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A STUDY OF THE TEACHINGS OF CONFUCIUS IN
THE LIGHT OF JESUS' TEACHINGS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Theology

by
Rebecca Ke-Hsin Liu
May 1954

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THE LIGHT OF JESUS' TEACHINGS

by

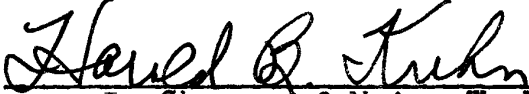
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Among a large fraction of mankind, Confucius has for many centuries been considered one of the most important men that ever lived. On the Confucian ideal China has modeled herself with all her own patience and discrimination. It was true that whether or not a man of her people proposed to be Buddhist or Taoist, he will be also a Confucian. He cannot escape it nor would he if he could. And not only so, this mighty influence was accepted by Japan and Korea and in a very subtle measure it modeled the nascent character of that people. Many Japanese have said to L. A. Beck, "Whether our people are Shinto or Buddhist, we are still Confucian. It clashes with neither of the others. It is a heart of one being."¹

This opinion was maintained years ago. But the question arises whether or not one can believe in Confucianism nowadays. This is especially important to the modern Chinese of today, a question that directly challenges their minds and cannot be brushed aside. A positive answer was given by a noted Chinese scholar of both Western and Oriental culture.

¹ Lily Adams Beck, The Story of Oriental Philosophy (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1928), p. 223.

For there is a centrality or, shall I say, universality, about the Confucian attitude and point of view, reflected in a joy in Confucian belief that I see even among maturing modern Chinese who have received a Western education. The centrality and basic appeal of its humanism have strange strength of their own.²

According to S. H. Dixon, the most powerful reason why the final phase of the Communist victory was so swift and complete in China, was the breakdown of the Confucian culture, with its ethical, social and political principles. He quoted from Dr. T. C. Chao's remark in 1947.

Chinese culture has collapsed. The causes of this mighty disintegration are not far to seek. Social, political, and intellectual revolutions, followed by wars and invasions, undermined China's spiritual foundation. The new education finally completed the process of disintegration....China had never experienced a shake-up like this, for all past changes left the root of Chinese life untouched.³

He insisted that the rejection of the historic Confucian philosophy of life which had done so much to set up the pattern of China's political and social life, cut away the main foundations of China's civilization. Group after group of students of China graduated without any clear, consistent philosophy or faith to live by; moral and

² Yu-tang Lin, The Wisdom of Confucius (New York: The Modern Library, 1943), p. 1.

³ S. H. Dixon, "The Experience of Christian Missions in China," The International Review of Missions 42:285, July 1953.

cultural instability increased. Thinking Chinese eagerly sought a new pattern of living and a new political system. At the close of eight years of war with Japan the better educated section of the Chinese people was ready to welcome any convincing gospel that seemed to meet its needs. The vacuum was waiting to be filled. This occasion gave Communism a chance to step in.⁴

How much truth it has in this opinion is somewhat questionable. It is partially true in such a sense that there was a group of thinking Chinese who eagerly sought a new pattern of living and a new political system, and who were sympathetic to the Communists when they first came in. But it is not a sufficient evidence to prove the presumption of the breakdown of Confucianism, because the minority group of Chinese would not be able to represent the whole body of Chinese people.

Though the fact that the awakening consciousness of the insufficiency of Confucianism and the desire to accept something better among some educated class is a reality, it does not mean that actually they are ready to reject absolutely the past heritage to accept a new philosophy entirely different like Communism. The purging movement among the Communists may be an explanation.

⁴ Loc. cit.

After all, this test of Communism in China would be entirely a failure, because it could not harmonize the various ideas of Chinese life. It is impossible for this philosophy of materialism to change such an age long traditional, spiritual centered culture rooted deeply in the majority of Chinese people over night. Basically, it is not what the Chinese people need. Lin Yutang so well discussed Confucianism in the Chinese history, and in the future.

During the political chaos and battle of ideas in the centuries immediately following Confucius, Confucianism won the victory over Taoism, Motianism, Naturalism, Legalism, Communism and a host of other philosophies. It maintained this supremacy over the Chinese people for the length of two thousand five hundred years, with the exception of a few periods, and it always came back to its own stronger than ever....Today Confucianism meets a still greater rival, not Christianity, but the entire system of Western thought and life and the coming of a new social order, brought about by the industrial age, As a political system aiming at the restoration of a feudal order, Confucianism will probably be put out of date by the developments of modern political science and economics. But as a system of humanist culture, as a fundamental viewpoint concerning the conduct of life and of society, I believe it will still hold its own. We have not yet progressed so far that, for instance, the doctrines of Karl Marx and Confucius no longer meet, or have no longer a meeting point. Confucianism, as a live force in the Chinese people, is still going to shape our national conduct of affairs and modify Communism in China, if it is ever introduced. We will merely repeat the fight with Western Communism that Mencius fought with the early Chinese Communists and won.⁵

⁵ Lin, op. cit., pp. 1-3.

The fact that the philosophy of Confucius has persisted so long despite efforts of Emperor Chin Shih-hwang to destroy them by fire, the imprisonment of the Confucianists in the Eastern Han Dynasty, the purging of the Confucianists in the Tang Dynasty ... and the efforts of all kinds of reactionary movements against it, proves that there must be some essential, dynamic and indestructible truth in it which should not be ignored.

Furthermore, the philosophy of Confucius has played a part in the development of some of the most basic social and political conceptions of the modern West.⁶

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a number of the Jesuit missionaries entered Chian and became scholars and even officials at the Chinese court. In letter after letter to Europe, they told of the wonderful new philosopher, Confucius, whom they had discovered. The following events are pointed out by H. G. Creel,

Thus Confucius became known to Europe just at the beginning of the philosophic movement known as the Enlightenment. A large number of philosophers, including Leibniz, Wolff, and Voltaire, as well as statesmen and men of letters, used his name and his ideas to further their arguments, and they themselves were influenced in the process. Both in France and in England the fact that China, under the impulsion of Confucianism, had long since virtually abolished hereditary aristocracy, was used as a weapon in the attack on hereditary privilege. The philosophy of Confucius played a role of

⁶ Herrlee Glessner Creel, Confucius, the Man and the Myth (New York: The John Day Co., 1949), p. ix.

some importance in the development of democratic ideals in Europe and in the background of the French Revolution. Through French thought it indirectly influenced the development of democracy in America. It is of interest that Thomas Jefferson proposed, as "the keystone of the arch of our government," an educational system that shows remarkable similarities to the Chinese examination system. The extent to which Confucianism contributes to the development of Western democracy is often forgotten, for rather curious reasons that we must examine in their proper place.⁷

The texts of Confucianism so called one of seven Bibles have been translated into many languages.⁸ A great many books and articles have been written concerning the teachings of Confucius, but in none is it written exclusively in comparison with the teachings of Jesus. It is worthwhile to have a thorough study to find out the most significant resemblances and differences between the teachings of them. The conclusion would enable the evangelism among the Confucianists to be carried out to the greatest advantage.

I. STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVES

It was the objective of this study (1) to trace the background and brief life of Confucius; (2) to inquire into the main writings of Confucius; (3) to criticize the teachings of Confucius in the light of Jesus' teachings; (4) to

⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸ Albert Wilhelm Martin, Seven Great Bibles (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1930), p. x.

give a conclusion to this study.

II. MAJOR PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

There are five major purposes of the study, listed in the following:

To introduce a new approach in study. The approach of comparative study of the teachings of Confucius with those of Jesus is attempted, through which both the similarities and differentiations would be apparently revealed.

To show God's revelation to non-Christian people. Man is constitutionally a religious being. In Acts 17:26-28, it states that God made all nations and determined their time and habitations in order that they should seek Him if haply they might find Him.

Dr. Kraemer maintains that it should not be denied that God has been working in the minds of men outside the sphere of the Christian revelation, and that there have been and may be now acceptable men of faith, who live under the sway of the non-Christian religions. Here it is admitted that even in the non-Christian religions God does not leave himself without witness; His spirit works there.⁹

As the late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, puts it,

⁹ Francis C. M. Wei, The Spirit of Chinese Culture (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 7.

The conscience of the heathen man is the voice of Christ within him....By the Word of God--that is to say, by Jesus Christ--Isaiah, and Plato, and Zoroaster, and Buddha, and Confucius conceived and uttered such truths as they declared. There is only one divine light; and every man in his measure is enlightened by it.¹⁰

To furnish missionaries an understanding of Chinese heritage. Two passages of Scripture found in the Gospel are quoted by Y. C. Yang to illustrate a very interesting story of missions. One is the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. When the woman heard Jesus speaking of the living water he could give, she asked the Lord this very poignant and challenging question, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?"¹¹

The second reference, Simon Peter, in answering the question that Jesus put to his disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."¹²

The first passage contains the question of the non-Christian inquirer; the second passage presents the answer of Christian faith. They represent the proper method of approach and the secret of effective preaching.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 24 f.

¹¹ John 4:10-15.

¹² Matt. 16:13-16.

Every people has its own "father Jacob", who has left them "a well" from which they drink, and his children. In him they have reposed reverence and confidence; from him they have been looking for leading and guidance; and he, in their esteem and judgment, has been superlatively important, an outstanding figure and a matchless leader. When missionaries, present to such other people the Lord, Jesus Christ and His Gospel, calling them to repent and to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, it is fair and natural that they should want to know and be convinced that Christ is really greater than their "father Jacob".

So it is with those in their ministry to all the "Samaritans" of the world--the Confucianists, the Buddhists, the Taoists....the missionaries must be able to answer to their satisfaction that Christ is greater than their Jacob. But surely they cannot give an intelligent answer or even an honest opinion, much less any convincing assurance, if they do not know who their Jacob is, nor anything about his well. A very familiar Chinese proverb says that to be always assured of success one must know the one he deals with as well as himself.¹³

Speaking concretely and with particular reference to China, it may be concluded that the best and most effec-

¹³ Yung Ching Yang, China's Religious Heritage (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, n.d.), pp. 15-18.

tive way for missionaries who want to guide the Chinese is to start by understanding them. Those who want to teach the Chinese must first learn what they have been taught. It is only thus that Christianity can go on "to fulfill" rather than "to destroy", for only with that preparation can it know when and how to say "yes" and "no".¹⁴

In the teachings of Confucius there are many beautiful gems of noble truth which are strikingly similar to the teachings of Jesus Christ. While recognizing the common truth, the true differences may be affirmed. As Bishop Bloomfield has said, "The surest way to bring a man to acknowledge his errors, is to give him full credit for whatever he had learned of the truth."¹⁵

Tracing back to the history of missions in China, the Christians both during the Tang Dynasty and in the Mongol period had failed to understand the essence of Chinese culture and philosophy and to make a real impact upon it or utilize it as a medium for presenting Christianity to the Chinese.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁵ C. Chacko Thomas, Points of Contact Between Christianity and Hinduism. An unpublished Master's Thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., 1951. p. xiii.

¹⁶ Wei, op. cit., p. 17.

An understanding of what is going on in the minds of the people is the key to understanding the great national movements which are and will be going on in the country. Christianity must hold the key in order to know the best approach in bringing Christ to China and China to Christ.

To challenge the Chinese. The final purpose of study is to challenge the Chinese to realize the insufficiency of the teachings of Confucius to satisfy the longings of the soul or the instincts of their moral nature. So that they may seek after the superior truth of Jesus and to be convinced to accept the living water of life given by Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

The great task of the thinking Chinese today is not seeking to solve their problems by rejecting or destroying their cultural heritage as the Communists did, not by blindly restoring or preserving their heritage without discrimination, but to rediscover the past heritage and compare it with Christianity by which the West has been enlightened to readjust her bearing to fit into a newer and larger environment, and to seek new life to live in a new world.

III. RESOURCES

The most difficult problem in historical research

of ancient Chinese philosophy is the choice of source-material. The critical problem and classics controversy will be dealt with in Chapter III, exclusively. The author accepts the generally received canon of the sayings and writings of Confucius as authentic, and deals exclusively with their significance as viewed carefully in the light of Jesus' teaching.

The sources are the books by Confucius and his disciples; the book of Mencius; commentaries by his later followers; books by later scholars dealing with the teachings of Confucius; New Testament and books about the teachings of Jesus; Encyclopedia; newspapers and articles.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND AND BRIEF LIFE OF CONFUCIUS

I. THE BACKGROUND

Confucius, the greatest philosopher of China, lived in the sixth century before Christ. He was a contemporary of Laozi, (Lao-tzu), the founder of Taoism. In the same century there lived the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel in Palestine, the philosophers Solon and Pythagoras in Greece, and Buddha in India.¹

His thought was different, in its active, practical, and strenuous emphasis, from Laozi's inactivity and Buddha's world renunciation; he claimed no direct divine revelation as Ezekiel and Daniel did, but he had some vague conceptions about God and a rather plain system of political and ethical precepts which have influenced his countrymen for more than twenty-five centuries.

In order to understand the events of his life and the influence of his opinions, it is necessary to get some impression of the world that existed in his time.

Chow Dynasty. He lived in the period of Chow

¹ Alfred Doebelin, The Living Thoughts of Confucians (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1940), p. 3.

