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CONFUCIAN ETHICS
AN EXPOSITION AND AN ESTIMATE
IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY

by
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A.B., Hope College
1932

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Religious Education
in the
Biblical Seminary in New York

April 1934

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To
Dr. Herman Harrell Horne,
whose
teaching ideals expressed through his books
first animated the aspirant teacher,
and
whose dynamic personality and
thoroughly Christian philosophy and practice
more intensely stimulated her in his classes,
this work is gratefully dedicated.

Left by Author

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem of the Thesis

Is Confucianism a religion, a philosophy, or an ethical system? Critics have variously called it any one or all three according to the content they put into the three terms. There is religion in Confucianism; there is philosophy; there is ethics; but which predominates so as to justify the system being called by it is not the primary concern of this exposition. Certainly Confucianism sets forth a way of living, whether the ethical, religious or philosophical content is conceded to predominate, and, as such, has determined the attitudes of China, where it was connected with the state until a few decades ago.

The specific problem of this thesis is to set forth the results, first, of an investigation of the ethics of Confucianism as found in its sacred scriptures, and second, of a comparison with Christian ethics, with a view to estimating the relative values of the two systems for the China of today.

B. The Importance of the Problem

This problem makes a personal appeal to the writer because of her missionary interests, and grows out of the realization that though one is thoroughly and unreservedly committed to his own faith and convinced of the permanent adequacy of its ethics for every people in facing the problems

of personal and social, national and international relationships, to offer it as a substitute for the prevailing system without a thorough familiarity with and understanding of its tenets in so far as that is possible by one of differing habits of thought, would be little short of presumption. Sooner or later the necessity for knowing the prevailing system will force itself upon him, both as a prerequisite to an understanding of the culture from which it has sprung and which in turn it has helped produce, and to an approach to the people who are products of that culture. As Dr. Lyons said,-

"The Chinese people will remain inscrutable to the Western mind except as he apprehends the influence which Confucianism has exerted on them.....Confucianism is the key with which to unlock the main door which shuts the Westerner out from an understanding of the Chinese mind."¹

The world is interested in China; it is compelled to be. The dependency of unit upon unit in the interplay of world affairs is inescapable, and whatever determines the philosophy of any one people forces itself upon the attention and concern of all others, at least in so far as it is practically expressed.

China is in a transition period. Young China is casting off the old restraints. Conflicting systems are contending for her allegiance and making great inroads. Whether

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1. David Willard Lyon: Will Confucianism be a Force to be Reckoned with in the Coming Days in China? Chinese Recorder, Feb., 1928, p.73.

Confucianism will continue to be an authoritative factor in Chinese thought and action will depend on its adequacy to meet the problems arising and demanding solution because of the nation's broadened contacts with the world.

C. Method of Procedure.

The results of a study of the historical development of Confucianism through its most influential exponents, Confucius, Mencius, Hsuncius, Chucius, and Wang Yang-Ming, will first be presented. This study was made principally from secondary sources, owing to the uncertainty of the consecution of the events set forth in the Classics, and because the writer desired to reserve her efforts for the main purpose of the thesis, namely, the investigation of the Classics for an understanding of the ethical system of Confucianism, as previously stated.

This investigation will be made in the form of a study of the Chinese Classics to determine, first, the basic hypothesis of the Confucian ethical system; second, the ultimate ideal toward which the system proposes to move and toward which it proposes to lead the individual adherent; third, the content of its ideal; fourth, the method it advances to insure the realization of the ideal; and fifth, the adequacy of all of these tested in relation to modern demands and as compared to Christian ethics.

D. The Sources of Data.

The primary sources are the Chinese Classics in translation. The Pre-Confucian Classics are the Shu-king, or Book of Records, containing decrees and other historical matter beginning with the reign of Yao (c2400 B.C.) down to the reign of Hsiang, of the Kau dynasty, B.C.619; the Shih-King, or Book of Poetry, containing, in all, three hundred^{and} five compositions, dated variously from 1710 to 586 B.C., some of religious character, but the greater number describing manners, customs, and events; the Yi-King (I Ching) or Book of Changes, based on a series of symbols early associated with divination, but also containing some metaphysical, physical, moral and religious utterances, the oldest dating from the twelfth century B.C., valued highly by Confucius and made large use of by the philosophers of the Sung dynasty in the development of their systems; the Li Ki (Li-Chi), or Book of Rites or Manners, containing both pre-Confucian and post-Confucian material. Wilhelm says, "We have in this work a precipitate of that which Confucius thought and taught on the subject of manners."¹

Confucius' relation to the two books, the Hsiao King, or Book of Filial Piety, and the Ch'un Ch'in, or Spring and Autumn, will be referred to in the discussion of his literary contribution.

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1. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, p.122.

The post-Confucian Classics are the Lun Yu, or Analects; the Ta He, or Great Learning; the Chung Yung, or Doctrine of the Mean, all attributed to his disciples; and the Works of Mencius, written by the philosopher whose name it bears and whose life and contribution we shall discuss in the first chapter.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONFUCIAN SYSTEM

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From a study of Confucianism, one is made to realize that Confucianism did not spring from the head of Confucius full grown as did Athena from the head of Zeus, but that it represents a development of four thousand years of Chinese thought and life, if we compute its age from the records contained in its earliest known literature,— the first of the classics, the Shu-King, about 2400 B.C.,— and conclude with its last great philosopher, Wang-Yang-Ming, who died about 1529 A.D.

It is our purpose in this chapter, first, to trace this development through the great philosophers, Confucius, Mencius, Hsuncius, Chucius, and Wang-Yang-Ming; second, to show what modification or interpretation of, or contribution to Confucianism as it has come down to modern times each has made by his own peculiar emphasis or deposit; and third, to note recent developments and tendencies.

A. Development through Confucius

It will be shown in this section that though "Confucianism without Confucius is quite as unhistorical as Christianity without Christ,"¹ yet the individual from whom Confucianism took its name would have been the last to pre-

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1. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, p.94.

sume to be the founder. Such a presumption would have been inconsistent both with his character and the system which he sought so diligently to transmit, for Confucius was a transmitter and never laid claim either to being an originator or to direct inspiration. Yet his "ethical teachings have for more than two thousand years been accepted by a larger number of human beings than those of any other teacher".¹

1. Life of Confucius.

Confucius (Kung-foo-tsze) was born in 551 B.C. in the district of Tsou, of which his father was commandant, in the state of Lu, which is now the province of Shantung. His lineage could be traced back through a noble line of ancestors to twenty-eight centuries before Christ. His father was a prominent officer and^a man of great strength and courage. He was over seventy when his son was born of his second marriage contracted for the specific purpose of procuring a fit representative to continue the family. He died when the boy was three years old, leaving the widowed mother to rear her son in poverty. Nevertheless, she sought for him the best education she could, and the boy pursued his studies with diligence under her stimulation. He entered public service at the early age of seventeen and made some reputation with the ruler of the state. He was married at nineteen, and his first child, a son, was born within a year.

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1. Miles Menander Dawson: Ethics of Confucius, p.vii.

