but Confucius would not permit it, saying, "My prayers were offered long ago."

And so, at the age of seventy-three, the great man passed away; and on the banks of the river Sze, to the north of the city of Loo, his disciples buried him, and for three years they mourned at his grave. One of the most faithful, who built a hut near his grave, and lived in it for six years, mourning as for a father, said, "I have all my life had the heaven above my

head, but I do not know its height, and the earth under my feet, but I do not know its thickness. In serving Confucius, I am like a thirsty man, who goes with his pitcher to the river and there drinks his fill, without knowing the river's depth."

And so the Most Holy Ancient Teacher, as his disciples loved to call him, passed away unhonoured, and almost unknown. Little did the few followers, who mourned around his grave, realize that the one of whom they were taking leave, would in after ages number his followers by millions, and that his writings and sayings would be more attended to and obeyed, than perhaps the writings of any man who has ever lived.

But we must pass on now to consider his writings and teaching.

"What Confucius teaches is true; what is contrary to his teaching is false; what he does not teach is unnecessary." This was the creed of the Confucian scholar twenty-five centuries ago, and it is the creed of the Confucian scholar to-day. We may well ask, therefore, what did Confucius teach?

In the Confucian system everything centred in the family. The same virtues are required in the head of the family as in the ruler of the kingdom. The same respectful reverence should be paid by the children to the father, as is due from the subjects to the sovereign. "Heaven and earth existing," says the *Book of Changes*, "all things exist; all things existing, then male and female exist; male and female existing, then the relation of husband and wife exists; from the existence of husband and wife, follows the relation of father and son; father and son existing, then prince and minister exist; prince and minister existing, then upper and lower classes; upper and lower classes existing, decorum and propriety are interchanged." "Let the household be rightly ordered, and the people of the state may be taught." All the teaching of Confucius tended to exalt the man, he did not think much of the women. "A woman," he said, "is subject to man and is unable to stand alone, and therefore, when young, depends on her father and brothers, when married, on her husband, and after his death, on her sons. She must not presume to follow her own judgment."

It is difficult for anyone, who has not lived in China, to realize the difference between the reception given to a son, and that given to a daughter. No one welcomes the advent of a little girl; there are no congratulations, no presents; friends

and neighbours freely comment on the misfortune that has come upon the family. And too often the father, by means of a pail of water, or in some other way, will suddenly bring to a close the life of the little baby daughter, who, unwelcomed, has so lately entered his household. In a large country district to the south of the city of Hangchow, the people said that the baby's soul came with its teeth. A soulless baby, dying without teeth, was wrapped in a piece of matting, and left anywhere on the hills, generally being eaten by the dogs, but if the little one had cut even one tooth, the soul was supposed to be there, and a little box was therefore provided for the burial.

A short poem written about 825 B.C., that is about the time of the prophet Jonah, well expresses the feeling in China to-day, as it did the feeling in the country nearly 2,800 years ago. The poem consists of two verses only, one referring to the boys, the other to the girls.

“And it shall be, whenever sons are born,
 These shall be laid on beds to sleep and rest ;
 In loose long robes they also shall be dressed,
 And sceptres shall be given them for their toys,
 And when they cry what music in the noise !
 These yet shall don the scarlet aprons grand,
 And be the kings and princes of the land.

And it shall be, when daughters shall be born,
 These shall be laid to sleep upon the ground ;
 In coarsest bands their bodies shall be bound,
 And tiles shall be their playthings. 'Twill belong
 To these to meddle not with right or wrong,
 To mind alone the household drink and food,
 And cause their parents no solicitude.”

Following the example of Confucius we must leave the little girls alone, and indeed the boys only would take far more time than we can give to them to-day.

There was nothing that Confucius thought more important than the education of the young. As we have already seen, that if, through neglected education, a young man went wrong, those, who had neglected to give the education, ought also to be punished. Even now in Central China, if a child be rude or call names, the most cutting thing that can be said is ; “I fear you have no father or mother,” implying of course that the education had been neglected. At about six years of age the boy goes to school, and places his foot on the first step of that ladder which, if he mounts well, will give him a place in the highest offices in the Empire. At school the boy will have

to master the following books:—viz., *The Three Character Classic*, *The Catalogue of Surnames*, *The Thousand Character Classic*, *The Canons of Filial Duty*, *The Odes for Children*, and the *Juvenile Instructor*. Having been thoroughly instructed in these six books, the young scholar is ready to begin the Confucian Classics, and to prepare for the competitive examinations. Of course many boys, who have to earn their living, never get so far: they have to leave school early and begin to learn a trade, but it is the highest ambition of everyone if possible to be a scholar. The following extract well expresses the national sentiment of the Chinese with reference to the various occupations that may be followed:—

“First, the scholar; because mind is superior to wealth. It is the intellect that distinguishes man above the lower animals, and enables him to provide food, raiment, and shelter for himself and others.