Dynasty which lasted from 1122 to 250 B.C.² It was established by King Wu and was in a declining condition at the time Confucius was born and the central authority, which gave its name to the Central States or "Middle Kingdom" as it is called by Chinese even today, was powerless to enforce its dicta upon the feudal states which were its nominal vassals.³

In fact, the central government became weaker, and many feudal princes began to grow in power by annexing small feudal States and by conquering undeveloped tribes in the South and in the West. Ignoring orders from the Imperial Government, the feudal princes usurped powers and called themselves kings and dukes as they pleased. Wars were prevalent and people were massacred by cities. The Empire fell into hopeless anarchy.⁴

State Lu. Confucius' native state Lu was founded by the famous Duke of Chow, a brother of the founder of the dynasty. It was considered a repository of the ancient culture and ceremonies and became the center of Chinese

² James Legge, "Confucius," Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, VI, 907.

³ W. Gilbert Walshe, "Confucius," Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics, IV, 16.

⁴ Leonard S. Hsu, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1932), p. 8.

civilization. Though it was relatively small and weak, it persisted until the very end of the Chow Dynasty. Of course it was constantly beset by troubles, from within and from without. The internal politics of Lu presented an aspect that was common to other states as well. In China as a whole the various feudal states had grown in power at the expense of the king until he was reduced to a puppet. The same within the feudal states, there was a tendency for the clans of the principal ministers to usurp power at the expense of the ruler of the states.⁵

Political chaos and corruption. To describe the political conditions of that period, Mencius, one of the most distinguished followers of Confucius, said,

Again the world fell into decay and principles faded away. Perverse speakings and oppressive deeds waxed rife again. There were instances of ministers who murdered their sovereigns, and of sons who murdered their fathers. Confucius was afraid, and made the "Spring and Autumn." What the "Spring and Autumn" contains are matters proper to the emperor. On this account Confucius said, "Yes! It is the 'Spring and Autumn' which will make men know me, and it is the 'Spring and Autumn' which will make men condemn me".⁶

Needless to say, political corruption was prevalent and false propaganda led public opinion astray. The evils of the rule of political bosses were notorious. Further-

⁵ Creel, op. cit., pp. 17 f.

⁶ Mencius, bk. 3, pt. 2, ch. 9.

more, political bosses and landlords had formed combinations contrary to the interests of the mass of the people. Political tyranny and economic exploitation went hand in hand. In Confucius' traveling with his disciples, they witnessed revolutionary movements on every hand. Public grievances against tyrannical governments were being expressed throughout the Empire. It was those firsthand observations that Confucius and his disciples drew many of their political principles.⁷

The time of Confucius was well concluded by
Leonard S. Hsu,

The age of Confucius was marked by political chaos, revolutionary movements, moral degeneration, the influence of corrupt demagogues in office, the grievances of common people against powerful militarists and landlords, the prevalence of pessimists or irresponsible hermits, and the domination of anarchism, extreme individualism, political transcendentalism, military despotism, selfish imperialism, and unethical mercantilism. These factors constituted the chief sources of the political philosophy of Confucianism.⁸

During this period of chaos, Confucius had quite a group of contemporaries with various view points of philosophy which ought to be mentioned here.

Nihilists. There flourished a large number of political nihilists at the time of Confucius. For

⁷ Hsu, op. cit., p. 9.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 24 f.

instance Lao-tzu, a pioneer of Chinese anarchism, advocated the abolition of state and government, the overthrow of the existing social order, the destruction of all morality, and a return to the state of nature.⁹

To Leonard S. Hsu, Taoism had no little influence on the development of the political philosophy of Confucianism. For instance, the Confucian theories of natural and social evolution, of the essentials of the state, of government, of virtue and of passive resistance, showed distinctly Taoist origins. But the doctrine of rectification, of political unity, and of political paternalism were but direct antitheses of Lao-tsu's ideas.¹⁰

Pessimists. Another group of the contemporaries of Confucius may be classed as anti-social citizens. They were the hermits or world-haters who, seeing the demoralizing condition of the time, became hopeless pessimists. They withdrew from ordinary society and retreated to remote primitive regions. Willing to live under rather primitive environments, they refused to be interested in what was the spirit of Confucius. He set out to improve society rather than to withdraw from it and seek refuge in a Utopia.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., pp. 10 f.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 12.

One day Confucius lost his way in the country. Seeing two farmers working in the field, he sent one of his disciples to inquire the way. These two farmers, who were hermits, insulted the disciple and criticized Confucius for being so restless in his endeavor to get into office to improve existing political situations. One of them said, "Disorder like a swelling flood, spread over the whole empire, and who is he that will change the state for you?" Then the farmers continued to work, paying no attention to the questions asked. When the disappointed disciple told Confucius what had happened, Confucius remarked sorrowfully,

I cannot associate with birds and beasts. If I associate not with my fellow-beings, with whom shall I associate? If peace and order were prevailing in the empire, I would not care to change it.¹²

Militarists. The most popular group were those dominated by a "dangerous" political philosophy. They propagated the theory that virtue as a basis for the state was not practicable; that is, the state was not bound by ordinary moral rules. The world was a practical one, leaving no room for moral ideals. A government of ethical ideals was considered only an ideal. The state which attempted to achieve such ideals would thereby

¹² Analects, bk. 18, ch. 6, cited by Hsu, op. cit. p. 12.

only commit suicide. They favored a strict enforcement of the laws with heavy punishment for those who violated them. The test of a State was its military strength. Therefore, war was inevitable means of reuniting the Empire.¹³

II. LIFE OF CONFUCIUS

Although a life history full of romance has been painted for the great teacher by Chinese historians, a large portion of the story is doubted by modern critics. In order to make the story as reliable as possible, the story here has to be sketchy. It may be divided into three periods.

A. EARLY LIFE

Birth place and date. Confucius (551-478 B.C.) was born in the state of Lu, at the town of Tsou, in the western part of modern province Shantung. His name was Kung Chiu, Chung-ni of which "Kung" was his family name, "Chiu", the personal name and "Chung-ni", the special name given upon reaching full age.¹⁴ Kung-fu-tze, meaning "master" or "teacher Kung," was given by his disciples and afterwards Latinized into "Confucius" by Jesuit

¹³ Ibid., pp. 9f.

¹⁴ Lin, op. cit., p. 49.

missionaries in China during the seventeenth century.¹⁵

His accurate birthday was announced lately by the Executive Yuan of the Republic of China to be September 28th, which is the conclusion of the research of many archaeologists and historians. This day is now celebrated also as "Teacher's Day" in honor of the teachers and the "great teacher".¹⁶

Parents. His early ancestor was Kung Fangshu who was a ninth-generation descendant of a king of Sung and the fourth generation ancestor of Confucius.¹⁷ His father Shuliang Ho was an officer in charge of the district of Tsow in the state of Lu and had been famous for his strength and daring. Confucius was a son of his father at seventy-one years of age and three years later his father died; he and his mother, twenty-one years of age, were left in poverty.¹⁸

He was thus early deprived of his father's guidance and care, but his thoughtful and loving mother, Yen Cheng-

¹⁵ Marcenus R. K. Wright, The Moral Aphorisms and Terseological Teachings of Confucius (Grand Rapids, Michigan: U. G. Clarke Pub. House, 1900), p. 10.

¹⁶ Taipei broadcast, The Young China Morning Paper (San Francisco) August 9, 1952.

¹⁷ Lin, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁸ Miles M. Dawson, The Ethics of Confucius (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), p. xvii.

tsai, who was well educated and of good character, extended to him the protection of her guardian heart and hand, and he received from her that kindly attention and needful assistance during his childhood.¹⁹

Education. At fifteen he set his hand upon learning.²⁰ The truth of the traditional story that Confucius studied philosophy under Lao-tzu, music under Chang Hung and Su Hsiang, and politics under Tang Tsu, has been doubted, but it was probable that he was very industrious and eager to learn from great masters in different subjects. He said of himself, "I was not one who was in possession of knowledge; I am only one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there."²¹

Again he said of himself,

He is simply a man who, in his eager pursuit of knowledge forgets his food, who in the joy of its attainment forgets his sorrows, and who does not perceive that old age is coming on.²²

Here his constant hard work in scholarship throughout life is apparently shown.

Marriage. Confucius was married in accordance with

¹⁹ Wright, op. cit., p. 11.

²⁰ Analects, bk. 2, ch. 4, v. 1.

²¹ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 19.

²² Analects, bk. 7, ch. 18, v. 2.

Chinese custom at nineteen. At twenty he became the father of a son, the only one through whom the family has continued to the present day. He has also two daughters, but nothing of them is known. The reports of his divorce are not sufficiently attested, and there was no report of him ever marrying a second wife or being guilty of social immorality.

Early employment. When Confucius was young, he was very poor, and had to do a variety of manual work.²³ Mencius said that Confucius was once a keeper of stores and at another time a superintendent of public fields in charge of oxen and sheep. In all these duties he proved himself efficient.²⁴

As a teacher. At twenty-two he became a school teacher which was his main employment throughout life, instructing the classics and principles of right conduct and government to the young students, gathered about him. His students during his life time rose to three thousand and of these seventy-two became his life long disciples. He had not fixed hours of instruction nor a fixed place of abode, but traveled about, accompanied by students.

²³ Analects, bk. 9, ch. 6, v. 3.

²⁴ Mencius, bk. 5, pt. 2, ch. 5, v. 4.

Several times along with his teaching, he was administrator for short periods.

While traveling the state of Chi, they passed by Tai Mountain, and an incident occurred which may be narrated as a specimen of the way in which he communicated to them his lessons. The attention of travelers was arrested by a woman weeping and wailing at a grave. Confucius stopped and sent one of his followers to ask the reason for the grief. "My husband's father", said she, "was killed here by a tiger and my husband also and now my son has met the same fate." Being asked why she did not leave so fatal a spot, she replied that here there was no oppressive government. "Remember this", said Confucius to his disciples, "oppressive government is fiercer and more feared than a tiger."²⁵

B. MIDDLE LIFE

Political service. At the age of fifty-two, he was made chief magistrate of the city of Chung-tu, which had thrived and improved under his care. Then the Duke of Lu appointed him minister of crime. The administration of Confucius was evidently successful. The fact that the state of Lu advanced to a position of commanding importance

²⁵ James Legge, "Confucius," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th edition, VI, p. 260.

among the states aroused the fear of its neighbor state Chi. So a plot was laid by the prince of Chi sending a large company of girls trained in music, and dancing to Lu. Thus the prince of Lu lost all interest in his people and government, and gave himself only to pleasure and indulgence and Confucius was neglected. Finally, Confucius withdrew from his position.²⁶

Wandering. Confucius was so convinced that the experiment he had made in his native state might prove of permanent value in any state which would earnestly apply his principles. Then at the age of fifty-six he started to spend the next period of more than thirteen years wandering among the feudal states trying to induce one prince after another to let him try his schemes and bring peace and order out of the chronic confusion.²⁷ His journeyings were confined with the modern provinces of Ho-nan, Shantung, and the borders of Ho-peh and Hu-peh.²⁸

Many times he was exposed to danger, want, starvation and pursuit, but trusting in God and himself, he went on traveling.²⁹

²⁶ Dawson, op. cit., p. xviii.

²⁷ James Legge, "Confucius," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, VI, 909.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 907.

²⁹ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 12; bk. 9, ch. 5.

Though his wandering was entirely a failure, with all his discouragements, he never lost heart and became pessimistic.³⁰

C. -LATER LIFE

Literary labour. These last years of wandering became the turning point of Confucius' career, after which he admitted his full failure in seeking a political career and returned to his native country to devote himself to literary labour. It was in his sixty-ninth year that Confucius returned to Lu.³¹

The actual authorship of but one book is ascribed to him, namely: Chun Chiu, or Spring and Autumn. Several collections of books, regarded as Classics, already ancient when he was born, were edited by him, namely: Yi Ching, the Canon of Changes; Hsiao Ching, the Canon of Filial Piety; Shu Ching, the Canon of History; Shih Ching, the Canon of Poetry; Li Ching, the Canon of Rites.³²

Death. In 482 B.C., he lost his only son, the next year his favorite student, Yen Hwuy. In 478 B.C. Tse-lu,

³⁰ James Legge, "Confucius," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th edition, VI, 262.

³¹ Lin, op. cit., pp. 30 f.

³² Dawson, op. cit., pp. xiii-xv.

another of his favorites, passed away, which caused him great sorrow, and in the same year Confucius died at the age of seventy-two.³³

After his death the highest honors were bestowed upon him. The prince of his native state came to pronounce eulogy upon him and he was buried in what is now called the "Forest of Kung", to which trees were originally brought from other states by his disciples.

Later, over six hundred families moved to the vicinity of his tomb forming what was called "the Confucian Village", at Chu-fu, Shantung. His house became a memorial hall in which his clothes, hats, musical instruments, carriages, and books were stored, and is annually visited by vast numbers of people.³⁴

Because he gave no definite idea of worshipping God, his followers proceeded to worship him. There are more than 1600 Confucian temples in China today worshipping him and performing sacrifices to him.³⁵

D. CHARACTER OF CONFUCIUS

Lin Yu-tang insists that the great prestige of

³³ Ibid., p. xviii.