There are indications that the union was not altogether happy.

His mother died in 529 B.C., and he observed the prescribed three-year mourning for her, withdrawing from practical life for the time. Thereafter he began his teaching activities. He had previously had disciples, but from thence he made teaching his primary occupation.

He taught no religion; he avoided discussion of the supernatural. The subjects of his discourses were chiefly human conduct, human relationships and good government. For a long time he unsuccessfully sought opportunity to institute governmental reforms in his own state of Lu.¹

He has been characterized as a "punctilious gentleman of the old school" and as gracious and kindly though he never relaxed himself even to his own son.²

2. Political, Social and Economic Conditions of his Time.

The great Chow Dynasty was still nominally in control having run a course of six centuries, but it had so far deteriorated that it scarcely functioned even locally. The empire was no longer united under a strong central power but had fallen apart into some thirteen small states, each governed by its own petty ruler, but even these could not maintain themselves peaceably and were constantly being

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, pp.7-11.
2. Ibid., p.11.

threatened by the ambitions of large families. The times were marked by disorder and confusion. Confucius' own state of Lu was in a turmoil. Three families competed for control, and plottings and intrigue were so rife that a man of principle had little inclination to enter politics.¹

It was an age of feudalism, and as Stewart has described it,

"an age without authority, an age of endless petty wars and struggles, an age when the rights of the people were neglected, and humanity became ignorant, cruel, brutish and vile. The people were oppressed and slaughtered in constant struggles. Sons murdered their fathers. Whole families of princes were wiped out in revenge. Salome's² sisters appear to have serenaded in all the courts."

3. His Attempts at Reform.

Through one of his pupils, a member of one of the ruling houses in the state of Lu, Confucius' opportunity came. A visit to the capitol was arranged. Although it did not result in an interview with the Emperor, it gave Confucius an opportunity to accumulate valuable historical data from the archives of the government, which he was to use in his later work.

Conditions at Lu continued as bad as ever and Confucius might have had appointments to office, but he hesitated to become involved in the maelstrom of rotten politics until, chided for his slackness, he "cast the die".

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.11.

2. J.L.Stewart: Chinese Culture and Christianity, pp.196-7.

Phenomenal reformation in the manners of the people followed, and within the short time of twelve months the princes of all the surrounding states are said to have desired to imitate his style of administration. Rapid advancement followed and soon he was made minister of crime. Crime is said to have ceased and penal laws needed no execution.¹ At the height of his success, however, the Duke Ting through a ruse of one of his neighbors reverted to his licentious ways, disregarded the appeals of his conscientious minister, and undid the good work. Discouraged, Confucius abandoned his post after four years in office, and for thirteen years wandered, followed by his students, from state to state, seeking a ruler who would permit him to institute his reforms. Once he was recalled to Lu, but the situation offered no better promise.

At seventy-three he died, a discouraged and broken-hearted seer.²

4. Veneration of Confucius.

Ssema Ch'ien, the famous historian, eulogizes him thus:

"Countless are the princes and prophets that the world has seen in its time; glorious in life, forgotten in death. But Confucius, though only a humble member of the cotton-clothed masses, remains among us after many generations. He is the model for such as would be wise. By all, from the Son of Heaven down to the meanest stu-

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.15.
2. Ibid., pp.16-17.

dent, the supremacy of his principles is fully and freely admitted. He may indeed be pronounced the divinest of men."¹

Appreciation of him began with his pupils during his life, and rose with the centuries after his death, expressing itself in rituals of praise and sacrificial offerings decreed and conducted by the imperial government. "But in recent years the temples of Confucius have been notoriously neglected."²

5. His Use of his Literary Heritage.

Our chief source in this part of our discussion is the biographical material of Ssema-Ch'ien, historian of the second century A.D., which Richard Wilhelm has organized.

"Confucius stands at the turning point in Chinese history. The old feudal culture that had as its point of departure a succession of saints upon the throne had broken down. Confucius takes up the thread, although he was a man of the people."³

But Confucius was not intentionally a harbinger of a new era. His ambitions lay in a return to the good old days of the golden past when saints were on the throne and the prerogative of the dictation of conduct lay with them. As a result of this attitude the historian says:

"Confucius himself wrote nothing....The great regulations for human conduct originated with the authorities appointed for that purpose; in the final analysis, from the Son of Heaven... The people regulated their conduct in accordance with them because they were intrinsically authoritative.

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.23.
2. Robert Ernest Hume: The World's Living Religions, p.115.
3. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, p.93.

Confucius had before him the goal of creating such moulds of life. He had no literary ends in view; he sought deeds, effects, creations. Here, then, he was in an extremely difficult situation. In the book on Measure and Mean we read 'If a man occupies the throne, but does not possess the necessary power of the spirit, he ought not to venture to undertake changes in civilization. Nor can one, even though he has the necessary power of the spirit, but not the highest authority venture to undertake changes in civilization.'

Confucius was conscious of possessing the power of the spirit which gave him a right to a re-creation of civilization. But such absolutely necessary external authority as would have permitted him to exercise that power was the thing which was lacking: he was after all only 'the man from Chou', a simple bourgeois in a cloth gown, nowhere an external sanction to deliver the message that he wished to bring; that he was, indeed, impelled to bring. It was for that reason that he made so long and vain a search to find a prince who might have given him the necessary authority to carry out all the reforms in the life of humanity which had become necessary since the last culture-creation - that of the Chou dynasty - had collapsed. But....no such prince could be found. Now Confucius might have written literary works in which to precipitate his thoughts. He would then have had a place in the long line of poets and scholars who have sought to react upon posterity through the setting up of a Utopia. He did not travel this road; he desired to be of influence."¹

So Confucius took advantage of the authority of the past to give weight to his utterances, though, no doubt, with the utmost sincerity and with confidence in their value.

"In the garb of the greatest antiquity, these teachings were bound to claim an importance which they did not deserve from the standpoint of their inner content..... He faithfully collected and sifted: from the times of the rulers Yao and Shun, whose dates are usually placed near 2300 B.C., down to the establishment of the Chou dynasty, he subjected everything to an intensive study. And finally he so edited the remnants of antiquity that they became the principle witnesses of his doctrine."²

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1. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, pp.97-98.
2. Ibid., p.99.

It is apparent from the foregoing that the writer accredits Confucius definitely with the deliberate editing of the ancient records, but Legge suggests a slightly different connection. He quotes the Doctrine of the Mean where it reads that

"he handed down the doctrines of Yao and Shun, as if they had been his ancestors, and elegantly displayed the regulations of Wan and Wu, taking them as his models."¹

and he continues:

"In fulfilling what he considered to be his mission Confucius did little towards committing to writing the views of antiquity according to his own conception of them. He discoursed about them freely with the disciples of his school, from whom we have received a great deal of what he said; and it is possible that his accounts of the ancient views and practises took, unconsciously to himself, some color from the peculiar character of his mind. But his favorite method was to direct the attention of his disciples to the ancient literature of the nation. He would neither affirm nor relate anything for which he could not adduce some document of acknowledged authority....It is an error even to suppose that he compiled the historical documents, poems and other ancient books from various works existing in his time. Portions of the oldest works had already perished. His study of those that remained, and his exhortations to his disciples also to study them, contributed to their preservation. What he wrote or said about their meaning should be received by us with reverence; but if all the works which he handled had come down to us entire, we should have been, so far as it is possible for foreigners to be, in the same position as he was for learning the ancient religion of his country."²

6. Confucius' Contribution.

a. Literary.