“Second, the farmer; because the mind cannot act without the body, and the body cannot exist without food and raiment.

“Third, the mechanic; because, next to food and raiment, shelter is a necessity.

“Fourth, the tradesman; because as society increases, and its wants are multiplied, men to carry on exchange and barter become a necessity.

“And, last of all, the soldier; because his business is to destroy, not to build up society. He consumes what others produce, but does not himself contribute anything that can benefit mankind. Still he is, perhaps, a necessary evil.”

We will now briefly consider the Four Books and the Five Classics, the nine works which contain the writings and sayings of Confucius and his disciples, and which for hundred of years have formed the sole subject of the competitive examinations throughout the land. One has well said; “There is not much, from a westerner’s point of view, to commend these ancient literary productions, and yet the incomparable influence they have exerted for centuries over so many millions of minds, invests them, even for us, with an interest no book beside the Bible can claim.”

The “great learning” consists of eleven chapters which treat of four important subjects, viz.: The Improvement of Oneself; The Regulation of a Family; The Government of a State; and the Rule of an Empire. The following extract from the book forms a kind of introduction to the consideration of these important subjects:

“The ancients, who wished to illustrate renovating virtue

throughout the Empire, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate well their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended their knowledge to the utmost. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Families being regulated, their States were rightly governed; their States being rightly governed, the Empire was made tranquil." And so we arrive where we were at the beginning.

The second of the Four Books is the *True Mean*, compiled by the grandson of Confucius about the year 388 B.C. or before the days of Alexander the Great. This book depicts the character of an ideal Princely or Superior Man, who in all relationships of life preserves the golden mean, and is thus a model and standard of virtue to succeeding generations. "The Princely Man, in dealing with others, does not descend to anything low or unworthy. How unbending his courage! He stands at the centre, removed from extremes, and leans not to either side. The Princely Man enters into no state, wherein he cannot be true to himself. If he hold high office, he does not treat with contempt those beneath him. If he occupy a lowly position, he uses no mean arts to gain the favour of his superiors. He corrects himself, and blames not others. He feels no dissatisfaction. On the one hand he murmurs not at heaven, nor on the other does he cherish resentment towards his neighbour. Hence the superior man dwells at ease, entirely waiting on the will of heaven." Speaking of the Princely Man, he also says, "Vast and extensive are the effects of his virtue; it is like the deep and living stream, which flows unceasingly; it is substantial and extensive as heaven, and profound as the great abyss. Wherever ships sail or chariots ran; wherever the heavens overshadow, and the earth sustains, wherever sun and moon shine, or frosts and dews fall, among all who have blood and breath, there is not one who does not honour and love him."

Third: *The Analects of Confucius*, written by his disciples to

chronicle the utterances of their "Most Holy Ancient Teacher." Among the many remarkable sayings of Confucius, recorded in this book, certainly the Golden Rule he impressed upon his followers stands first. One of them had inquired: "Is there a single word which may serve as a rule of practice for the whole of one's life?" "Is not Reciprocity such a word," replied Confucius, "do not to others what you would not wish done to you." "What do you say," said a disciple, "concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" The master said, "With what then will ye recompense kindness. Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." Some other sayings are, "I have found no man who esteems virtue as much as pleasure.—The perfect man is never satisfied with himself; he that is satisfied with himself is not perfect.—Patience is the most necessary thing in the world.—The perfect man loves all men; he is not governed by private affection and interest, but only regards right reason and the public good.—The superior man has nine things which he takes into thoughtful consideration. In regard to the use of his eyes, he is anxious to see clearly. In regard to the use of his ears, to hear distinctly. In regard to his countenance, that it should be benign. In regard to his demeanour, that it should be respectful. In regard to his speech, that it should be sincere. In regard to his doing business, that it should be with care. In regard to what he doubts about, to make enquiry. When he is angry, he thinks of the difficulties that his anger may involve him in. When he sees gain to be got, he thinks of righteousness."

The last of the series is the *Book of Mencius*, who lived about two hundred years after Confucius, 371 B.C., in the days of Plato and Demosthenes. Mencius has been regarded by many as one of the greatest men the Asiatic nations have ever produced. The following extracts will show what kind of man he was, and considering when they were written, they are certainly very remarkable. "I love life," he observes, "and I love justice, but if I cannot preserve both, I would rather give up life, and hold fast justice. Although I love life, there is that which I love more than life. Although I hate death, there is that which I hate more than death."