³⁴ Hsu, op. cit., pp. 7 f.

³⁵ Gerald B. Winrod, The Great Religions of the World (Wichita, Kansas: Defender Publishers, 1943), p. 17.

Confucius and Confucian teachings during the centuries after his death, as well as in subsequent Chinese history, must be ascribed to three factors: first, the intrinsic appeal of Confucian ideas to the Chinese way of thinking; second, the enormous historical learning and scholarship accumulated and practically monopolized by the Confucianists; and thirdly, the evident charm of personality and prestige of the Master himself.

There are certain world known great teachers, whose personality seems to account for their influence more than their scholarship. For instance, Jesus and Socrates, who themselves did not write any books of account, but who left such a tremendous influence which has persisted throughout the ages.³⁶

Some of the best characterizations may be mentioned in the following:

Originality: Some people think, however, that Confucius was "a transmitter and not an originator, believing in and loving the ancients", quoted from his own words in the Analects. But these words simply express the characteristic modesty of the Chinese. Another reason Confucius used the names of the ancient kings to father his theories as told by himself, when he said to Tseng Tzu,

36 Lin, op. cit., pp. 20 f.

"I humble myself in order to borrow authority," recorded in Adjunct to the Canon of Filial Piety. On one hand, he could escape danger from the princes, and on the other, he could win the confidence of the people.

Yet he sometimes confessed that he was an originator. In the Adjunct to the Spring and Autumn, he said, "A sage is never born to do nothing; he must produce something in order to show the mind of God. I am the wooden-tongued bell, and make laws for the world."³⁷

Optimist. Once a king asked one of his disciples about Confucius, and the disciple could not make an answer. Then the disciple returned to tell Confucius of the incident, and Confucius replied,

Why didn't you tell him that I am a man who forgets to eat when he is enthusiastic about something, who forgets all his worries when he is happy, and who is not aware that old age is coming on?³⁸

In this statement, there is revealed something of the joy of life, the enthusiasm, and the positive and persistent urge for doing something.

As an illustration of this positive urge in Confucius, there is also the following record. One of his

³⁷ Huan-chang Chen, The Economic Principles of Confucius and His School (New York: Columbia University Longmans Green & Co., 1911), p. 30.

³⁸ Lin, op. cit., p. 21.

disciples was putting up for the night at a place and was asked by the gatekeeper where he was from. Tse-lu replied that he was from Confucius, and the gatekeeper remarked, "Oh, is he the fellow who knows that a thing can't be done and still wants to do it?"³⁹

Gentility. His gentility and hospitality toward all desiring to learn was recorded in the following incident, resembling the story in the Bible when Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." The people of a certain village were given to mischief, and one day some young people from the village came to see Confucius, and the disciples were surprised that Confucius received them. Confucius remarked,

Why be harsh on them? What concerns me is how they come and not what they do when they go away. When a man approaches me with pure intentions, I respect his pure intentions, although I cannot guarantee what he does afterwards."⁴⁰

Hatred of hypocrites. There was no class of people that Confucius hated more than the goody-goody hypocrites whom Confucius described as "the thieves of virtues". It reminds us of how Jesus hated the hypocrites, scribes and Pharisees. Once such a person, Ju Pei, wanted to see

³⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

Confucius. Confucius sent word to say he was not at home. When Ju Pei was still outside the door, Confucius took up a stringed instrument and sang, in order to let him hear it and know that he was at home.

Another time, a corrupt official, by the name of Yang Ho, presented Confucius with a leg of pork. As the two persons heartily disliked each other, Yang Ho found out when Confucius would not be at home and then presented the gift at his home as a matter of courtesy. Confucius also took the trouble to find the time when Yang Ho was not at home and then went to say thanks to him and leave his card.⁴¹

Humility. Several times he said of himself that he was not a "saint". Once he said,

In letters, I am perhaps equal to other men, but the character of the superior man carrying out in his conduct what he professes is what I have not yet attained to.⁴²

Another time he said, "If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the Yi, and then I might come to be without great faults."⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 23 f.

⁴² Analects, bk. 7, ch. 32.

⁴³ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 16.

Tse-kung loved to criticize people and Confucius said, calling him by his intimate name, "Ah Sze, you are very clever, aren't you? I have no time for such things."⁴⁴

Sense of humor. So often Confucius is assumed as always being serious and rigid; evidently, there was a lot of fun in him. He seems to have led a full, joyous life, the full human life of feelings and artistic taste. For he was a man of deep emotion and artistic taste.

Once in reply to a question from his disciples concerning the rulers of his day, Confucius remarked, "Oh, those are rice bags", which meant that they were good for only filling themselves with rice.⁴⁵

After his failure in wandering, he compared himself and his disciples with a deep pathos, but in the best type of humor, to a nondescript band of animals, "neither buffaloes, nor tigers", wandering in the wilds, and began to ask his disciples what was wrong with him. After the third answer, Confucius approved and said to the disciple who made that clever answer, smilingly, "Is that so? Oh, Son of Yen, if you were a rich man, I would be your butler."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Lin, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

CHAPTER III

CONFUCIAN LITERATURE AND CRITICAL PROBLEM

It has been said that the work of Confucius is no greater than his writings. In order to secure the best source of his teaching, one must discover what his writings are, and what writings of his disciples are to be regarded as major sources. Since they are the oldest and best literature of the Chinese, they occupy the first department of the Chinese library. The study of them is very difficult; many good scholars, spending their whole lives, study thoroughly merely a part of them. Yet their principles can never be exhausted.¹

There is a great critical problem, about the authenticity of the writings of Confucius and his followers, which is necessary to be discussed.

I. ORTHODOX VIEW

The Confucian literature, according to the orthodox view, may be classified into: (1) Canonical Classics by Confucius; (2) Four Books by his followers; and (3) Other Records and Commentaries.

¹ Chen, op. cit., p. 23.

A. CANONICAL CLASSICS--BY CONFUCIUS

All the different writings of Confucius himself are called "Chings", the same word used for "Bible" in Chinese. It would be better to use the translation, "Canons". They may be reviewed according to their original order as follows:

The Canon of Poetry (Shih Ching). It contains 305 poems. Except the first two poems, they were all written by different authors in the Chow Dynasty (1182-598 B. C.), but they were all edited by Confucius according to his own principles. All the poems are the expression of human nature and the description, narration or criticism of social and political conditions. It was also a song book which could be sung in harmony with music.²

The Canon of History (Shu Ching). It has twenty-eight books. It covers the history of China from Yao (2357-2258 B. C.) to Duke Mu of Chin (659-621 B. C.), and gives the most important documents of this period. These documents, written by different authors, were edited by Confucius. The "System of Yao", the "Tribute of Yu", the "Great Model" and the "Code of Po" are apparently the

² Ibid., p. 24.

works of Confucius himself, because their style is different from that of the other documents and similar to the style of Confucius. This book is a study of history and political science.³

The Canon of Rites (Li Ching). It has seventeen books and describes the details of eight rites. These eight rites are: (1) capping for the indication of maturity, (2) marriage, (3) funeral, (4) sacrifice, (5) district-drinking, (6) game of archery, (7) diplomatic intercourse, and (8) visiting of the emperor by the princes. Such rites were the old customs and manners collected and prescribed by Confucius.⁴

The Canon of Changes (Yi Ching). It is divided into two parts, and has sixty-four books. It is the doctrine of evolution. The thought is mystical; the words are figurative; the illustrations are mathematical. It refers mainly to heaven and earth, and to the relation between husband and wife. The last two books of this Book are called "Success" and "Failure".⁵

³ Ibid., pp. 24 f.

⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

The Spring and Autumn (Chun Chiu). This book was originally the Annals of Lu, but Confucius changed it into the present form. It covers the period of 242 years, (722-481 B.C.), and records the events during the reigns of twelve dukes. It was said that for the preparation of this book, Confucius sent fourteen disciples to collect the materials from different nations. It is an inductive work, written entirely by Confucius. This Book is the most important of all his works.⁶ It was designed to serve as an epitome of his teachings upon all ethical, social, and religious subjects. Mencius thus speaks of it.⁷

It is not quite historical in character; the words drawn from history are but the figures by which Confucius has illustrated his principles as he said, "I should like to convey my ideas as pure theories, but it is deeper, truer, clearer, brighter to represent them through the actions of men".⁸

B. FOUR BOOKS--BY HIS FOLLOWERS

The Four Books (Ssu Shu) are considered as having grown out of the Five Canons and are much more familiar

⁶ Loc. cit.

⁷ Dawson, op. cit., p. xiii.

⁸ Chen, op. cit., p. 26.

to the Chinese. In days before the introduction of the modern school system, every school boy had to commit them to memory.

The Great Learning (Ta Hsueh). The term "Ta Hsueh" is the designation now used in China for all universities. This book is a treatise on Higher Education or Great Learning and an essay on moral culture. The central thought or thesis is succinctly stated in the opening sentence, "What the Great Learning teaches, is--illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence."⁹ That is to have a person's mind so illuminated that he can see the truth and to let his light so shine that truth may be glorified thereby. This is the true object of real great learning or higher education.¹⁰ It was committed to writing by Tse-Sze, the grandson of Confucius.¹¹

The Doctrine of the Mean (Chung Yung). This, also is the work of disciples of Confucius and their early disciples. It contains some of the deepest, the most significant and beautiful ideas of Confucianism. It is a

⁹ The Great Learning, Text, v. 1.

¹⁰ Yang, op. cit., pp. 67 f.

¹¹ Dawson, op. cit., p. xv.

wonderful discourse on the Doctrine of the Golden Mean, which has had profound influence upon the national character and temperament of the Chinese people. It may be said that "the grand idea is the search for and the formulation of a statement of an eternal truth, or a rule of life, which can be of universal application." The golden mean is supposed to be the proper center of gravity for all correct human actions.¹²

The Analects (Lun Yu). It is a compilation of the discourses and sayings of Confucius, and of dialogues with his disciples. This document is the principal source of the information on the life and ideals of Confucius. It occupies a place in the Confucian Classics comparable with the Gospels in the Bible.

It covers a wider range of subjects dealing with ethics and morality as they apply to the individual, the family, the society, and the state or government. The Master's discourses and description of the ideal man (Chun Tze) may be regarded as the cornerstone around which all other parts of the structure fit together.¹³ The authorship was supposed to be the disciples of Con-

¹² Yang, op. cit., p. 69.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 70 f.

fucius, Chung-keng, Tzu-yu, Tzu-hsia and others.¹⁴

The Mencius (Meng Tzu). It was the work of Philosopher Mencius, and has seven books. Dr. Yung-ching Yang noted that Mencius is to Confucianism what Paul is to Christianity, and the Book of Mencius can be compared to the Epistles of Paul in the Bible. The sayings of Mencius were written in a more vigorous style and Mencius seemed to be much more socially and politically minded.

The two chief themes of Mencius are (1) the benevolence and righteousness in government, and (2) the inherent goodness of human nature. The one is the basis of good government, and the other is the starting point of moral development of the individual.

In the Analects, there is a picture of a great sage, sublime and serene, firm yet gentle, dispensing words of practical wisdom. In Mencius, an ardent reformer, with dynamic convictions and a ringing message, who typified the hero in action and righteous enthusiasm can be seen.¹⁵

C. OTHER RECORDS AND COMMENTARIES

The Canon of Filial Piety (Hsiao Ching). This

¹⁴ Chen, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁵ Yang, op. cit., pp. 71 f.

may have been written by the followers of Confucius' disciple, Tseng Tzu, and it serves as the gateway to the Five Canons.

Records of Rites (Li Ki). They were compiled by the Elder Tai and the Younger Tai, both great scholars of the Rites during the reign of Han Hsuan Ti (73-49 B.C.).

Kung-yang's Commentary (Kung-yang Chuan). In order to understand the principles of Spring and Autumn, it is necessary to study this commentary which records the oral teachings of Confucius. In fact, it may be considered the keystone of Confucianism. It is now compiled with the Canon in a single book. The authorship is ascribed to the disciples of Tzu-hsia.

Ku-liang's Commentary (Ku-liang Chuan). It is a commentary on the Spring and Autumn, and a record of the oral teachings of Confucius, compiled with the Canon in a single book. It was written by the same authors of Kung Yang's Commentary, but it is inferior to that of Kung-Yang.

The Seven Ajuncts. They were seven separate books, each of them supplementing respectively the Six Canons (including the lost Canon of Music), and the Canon of Filial Piety. They were written by Confucius. The Canons are the warp, and the Ajuncts the woof.

The source of the books mentioned above was found

in Dr. C. H. Chen's book, The Economic Principles of Confucius and His School.¹⁶

Historical Records (Shih-Chi). It is the work of Ssu-ma Chien and was criticized by modern scholars as "so utterly confused and disordered in present form". Nevertheless, said Creel, "this is the foundation upon which are erected accounts of the sage that we are asked to believe."¹⁷

II. CRITICAL PROBLEM

In regard to the critical problem, it may be classified into, (1) Classic controversy, and (2) Higher criticism.