Whichever statement quoted above may be regarded

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1. Doctrine of the Mean, Ch.30:1 - Four Books, p.291.

2. James Legge: Sacred Books of the East, V. III, pp.xiv-xv.

as the more accurate, at least they agree that Confucius was not the author of the Confucian classics, but that he was a transmitter of them and, it appears, the chief exponent of their value as a guide to conduct of life and government. Either process admits of selection according to the purpose of the transmitter, and it is fair to conjecture that likely Confucius selected the material which he believed had special ethical value for his time and situation.

The authorship of one book, Ch'un-Ch'in, or Spring and Autumn, has generally been accredited to Confucius. It is a chronicle compiled by him of the annals of his native state of Lu, from B.C.722-481.¹ In evaluating it Wilhelm says:

"He makes these annals the basis of his labours throughout, and actually what he does is only to make the expressions specific and exact. Through the use of the specific and exact expressions we can deduce the judgments which Confucius passes on events....The effect of this work was enormous. Rebellious sons and treacherous officials became terrified....They aroused the terror of Ch'in Shih Hwang Ti and he ordered the classics burned. It has remained an incorruptible codex of political morality throughout the centuries and has had such an effect that Chinese statesmen, even when they departed from its teachings were yet never able to avoid a silent reckoning with its judgments. Thus Confucius actually crowned himself an uncrowned king through the quiet labour of an author and a teacher."²

Recognition should also be made of his part in the Hsiao King, or Classic of Filial Piety. It is composed of conversations supposed to have taken place between Confucius and one of his disciples, Zanzse, put on record by members of Zang's school, though the proportion of the actual words

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1. James Legge: Sacred Books of the East, V.3, p.xix.
2. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, p.132.

of Confucius is quite uncertain.¹

b. Religious and ethical contribution.

That China had a form of religion before Confucius is indisputable one feels after a reading of the ancient classics. But what was the form of it? Speer in commenting on this quotes from the Parliament of Religions' Report: "There were priests in China as far back as Hwang Ti,"² whose dates take us back to those of the earliest classic, the Shu King. Religion and the state were interrelated. The officers of the state were ministers of religion and officiated at annual sacrifices.

Two elements are recognizable, - "one an elementary monotheism, and the other a crude animism."³

"The oldest and holiest books of the empire teach that the universe consists of two souls or breaths called Yang and Yin, the Yang representing light, warmth, productivity and life, also the heavens from which all these good things emanate; and the Yin being associated with darkness, cold, death, and the earth. The Yang is subdivided into an indefinite number of good souls or spirits called Kwei, specters; it is these shen and kwei which animate every being and everything. It is they also which constitute the soul of man....This man is an intrinsic part of the universe."⁴

The prominence of Ti and T'ien in the early classics led Legge to conclude as follows:

"Since its early formation, Ti has properly been the personal name of Heaven. T'ien has had much of the

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1. James Legge: Sacred Books of the East, V.3, p.xx.
2. Robert E. Speer: The Light of the World, p.125.
3. Ibid., p.126.
4. J.J.M. DeGroot: The Religion of the Chinese, pp.3-4.

force of the name of Jahve as explained by God Himself to Moses; Ti has presented the absolute deity in the relation to men of their lord and governor. Ti was to be to the Chinese fathers, I believe, exactly what God was to our fathers, whenever they took the great name on their lips.....Thus the two characters show us the religion of the ancient Chinese as a monotheism. How it was with them more than five thousand years ago, we have no means of knowing."¹

Though the monotheistic element is as clearly present as the animistic in the classics, the latter apparently prevailed in practise.

How did Confucius affect this prevailing emphasis? We might almost justifiably call him an agnostic. He did not promote the animistic element and he did not add to the monotheistic. Though he undoubtedly recognized the latter his emphasis was away from it, and his tendency to depersonalize Heaven.

He was interested in man in his relation to society, government. "He viewed man and ethics always in relation to politics."² The means by which he sought to promote a proper relationship of these were annual state worship of Heaven conducted by the Emperor, and ancestor worship with all its ramifications and practical significance.

He was primarily a teacher of ethics and cared little for metaphysical discussion or for explanations of the Cosmos. The development of a philosophy based on his transmissions was the work of his successors.

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1. James Legge: Religions of China, pp.10-11
2. Robert E. Speer: The Light of the World, p.149

B. Development Through Mencius.

The first real advance upon Confucius was made by the philosopher Mangtze, in its Latinized form "Mencius".

1. Life of Mencius.

Mencius was born about 371 B.C., scarcely more than a hundred years after the decease of Confucius, in the principality of Tsow, formerly Choo. He was a contemporary of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, Demosthenes. "When we place Mencius among them, he can look them in the face. He does not need to hide a diminished head."¹

His father died early and his mother reared him carefully and according to her knowledge of propriety.

He studied with the disciples of Tsze-sze, who was a disciple of Confucius; thus his relationship to the "Master" is analogous to that of Polycarp to Christ. He studied the classics diligently the first forty years of his life. His admiration for Confucius was untiring, and "in his principles and doctrines he recognized the truth for want of an appreciation of which the bonds of society all around him were being relaxed and the empire hastening to general anarchy."²

2. Efforts at Reform.

Mencius found society and government in a degenerate condition. The dynasty of Chow was ready to vanish away, and

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1. James Legge: Life and Works of Mencius, p.16.

2. Ibid., p.20.

a potential anarchy was existent. "Doctrines strange and portentous in the view of Mencius were openly professed. The authority of Confucius was disowned. The foundations of government were overthrown; the foundations of truth were assailed."¹

He held various public offices and, like his esteemed Master, sought to bring about his reforms through influencing the rulers, but everywhere his acuteness seemed to offend. After striving long "against the adverse circumstances which threw his hopes of influencing the rulers of his time again and again in the dust" he concluded "'Heaven does not wish that the empire should enjoy tranquillity and good order'", and at last bowed in submission. He is thence lost sight of and very likely spent the last twenty years of his life discoursing with his disciples and writing.²

3. His Contribution.

a. Compared to Confucius.

Mencius might well be called the St. Paul of Confucianism in that he was the first great developer of the doctrines of Confucius. He is "rigidly loyal to Confucius.He reiterates the teaching of the Master and rarely strays from the narrow Confucian path."³

He had a greater tendency toward philosophy than

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1. James Legge: Life and Works of Mencius, p.21.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.22-26.

3. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.64.

Confucius. With him it becomes plain that psychology and metaphysics enter Confucian thought.¹

His ethical and religious views do not differ from Confucius and it is chiefly in his emphasis that we find some shifting, some development.