"Heaven, when about to confer a great trust upon any man, first exercises his mind with suffering, and his senses and bones with toil. It exposes his body to hunger, subjects him to poverty, and confounds his undertakings. By all these methods it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature and supplies his

incompetencies. . . . When men are distressed in mind, and perplexed in their thoughts, they are aroused to vigorous reformation. . . . From these things we see how life springs from sorrow and calamity, while death follows ease and pleasure."

It may be remarked in passing, that Mencius had a good mother. She is said to have moved her residence from the neighbourhood of a butcher's shop, because she would not have her little boy witness daily that which she thought might make him cruel.

Mencius, like Confucius, believed the nature of man to be originally good, though contaminated through contact with the evil of this world. All men are naturally virtuous, just as water naturally flows downward.

At the head of the Five Classics is placed the *Book of Changes*, an obscure treatise consisting of sixty-four short essays of a moral, social, and political character. It is said to have been composed in prison by King Wan, in the year 1150 B.C., that is before the birth of Samuel. It is in this ancient book that we first find mention of the Five Great Social Relations; they are those of Sovereign and subject, husband and wife, parent and child, elder brother and younger brother, and friends. If we apply the important word Reciprocity to these five social relations, we shall perhaps be able to form some idea why the Chinese nation has been able to hold together for so many centuries.

The second is the *Book of History*. It consists of a series of dialogues designed to give a brief history of China from about B.C. 2350 to 770 B.C. "This volume compiled by Confucius contains," one remarks, "the seeds of all things valuable in the estimation of the Chinese. It is at once the foundation of their political system, history, and religious rites, and the basis of their tactics, music, and astronomy. The knowledge of the true God, under the appellation of Shang-ti, is not obscurely intimated in this work."

The third is the *Book of Odes*, consisting of three hundred popular songs and poems, culled from a period covering more than a thousand years—from the days of Joseph's greatness in Egypt, to the era of the Babylonish captivity. It is most noteworthy that there is nothing in the whole collection which might not be read aloud in any company, in its full natural sense, by youth or maiden.

The following one of the Odes, translated by Dr. Legge, is given as a specimen:—

A wife's lamentation during the absence of her husband.

"Away the startled pheasant flies,
 With lazy movement of his wings ;
 Borne was my heart's lord from my eyes—
 What pain the separation brings !

"The pheasant though no more in view,
 His cry below, above, forth sends,
 Alas ! my princely lord, 'tis you—
 Your absence that my bosom rends !

"At sun and moon I sit and gaze,
 In converse with my troubled heart.
 Far, far from me my husband stays ;
 When will he come to heal its smart ?

"Ye princely men who with him mate,
 Say mark ye not his virtuous way ?
 His rule is, Covet not, none hate :
 How can his steps from goodness stray ?"

The fourth is the *Book of Rites*. The original documents which form the basis of this work go back to 1112 B.C., that is, about the time of the disturbed days of the judges, when we are told, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." "Even at that time, China was under the control of a methodical and effective system of national polity. Villages had their schools, and districts their academies." This book regulates the rites and ceremonies of the nation, and has done so for many centuries. One of the six governing Boards at Peking is specially charged with the duty of seeing its precepts carried out throughout the Empire. Both the Emperor and his people regulate their lives by the *Book of Rites*, and no one would dare to depart from the rules there laid down, even in the smallest matter. At marriages, funerals, and feasts, there is always a master of ceremonies, whose duty it is to see that all is done in accordance with the proper etiquette."

The following extracts from the Domestic Rules contained in this ancient book, though antiquated and trivial in detail, are interesting, as showing the respect paid to parents, even to the present day:—

"Men, in serving their parents, at the first cock-crowing must all wash their hands, rinse their mouths, comb their hair, bind it together with a net, fasten it with a bodkin, forming it into a tuft, brush out the dust, put on the hat, tying the strings ornamented with tassels, also the waistcoat, frock, and girdle, with the note books placed in it, and the leggings attached on

the right and left, bind on the greaves, and put on the shoes, tying up the strings.

“Wives must serve their husband’s father and mother as their own. At the first cock-crowing they must wash their hands, rinse their mouth, comb their hair, and bind it together with a net, fasten it with a bodkin, forming it into a tuft, put on their frocks and girdles, fasten on their bags of perfumery, put on and tie up their shoes. Then they must go to the chamber of their father and mother, and having entered, in a low and placid tone they must enquire whether their dress is too warm or too cool. If the parents have pain or itching, they must respectfully press or rub the part affected. If the parents enter or leave the room, either going before or following they must respectfully support them. In bringing the apparatus for washing, the younger must present the bowl, the elder the water, begging them to pour it and wash, and after they have washed, hand them the towel. In asking and respectfully presenting what they wish to eat, they must cheer them by their mild manner, and must wait until their father and mother have eaten, and then retire.”