A. CLASSIC CONTROVERSY

Passing through the Chin dynasty and the Former Han, Confucian literature remained the same as the original works of Confucius and his disciples. Then there started a serious controversy between "Modern Literature" and "Ancient Literature" for centuries.

Modern Literature. Confucius compiled the Shu

¹⁶ Chen, op. cit., pp. 32 f.

¹⁷ Creel, op. cit., p. 7.

Ching in one hundred sections. It disappeared in the great fire in 213 B. C. An old man named Fu Sheng dictated from memory twenty-nine sections of the Shu Ching, which were transcribed with the characters used at that time under the Emperor Wen of the Han (179-157 B.C.). This was the "Modern Literature" or "Chin Wen" version.¹⁸

Ancient Literature. In the last years of the second or first century B.C., Kung An-kuo, descendant of Confucius, worked on another Shu Ching written in Archaic characters and reputedly discovered in the wall of Confucius' house. There were serious discrepancies between these two texts. Kung's recension is known as "Ancient Literature" or "Ku-wen".

Among the "Ancient Literature" texts, there was also preserved a manuscript of the Analects with Tso's Commentary.

Champions of Confucius in the controversy. At the beginning of Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 A.D.), believers in the authenticity of "Ancient Literature" were very few. However, by the end of the dynasty, Ma Yung, Cheng Hsuan, and others, partisans of the Modern Literature, had won the field. Ho Hsiu (129-182 A.D.), who upheld the authenticity of Kung-yang's Commentary against the Tso's Commentary was the

¹⁸ Joseph R. Levenson, "The Breakdown of Confucianism", Journal of the History of Ideas. 11:478, October 1950.

strongest "Modern Literature" champion. But with Cheng Hsuan's counter-blasts, followed by those of Tu Yu and Wang Su in Chin dynasty (265-419 A.D.), the "Modern Literature" school was routed.

Finally, Chung Tsun-yu (1719-1788), stressed the importance of the Kung-yang's Commentary, paved the way for the revival of the Modern Literature School of criticism. Liu Feng-lu (1776-1829 A.D.), studied Ho Hsiu's work on the Kung-yang's Commentary, and wrote the book, Tso-shih Chun-chiu Kao-cheng in which he presented evidence that Liu Hsin had had a hand in the rearrangement of Tso's Commentary. Shao I-chen (1810-1861 A.D.), in the Li-ching Tung-lun, maintained that the Ancient Book of Rites was another Liu Hsin's forgery.¹⁹

The Ancient Literature proved false. Liang Chichao (1873-1929 A.D.), a brilliant journalist, scholar, and political figure as the most ardent and influential follower of Kang Yu-wei in the espousal of western-type reforms for China,²⁰ in his Ching-tai Hsueh-shu Kai-lun, said that Kang Yiu-wei settled the "Classics controversy", and he was the man who surveyed the whole field of these classics whose authenticity has been questioned, first in Han times and also in Ching, and he made the definite findings.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 470 f.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 448.

In his work on the false classics (Hsin-hsueh Wei-ching Kao), Kang Yiu-wei linked Liu Hsin's forgeries to Wang Mang's usurption (8-23 A.D.).²¹ So the Ancient Literature was proved to be the letter of Liu Hsin, the imperial librarian, being written just before the beginning of the Christian era in the reign of Wang Mang. Tso's Commentary was proved to be compiled by Liu Hsin from the greater part of Tso Chiu-ming's Narratives of Nations.²²

Liang, in his summary of Ching scholarship, pointed out that the Modern Literature School, in its first phase, was concerned only with the Kung-yang's Commentary. He maintained that through work on individual classics, the family relationship between the disputed texts became clear and the authenticity of one determined the authenticity of all.²³

Problem of distinguishing the true Canons from the false Canons. Of course, it is very difficult to distinguish the true Canons from the spurious Canons, especially as many of the books of the "Modern Literature" have been lost because Cheng Hsuan, the chief scholar of Han dynasty,

²¹ Ibid., p. 471.

²² Chen, op. cit., p. 35.

²³ Levenson, op. cit., p. 471.

mixed the two, a great confusion had been interwoven through them, and it is very difficult to distinguish them.

Since some still remain, and since there are many collections of the fragments of the "Modern Literature", a most careful study has determined what the true Canons are. Though every word cannot be made out, still the Five Canons are at least ninety per cent authentic.²⁴

B. HIGHER CRITICISM

According to tradition, Confucius edited four of five classics, the Shih Ching, the Shu Ching, the Li Ching, and the Yi Ching, writing some commentaries on the last, now known as the Yi Appendixes, and wrote the fifth classics, the Spring and Autumn Annals.

A more radical view held by the famous Confucian scholar, Kang Yiu-wei, Confucius originated them all. But Dr. C. M. Wei comments,

How much he did in editing the classics now bearing those names is a question. He described himself as "a transmitter and not a maker." If he did actually edit those books, we have no reason to believe that he deleted much or added any of his own ideas to them.²⁵

²⁴ Chen, op. cit., pp. 35 f.

²⁵ Wei, op. cit., p. 42.

This passage represents some of the modern critics' attitude toward the Confucian literature. It may be discussed on individual books in the follows.

The Canon of Changes. Dr. C. M. Wei insists that a careful study of the Analects, which is accepted to be the most reliable record of Confucius' teaching, leads to the conclusion that Confucius paid no attention to the Canon of Changes which could have existed in his time only as a book of divination. As such it hardly came into his purview.²⁶

There is only one place where the name Canon of Changes is mentioned at all and that is in the Analects, Book VII, chapter 16. There, Confucius is supposed to have remarked, "If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the 'Yi' and then I might come to be without great faults." Much textual criticism has been written on this passage, but the Imperial Critical Commentaries on the Classics edited in the early part of the last dynasty, pointed out that in an old text of the Analects, the character "Lu Lun" was used instead of "Yi". "If this is accepted as the correct reading of the text, the solitary documental evidence," says Dr. Wei, "that Confucius ever had anything to do with

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 42 f.

the Book of Changes evaporates."²⁷

In regard to the fact that the great historian, Ssu-ma Chien of the first century has written in his Historical Records that Confucius was so fond of the Book of Changes in his later years and read it so constantly, and diligently, Dr. Wei argues,

But Ssu-ma Chien wrote four hundred years after Confucius' death, and he is not known among modern scholars for his careful higher critical studies in writing his history.²⁸

The authorship of Confucius of Yi Appendixes has been questioned ever since the eleventh century of the Christian era. The verdict of higher criticism is that these Appendixes belong to the second century B.C., after Taoist ideas had crept into the Confucian stream of thought.²⁹

The best answer to this higher criticism is what H. G. Creel says,

Almost every account of Confucius is based upon the biography included in the Historical Records, which was written around 100 B.C. Indeed, a Western scholar had written that it "will form the basis of the biographies of Confucius for all time."³⁰

Since the modern arguments against the traditional view on Yi Ching are not sufficient and strong enough, it

²⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁸ Loc. cit.

²⁹ Loc. cit.

³⁰ Creel, op. cit., p. 7.

is more safe to place the chief reliance upon records of Confucius that were written down as near to his own time as possible.³¹

The Canon of History. Critical scholarship accepts only twenty-three sections of the present Canon of History as genuine. It was probably these sections that Confucius knew. They insist that the remaining twenty-five sections are of much later date in the fourth century, A.D.

Questions have been raised recently by critical scholars in China regarding the genuineness of the first five sections. While the conclusions reached are not to be accepted as final the points made need to be further investigated.³²

The Spring and Autumn. The authorship of the Spring and Autumn was established in old tradition to Confucius. To Dr. Wei, on Mencius' authority it may be accepted that Confucius wrote a book entitled Spring and Autumn; the question remains whether the book bears that title today was what Confucius had written.³³

31 Ibid., p. 9.

32 Wei, op. cit., p. 45.

33 Ibid., pp. 44 f.

After all, unless it is proved to be spurious, it should stand on the ground of authenticity forever.

The Analects. It has been argued, that the first fifteen chapters of present Analects were the original book, while the next five were added later. To Creel, it seems certain that Tsui was correct in his hypothesis that chapters sixteen to twenty represent a still later addition. In these chapters Confucius is commonly called "Master Kung" instead of "the master", and other differences set them apart.³⁴

Professor Ku Chieh-kang, too, recognizes only a part of the Analects as the genuine ideas of Confucius.³⁵

Other books. Dr. Hu Shih accepts only the Book of Poetry and the second book of the Li Ki or the "Record of Rites" as genuine. The position together with Professor Ku Chieh-kang's opinion toward the Analects, however, is criticized by Liang Chi-chao, as being unreasonably rigid.³⁶

³⁴ Creel, op. cit., p. 29.

³⁵ Hsu, op. cit., p. xiv.

³⁶ Loc. cit.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMPARATIVE TEACHINGS OF CONFUCIUS AND JESUS

It should be noted that Confucius was not primarily a founder of religion. He was a general philosopher, interested in many things. Throughout all the Confucian literature, there is scarcely a single book treating exclusively of a single subject. But there are many passages and chapters referring to diverse subjects and diverse principles. The difficulties are that they are scattered, through all the writings in such a chaotic way without system and logic order, to be mixed up with something else. Therefore, in bringing together the topic teachings of Confucius from these writings, they need to be arranged in the order of modern terms. It really takes no less time to do so.

Owing to the limits of both time and source, this study makes no claim to be an exhaustive study of the text, or of the commentaries on the text, of Confucius, but to have a general survey on the teachings of Confucius in the light of the teachings of Jesus.

The teachings of Confucius may be classified into three groupings, namely: (1) religious conceptions; (2) political conceptions; and (3) social and ethical conceptions.

1. RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS

Whether Confucianism is a religion or not has been a great controversy. Dr. Yang Yung-ching, author of China's Religious Heritage, says,

If we should take the two essential elements of religion to be faith and worship, then we could say that Confucianism may be considered a religion with its major emphasis on faith and with only minor emphasis on worship. As a faith, no religion perhaps has succeeded more than has Confucianism in knitting a whole nation together in a set of unquestioned beliefs--beliefs primarily concerning the practical rules of human conduct, but having their root in certain fundamental conceptions of an overruling Cosmic Order or Deity.

We may conclude by saying that Confucianism is not a religion in the fullest sense and according to the scientific definition of the term; but it is generally so considered, and it at least has functioned as a religion in China.¹

A. CONCEPTION OF "HEAVEN" OR GOD

Confucius did not indulge in the philosophical and theological discussion about deity and religion. However, in refraining from discussing deity and future life, Confucius simply admitted his own intellectual limitations. Confucius was not at all atheistic. He did definitely recognize the existence of a Supreme Deity of the universe, whom he sometimes referred to as "Heaven" (Tien) and

¹ Yang, op. cit., p. 60.

sometimes as the "Supreme Ruler" (Shang Ti).² Though many spirits were often mentioned, they were only considered as ministering spirits (Shen) and the "Manes" (Kwei) of departed men,³ and yet the monotheism remained.⁴ This explains why the translation of "God" in the Chinese Bible adopted the ancient name of God "Shang Ti" or "Supreme Ruler".

Heaven as a personal being. This "Heaven" or "Supreme Ruler" is not a mere abstract concept or a blind force of nature. It is a conscious being and personality. In the Analects, Confucius says, "I do not murmur against Heaven: I do not grumble against men. My studies lie low, and my penetration rises high. But there is Heaven that knows me".⁵

Confucius stated it in even stronger terms when he said, "He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray".⁶

² Ibid., p. 73.

³ James Legge, The Religions of China (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1881), p. 12 f.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 46.

⁵ Analects, bk. 14, ch. 37, v. 2.

⁶ Analects, bk. 3, ch. 13, v. 2.

The appellations for Deity in the Confucian Classics indicate belief in the personality of God. There are three passages which declare that God has spoken to man. One is found in Shih Ching, "God said to King Wan, 'Be not like them who reject this and cling to that. Be not like them who are ruled by their likes and desires.'"⁷

Confucius recognized that there is a supreme God who knew him and overrules the moral order of mankind, whereas Jesus taught that He and His Father are one and fully known to each other.⁸ And in His name man can pray God for providence, forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from evil. This was apparently taught in the Lord's prayer.⁹

Heaven as Creator. Confucius noted that Heaven is the creator of all things. In Doctrine of the Mean, he says,

Thus it is that Heaven, in the production of things, is sure to be bountiful to them, according to their qualities. Hence the tree that is flourishing, it nourishes, while that which is ready to fall, it overthrows.¹⁰

⁷ Shih Ching, Major Odes, decade 1, ode 7, cited by Dawson, op. cit., pp. 293 f.

⁸ Matt. 11:27

⁹ Matt. 6:9-13.

¹⁰ Doctrine of the Mean, 17:3.

In regard to the origin of man, this idea that Heaven is the creator is put forward in the Li Ki in this fashion:

Man is the product of the attributes of Heaven and of Earth through the interaction of the dual forces of nature, the union of animal and intelligence, the finest, and most subtle matter of the five elements.¹¹

Jesus' sayings indicate something similar, "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be."¹² Another place, "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female."¹³

It is significant that the thought of God's constant activity is clearly brought out by both of them in the phrases, "it is that Heaven, in the production of things", and "From the beginning of creation".