"But while we do not look to Mencius for new truths, the peculiarities of his natural character were more striking than those of his master. There was an element of 'the heroic' about him. He was a dialectician, moreover. If he did not like disputing, as he protested that he did not, yet when forced to it, he showed himself a master of the art. An ingenuity and subtlety which we cannot but enjoy often mark his reasonings. We have more sympathy with him than with Confucius. He comes closer to us. He is not so awful, but he is more admirable. The doctrines of the sages take a tinge from his mind in passing through it, and it is with that Mencian character about them that they are now held by the cultivated classes and by readers generally."²

On the readiness of the people to be governed Mencius only differs in his more vehement style. He does not dwell so much on the influence of personal virtue, but he quotes Confucius' language on the influence of superiors on inferiors.³

Like Confucius he maintained the state sacrifices to Heaven and to the nature spirits and ancestors, but he concerns himself less with these than with the inculcation of morals.⁴

It is principally on the view regarding human

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.66.
2. James Legge: Life and Works of Mencius, p.43.
3. Ibid., p.48.
4. Frederick Starr: op.cit. p.85.

nature that Mencius makes an advance over Confucius. Confucius taught the goodness of human nature, but his utterances regarding it are few. With Mencius the innate goodness of human nature becomes a fundamental doctrine. He states it clearly:

"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 downward. Now by striking water and causing it to leap up, you may make it go over your forehead, and by damming and leading it you may force it up a hill; but are such movements according to the nature of water? It is the force applied which causes them. When men are made to do what is not good, their nature is dealt with in this way.¹

The further discussion of this doctrine we shall reserve for a subsequent chapter when we shall compare it with the Christian view.

b. Literary works.

The book bearing his name, which together with the Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean comprises the four post-Confucian classics, is his chief literary contribution. Wilhelm's evaluation is interesting and to the point:

"The picture which is drawn in this work of the life and work of Confucius is in practical harmony with that which we gain from the other sources of first rank. We may, therefore, accept this book as a perfectly valid testimony for the Confucian doctrine. In many respects it follows the main ideas of Confucius down to minute details, and seeks to give a psychological foundation, and to round them out psychologically. To

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1. The Works of Mencius, Bk.V, Ch.II:2 - Four Books, p.272.

be sure it cannot be denied that, with the development and rationalization of the doctrines of the Master, a certain resultant shallowness and one-sidedness were unavoidable. Whereas Confucius was the practical statesman, who gives positive expression to his doctrines and who seeks to make them effective among his disciples through the influence of his powerful personality, Mencius is the clever debater who tries to confute and always to be in the right in his duels with other schools of philosophy, but who, for the sake of greater clarity, on the other hand, reinterprets certain basic ideas of the Master, such as his conception of humanity and love in the highest sense, but juxtaposing justice and duty to love, when actually the two together, love and duty, indicate the highest ideal.....¹

But he was passionate for the true and good in Confucianism and it was due to him that Confucius was strengthened.²

C. Development Through Hsuncius. (53)

Hsuncius has frequently been denominated a heretic, but his contribution to the philosophical development of Confucianism merits him at least brief consideration.

1. Life of Hsuncius.

He was born in 320 B.C. and, therefore, he was partially contemporary with Mencius. Little is known of his early years, but middle life finds him in government service and later life in literary work.

2. His Contribution.

Dubs says of him that he gave a stable and consistent foundation and expression to the Confucian philosophy.

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1. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, pp.140-141.
2. Idem.

He exposed the fallacies of other schools of thought and made a powerful defense of Confucianism and trenchant attacks upon other philosophers.¹

"Hsuntze gave a philosophical foundation to the authoritarianism which has been one fundamental characteristic of Confucianism through all the ages, even of those who have attacked Hsuntze....It is in his exaltation of Li as the basis of morals that Hsuntze is most characteristic of Chinese thought all through the ages."²

He strengthens the impersonal conception of Heaven already perceptible in Confucius, and defines more clearly the old idea of Tao.³

He attacked the belief in spirits vigorously, including the existence of the spirits of ancestors, and is responsible in large part for the religious agnosticism permeating Chinese educated circles. Confucius neglected rather than denied the existence of spirits, sparing his reverence for the past; Mencius scarcely mentions them, and Hsuncius is the first to deny absolutely their existence. He believed that, deprived of hope of supernatural aid, man would devote himself more diligently to self-culture.⁴

But it is with respect to his position that human nature is fundamentally evil and needs training to make it virtuous, that he differs irreconcilably with Mencius. "But for his independence here he would have been in the line of

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.110.
2. Ibid., p.98.
3. Ibid., p.103.
4. Ibid., p.99.

orthodoxy....His many valuable contributions were all overshadowed by the enormity of his claim that human nature is evil."¹ Dubs in explaining his position says that he did not imply that human nature was capable of no good, but rather just the opposite. He recognized an infinite capacity for good and sought to stimulate men to develop it.² He defends Hsuncius as a true Confucianist, agreeing in all essentials with Confucius and Mencius:

"In everything except his theory of ethics and doctrine of human nature Hsuntze was a disciple of Mencius as well as of Confucius. But none of his predecessors gave a continuous and rounded view of the Confucian teaching."³

Wilhelm believes he deviates most from the core of Confucian doctrine in the means used to produce virtue.

Both Confucius and he agree that manners are the means, but

"with Confucius manners are a mild force which starts from the convincing personal power of a great personality and which are expanded like organic growth. Hsun Ch'ing sees in manners, in the first instance the fixed form which must achieve its aims and reconstruct man with the coercive power of a law."⁴

D. Development Through Chucius.

During the period intervening the death of Hsuncius and the activities of Chucius over thirteen centuries elapsed, and two rivals, Taoism and Buddhism, developed and exerted their influence, so that the chief contributors to the next advance

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, pp.104-105.

2. Ibid., pp.106-107.

3. Ibid., p.117.

4. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, pp.141-142.

in the Confucian system are not a little tainted by the two "heresies". "While the springs of the Sung philosophy are to be found in the classics, the stream was fed by affluents of widely different origin."¹

1. The Sung School.

"In the literary renaissance of Chinese history, a galaxy of thinkers arose, forming what is known as the Sung School of Confucianism, whose writings crystallized the thoughts of the ages into a system which has dominated the Chinese mind ever since, colouring the mental outlook of the most ignorant peasant not less really than that of the erudite scholar."²

The members of the school were Chou Tun I (1017-73A.D.), founder of the school; Cheng Hao (1032-1085 A.D.) and Cheng I (1033-1107 A.D.), brothers; Chang Tsai (1020-1076), their uncle; and Chu Tsi (latinized "Chucius"), (1130-1201). Note that the trend of thought which this school represents was in the process of development for approximately two hundred years, and it is in the last named that it finds its fullest expression.