The following “on reproving parents” is remarkable. ‘When his parents are in error, the son, with a humble spirit, pleasing countenance, and gentle tone, must point it out to them. If they do not receive his reproof, he must strive more and more to be dutiful and respectful towards them, till they are pleased, and then he must again point out their error. But if he does not succeed in pleasing them, it is better that he should continue to reiterate reproof, than permit them to continue to do injury to the whole department, district, village, or neighbourhood. And if the parents, irritated and displeased, chastise their son until the blood flows from him, even then he must not dare to harbour the least resentment; but, on the contrary, should treat them with increased respect and dutifulness.”

Also this. “Although your father and mother be dead, if you propose to yourself any good work, only reflect how it will make their names illustrious, and your purpose will be fixed. So if you propose to do what is not good, only consider how it will disgrace the names of your father and mother, and you will desist from your purpose.”

But we must pass on to the last of the five classics; the Spring and Autumn Annals; which stands alone as the personal work of Confucius. It gives some account of his own times, covering a period of over two hundred years, from B.C. 722, that

is, shortly after the foundation of Rome. In one noteworthy sentence in this book, Confucius speaks of the Divine Being as "God all-wise, equitable, and one."

But we must bring to a close this brief sketch of the Four Books and Five Classics, remembering that there is not an educated man in China who could not repeat the whole nine books from memory. From the time that competitive examinations were introduced in the year 631 A.D., they have constituted the sole subjects for examination. Thus for upwards of twelve hundred years, the nine Confucian Classics have been the main study of every generation of Chinamen from childhood to old age. One has well said: "The effect of this complete absorption of the Confucian system into the national character has been to maintain the influence of the sage as powerfully, or even more powerfully, than ever. Buddhism and Taouism have found their adherents almost entirely among the uneducated classes, and even these reject all doctrines which are inconsistent with the teachings of Confucius. No educated man would admit for a moment that he was a follower of either of the above-mentioned religions; to him Confucius is guide, philosopher, and friend, and though fully recognised by him as a man, is worshipped as a god." In the eighteen provinces there are one thousand five hundred and sixty temples dedicated to the worship of Confucius, and in these temples, sixty-six thousand animals are offered every year to his spirit. The feeling of the Chinese people is undoubtedly expressed in the following lines, which form part of the sacrificial ritual:

"Confucius! Confucius! How great is Confucius!
 Before Confucius, there never was a Confucius!
 Since Confucius, there never has been a Confucius!
 Confucius! Confucius! How great is Confucius."

That Confucius was a remarkable man there can be no doubt, and his humility was one of his most striking characteristics. He always disclaimed originality, and declared that all his teaching was derived from the ancients, for whom he entertained the profoundest veneration.

"A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients." "I was not born a man of knowledge; I am naturally only quick to search out the truth from a love for the wisdom of the ancients."

"I am not virtuous enough to be free from anxieties; nor wise enough to be free from perplexities; and not bold enough to be free from fear."

“In the way of the superior man there are four things, to not one of which have I as yet attained. To serve my father as I would require my son to serve me; To serve my prince as I would require my minister to serve me; To serve my elder brother as I would require my younger brother to serve me; To behave to my friend as I would require him to behave to me.”

“Shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it; this is knowledge.”

According to Confucius, the first of all virtues, whether in a son or in a subject, is filial piety. It is this which distinguishes man from brutes; it is this which recognises the true relation between child and parent. “Filial piety consists in serving one’s parents when alive, according to propriety; in burying them when dead, according to propriety; and sacrificing to them, according to propriety.” “Of all things,” said Confucius, “which derive their natures from heaven and earth, man is the most noble; and of all the duties that are incumbent on him, there is none greater than filial obedience; nor in performing this is there anything so essential as to reverence one’s father; and, as a mark of reverence, there is nothing more important than to place him on an equality with heaven. Thus did the Lord of Chow; he sacrificed on the round altar to the spirits of his remote ancestors, as equal with heaven; and in the open hall he sacrificed to King Wan (his father), as equal with Shang-ti.” This is one of the innumerable passages, which enjoin the duty of ancestral worship,* which may now well be called *the religion* of the Chinese, for Confucianist, Taouist, and Buddhist, alike all rear the shrine for the ancestral tablets, and worship at the graves of the departed. This extract shows that, according to Confucius, a man ought to place his father on an equality with God, and the following incident will show that there are Chinese in our own day who strive to carry this principle into practice.

Only a few years ago a man in Canton committed a murder, and a warrant was issued for his arrest; but before he could be found, his son, a young man about twenty years of age, went to the magistrate and said, “I committed the murder.” The son was arrested, tried, and, on his own confession, condemned to death. Soon all the people in Canton knew what had been done, and it was the one topic of conversation in the city.