God's supremacy and universal providence. "Without recognizing the ordinances of Heaven, it is impossible to be a superior man."¹⁴ Thus in the Analects Confucius

¹¹ Li Ki, bk. 7, sec. 3, v. 1., cited by Dawson, op. cit., pp. 286 f.

¹² Mk. 13:19.

¹³ Mk. 10:6

¹⁴ Analects, bk. 20, ch. 3, v. 1.

gives this expression to the necessity for full recognition of the supremacy of God, and his unchanging laws of the universe and their operation.¹⁵

In the Li Ki Confucius is recorded as saying, "Heaven covers all without partiality; earth sustains and embraces all without partiality; the sun and the moon shine upon all without partiality."¹⁶

Confucius himself sets forth the conception of the supremacy and providence of God, thus, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me. Hwan Tui--what can he do to me?"¹⁷

In another passage he says, "Death and life have their determined appointments; riches and honors depend upon Heaven."¹⁸

Concerning the supremacy and providence of God, two things in the teaching of Jesus need to be noticed. In the first place, nothing is so small or so insignificant as to escape God's attention and care. He knows even when each small sparrow falls to the ground and sees that the birds are fed and the lilies clothed.

¹⁵ Dawson, op. cit., pp. 288 f.

¹⁶ Li Ki, bk. 27, ch. 6, cited by Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁷ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 22.

¹⁸ Ibid., bk. 12, ch. 5, v. 3.

And, more amazing still, in God's omniscience even the hairs of men's heads are numbered.¹⁹

In the second place, God has a providence of redemption and the eternal residence for men in heaven. It is through the belief in Jesus Christ that the world might be saved, and have eternal life.²⁰ And Jesus himself is going to prepare a place for the believers in heaven.²¹

Attributes of Heaven. In regard to the attributes of God, several passages are found in the following:

(1) Omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience.

Confucius says,

How abundantly do spiritual beings display the powers that belong to them! We look for them but do not see them; we listen for them but do not hear them; yet they enter into all things and there is nothing without them.²²

And in Shih Ching this idea is more clearly shown as abundant reason for virtuous conduct when in the privacy of one's chamber:

Looked at in your chamber, you ought to be equally free from shame before light which shines in. Do not say: "This place is not public; no

¹⁹ Matt. 10:30.

²⁰ John 3:16 f.

²¹ John 14:1-3.

²² Doctrine of the Mean, 16:1,2.

one can see me here." The approaches of spiritual beings cannot be foretold; the more, therefore, should they not be left out of the account.²³

In the Analects Confucius says, "But there is Heaven that knows me!"²⁴

(2) Sincerity and holiness. It is recorded in Doctrine of the Mean, "Sincerity is the path of Heaven".²⁵

"When the personal character is pure and clean, the spirit and mind are like those of a spiritual being."²⁶ This indicates the idea that the spiritual being is pure or holy.

(3) Justice. The ancients of China had the idea of a just God, rewarding for good deeds and punishing for evil. Thus in the Shu Ching I Yin is represented as saying, "Good and evil do not wrongly befall men, but Heaven sends down misery or happiness according to their conduct."²⁷

And Cheng Tang in the same book says, "The way of Heaven is to bless the good and make the bad

²³ Shu Ching, Major Odes, decade 3, ode 2, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 286.

²⁴ Analects, bk. 14, ch. 37, v. 2.

²⁵ Doctrine of the Mean, 20:18.

²⁶ Li Ki, 26:8, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 284.

²⁷ Shu Ching, pt. 4, bk. 6, v. 2, cited by Ibid., p. 289.

miserable."²⁸ Another statement found in Shu Ching, "Awful though Heaven be, it yet helps the sincere."

The fact that Confucius edited and permitted these ideas to stand proves his acceptance of them. His emphasis of justice in human relations seems to affirm this idea, "Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness."²⁹

Hence, to Confucius, God is a just and holy God, rather than a loving Father who is always ready to forgive the prodigal son when he returns home penitent as Jesus taught.

B. IDEA OF SERVING GOD (HEAVEN) AND SPIRITS

Sacrifice to God. To Confucius, the ceremonies of the sacrifices are the chief means of serving God as he says in Doctrine of the Mean, "By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth they served God."³⁰ But the one to perform the sacrifices was confronted to the sovereign, "It is only the sage who can offer sacrifice to God".³¹ Again he remarked,

²⁸ Shu Ching, pt. 4, bk. 3, v. 2, cited by loc. cit., p. 289.

²⁹ Analects, bk. 14, ch. 36, v. 3.

³⁰ Doctrine of the Mean, 19:6 a.

³¹ Li Ki, 15:22, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 295.

He who understands the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth and the meaning of the several sacrifices to ancestors, would find the government of a kingdom as easy as to look into his palm."³²

The worship of God taught by Confucius is very defective. The formal organized worship was restricted to the emperor without the participation of the people and the occasions for it were few. So it prevented the growth and wide development among the Chinese of a sense of sin.³³

Evidently, these offerings were oblations and not sacrifices. They were only the tributes of duty and gratitude, accompanied with petitions and thanksgivings. There was neither the idea of propitiation nor the idea of consecration on the part of the worshipper symbolized by any part of the worship.³⁴

Dr. Legge further remarked, "What a pity that the Chinese were not taught from the first to draw nigh to God, in all the changes of their lot, as their King, their Shepherd and their Friend."³⁵

The sacrificial death of Christ is of the essence of Jesus' teaching. It is the gospel of good tidings of

³² Doctrine of the Mean, 19:6 b,

³³ Legge, op. cit., p. 294.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 287 f.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 250.

great joy to all people. It produces contrition for sin, and proclaims the promise of pardon. It tells men how low they have fallen and how high they may rise through faith in Jesus Christ. Confucius taught nothing at all akin to it. Herein is the love of God as Father who sent His Son to be the propitiation for man's sins. No Confucian writer has ever had such facts to make known to his countrymen. In this respect there is no comparison between them.

Spirit worship. According to the Official System of Chou, there were four classes of spirits--the spirits of heaven, of earth, of the dead, and of all material things--above all of which was a Supreme God.

Under this old religion, to the other spirits an inferior worship was paid, and it is said that they were worshiped as doing service to men on behalf of God. By the time of Confucius the whole empire was ruled by superstition. Being a religious reformer, Confucius did not like to talk about extraordinary things and spiritual beings. "To give one's self earnestly," said he, "to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom."³⁶

³⁶Chen, op. cit., p. 40.

Prayer. Confucius' conception of prayer seems vague and doubtful. While Confucius was very sick, his disciple Tze-lu asked leave to pray for him. He said, "May such a thing be done?" Tze-lu replied, "It may. In the Eulogies it is said, 'Prayer has been made for thee to the spirits of upper and lower worlds'". Confucius said, "Prayer has been made for a long time."³⁷ Here it shows that though he practiced prayer, he did not seem to have real confidence and assurance of the effect of prayer.

Another statement of his, "He who offends against Heaven, has none to whom he can pray"³⁸ indicates that there is no prayer available at all for the sinners. And accordingly the same is recorded in Yi Ching, "There is the misery of having none upon whom to call."³⁹

The importance which Jesus attached to prayer appears in the place that prayer occupied in his own life and in the prominence that he gave to it in his teaching. All the great incidents of his life were related to prayer. It was not alone in crises that he prayed; prayer was the habit of his life. This so impressed the disciples that

³⁷ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 34.

³⁸ Analects, bk. 3, ch. 13, v. 2.

³⁹ Yi Ching, Appendix 2, Sec. 2, ch. 43, v. 6.

they asked him to teach them to pray.⁴⁰

According to his teaching the central and controlling idea of prayer is the communion and fellowship with God. It is the promise of God that He will answer man's prayer in the name of Jesus.⁴¹ God always has listening ears to the sinners' prayer asking for forgiveness. It was apparently taught in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.⁴²

C. NATURE OF MAN

Man is the main subject of Confucius. The development of man and the improvement of society in its ever-widening circles are his sole aim and effort.

Human nature is good. In the estimation of Confucius, human nature is naturally good.⁴³ Thus he had said, "Man is born for uprightness; if a man lose his uprightness, and yet live, his escape (from death) is the effect of mere good fortune".⁴⁴ Mencius, in the same manner, gave his opinion more distinctly and roundly.

⁴⁰ John F. Carson, The Word of Authority, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1914), p. 77 f.

⁴¹ John 14:13, 14.

⁴² Luke 18:10-14.

⁴³ Edmund D. Soper, The Religions of Mankind. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press), 1938, pp. 234.

⁴⁴ Analects, bk. 6, ch. 17.

The tendency of man's nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. There are none but have this tendency to good. Just as all water flows downwards.⁴⁵

A man must depend on his own determined will to achieve maturity of character. To Confucius, this is not hard, "If the will be set on virtue, there will be no practice of wickedness."⁴⁶

Chu Hsi, the best exponent of Neo-Confucianism, stressed the point that man's original nature is good. He asserted that the whole trouble with man's moral life is that his good self is like a clean mirror covered by dust, and all that is needed is to dust it off. Secondly, all men are educable. Thirdly, all men are essentially alike.⁴⁷

Jesus' view of human nature. The teaching of Jesus concerning human nature is just the opposite of that of Confucius. It is closely involved in His doctrine of sin that man is sinful.

He spoke of men as blind, as sick, as dead. He said that they were as sheep gone astray, as sons that

⁴⁵ Mencius, bk. 6, pt. 1, ch. 2, v. 2.

⁴⁶ Analects, bk. 4, ch. 4.

⁴⁷ Yang, op. cit., p. 76.

are lost, as men in bondage from which they can never free themselves.

Sin, in Christ's view, is not merely something a man does, but it is what he is; in another word, it is human sinful nature. "It was just here that Christ broke, and broke decisively, with the traditional religion of His time".⁴⁸

Jesus says all men are sinful, "If ye being evil"⁴⁹ --this presupposition could be made every where. He spoke of men as "lost", and said that he had come to seek and save them.⁵⁰ He summoned men, without distinction, to repentance. He spoke of His blood as "shed for many unto remission of sins".⁵¹ This is the only remedy for the sinful nature of man of which Confucius had no idea at all.

This doctrine of the goodness of human nature of Confucius has led the scholarly class to think too highly of themselves as capable, unhelped from without, of all virtuous achievement, and to neglect the suggestion that

⁴⁸ George Jackson, The Teaching of Jesus (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1903), p. 118.

⁴⁹ Matt. 7:11.

⁵⁰ Matt. 15:24.

⁵¹ Matt. 26:28.

Christianity is better than their own.

D. DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

Nature of death. "The body and the animal soul go downwards; and the intelligent spirit is on high."⁵² Thus in the Li Ki is voiced the belief of the ancient Chinese which was accepted by Confucius and his disciples as a fact.

It is again recorded in the same book in this manner, "That the bones and flesh should return to earth is what is appointed. But the soul in its energy can go everywhere; it can go everywhere."⁵³

Confucius gave them his approval by this saying,

The intelligent spirit is of the Shen nature and shows that in fullest measure; the animal soul is of the Kwei nature and shows that in fullest measure....All who live, must die and, dying, return to the earth; this is what is called Kwei. The bones and flesh moulded below and, hidden away, become the earth of the fields. But the spirit issues forth and is displayed on high in a condition of glorious brightness.⁵⁴

From this statement, it is informed that after the body and the animal soul of man cease to be and mingle with

⁵² Li Ki, bk. 7, sec. 1, v. 7, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 267.

⁵³ Li Ki, bk. 2, sec. 2, pt. 3, v. 13, cited by loc. cit.

⁵⁴ Li Ki, bl. 21, sec. 2, v. 1, cited by Ibid., pp. 267 f.

the dust of matter, but the intelligent spirit lives on in the bright heaven with freedom to go everywhere. Of its condition there Confucius says nothing, nor does he say how it can come from heaven when sacrificed to and communicate with its worshipers from the spirit tablet. Confucius taught the existence of the soul after death, but nothing of the character of that existence; and so it does not fan the flame of faith and hope in regard to the future life.

Ancestor worship. It is the fundamental basis of Confucian religion that he advocates one supreme God worshiped only by the emperor, but he also has a companion of God, that is, one's father. So ancestor worship becomes a prominent phase of the religion of the Chinese. According to Confucius, ancestors should be worshiped by all classes from the emperor to the common people.

"They served the dead as they would have served them alive; they served the departed as they would have served them, had they been continued among them."⁵⁵ In these words Confucius set forth the conception of observances of filial piety toward parents and other closely related ancestors which should be continued unbroken

55 Doctrine of the Mean, 19:5.

throughout life, even after they depart from this life.