"While each of the great philosophers whose names are closely associated with the school made his own special contribution to the stream of its thought, it is as that stream passed through the channel created by the last of the famous five - Chu Hsi himself - that it assumed its final trend. The philosophy of Chu Hsi is the philosophy of the Sung School."³

2. Life of Chucius.

Chucius (Chu Hsi) was born about 1130 A.D. At

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1. J. Percy Bruce: Chu Hsi and His Masters, p.6.
2. Ibid., p.7.
3. Ibid., Preface, p.x.

twenty-two he received his first official appointment as keeper of records and superintendent of education at Ch'uan Chou in Fukien. With his keen intellect and propensity for study he soon instituted reforms in his capacity as superintendent of education.¹

3. Conditions of his Time.

The two centuries covered by the lives of the five philosophers fell within the Sung dynasty. It was a period of war and unrest, but it appears that the very turbulence of the times stimulated the activity of these thinkers and gave their teachings a particular appropriateness.

"Through their high ethical doctrines the five philosophers and their associates exerted a widespread, uplifting influence in the social conditions of the people; in the statesmanship of the Empire they earnestly contended for their principles; and though unable to control either foreign or domestic policy, they kept those principles alive in the heart of the nation."²

4. Contribution of Chucius.

a. Advance over predecessors.

The source of the Sung philosophy is found principally in the Yi-King, though in passing through the minds of Chucius and his predecessors it was substantially developed.

"The unity of nature is a doctrine which constitutes the very warp and woof of Chu Hsi's philosophy and that of his school. For them man and the universe are one."³ In

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1. J. Percy Bruce: Chu Hsi and His Masters, p.64.

2. Ibid., pp.12-13.

3. Ibid., p.3.

Chucius' nature becomes a cosmological concept. The term "nature" according to him is "an ethical principle imparted by the creative will of God to the material organism and constituting the life of that organism."¹

Bruce sees in this the great merit of the Sung School:

"The great merit of the Sung school is that the moral is recognized as fundamental. It teaches that the material universe which we see around us has an ethical basis which consists of the same ethical principles which we find imbedded in our own hearts."²

Nature in its double application he identifies with the Ultimate, - the law which pervades the universe.

"The supreme ultimate is the law of the universe. It is immanent in heaven and earth, it is immanent in all things....There is but one supreme ultimate, which is received by each individual of the All Things: but this supreme ultimate is received by each individual in its entirety and undivided....The Supreme Ultimate is all in all."³

Chucius agrees with Mencius in his main proposition that nature is good, but that it does not predicate an impossibility of evil in an individual.⁴ Bruce in interpreting Chucius' philosophy even goes so far as to say that this ethical principle is Love, Righteousness, Reverence, Wisdom.⁵ To this same principle in its double implication is given the name "Li", and "Tao".

The chief contribution then of Chucius consists in

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1. J. Percy Bruce: Chu Hsi and His Masters, p.196.
2. Ibid., p.125.
3. Ibid., p.141.
4. Ibid., p.207.
5. Ibid., p.124.

this development of the doctrine of the unity of nature.

"The government recognized Chucius as the one true representative of Confucian orthodoxy."¹

b. Later influence of Chucius.

The doctrines of Chucius were transmitted by his numerous disciples and his voluminous writings from generation to generation until his system became the established form of Confucianism for the whole nation. Bruce observes its relation to present-day thought thus:

"To those who have lived in China it is of no small interest to find, when they study the writings of these philosophers, that on almost every page are modes of thought and expression which to this day are to be observed among all classes of the people. Present-day Confucianism - that is, the system of ethical and metaphysical conceptions current in China for the last seven hundred years - is rather Chu Hsi's philosophy than that of Confucius."²

E. Development Through Wang Yang-Ming.

One other philosopher, however, should be treated briefly, and one who is thought to have received his inspiration from the same teachers who influenced Chucius, the Cheng brothers, but tainted en route by Zen-Buddhism, and this becomes evident in his extreme subjectivism.

1. Life of Wang Yang-Ming.

He was born in 1472^{A.D.} and like all of those previ-

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1. Frederick Starr: op. cit., p.180.

2. J. Percy Bruce: Chu Hsi and His Masters, Preface, pp.ix-x.

ously discussed, held various government positions.

His intensive study of the classics began at thirty-four. A year later he offended his superior officer and was assigned an insignificant post in the barbaric Lungch'ang. This enabled him to follow his natural philosophic and meditative tendency. He meditated a good deal upon life and death. A sudden enlightenment upon the passage of the sage about "investigating things for the purpose of extending knowledge to the utmost" brought him to the conclusion that he was wrong in looking for principles in things and affairs, and that his nature was sufficient. He believed he found the confirmation of this new knowledge in the classics.

2. His Point of View.

Out of this experience grew his doctrine of intuitive knowledge.

He "was an idealist of the monistic type. For him mind covered the entire gamut of existence: he thought that nothing exists independent of and apart from the mind. His point of view was consequently at variance with Chu's" who was a realist and "held that external things partake of the principles of the mind, and that for this reason knowledge may be perfected by investigating the principle of all things with which one came into contact."¹

He believed human nature was good, that the heart

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1. Frederick Goodrich Henke: The Philosophy of Wang Yang-Ming, p.xiii.

alone was the norm of goodness, and that men would comply with it spontaneously unless interfered with.¹

Henke in his preface gives a concise summary:

"As a rationalizing and socializing factor in the development of life, his exposition exhibits the following doctrines:

(1) Every individual may understand the fundamental principles of life and of things, including moral laws, by learning to understand his own mind, and by developing his own nature. This means that it is not necessary to use the criteria of the past as present-day standards. Each individual has the solution of the problems of the universe within himself. 'Man is the measure of all things.'

(2) On the practical side, every one is under obligation to keep knowledge and action, theory and practice together, for the former is so intimately related to the latter that its very existence is involved. There can be no real knowledge without action. The individual has within himself the spring of knowledge and should constantly carry into practice the things that his intuitive knowledge of good gives him opportunity to do.

(3) Heaven, earth, man, all things are an all-pervading unity. The universe is the macrocosm, and each human mind is a microcosm. This naturally leads to the conceptions equality of opportunity and liberty, and as such serves well as the fundamental principle of social activity and reform."²

3. Relation to Orthodox Confucianism.

Wang Yang-Ming himself felt that he was not greatly at variance with Chucius, who, he believed, glimpsed the truth as he saw it and would have arrived at the same conclusion had he followed it through.³

Though he and his school introduced a new attitude and were not regarded as orthodox, they were faithful in

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1. Frederick Goodrich Henke: The Philosophy of Wang Yang-Ming, pp.xiii, xiv.
2. Ibid., p.xiv.
3. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.150.

defense of the classics, and had in common with Mencius the germ of his doctrine of the heart as the norm,¹ and were not wholly inconsistent with the "unity of nature" idea of Chucius.