* *Journal Vict. Inst.*, “Ancestral Worship,” vol. xxxvi, p. 67.

When the day came for him to be beheaded, thousands of people accompanied the procession to the execution ground to see the young man die, to see the son die to save his father's life. Every one knew the young man was innocent, the magistrate knew it, the people knew it, but not a voice was raised in his behalf. No one would deprive him of the honour of carrying out, to the fullest extent, the teaching of his great master. He died and his father was free. Nowhere but in China could such a scene be witnessed. One result would undoubtedly follow, the magistrate would be promoted, because it could only be owing to his virtue that there was such an excellent young man in the district.

On the subject of spirits, as on all matters relating to heavenly things, Confucius seems rather inconsistent. His mind was wrapped up in the things of this earth, and he looked upon all such subjects as obscure and unprofitable. 'Spirits are to be respected,' he said, 'but to be kept at a distance.' Yet we are told 'he sacrificed to the dead, as though they were present, and to the spirits as though they were before him.'

But we must draw this short sketch of Confucius and his teaching to a close. Every student of Confucius must hold his personal character in high estimation. The narrative of few men's lives would be so free from vice, and so full of that which must be commended as right and good. But while we are forced to confess that there is very much to be admired in the Confucian system, especially compared with other idolatrous religions, we must not forget that there are many serious defects. One writer has summed them up as follows:—

"No relation to a living God is recognised. It knows no mediator between God and man. It is devoid of any deep insight into sin or moral evil. Truthfulness is not urged, but rather the reverse. Polygamy is presupposed and tolerated. Polytheism is sanctioned. Fortune telling, choosing of days, etc., are believed in. Filial piety is exaggerated into the deification of parents. All rewards are expected in this life. No comfort is offered to ordinary mortals either in this life or the next."

Certainly we can only say of the Confucianists of to-day as St. Paul said of some in old time, "Having no hope and without God in the world."

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—We are very deeply indebted to the lecturer for this very instructive and delightful paper. In the present day there has been started what has been regarded as another subject of study, entitled that of comparative religion. I do not think that we who hold to the Christian faith need in the slightest degree be concerned with such a study as that. The paper has given to us some little insight into Confucianism, which will enable us to see its manifold defects; defects which are supplied by that system of faith which it is our privilege and blessing to hold. One cannot help being struck, however, with the excellent philosophical principles which appear in the teaching of Confucius here and there. Philosophy, of course, is an extremely valuable subject for the training and cultivation of the mind of man in every age and under all kinds of circumstances; but it is evident, from the experiences of the Chinese nation, that it is not such a study as enables the human understanding to progress to the extent which it needs progress. The stagnation of the Chinese nation, I think, can be understood better now that we have such a paper before us, telling us what their study has been, and how their minds have been contracted into the narrow channels of the thoughts of Confucius. As the paper has so very well remarked, it leaves man in a condition of serious want and makes no provision for the supply of that want. The man who is a bad man appears to have little or no hope held out to him by the Confucian system of philosophy or religion, in whichever way we may think it should be regarded. That which is so serious a defect in the Chinese philosophy and religion is only supplied adequately by the Christian faith. I was very glad to hear from the reader of the paper of the position which Christianity is now occupying in that great and important nation. We shall doubtless hear more of the Chinese nation in years to come than we have in the past. The Yellow Peril is one that we need not concern ourselves greatly about, but if there is one way by which the Yellow Peril may be avoided more than another, it is by the circulation of that truth which their present system of thought and life so earnestly claims

from us, and which is so wanting in their present faith and education.

The subject is now open for discussion.

Professor ORCHARD.—I am sure we owe our gratitude to the able and learned author of this paper for putting before us in so interesting a manner the character and teaching of one of the most remarkable ethical reformers and philosophers who ever trod the earth. Confucianism does not make good its claim to be a religion. A religion, as its derivation implies, is the re-binding of the human spirit to the great I AM. It is the restored relationship of man to God. The original fellowship has been lost by sin. If a man is to be restored to fellowship with God, that sin must be done away with. The great problem of any true religion is this, how to do away with sin. True religion is religion "before God and the Father," but Confucianism makes no remedy for sin. It enjoins some virtues, but it never rises higher than filial piety. If you do not rise higher than filial piety you do not raise man above his natural level. You do not restore the lost communion and fellowship with God.