A conception which pervaded his own conduct, as it is thus described in the Analects, "I consider my not being present at the sacrifice, as if I did not sacrifice".⁵⁶ The absolute necessity for this single-minded sincerity is asserted in those words recorded in Shu Ching, "The spirits do not always accept the sacrifices that are offered to them; they accept only the sacrifices of the sincere".⁵⁷

The reason he made ancestor worship necessary is more on the ethical ground. Its subjective benefits are thus portrayed,

Only men of ability and character can give complete expression to the concept of sacrifice. The sacrifices of such men have their reward, not indeed what the world calls reward. Their reward is the perfecting of self; this also means the full and normal discharge of all one's duties.⁵⁸

And yet simpler and stronger terms in this passage,

When his parents are dead and the son faithfully watches over his actions, so that a bad name involving his parents may not be handed down, he may be said to be able to maintain his piety to the end.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Analects, bk. 3, ch. 12, v. 2.

⁵⁷ Shu Ching, pt. 4, bk. 5, sec. 3, v. 1, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 278.

⁵⁸ Li Ki, bk. 22, sec. 2, cited by Dawson, ibid., p. 279.

⁵⁹ Li Ki, bk. 21, sec. 2, v. 12, cited by Ibid., p. 170.

This union of all the sentiments which compose the piety of a son to his parents both while they are living and after their death is set forth in these words in the same book,

The superior man while his parents are alive, reverently nourishes them; and when they are dead, reverently sacrifices to them. His chief thought is how, to the end of life, not to disgrace them.⁶⁰

Therefore, according to the view of Confucius, ancestor worship is more a social and ethical obligation than a religious rite.⁶¹

Jesus' belief and practice in reverence to the parents as the fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother" are more healthy and true than those of Confucius. And moreover, the practice of ancestor worship together with the worship of spirits definitely transgresses the first commandment of all quoted by Jesus,

The first of all the commandments is, "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment."⁶²

Future life. The fact of ancestor worship seems

⁶⁰ Li Ki, bk. 21, sec. 1, v. 5, cited by loc. cit.

⁶¹ Chen, op. cit., p. 238.

⁶² Mk., 12:29 f.

an evidence of the belief of immortality, yet on being questioned as to what is beyond death, Confucius said, "While one cannot know life how can he know death?"⁶³ Still more striking is a conversation with another disciple, recorded in Park of Narratives (bk. 18). When Tzu-kung asks him whether or not the dead have knowledge, he replies:

If I were to say that the dead have knowledge, I am afraid that filial sons and dutiful grandsons would injure their substance in paying the last offices to the departed; and if I were to say that the dead have no knowledge, I am afraid that unfilial sons and undutiful grandsons would leave their parents unburied. If you wish to know whether the dead have knowledge or not, you will know it yourself when you die. There is no need to discuss this point at the present.⁶⁴

Connecting the worship of the dead with filial piety, Confucius derived additional motives with which to enforce the cultivation of that virtue. At the same time he evaded the questions that were put to him about the state of the dead. The truth is, he could not tell what he did not know; he could not instruct others in what he had not learned for himself. He is not to be blamed for his silence. But the Chinese are left by the Confucian religion with a very limited and uncertain knowledge of

⁶³ Analects, bk. 11, ch. 11.

⁶⁴ Park of Narrative, ch. 18, cited by Chen, op. cit., p. 279.

futurity, with merely a little hint that the souls of their departed loved ones are in heaven; with no account of what sort of a place or state heaven is, with no intimation of a discriminating retribution for the good and evil of the life on earth in the life beyond. No wonder the barrenness of their religion in this respect disposed them to give heed to the teaching of Buddhism about transmigration, and to become victims to the cruel representation of Taoism in its courts of purgatory and the horrors of hell.⁶⁵

Turn to the New Testament, where it is recorded that Jesus Christ abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel of resurrection. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus show that, immediately on death, there is a separation of the good and the bad; that each one goes to his own place, and that retribution commences according to the character of this life.⁶⁶

Jesus' teaching concerning the continuity of the immortality of man is more clearly recorded in this manner. Speaking in an answer to the Sadducees, who had asked him a question concerning resurrection, He quoted

⁶⁵ Legge, op. cit., pp. 268 f.

⁶⁶ Luke 16:20-31.

the word of God to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob", and continuing, He affirmed, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living".⁶⁷ He also proclaimed that,

The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.⁶⁸

II. POLITICAL CONCEPTIONS

To Edmund D. Soper, the state was Confucius' hobby. All his theories were to be measured by their value in relation to the State.⁶⁹ But in logical progression Confucius rises from a discussion of duties toward the family to those toward the state, which social organization he regards as only a larger household with all its ethical principles founded on those of the primary unit.⁷⁰

A. FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Democratic monarchy. The Confucian conception of

⁶⁷ Mark 12:26 f.

⁶⁸ John 5:28 f.

⁶⁹ Soper, op. cit., p. 236.

⁷⁰ Dawson, op. cit., p. 172.

the ideal state is often represented as a benevolent despotism, but in fact, it is a democratic monarchy--a monarchy in form but a democracy in spirit. It is a government of the kingly way, based upon benevolence and righteousness. The basic principle is "Jen" or benevolent regard for others including the ruler for his subjects and the people for each other.⁷¹ In Li Ki, it is recorded,

If his heart be not observant of righteousness, self-consecration, good faith, sincerity, and guilelessness, though a ruler try to knit the people firmly to him, will not all bonds between them be dissolved?⁷²

Theo-democracy. The underlying political theory of Confucius is a mixture of the divine right kingship and the sovereignty of the people. The king is the son of Heaven, called "TienTze" in Chinese. Thus he rules by divine right. To Heaven he is supremely responsible, as a dutiful son, to obey and perform the wishes of Heaven, his Father.⁷³

How can he find out the will of Heaven? And how does Heaven Speak? The answer is, "Heaven sees as the

⁷¹ Yang, op. cit., p. 95.

⁷² Li Ki, bk. 2, sec. 2, pt. 3, v. 11, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 213.

⁷³ Yang, op. cit., p. 95.

people see, and Heaven hears as the people hear."⁷⁴ So it demands that the king should like what the people like and should hate what the people hate.

In the Great Learning, thus is quoted from the Book of Poetry, "By gaining the people, the kingdom is gained, and by losing the people, the kingdom is lost."⁷⁵ And Mencius interpreted more clearly, "The people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest."⁷⁶ All these passages have apparently explained the importance of the will of people. Thus the king was to live for the people and not the people for the king. For the people are not only above the king, but also above the state; the king is simply the agent, and the state is the organization to serve the people.

If the king should disregard the welfare and interest of the people, then he would be transgressing the will of Heaven as expressed by the people, and he would cease to be the exalted Son of Heaven. Under such circumstances the man who led a revolution would be

⁷⁴ Mencius, bk. 5, pt. 1, ch. 5, v. 8.

⁷⁵ The Great Learning, 10:5.

⁷⁶ Mencius, bk. 7, pt. 2, ch. 14, v. 1.

regarded as acting for Heaven in vindicating its righteous indignation.⁷⁷

Paternal democracy. Confucius' theory of government was also paternal and democratic. The ruler is supposed to be the father of his people, and his right to rule is of the order of Heaven. He is moreover responsible for the welfare, both material and moral of his people. On the other hand, the highest source of human wisdom is the people themselves. They know best what is good for them. So the humblest subjects are the ruler's equal and revolution against tyranny is a duty.⁷⁸

There is no definite form of government prescribed in the New Testament; but Christ's conception of God as a Father, of men as brothers, of government as service,⁷⁹ of the value of personality, his disapproval of class distinction, and his love for the common people--all these considerations would naturally lead one to suppose that he favored some kind of a "theo-democracy". That is a government theocratic in spirit and principles, and democratic as to officials, laws and institutions.⁸⁰ At this point

⁷⁷ Yang, op. cit., p. 96.

⁷⁸ Hsu, op. cit., p. vii.

⁷⁹ Mark 10:42-44.

⁸⁰ Philip Vollmer, New Testament Sociology (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1923), p. 170.

it seems that Confucius and Jesus have the same contact.

B. ESSENTIALS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

When Confucius was asked about good government by one of his disciples, Tze-kung, he said, "The requisites are that there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler."⁸¹ In detail, he had the following statements:

Sufficiency of wealth. In the Great Learning it is recorded a principle of getting sufficiency of wealth,

There is a great course also for the production of wealth. Let the producers be many and the consumers be few. Let there be activity in the production, and economy in the expenditure. Then the wealth will always be sufficient.⁸²

Military equipment. "To lead an uninstructed people to war, is to throw them away."⁸³ It is also enforced by Confucius as follows, "Let a good man teach the people seven years and they may then be led to war."⁸⁴

⁸¹ Analects, bk. 12, ch. 7, v. 1.

⁸² The Great Learning, 10:19.

⁸³ Analects, bk. 13, ch. 30.

⁸⁴ Analects, bk. 13, ch. 29.

Confucius scarcely referred to the subject of war, except in the matter of indicating methods by which violent revolts may be avoided. Yet the saying quoted above seems full of insight and of prescience.⁸⁵

Confidence of people in their ruler. Confucius says "If the people have not confidence in their rulers, there is no stability for the state."⁸⁶

It is more aptly described in this passage from the Great Learning,

On this account, the ruler will first take pains about his own virtue. Possessing virtue, he will win the people. Possessing the people, he will win the realm.⁸⁷

Provision of charity. Another essential of good government was pointed out by Confucius:

A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment for the able-bodied, and the means of growing up to the young, They showed kindness and compassion to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease; so that they were all sufficiently maintained. Men had their proper work and women their homes.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Dawson, op. cit., p. 207.

⁸⁶ Analects, bk. 12, ch. 7, v. 3.

⁸⁷ The Great Learning, 10:6.

⁸⁸ Li Ki, bk. 7, sec. 1, v. 2, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 201.

This passage is the description of the blissful consequences of good government, contained in "The Grand Harmony" as set forth in the Li Ki.

Emphasis of righteousness. Both in its relations with other states and the people, Confucius held that the government must restrain from selfish motives. It is put, briefly and pointedly, in this saying, "In a state, gain is not to be considered prosperity, but its prosperity will be found in righteousness."⁸⁹

Since nowhere does Jesus give systematic teaching in regard to politics, His attitudes towards the state and political relations are to be seen only in scattered statements and in general comparison and implications.⁹⁰

In regard to the good government, it has to be justified to the principles of fraternity and love that underlie the entire social teachings of Jesus.⁹¹

C. QUALITIES OF THE RULER

Edward S. Corwin remarks,

The outstanding point of contrast between Confucian and Western political thought is that between the "good ruler" idea and the idea of the

⁸⁹ Great Learning, 10:23

⁹⁰ Shailer Mathews, The Social Teaching of Jesus (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1897), p. 115.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 130.

"supremacy of law". Confucianism attains its richest fruition in the wise, virtuous, and just ruler, while Western political thought culminates in the sovereign law-making body, representative of "public opinion".⁹²

Some of the qualities of the ruler were mentioned by Confucius as follows:

Good virtue. "He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it."⁹³ Mencius also says,

When one subdues men by force, they do not submit to him in heart but because not strong enough to resist. When one subdues men by virtue, they are pleased to the heart's core and sincerely submit."⁹⁴

This picture is given by Confucius in the Analects of a worthy and successful ruler,

By his generosity, he won all. By his sincerity, he made the people repose trust in him. By his earnest activity, his achievements were great. By his justice, all were delighted.⁹⁵

As a good example. "The ruler must himself be possessed of the qualities which he requires of the people,

⁹² Hsu, op. cit., p. viii.

⁹³ Analects, bk. 2, ch. 1.

⁹⁴ Mencius, bk. 2, pt. 1, ch. 3, v. 2.

⁹⁵ Analects, bk. 20, ch. 1, v. 9.

and must be free from the qualities which he requires of the people to abjure."⁹⁶ What he means is that "example speaks louder than words".

Another place he says, "When rulers love to observe the rules of propriety, the people respond readily to the calls on them for service."⁹⁷

To Jesus, the most important quality of rulers, is that they are servants of the people, and not to lord over them.⁹⁸ This is also echoed in Confucius' teaching, "Go before with your example, and be laborious in their affairs."⁹⁹

D. THEORY OF POLITICAL PROGRESS

Probably the most astonishing feature of the Confucian teaching to the modern readers is its anticipation of the Spencerian formula of evolution, and its adoption of this to a theory of progress.¹⁰⁰

The Confucian concept of progress is expressed in

⁹⁶ Great Learning, 9:4.

⁹⁷ Analects, bk. 14, ch. 44.

⁹⁸ Mk., 10:42-44.

⁹⁹ Analects, bk. 13, ch. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Hsu, op. cit., p. vii.

the Li Ki, which classifies the development of civilization into three stages as follows:

Stage of disorder. It is characterized by the absence of Li or social propriety. The social mind was narrow, and the economic life was crude. Due to the lack of transportation and communication, the people lived in isolated groups. Peaceful contact between groups was unknown and within the group the people were controlled by military force and there was no rule of virtue.¹⁰¹

Stage of small tranquillity. The next higher stage of culture is the stage of today. In this stage there are family, private property, national states, war, selfishness, militarism, cunning diplomacy, and revolution. It is in this stage that the principle of Li, the principle of rectification, the principle of benevolent government, the principle of unitary sovereignty, the theories of political democracy, law and justice, and moral education are necessary and useful. It is accordingly a stage of attainable order and practical ideals.¹⁰²

Stage of Golden Age of Grand Harmony or "Ta Tung".