4. Influence of Wang Yang-Ming.

Starr says that during his lifetime he had many disciples and the influence of his work has been felt down to the present; that he occupies a high position in Chinese thought today; and predicts a possibility of his influence increasing with time.²

F. Recent Developments in Confucianism.

Since the revolution of 1911, Confucianism has suffered very heavily. Previously it was considered the religion of the state. Its officers were her priests, but with the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Republic, the unifying element - the conducting of the state worship by the emperor - practically disappeared. An attempt was made in 1914 to restore the teachings of Confucius, and although the President, Yuan Shih Kai, at first favored the Confucian proposal and tried to restore the annual sacrifices to Heaven, the opposition was too strong and he failed. After his death an attempt was made to have included in the permanent constitution of China "a compromise statement....

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1. Frederick Starr: Confucianism, p.162.
2. Ibid., p.180.

providing still for religious liberty but that 'Confucian teachings be made the basis of moral instruction in all public elementary schools'". Opposition proved too strong against it, the proposal was dropped, and at present the status is religious liberty for all religionists.¹

But within Confucianism efforts at reform have been taking place. In 1911 a society was formed with a simple creed to perpetuate the Confucian teachings, a Neo-Confucian movement is making efforts to "restate the case for Confucianism in the light of modern knowledge, and the works of Chucius are being revived and increasingly discussed."²

G. Recapitulation.

We have traced the historical development of the Confucian system through its chief promulgators, Confucius, Mencius, Hsuncius, Chucius, and Wang Yang-Ming, and have noted the contribution and emphasis of each.

Confucius transmits the religious and ethical heritage of the ancients through the Classics, tends to depersonalize Heaven, and emphasizes practical ethics. The others do not neglect this last, but develop a philosophical basis for their ethics, - Mencius makes the "innate goodness of human nature" a fundamental doctrine; Hsuncius takes an apparently opposite view, - that man's nature is fundamentally evil, hoping to thereby stimulate human efforts to attainment

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1. Cf. Charles Samuel Braden: Modern Tendencies in World Religions, pp.114-15.
2. Ibid., pp.117-20.

of virtue; Chu Hsiang-shan's orthodoxy reaffirms Mencius' view but develops the doctrine of the unity of man's nature with the universe through a common ethical principle, and sets the mould of present-day Confucianism; Wang Yang-Ming plays up a hitherto slighted factor, - the intuitive knowledge of good by man and reconciles his view with the classics.

Though these men differed in their philosophical bases, the differences being mainly attributable to emphases or degrees of development, all agree on the ethics of the Classics as an effective means of developing the character of man, and we are ready for an examination of the ethical system as set forth in the classics.

CHAPTER II

A STUDY OF THE ETHICAL SYSTEM OF CONFUCIANISM

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A. Its Basic Hypothesis

1. Innate Goodness of Man.

The hypothesis which the student of the Chinese classics finds underlying the whole Confucian system of ethics is the innate goodness of man. Indeed, it is not subtly implied, but clearly and repeatedly stated, and consistently assumed throughout.

a. Human nature is Heaven-conferred.

Man's nature is conferred by Heaven, however indefinitely conceived. Translators and commentators differ widely on the conception of the divine in the Classics, but this much is uncontested, - that Heaven is a power recognized in the Classics as having a relation to man, and certainly to the extent of being the author of man's nature. In the earliest of the Classics we find "The great God has conferred on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right;"¹ and in a later book, - "What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature. An accordance with this nature is called the Path of Duty; the regulation of this path is called the System of Instruction."²

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1. Shu King, Part IV, Bk.III.2, SBE, V.3, p.90. (SBE is the abbreviation for Sacred Books of the East. Cf. Bibliography)
2. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sec.I.1, SBE, V.28, p.300.

b. Human nature is good.

The normal nature of man is good:

"Heaven in giving birth to the multitudes of the people, to every faculty and relationship annexed its law. The people possess this normal nature, and they (consequently) love its normal virtue."¹

Legge's footnote defines "normal nature" for us, and though we shall refer to it again, for the sake of clarity we insert it here.

"Every faculty, bodily or mental, has its function to fulfil, and every relationship its duty to be discharged. The function and the duty are the things which the human being has to observe:- the seeing clearly, for instance, with the eyes, and hearing distinctly with the ears; the maintenance of righteousness between ruler and minister, and of affection between parent and child. This is the normal nature, and the 'normal virtue' is the nature fulfilling the various laws of its constitution."²

At a much later date than that of our first reference, Mencius elaborated on this doctrine of the innate goodness of human nature and left us many pointed statements, e.g. "Mencius discoursed to him how the nature of man is good, and when speaking, always made laudatory reference to Yao and Shun."³

Confucius declares uprightiness to be the "be all" of being, thus: "Man is born for uprightiness. If a man lose his uprightiness, and yet live, his escape from death is the effect of mere good fortune."⁴ The translator's footnote

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1. Shih King, Decade III, Ode 6, SBE, V.3, p.425. The parentheses appearing here and elsewhere are the translator's, and contain words necessary to convey the meaning inherent in the original but not literally expressed.
2. Idem.
3. The Works of Mencius, Bk.III, Pt.I, Ch.I:2, Four Books, p.110.
4. Confucian Analects, Bk.IV, Ch.17, Four Books, p.54.

clarifies it: "Life without uprightness is not true life, and cannot be calculated on."¹

According to Mencius there are four principles inherent in the nature of man:

"What belongs by his nature to the superior man are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge. These are rooted in his heart; their growth and manifestation are a mild harmony appearing in the countenance, a rich fulness in the back, and the character imparted to the four limbs. Those limbs understand to arrange themselves without being told."²

In other words, these principles find their expression spontaneously.

Elsewhere the same philosopher defines these four principles as follows:

"The feeling of commiseration is the principle of benevolence. The feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness. The feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety. The feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge.

Men have these four principles just as they have their four limbs...."³

c. Human nature needs development.

However clearly and positively the doctrine of innate goodness of man's nature is asserted, an exercise thereof is demanded, and the demand frequently follows a statement of the basic hypothesis, showing that the two were not intended to be contradictory but related, as is the case in the quotation given lastly hereinabove, which

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1. Confucian Analects, Translator's note, Bk.VI, Four Books, Ch.17, p.54.
2. The Works of Mencius, Bk.VII, Pt.I, Ch.29:4, Four Books, p.336.
3. Ibid., Bk.II, Pt.I, Ch.3:6, p.79.

continues:

"When men, having these four principles, yet say of themselves that they cannot develop them, they play the thief with themselves, and he who says of his prince that he cannot develop them, plays the thief with his prince.

Since all men have these four principles in themselves, let them know to give them all their development and completion, and the issue will be like that of fire which has begun to burn, or that of a spring which has begun to find vent. Let them have their complete development, and they will suffice to love and protect all within the four seas. Let them be denied that development, and they will not suffice for a man to serve his parents with."¹

The service of the sage is to bring out this good nature in training the young according to the Yi-King:

"(The method of dealing with) the young and ignorant is to nourish the correct (nature belonging to them);- this accomplishes the service of the sage."²

Confucius said, "By nature, men are nearly alike, by practice, they get to be wide apart,"³ which would seem to intimate that environment or other external factors act upon the inherently good nature of man to make changes which must either be for the better or worse, and in fact as we progress we shall find how large a place is given to the power of example in influencing the people to express the goodness of their natures.

d. Good nature may become evil.