Confucianism then does not deserve to be called a religion. It is not a religion. It is a system of philosophy undoubtedly, and we may concede this, I think fairly, to Confucius that he was a great ethical reformer and philosopher. At the bottom of page 57 and the beginning of page 58, Confucius himself admits the failure of his system. He admits that his system does not (even in his own case) soar far above the ordinary man of his days. He admits that his system does not free from anxieties, nor free from perplexities, nor free from fear. He admits further there are four things which he ought to do, but which his system does not enable him to do, namely, "To serve my father as I would require my son to serve me; To serve my prince as I would require my minister to serve me; To serve my elder brother as I would require my younger brother to serve me; To behave to my friend as I would require him to behave to me." He admits then that with regard to the relationships of father, subject, brother and friend, his system is a failure,—a failure in his own case, yet he was head and shoulders above most of his contemporaries.

There are one or two questions that I would like to ask the author of this paper. One is on page 47. It appears that before

Confucius had any food he offered a little of it up in sacrifice. Was this in sacrifice to the ancestors, or to the spirits, or to God ? Another question is on page 50, where it appears that if a little baby had even one tooth it was supposed to have a soul. I should be very glad to have some explanation of the supposed connection of tooth and soul, if the lecturer will kindly favour us with the supposed connection. And the third question I wish to ask is how he accounts for it that Confucianism has attained such a wonderful influence in China.

Lieut.-Colonel ALVES.—I should like to say just a word. A good many people are talking now-a-days of the numberless good religions in the world, as they call them, of which Christianity may be a little better than some others, but that they are all very much alike. I think there is a marvellous amount of sound Old Testament moral precepts of the Mosaic law in Confucianism. Mr. Elwin's friend must have sorely repented himself of that boy who was going to be drowned. According to the Mosaic ordinances, if a woman have a rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or that of his mother, they were to bring him before the elders for sentence of death. I think it would be a very good thing if that law were in existence at the present time.

There are many other points which seem to be very sound.

We remember how five and forty years ago, when Speke and Grant went to discover the source of the Nile, they struck across equatorial Africa, on to the lakes, and went down the Nile ; and if we also go to the head and work down we find in the Bible in very early days what may be called Mosaic-Levitical ordinances long before the time of Abraham. We find clean beasts in the ark, and not long after Abraham's time we see that people, when they went to meet with God, had to be clean and wash their clothes. If Levitical ordinances, which after all were only very secondary, should have been thus revealed, it was surely more important that the moral ordinances of the law should have been given as the common property of the whole world. It is not unreasonable to suppose that China should have possessed many of these ; and that Confucius, who admits not to have been original, but only a compiler of what was good, should have got hold of some of these ordinances. But even Israel was in a state of legality, keeping the law being a condition of life. It was a question of moral

ordinances, and that a man might not turn away from his righteousness that he had done and die in his sin. That is not the hope of the Christian and the teaching of the Apostle Paul. We remember that his remark concerning the heathen is that God deals with those who were desirous of doing right differently from those who have means of knowing the truth. Pre-Mosaic Revelation will account for all the wonderful truth that Confucius put into his system. We see in the Old Testament the marvellous authority that a parent had over his children, something that we do not dream of now-a-days. When Jephthah had made his rash vow, note his daughter's words. They were the words of a woman who was loyal to the truth and who made light of her own sacrifice, because her father had made his vow to Heaven. The Rechabites also in the days of Jeremiah were bound by an old vow of Jehonadab, son of Rechab, that they were not to drink wine or to live in houses. They obeyed the command of their father, although the prophet of the Lord put wine before them to drink; and they were commended for it. Filial respect and obedience are strongly enjoined in the Old Testament; and there must have been a good deal of moral doctrine floating about, some of which no doubt had got into China, which was a country not so sealed up in those days as it is now, 2,500 years later. It has had 2,500 years of training to make it more conservative than in those earlier days.

We are indebted to the reader of this paper, for he has given us a great insight into the general teaching of Confucius.

Mr. ROUSE.—Is not the ascription to Almighty God, which is quoted by Mr. Elwin, the only one to be found in all the works of Confucius, except that in his *Book of History*, he alludes to Him at times as Shang-Ti, the Supreme Ruler. Believing this to be the fact, I should judge that Confucius knew little of God as a Father, or of a way in which guilty sinners could be reconciled to Him here below and find in Him thereafter a comforter and guide. Confucius instilled principles of justice, patience, and temperance, and a spirit of wise reflection into his disciples, and both privately and publicly during his brief sway as a ruler he illustrated that spirit, and those principles in his own person; but his philanthropy stopped short at the negative maxim, "*Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you*": he rose not to the sublime principles of the Sermon on the Mount, which was also, as the

Divine Saviour tells us, the underlying one of "the law and the prophets." All things whatsoever ye *would* that men should do to you, *do* ye even so to them.