101 Ibid., p. 234.

102 Ibid., p. 247.

This is the highest or ideal state or community which Confucius strives to build up. In this stage there is no private property, no national state, no special family relationships, no war, no crime and immorality. Hence all the practical ideals such as Li, benevolent government, and government of virtue are unnecessary. Every one loves the other as himself. There is absolute equality, and moral excellence.¹⁰³ This is what Confucius had to say about it,

When the "Ta Tao" or Grand Way prevails (i.e., in the Golden Age), the world becomes a great commonwealth. Officers are selected because of their virtue; and appointments are made according to the abilities of the recipients. Mutual confidence is established and peaceful relations prevail. People regard not only their own parents as parents, nor only their own children as children. Provisions are made for the aged; employment is provided for the able-bodied; and guidance is given to the immature. Helpless widows and widowers, lonely orphans and childless people, and the crippled and deformed are all cared for. Men have their occupations and women have their homes. Useful articles are not to be thrown away, but they are not necessarily all kept as personal property. Labor is not to be idle; but work is not necessarily for the self only. Within such social atmosphere, selfish scheming and cunning intrigues are repressed, and banditry and rebellion do not arise. As a result there is no need of shutting the house gate at night. This is the state of real commonwealth and the Age of Grand Harmony (Ta Tung).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 247. f.

¹⁰⁴ Yang, op. cit., p. 98.

This vision of the whole world as a commonwealth of Grand Harmony is still a living hope cherished in the hearts of the Chinese people. It can be seen from the fact that the national song of China concludes its very first sentence with "Ye chien Min Kuo; ye chin Ta Tung". That is "to build the Republic and to promote Grand Harmony."¹⁰⁵

It is very interesting to see that Confucius had the same concept as Jesus about the people in the world, as an absorbing and organic union with one another as members of a family--that is, a universal brotherhood of men. In the Analects Confucius remarks that in social relations men are "all brothers within the four seas."¹⁰⁶ But he did not realize the fact that men have lost their sonship before God and brotherhood among men because of their sin of rebellion. That is the reason Confucius believed that through the means of education and self-cultivation his ideal of Golden Age of Grand Harmony could be promoted and reached.

After all this glorious vision which Confucius and his disciples set before the Chinese people is only an

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁰⁶ Analects, bk. 12, ch. 5, v. 4.

ideal society or kingdom of man in this world. Whether it could be fulfilled through the unaided effort of man is very doubtful. This, however, is not a kingdom of God calling men back to a sense of their duties to God, but rather a kingdom of men calling men to do their duties to men.

It may be said that while Confucius has given to China a series of excellent teachings on the subject, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" as the basis of human relationship; the Chinese will have to hear the great sermons of Jesus on the yet more fundamental law of life through which only the former can be fulfilled, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."¹⁰⁷

The highest stage in the future taught by Jesus goes beyond what Confucius thought of. There would be the eternal kingdom of God established in the New City, Jerusalem under the New Heaven and on the New Earth fully described in the Book of Revelation. There is nothing of this in the system of Confucius.

III. SOCIAL AND ETHICAL CONCEPTIONS

The major function of Confucius in Chinese history

¹⁰⁷ Yang, op. cit., pp. 103 f.

was to give clear and positive form to the social and ethical principles of the traditions, and that by his writings and conversations he made them a force of public education and national unity. He identified the traditional path and law with the concrete relations of the family, the society and the state, and placed these relations on the basis of personal character.¹⁰⁸ His social and ethical teaching may be discussed as follows:

A. CULTIVATION OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER

The central idea of Confucius is that every normal human being cherishes the aspiration to be a "Superior man" (Chun-tzu) or a "Courteous gentleman". It means a man of high or perfect virtue.¹⁰⁹ Thus Confucius says, "From the son of Heaven down to the mass of the people all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of every thing besides."¹¹⁰

Qualities of a "superior man". There are a great number of qualities which should be possessed by a "Superior Man": - such as rectified purpose, self-

¹⁰⁸ Samuel Johnson, Oriental Religions. (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1877), p. 626.

¹⁰⁹ Dawson, op. cit., p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Great Learning, text, v. 6.

sufficiency, earnestness, sincerity, truthfulness, hospitality, prudence, quietness, fearlessness, ease and dignity, firmness, loveliness, growth, capacity, openness, benevolence, broadmindedness, charity, moderation, reserve power ... and so forth.¹¹¹

Self-development. "To set the human heart right" is practically the essence of Confucian ethics. The way for any man intending to cultivate his personal life is merely to start out on a seeking for the best in his human nature and steadfastly to keep it.¹¹²

Confucius taught that to pursue the art of life was possible for every one because he believed that by nature men are good and alike. In the Great Learning, Confucius revealed the process step by step, by which self-development can be attained,

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their family were regulated. Their family being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.¹¹³

111 Dawson, op. cit., pp. 2-6.

112 Lin, op. cit., p. 14.

113 Great Learning, Text, 5.

Briefly speaking, the mind, will, and character are three principal components of a well-developed self. One cannot hope to be a "courteous gentleman" unless he sets his mind on the right track. Then with a will fortified by sincerity and earnestness he may proceed with cultivation of a sound character. It implies constant training and strengthening of mind, will, and character.¹¹⁴

Education. Confucius like his near contemporary, Socrates, inculcated the idea that virtue is teachable. This is a doubtful thesis. He believes, however, that "It is not easy to find a man who has learned for three years without coming to be good."¹¹⁵

The Chinese, it may be said that education, morality, and religion are inseparably linked together. In fact, learning is for virtue first, and for knowledge second. Hence the Confucian conception of education is not only the training of intellect, but the development of the man, as in the Book of Great Learning, that the definition of education is started with, "to elucidate (through knowledge) or illustrate (through life) illustrious virtue".¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Kung-Ksing Wang, The Chinese Mind. (New York: The John Day Co., 1946), pp. 17 f.

¹¹⁵ Analects, Bk. 8, ch. 12.

¹¹⁶ Yang, op. cit., pp. 45 f.

Though Jesus did not offer programs, nor ready made solutions of social problems or precepts, He did reveal eternal principles. The approach of the reconstruction of society from within of the individual is in common between Confucius and Jesus. The marked difference is that Jesus starts out with the regeneration of the individual from above, whereas Confucius' unaided self-development is in a very limited sense capable of success.¹¹⁷

Concerning the qualities of the "superior man" Confucius mentioned nothing about the relation to God. Although he noted that the object of the "superior man" is truth,¹¹⁸ he did not fully know what the truth is.

B. RELATIONS OF HUMAN LIFE

Rev. A. Smith, author of Chinese Characteristics, remarked;

It is acknowledged that there is in Confucianism much that is excellent concerning the relations of man, and many points in which the doctrines of Christian revelation are almost echoed.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Vollmer, op. cit., pp. 39 f.

¹¹⁸ Analects, bk. 15, ch. 31.

¹¹⁹ Herbert A. Giles, Great Religions of the World (New York: Harper & Brothers Pub., 1901), p. 22.

"Five Relations". Confucius worked out a scheme to cover all the relations of human life. They are the "Five Relations", those of Father and Son, Ruler and Subject, Husband and Wife, Elder and Younger Brother, and Friend and Friend, in each case the first named is looked upon as the superior and the last the inferior, subservient to the other, but reciprocity is the basis of all relationships¹²⁰ as in the Book of Poetry it is said,

As a sovereign, he rested in benevolence. As a minister, he rested in reverence. As a son, he rested in filial piety. As a father, he rested in kindness. In communication with his subjects, he rested in good faith.¹²¹

As to the relation between husband and wife it is said, "Happy union with wife and children is like the music of lutes and harps."¹²² It also says, "Love your wife as your brothers."¹²³

To Confucius, the chief end of man was to become a desirable member of society, and the main function of Confucius as a great moral leader lay in pointing the way to attainment of this end.¹²⁴ To Jesus, however,

120 Soper, op. cit., pp. 235 f.

121 Great Learning, 3:3.

122 Doctrine of the Mean, 15:2.

123 Chen, op. cit., p. 64.

124 Martin, op. cit., pp. 144 f.

man's chief end is to glorify God.¹²⁵ Hence in the teaching of Confucius, man's duty to God is left to take care of itself.

James Legge pointed out the outstanding relationship of friend to friend,

I do not know any other scheme of society which gives so prominent a place to friendship, and what is found in Chinese moralists on the subject is of noble character. The end of friendship should be mutual helpfulness, and especially the promotion of virtue.¹²⁶

Rules of Propriety. It is stated in the Analects, "Let the 'Superior Man' never fail reverentially to order his own conducts, and let him be respectful to others and observant of propriety."¹²⁷ Thus Confucius has emphasized the importance of the due observance of propriety. The rules of propriety were in the mind of the Confucius of much the same order as the positive commands which would establish man's character.

(1) Propriety of speech. Simplicity and directness of discourse are commended in all that Confucius says; he urges sincerity of thought, candour of speech, and

¹²⁵ Matt. 5:16.

¹²⁶ Legge, op. cit., p. 107.

¹²⁷ Analects, bk. 12, ch. 5, v. 4.

earnestness of conduct, but he rarely put it better than in the following: "In language it is sufficient that it conveys the meaning."¹²⁸

The listener ought to be able accurately to understand what a man says, and also to discover the true character of the man. To this, the sage gives a warning, "The virtuous will be sure to speak aright, but not all whose speech is good are virtuous."¹²⁹ Hence he emphasizes the requirement of sincerity in one's speech, "In regard to his speech, he is anxious that it should be sincere."¹³⁰

(2) Propriety of conduct. In regard to the proper conduct of man, he gives a Golden Rule which is widely known as negative form, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."¹³¹

Those who contrast this with that of Jesus, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."¹³² are not apt to know that the

¹²⁸ Analects, bk. 15, ch. 40.

¹²⁹ Analects, bk. 14, ch. 5.

¹³⁰ Analects, bk. 16, ch. 10.

¹³¹ Analects, bk. 15, ch. 23.

¹³² Matt. 7:12.

Confucian ethics also contain the strongest statements of the rule in its positive form. In Shu Ching, it is definitely enforced, "To envoke love, you must love, to call forth respect, you must respect."¹³³ Another remark of Confucius himself is found in the Doctrine of the Mean,

In the way of the superior man there are four things, to not one which have I as yet attained. -- To serve my father, as I would require my son to serve me: to this I have not attained; to serve my prince, as I would require my minister to serve me: to this I have not attained; to serve my elder brother, as I would require my younger brother to serve me: to this I have not attained; to set the example in behaving to a friend, as I would require him to behave to me: to this I have not attained.¹³⁴

This shows that he starts from the negative basic way and then leads to the positive higher ideal. This statement also reveals his personal imperfection in the way of "superior man".

The Confucian Golden Rule is somewhat similar to Plato's theory of making virtue the center of human activity. The practical essence of Confucian ethics is concluded in one word, "Jen", usually translated as "benevolence" or "reflective love". It is the sustaining

¹³³ Shu Ching, pt. 4, bk. 4, v. 2, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 125.

¹³⁴ Doctrine of the Mean, 13:4.

virtue of the world society. In replying the question about "benevolence", the Master says, "It is to love all men."¹³⁵ Thus as far as human relationship is concerned, his idea is very close to that of Jesus.

(3) Propriety of example. Since Confucius realizes the great influence of friends upon a person's character, he gives quite a number of counsels about friendship:

There are three friendships which are advantageous, and three which are injurious. Friendship with the upright; friendship with the sincere; and friendship with the man of much observation: -- these are advantageous. Friendship with the man of spacious airs; friendship with the insinuatingly soft; and friendship with the glibtongued; -- these are injurious.¹³⁶

Yet the evil in man is useful for instruction, as well as the good; and thus he says, "When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them."¹³⁷

It is interesting and refreshing to find in Confucius something akin to the words of Jesus, on one occasion

¹³⁵ Analects, bk. 12, ch. 22, v. 1.

¹³⁶ Analects, bk. 16, ch. 4.

¹³⁷ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 21.

defended himself for receiving strangers,

I admit people's approach to me without committing myself as to what they may do when they have retired. Why must one be so severe? If a man purify himself to wait upon me, I receive him so purified, without guaranteeing his past conduct.¹³⁸

But Jesus positively announced that he comes to call sinners and to be their friends, and he has the power to convert them from the sinful life.¹³⁹

(4) Propriety in relations between the sexes.

Confucius says, "The scholar keeps himself free from all stain."¹⁴⁰ In the Li Ki, it is thus insisted that the distinction between men and women must be observed for the good of all, "If no distinction were observed between males and females, disorder would arise and grow."¹⁴¹

So rules of sexual propriety were set up in Li Ki. The most familiar one among the Chinese even today is this, "Men and women in giving and receiving things, allow not their hands to touch."¹⁴² That is why even up

¹³⁸ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 28, v. 2.

¹³⁹ Matt. 9:13.

¹⁴⁰ Li Ki, bk. 38, sec. 15, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 131.

¹⁴¹ Li Ki, bk. 17, sec. 1, v. 32, cited by Ibid., pp. 132 f.