No inconsistency is felt between the doctrine of the innate goodness of man and the frequent admissions

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.II, Pt.I, Ch.III.6, Four Books, pp.79-80.
2. Yi-King, Appendix I, Sect.I, Hex.IV.2, SBE, V.16, p.217.
3. Confucian Analects, Bk.XVII, Ch.II, Four Books, p.218.

of proneness to error, such as the following: "The mind of man is restless, prone (to err); its affinity to what is right is small."¹

"....The small man thinks that small acts of goodness are of no benefit, and does not do them; and that small deeds of evil do no harm, and does not abstain from them. Hence his wickedness becomes great till it cannot be covered, and his guilt becomes great till it cannot be pardoned."²

"The Master said, 'Perfect is the state of equilibrium and harmony! Rare have they long been among the people who could attain to it!'"³

A statement from the Li Ki would seem to imply that contact with his social environment corrupts the good nature of man:

"It belongs to the nature of man, as from Heaven, to be still at his birth. His activity shows itself as he is acted on by external things, and develops the desires incident to his nature. Things come to him more and more and his knowledge is increased. Then arise the manifestations of liking and disliking. When these are not regulated by anything within, and growing knowledge leads more astray without, he cannot come back to himself, and his Heavenly principle is extinguished.

"Now there is no end of the things by which man is affected; and when his likings and dislikings are not subject to regulation (from within), he is changed into the nature of things as they come before him; that is, he stifles the voice of Heavenly principle within, and gives the utmost indulgence to the desires by which men may be possessed. On this we have the rebellious and deceitful heart, with licentious and violent disorder. The strong press upon the weak; the many are cruel to the few; the knowing impose upon the dull; the bold make it bitter for the timid; the diseased are not nursed; the old and young, orphans and solitaries are neglected:- such is the great disorder that ensues."⁴

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1. Shu-King, Pt.II, Bk.II,2, SBE V III, p.50.
2. Yi King, Appendix III, Sect.II, Ch.V.38, SBE,V.16, p.391.
3. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.I.8, SBE, V.28, p.302.
4. Li Ki, Bk.xvii, Sect.I,11-12, SBE, V.28, p.96-7.

Mencius in replying to the philosopher Kaou's statement that man's nature is indifferent to good and evil, makes clear in the following oft-quoted passage his position that if "men do what is not good, the blame cannot be imputed to their natural powers,"¹ but to some external force:

"Water indeed will flow indifferently to the east or west, but will it flow indifferently up or down? 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."

"Now by striking water and causing it to leap up, you may make it go over your forehead, and by damming and leading it, you may force it up hill;- but are such movements according to the nature of water? It is the force applied which causes them. When men are made to do what is not good, their nature is dealt with in that way."²

Confucius practically admits moral impotency ✓

when he says,

"Men all say, 'We are wise;' but being driven forward and taken in a net, a trap, or a pitfall, not one of them knows how to escape. Men all say, 'We are wise;' but when they have chosen the state of equilibrium and harmony, they are not able to keep in it for a round month."³

2. Unity of Nature.

This doctrine runs through the Yi King more or less subtly, but was given form and clarity by Chucius in the twelfth century A.D.⁴ The implication seems to be that if the same ethical principle is inherent in man and the

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.VI, Pt.I, Ch.IV.5, Four Books, p.278.
2. Op.cit., Ch.II.2-3, p.271-2.
3. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki Bk.XXVIII, Sect.I.12, SBE, VXXVIII, p.302.
4. Cf. Chapter I, p.21ff.

natural world, man ought to submit to the natural forces, and in this sense nature functions in man's ethical development. Thus the rules of ceremony are designed in conformity with the seasons and for the nurture of man's nature.¹ One example will show how it is carried out:

"In this month the shortest day arrives. The principle of darkness and decay (in nature) struggles with that of brightness and growth. The elements of life begin to move. Superior men give themselves to self-adjustment and fasting. They keep retired in their houses. They wish to be at rest in their persons; put away all indulgence in music and beautiful sights; repress their various desires; give repose to their bodies and all mental excitements. They wish all affairs to be quiet, while they wait for the settlement of those principles of darkness and decay, and brightness and growth."²

Other attempts to relate human nature and the natural world are evident in the analogies drawn between the movements of nature and moral and intellectual movements.³

B. Its Ethical Ideal

1. Individual Aspect.

a. Superior man.

(1) What constitutes the Superior Man.

There is apparently no absolute standard of goodness in Confucianism. It is not only conspicuous by its absence but by a recognition of the fact of its absence in direct statements, for example:

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1. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.VII, Sect.IV:5, SBE, V.27, p.388.
2. Li Ki, Bk.IV, Sect.IV, Pt.II:13, SBE, V.27, p.304.
3. Cf. Yi King, Appendix I, Sect.II, Hex.56, Ch.LV:3, SBE, V.16, p.259.

"There is no invariable model of virtue; a supreme regard to what is good gives the model to it. There is no invariable characteristic of what is good that is to be supremely regarded;- it is found where there is a conformity to the uniform consciousness. 1

Confucius himself says that

"Humanity is like a heavy vessel, and like a long road. He who tries to lift the vessel cannot sustain its weight; he who travels the road cannot accomplish all its distance. There is nothing that has so many different degrees as (the course of) humanity; and thus he who tries to nerve himself to it finds it a difficult task. Therefore when the superior man measures men with the scale of righteousness, he finds it difficult to discover the men (whom he seeks); when he looks at men and compares them with one another, he knows who among them are the more worthy." 2

And again he complains that the "superior men" of his day do not practise the ancient rites nor regulate their conduct by them. 3 And stating the fact negatively he says, "Superior men, and yet not (always) virtuous, there have been, alas! But there never has been a mean man, (and at the same time) virtuous." 4 And yet "If the superior man abandon virtue, how can he fulfil the requirements of that name?" 5 seems to indicate that "the Master" felt the inconsistency of setting up a hypothetical standard which was not at the same time absolute.

Nevertheless there were some very definite conceptions of ethical superiority which the Chinese embodied in this hypothetical being which constituted their ideal,

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1. Shu King, Pt.IV, Bk.VII:5, SBE, V.III, p.102.
2. Li Ki, Bk.XXIX:18, SBE, V.28, pp.334-5.
3. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.XXXIV:5, SBE, V.28, p.262-3.
4. Analects, Bk.XVI, Ch.7, Four Books, p.141.
5. Analects, Bk.V, Ch.2, Four Books, p.30.

the consideration of which forms the main substance of the Classics. One of Confucius' disciples, Tsze-loo, asked of him what constituted the superior man, and we quote the discussion which ensued:

"The Master said, 'The cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness.' 'And is this all?' said (Tsze-loo). 'He cultivates himself so as to give rest to others,' was the reply. 'And is this all?' again asked (Tsze-loo). (The Master) said, 'He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people. He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people:- even Yaou and Shun were still solicitous about this.'"¹

To Yaou and Shun we shall have occasion to refer later.