But such knowledge of God as the Chinese sage possessed there is no proof that he thought out for himself without the help of any current belief or tradition; while there is strong reason, on the other hand, to infer that at one time the Chinese at large worshipped the Creator, and Him alone. The further we go back into the history of heathen nations, the more prevalent do we find the acknowledgment of, and reverence for one great Supreme Maker of all things. Thus in Babylonia we find in the time of King Khammurabi, contemporary of Abraham (as Hommel has shown), that although the state religion was a pagan idolatry, a very large number of personal names ended with the word *ilu*, God, and contained ascriptions to God of power, wisdom or kindness; while very few are to be met with at that time in which the name of a heathen god is imbedded: but, as the centuries advanced, personal names, formed from those of heathen divinities, wholly displaced the names that set forth the nobler tradition. In like manner (as Hommel further points out) in Arabia the earliest inscriptions of the Minaean kings, and the inscriptions that succeed them through several centuries, show an abundance of personal names ending with *ili*, God, and ascribing mighty or gracious conduct to Him; but gradually the names of pagan deities worked their way into the personal names of Arabia—Minaean and Sabaeen—until at length they ousted the truly Godfearing names of old.*

So, too, as to Persia, a step nearer to China, if Zoroaster, the reputed founder of the Parsee monotheistic faith, really lived at so remote a period, as Clodd for instance assigns to him—namely, before the twelfth century B.C.—there is no special reason for supposing that he evolved that faith after he and all his countrymen had been used to a primeval worship of nature gods. Rather, in the absence of evidence, and with the analogy of contiguous

* It seems as if in their progressive rebellion against the true God, the last thing that men dared to do was to withdraw their children from His protection and put them under the protection of their fancied deities.—M. L. R.

Babylonia and Arabia before us, should we infer that Zoroaster preserved and restored the faith which had been transmitted from the time of the Deluge and of the great Dispersion which followed it, but which had already been abandoned by many of his countrymen for a worship of "the creature instead of the Creator," for the mighty forces that He directs, instead of the Spirit that made and controls them all.

Returning now to China, on the one hand, we find a strong link of communication between Babylonia and China at a remote epoch ; on the other hand, we find a rare but periodical worship of the God of Heaven, celebrated from time immemorial by the Chinese emperors themselves. The link is known from the discovery made about twenty years ago, that a striking resemblance exists between some of the earliest Chinese characters and certain of the Babylonian ones—a discovery that I for one had the pleasure of seeing set forth by Professor Lacouperie to the Philological Society in about the year 1890, when he laid fifty cuneiform letters beside fifty of the phonetic letters in use in the chief province of China before the Chinese writing was made ideographic, showing the groups to be practically identical letter for letter. The worship is that which is paid once in the year by the emperor alone in the great Temple of Heaven, which is a vast inclosure at Peking with a large altar in the midst, but no roof save the blue sky.

It is on record that seventy years ago, when a drought and famine had long been continued, the reigning emperor uttered before that altar a remarkable prayer, in which he confessed to the Supreme Ruler his sins and those of his nation, and asked forgiveness and a return of favour ; and the very next day a most abundant rain fell upon the parched region and revived its fertility. "Them that honour me I will honour, saith the LORD."

Rev. Mr. ELWIN in reply said:—Some interesting points have been raised. With regard to the offering of a little food in sacrifice with grave, respectful air, that is specially mentioned in the *Annals of Confucius*, but it does not say to whom the offering was made. We may almost take it that it was to the spirits of the ancestors. And then, with regard to the teeth, that was a very interesting question, because if the soul comes with the teeth, we may almost suppose that the soul goes with the teeth, too! I have asked the Chinese about this, and all they can say is that that tradition has

been handed down from old time. The idea has, I believe, originated in order to make infanticide all the easier. If they can persuade themselves that the baby has no soul, then there is no difficulty in putting it into a pail of water like a kitten or a puppy. Of course, if it had a soul there would be greater difficulty, and perhaps the Chinaman would feel his conscience prick him a little. The question with regard to the influence of Confucianism is also very interesting. I think myself, it is owing to his books. The books are very old and the competitive examinations are dated back from about the year 631. The nation is so saturated with this Confucian idea, the books have to be learnt absolutely perfectly without a mistake; and any scholar in China who goes in for examination would be able to repeat the nine books right through, and of course that in itself would tend to give the whole Confucian system a standing in the country which nothing else would.

Dr. Legge held that Shang-ti was the Supreme God, that is to say, the God that we worship; the God that has been handed down, but of course there are others who will not allow that. I have spoken to Chinese scholars in China—English Chinese scholars—who would not allow that Shang-ti was the Supreme God; but it is a very wide question and certainly a very difficult question. Dr. Legge, when he visited the Temple of Shang-ti, where the sacrifice is offered only once a year by the emperor to God,—he worships in the middle of the night, and offers a whole bullock; it is in the open air; there is no temple. There is simply a mound and at the top of the mound an altar, and on this altar the sacrifice; and the only worshipper is the emperor. Dr. Legge, when he visited that place, was so convinced that in that particular spot worship to the true God had been handed down from century to century, that he stooped down and took off his boots, and he walked without his boots, because he said, “This is holy ground.”