¹⁴² Li Ki, bk. 27, sec. 37, cited by Ibid., p. 134.

till now the custom of shaking hands between man and woman is not popular in China.

C. FILIAL PIETY

The family is the basic unit in the Confucian social structure. The individual is not ignored, but he operates from the "home base". In fact, all human relations, even those in the political state and in the realm of religion, are all expressed in terms of the family relationship.¹⁴³

The practical reason for this is that Confucius regards the family as the logical starting point for moral development. It requires little persuasion for a person to apply the principles of benevolence and due regard for others to members of his own family. It is by learning the lessons well in family circles that he may be taught, in degree and by successive steps, to extend them to the society, to the nation, and finally, to the world at large.¹⁴⁴

Filial Piety is to be regarded as the greatest virtue in the family life, not only because it is right

¹⁴³ Yang, op. cit., pp. 83 f.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

that man should remember those to whom he owes so much in life, but also because all other virtues can be stated in terms of it and be developed from it. A familiar Chinese proverb says that the best place to look for a good husband or a loyal and faithful minister is in a family renowned for its Filial Piety.

The origin of Filial Piety. In Hsiao Ching, Confucius says, "Filial Piety is the constant requirement of Heaven."¹⁴⁵ James Legge pointed out that it is justified in looking on the long-continued existence and growth of China as a verification of the promise attached to the fifth Commandment of God, "Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee."¹⁴⁶

Essentials of Filial Piety. In the Li Ki the following detailed statement is ascribed to Tseng-Tzu, a disciple of Confucius,

The body is that which has been transmitted to us by our parents; dare any one allow himself to be irreverent in the employment of their legacy? If a man in his own house and privacy be not grave, he is not filial; if in serving his ruler he be not loyal, he is not filial; if in discharging

¹⁴⁵ Hsiao Ching, ch. 7, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 291.

¹⁴⁶ Legge, op. cit., p. 88; Exodus 20:12.

the duties of office he be not reverent, he is not filial; if with friends he be not sincere, he is not filial. If he fails in these five things, the evil will reach his parents; dare he then do otherwise than reverently attend to them? 147

Confucius remarks, "While his parents are alive, the son may not go abroad to distance; if he does go abroad, he must have a fixed place to which he goes."¹⁴⁸ This is the great factor to hold the unity of Chinese large families.

As to the degree of Filial Piety, Tseng-Tzu says,

There are three degrees of Filial Piety; the highest is being a credit to our parents, the next is not disgracing them and the lowest is merely being able to support them.¹⁴⁹

Perpetuation of the family. Confucius says,

"Since the parents have given birth to a son, it is the perpetuation of the human race, and there is nothing greater than this."¹⁵⁰ Hence a son must continue the line of his parents. Mencius says, "There are three things which are unfilial, and to have no posterity is

¹⁴⁷ Li Ki, bk. 21, sec. 2, ch. 11, cited by Dawson, op. cit., pp. 157 f.

¹⁴⁸ Analects, bk. 4, ch. 19.

¹⁴⁹ Li Ki, bk. 21, sec. 2, ch. 9, cited by Dawson, op. cit., pp. 159 f.

¹⁵⁰ Chen, op. cit., p. 328.

the greatest of them."¹⁵¹ This is the main reason for polygomy in China, that if one has no son, he may take a concubine in the hope of having one.

Ancestor worship. It is a part of Filial Piety. The system of ancestor worship prevented the development of the idea of future retribution. The tyrant oppressor might have his tablet in the temple and his spirit be feasted and prayed to as if he had been a great benefactor of the people.¹⁵² Hence on this phase, together with the idea of perpetuation of the family, is very defective in comparison with the teachings of Jesus.

D. ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMAN

In Confucianism, the position of woman has always been an inferior one; Its religion does not look upon her with an equal eye. It is not till the wife becomes a mother - a mother of a son. Then she takes a place in the family and the temple on a level with her husband.

Three followings of woman to man. In the Li Ki, "The woman follows the man; in her youth she follows

¹⁵¹ Mencius, bk. 4, pt. 1, ch. 26, v. 1.

¹⁵² Legge, op. cit., p. 115.

her father and her elder brother; when married, she follows her husband; when her husband is dead, she follows her son."¹⁵³

In regard to his teaching on the bright side, it may be considered as for the purpose of discipline within the family as well as for material support and protection, the woman was counselled to subject herself to the man. But on the other hand, it gave the man a pretext to oppress the woman in bondage through thousands of years in China.

No equal education for women. Confucius provided no equal education for women. In his life time no record is to be found about his teaching concerning women. According to tradition, this statement is ascribed to him, "Woman without talents is virtue." Hence, before Christianity came to China, all women were kept in the home to do domestic work. None of them had a chance to study except a few who studied at home with their fathers or brothers.

Woman linked on the same rank of "inferior man". In the Analects it is recorded that Confucius puts the

¹⁵³ Li Ki, bk. 9, sec. 10, cited by Dawson, op. cit., p. 139.

woman on the same rank of the "inferior" or "mean" man who is the opposite of "superior man". He says,

Of all people, women and inferior men are the most difficult to behave to. If you are familiar with them, they lose their humility. If you maintain a reserve towards them, they are discontented.¹⁵⁴

This is an evidence of his false prejudice toward woman. Owing to the unequal position and lack of education, there might be some abnormal reactions of woman, but it is unjust to link them on the same rank with "inferior man."

Divorce. According to Elder Tai's Record of Rites, there are seven grounds for divorcing a wife: (1) disobedience to parents-in-law; (2) not giving birth to a son; (3) adultery; (4) jealousy of her husband's attentions; that is, to the other inmates of his harem; (5) leprosy; (6) talkativeness; (7) thieving. They are three considerations which may overrule these grounds: (1) having no family to return to; (2) having passed through the three year's mourning for his parents; (3) his condition formerly poor and mean, and now rich and honorable.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴Analects, bk. 17, ch. 25.

¹⁵⁵ Chen, op. cit., p. 148.

Divorce is only allowed by Confucius to man, but there is no statement about divorce issued to the woman. This is wholly unfair.¹⁵⁶

In all the ethical teachings of Confucius, this is the most defective; it is a source of astonishment to the reader, who esteems Confucius as a sage.

Dr. Chen has discovered some of his teachings about the equality of man and woman. Such as the relationship of husband and wife, which is called "brothers" by Confucius. And the rite of "personal receiving", which is prescribed as a necessary ceremony for marriage; that is, that the bridegroom must go to the bride's home to receive her personally. Another illustration is that the married woman preserves her own name after marriage.¹⁵⁷

After all these seem more external, and they cannot actually balance the other teachings mentioned above.

This is a great contrast with the attitude of Jesus towards woman. Jesus' high regard for woman may be seen from His uniform respectful attitude toward the sex, associating with them, teaching them,¹⁵⁸ treating them as equals, calling them into His discipleship,¹⁵⁹ protecting

156 Ibid., p. 150.

157 Ibid., pp. 64 f.

158 John 4:7.

159 Luke 8:2 f.

them against the male-made double standard of morality,¹⁶⁰ recognizing their devotion to religious ideals,¹⁶¹ insisting on fair treatment in marriage and divorce affairs, restraining upon any tendency to consider her merely as man's property, a slave or the object of his lust.

The superficial charge that Christ never did anything definitely for woman's emancipation may be answered by proving from history that in truth the only one who ever did anything definitely for woman's true elevation is Christ through his Church, by insisting that the protecting arm, laws of His kingdom should be stretched over her in equality as over the man.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ John 7:53-8:11, Luke 7:44-50.

¹⁶¹ Matt. 26:10.

¹⁶² Vollmer, op. cit., pp. 148 f.

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¹⁶¹ Matt. 26:10.

¹⁶² Vollmer, op. cit., pp. 148 f.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Since it has been discussed and compared topic by topic, all the subjects which have been considered, it remains only for this final chapter to bring together the conclusions.

The influence and contributions of Confucius.

Confucianism, reduced to its simplest definition, is to show man "how to get through life like a 'Courteous Gentleman'". Confucius was striving to make the human being good--a good father, a good son, a good brother, a good friend, and a good citizen.¹ On this phase of human relationships, certainly, he has made no small a contribution.

He was also ascribed as an important intellectual ancestor of the Chinese Revolution. Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Republic of China, declared that "both Confucius and Mencious were exponents of democracy", and gave to the Republic of China a constitution that bears the deep imprint of Confucian principles.² Moreover, as

¹ Dawson, op. cit., pp. v f.

² Creel, op. cit., pp. 5 f.

it was discussed in the first chapter, the philosophy of Confucius played a role of some importance in the French Revolution, and in the development of Western democracy.

Both the continuing influence of Confucian moral ideals and the process of their re-evaluation and re-interpretation in the new light of modern situations were admirably demonstrated in the New Life Movement, started in China in 1934. The purpose of this movement was to call for a return to China's traditional emphasis upon morality and virtue, particularly to a rededication of individual and national life to the time-honored principle of "Li, Ye, Lien, Chih"--propriety, righteousness, honesty, and conscientiousness, (i.e., a keen sense of shame for any failure of proper moral conduct).³ Though not much accomplishment was seen, yet it served a great appeal and challenge of moral survival in China. Its spirit and outlook would remind the Christian thinking of the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."⁴

As a teacher of morality, Confucius believed that he had a mission from Heaven. In connection with the

³ Yang, op. cit., p. 56.

⁴ Ibid., p. 57.

truth he unfolded, he felt himself worthy to be accepted as a messenger from God to his countrymen for good.

Defects of Confucius' teachings. It is evident that the Confucius' gospel is based upon the conviction that man's nature is originally good, and merely requires self-cultivation of right lines to bring it to its highest perfection. He admitted that by nature men are nearly alike, but by practice they get to be wide apart.⁵ This is the main point with which he started basically wrong.

The failure of Confucius to satisfy the cravings of men's spiritual nature, his attitude of reserve on questions connecting the unseen world, and his silence with regard to sin and its remedy, his equivocal reference to the possibility and value of prayer, and a vague idea of serving God--all these weaknesses have had the effect of paving the way for Christianity.⁶

The superiority of Christianity. Philip Schaff noted that the religious development of humanity separates into two branches--Judiasm and heathenism. These two meet

⁵ W. Gilbert Walshe, "Confucius", Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics, IV, 17.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 19.

and unite at last in Christ as the common Saviour, the fulfiller of the types and prophecies, desires and hopes of the ancient world.⁷

Here is the great and imperative need in the heathen field of China. It can be met permanently, completely, only by Christianity, which is well defined by Samuel G. Craig,

Christianity is that ethical religion that had its origin and that has its continuance in Jesus Christ conceived as a God-man; more particularly it is that redemptive religion that offers salvation from the guilt and corruption of sin through the atoning death of Jesus Christ and the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit.⁸

And the true Sage whom Confucius dimly outlined will be recognized in Jesus Christ, in whom alone the highest definition of brotherhood is exhibited, and by whom alone the conception of fatherhood, in the ultimate sense, is formulated - the Fatherhood of God, whose offspring includes all mankind on the earth. He only proposes a remedy for the weaknesses and disabilities of a corrupted human nature, which will enable men to attain to the

⁷ Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), p. 57.

⁸ Samuel G. Craig, Christianity Rightly So Called (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1946), p. 87.

highest perfection which Confucius had in mind, as he said, "Rest in the highest excellence".⁹

If Confucius and Jesus should meet. Some people consider that Confucius was self-righteous and self-sufficient, feeling no need of salvation. His confession that he was unable to take the initiative in carrying out his own rule in serving his father as he would require his son to serve him, so of the other relations between ruler and minister, elder brother and younger brother....¹⁰ gives the answer.

Again he confessed that in letters, he was perhaps equal to other men, but the character of the superior man, carrying out in his conduct what he professed was what he had not yet attained.¹¹

In another place, he said, "If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty years to the study of Yi Ching and then I might come to be without great faults."¹²

⁹ W. Gilbert Walshe, "Confucius", Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics, IV, 17.

¹⁰ Doctrine of the Mean, 13:4.

¹¹ Analects, bk. 7, ch. 32.

¹² Analects, bk. 7, ch. 16.

From all these words it is apparent that self-righteousness is far from Confucius in mind, yet they echo his self-consciousness of inadequacy. The following statement reveals more of his great longing and love for truth, "If a man in the morning hear the right way, he may die in the evening without regret."¹³

Hence Dr. Yang points out that it is very interesting to imagine how Jesus and Confucius would feel towards each other, if they should meet in person. Would it be unnatural or unreasonable to suppose that Confucius would say with great respect to Jesus Christ as John the Baptist, "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose"?¹⁴ And, on the other hand, could it be imagined Jesus as saying, with reference to Confucius something like this, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile"?¹⁵

As a result of this further study and investigation, it does not seem at all that Father Intorcetta went so

¹³ Analects, bk. 4, ch. 8.

¹⁴ Mk. 1:7.

¹⁵ John 1:47; Yang, op. cit., p. 104.

far as to affirm that "If Confucius had lived in the seventeenth century, he would have been the first to become a Christian."¹⁶

¹⁶ Creel, op. cit., p. 259.

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