The Meeting adjourned.

COMMUNICATIONS.

Rev. F. STORRS TURNER, B.A., writes :—

Mr. Elwin has crowded within his brief sketch of Confucius as much accurate and valuable information as could be got within the limit ; but I would point out that if he had been able to prepare for it by a description of the historical background the biography would have been more vivid, and our impression of the man much increased. It is difficult for an Englishman rightly to appreciate Confucius. His reverence for antiquity is offensive to our belief in progress ; his rigid scrupulosity in matters of court etiquette, social usage, and religious ritual, seems to us pharisaical ; and his remarkable reticence in respect to the great realities of religion has caused him to be suspected of agnosticism. But to understand Confucius one must study the history of his world. The first thing we shall learn is that his world was not our world. For him and for his people during two thousand years before, our world did not exist. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, were utterly unknown. Three or four thousand miles of mountainous countries like Tibet, of waterless deserts like Gobi, and of vast uncultivated steppes, over which roamed nomad tribes of savage warriors, Huns, Scythians, Tartars, Mongols, divided Eastern Asia from Western Asia, as effectually as the Atlantic hid America from Europe. Confucius did not know the name "China," the place he knew was "all under heaven," *i.e.*, the world. This being so, those ancient books which he possessed were the only Bible he had ; and it was impossible for him to conceive of any other literature, any other civilisation, any other religion, than those of the "black-haired race." Moreover, the history he knew began with the tradition of an age of righteousness and peace, when saintly kings ruled ; whereas he lived in an age of general misrule, war, oppression and misery. The annals which we can read are full of battles and sieges. In the courts, assassinations, conspiracies, revolutions, were the rule rather than the exception. Fathers killed their sons and sons their fathers. Lust and incest polluted the palaces. It seemed as if morals and religion were dying. In such a time was Confucius sent into the world, as

he believed, to stem the flood of wickedness, and to restore the good old days of peace.

Seen against the darkness of this background, the life of Confucius is bright with noble heroism, steadfast purpose, clear-sighted wisdom, and, it seems to me, a profound religious faith. He did not teach theology, for he had none to teach; but he openly professed that his message was from heaven; and his loyal fulfilment of his mission, in self-sacrifice, poverty and reproach, is the evidence of the sincerity of his belief. And what was his message? In essence it was just this: "Be good. Heaven has made you capable of being good. Be good sons and good fathers, good husbands and good wives, good kings and good servants of your kings; brothers be good, friends be good." It was the simplest message, but mighty in its appeal to conscience as the divinely-given nature. For the sake of this we may well tolerate what seems to us an excessive devotion to forms and ceremonies. Confucius did not think it excessive. In the *Book of Rites*, it is said—

(1) Of all the methods for the good ordering of men, there is none more urgent than the use of ceremonies. Ceremonies are of five kinds, and there is none of them more important than sacrifice. Sacrifice is not a thing coming to a man from without, it issues from within him, and has its birth in his heart. When the heart is deeply moved expression is given to it by ceremonies. . . .

(2) The sacrifices of such men have their own blessing; not indeed what the world calls blessing. Blessing here means perfection; it is the name given to the complete and natural discharge of all duties.

The quotation from the "Filial Piety Classic" is apparently decisive against me; but this document is not one of the Four Books, and its authority therefore is not quite the highest. Again, the translation is open to question. In his version, Dr. Legge does not use the word "equal," but instead says "correlate."* Kang-hi's great dictionary supports Legge; it does not explain the character as meaning equal, but as "pair," "couple," "opposite." The members of a pair or couplet may be equal or unequal. For instance, the dictionary gives "husband and wife" as an illustration,

* *Religions*, p. 79.

and to the Chinese mind husband and wife are by no means equal. I should have thought Legge's translation beyond question the correct one, had I not happened upon a Chinese commentator who clearly approves the other explanation. It is possible that the original meaning was that Duke Chan "associated" the worship of his father and King Wan with God, by worshipping them at the same time and with the same or similar sacrifices, and that afterwards this practice introduced the notion of equality of the beings worshipped. At any rate it seems to me that too much stress must not be laid upon one text. In one of the Psalms it is said, "I said ye are gods," and the meaning is not easily explained; but I think no one would assert that all the Israelites, or all their nobles and judges, were said to be "gods" in the sense of equality with Jehovah. For the interpretation of Confucius I rely upon the general tenour of his teaching. But during more than two thousand years, and among many millions of scholars, no doubt there have been many different interpretations of that teaching among the Chinese; and it is not surprising that foreign students differ in opinion.