Self-cultivation is considered to be the supreme preoccupation of man and fundamental to a proper relationship to society. How fundamental it was considered is pointedly and aptly stated in the Li Ki:

"From the son of Heaven down to the multitudes of the people, all considered the cultivation of the person to be the root (of everything besides). It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well-ordered,"²

and the route taken by self-culture to affect the state is interestingly and reasonably worked out. Note that the reasoning proceeds from the state to the individual and back to the state, as though in this passage it were for the sake of the state that the individual was called upon to cultivate his nature:

"The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well

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1. Confucian Analects, Bk.14, Ch.XLV, Four Bookes, p.156.

2. The Great Learning, Li Ki, Bk.39:4, SBE, V.28, p.412.

their states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge.

"The extension of knowledge is by the investigation of things.

"Things being investigated, their knowledge became 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 families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy. 1

Self-culture is found to be the development of the inherently good nature of man consistently with its four principles, - benevolence, righteousness, propriety, knowledge. Perfection is reached when self-culture has been carried to its completion, and "Perfection of nature is characteristic of Heaven. To attain to that perfection belongs to man."2

Another statement reverses the order: "It is only he of all under heaven who is entirely perfect that can give its full development to his nature."3 This perfected character chooses easily and naturally what is good, and has it within his power to give full development to the nature of other men, and to "assist the transforming and nourishing operations of heaven and earth." This last is based on a claim that the

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1. The Great Learning, Li Ki, Bk. XXXIX:2-4, SBE, V.XXVIII, pp-411-12.
2. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII;19, Sect.II, SBE, V.XXVIII, p.317.
3. Ibid., p.319.

perfect individual can foreknow, that is, predict from omens certain outcomes and act accordingly. When the superior man reaches that stage he is recognized as a sage.¹

This being is eulogized thus:

"How shall this individual have any one beyond himself on whom he depends? Call him man in his ideal, how earnest is he! Call him an abyss, how deep is he! Call him Heaven, how vast is he!"²

and he is the pattern for the ages.³

(2) Examples of the superior man. One cannot read through the Classics without being impressed with the premium which is placed upon the power of example, and quite naturally expects to find some concrete embodiment of the superior man, perhaps many. Our investigation yields the following results:

The "ancient kings" and the "men of antiquity" are held up as worthy of emulation, e.g.,

"The philosopher Yew said, 'In practising the rules of propriety, a natural case is to be prized. In the ways prescribed by the ancient kings, this is the excellent quality, and in things small and great we follow them.'⁴

"There is a nobility of Heaven, and there is a nobility of man. Benevolence, righteousness, self-consecration, and fidelity, with unwearied joy in these virtues;—these constitute the nobility of Heaven.....

"The men of antiquity cultivated their nobility of Heaven, and the nobility of man came to them in its train."⁵

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1. Cf. Doctrine of the Mean, op.cit., pp.317-20.
2. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.28, Sect.II.58, SBE, V.28, p.327.
3. Cf. op.cit.,p.325.
4. Confucian Analects, Bk.I, Chap.XII:1, Four Books, p.7.
5. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Chap.XVI.2, Four Books, pp.294-5.

Mencius repeatedly refers to Yaou and Shun, two ancients who seemed to him worthy embodiments of his ideal of self-culture, e.g.,

"Benevolence and righteousness were natural to Yaou and Shun. T'ang and Woo made them their own."¹

"Yaou and Shun were what they were by nature; T'ang and Woo were so by returning to natural virtue."²

"The course of Yaou and Shun was simply that of filial piety and fraternal duty."³

and he challenges the inquirers with the belief that all men may be Yaous and Shuns,⁴ and even suggests that it should be the life-long ambition for the superior man to be like Shun.⁵

Though Mencius speaks most highly of Confucius, calling him "a complete concert",⁶ he could scarcely affirm what Confucius himself denied when he said,

"In the way of the superior man there are four things, to not one of which have I, K'iu, as yet attained, - to serve my father as I would require my son to serve me, I am not yet able; to serve my ruler as I would require my minister to serve me, I am not able; to serve my elder brother as I would require a younger brother to serve me, I am not yet able; to set the example in behaving to a friend as I would require him to behave to me, I am not yet able."⁷

References to the perfect excellence of the "Son

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.VII, Pt.I, Chap.30:1, Four Books, p.342.
2. Ibid., Bk.VII, Pt.II, Chap.33:1, Four Books, p.371.
3. Ibid., Bk.IV, Pt.II, Chap.2:4, Four Books, p.301.
4. Ibid., Bk.IV, Pt.II, Chap.2:7, Four Books, p.300.
5. Ibid., Bk.IV, Pt.II, Chap.28:7, Four Books, pp.210-11.
6. Ibid., Bk.V, Pt.II, Chap.1:6, Four Books, p.248; also cf. Bk.II, Pt.I, Chap.II:23-8, op.cit., pp.70-72.
7. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.1:33, SBE, V.28, pp.305-6.

of Heaven", the exalted title given to the emperor, and the "Sage" are difficult to attribute to any particular historical character who might be held up as the fulfillment of the ideal.

b. The ethics of the superior man.

Since the superior man is one who has completely developed the four fundamental principles inherent in his nature, we shall classify the ethical precepts, which have been formulated for the purpose of directing man in his development, under these principles of his nature, not too rigidly, but for the sake of organization. To restate them,- they are benevolence, righteousness, propriety and knowledge, variously called understanding. Before we discuss these four classes, we shall discuss one which is not regarded as one of them but the root of all of them, namely, filial piety.

(1) Filial piety. "Now filial piety is the root of (all) virtue, and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching"¹; is a statement from the Hsiao King, and the translator's footnote defines "all virtue" as meaning the virtuous principles, the constituents of humanity.² Its basic importance is also evident in such statements as the following:

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1. Hsiao King, Chap.I, SBE, V.III, p.466.
2. Cf. Legge's footnote, idem.

"The fundamental lesson for all is filial piety. The practice of it is seen in the support (of parents). One may be able to support them; the difficulty is in doing so with the proper reverence. One may attain to that reverence;-the difficulty is to do so without self-constraint. That freedom from constraint may be realised;- the difficulty is to maintain it to the end. When his parents are dead, the son carefully watches over his actions, so that a bad name (involving) his parents, shall not be handed down, he may be said to be able to maintain his piety to the end. True love is the love of this; true propriety is the doing of this; true righteousness is the rightness of this; true sincerity is being sincere in this; true strength is being strong in this. Joy springs from conformity to this; punishment springs from the violation of this."¹

Mencius regarded the service of parents, the expression of filial piety, as the root of all other service.²

Confucius' definition of filial piety on one occasion was simply, "It is not being disobedient."³

The principle of filial piety is to be applied by the superior man in the nourishing of his parents, and after their death in the sacrificing to them. All his acts are to be governed by the thought that he is to bring no disgrace upon his parents.⁴ Filial piety enables the superior man to overlook the errors of his father.⁵ It motivates his care of his own body. "His parents give birth to his person all complete, and to return it to them all complete may be called filial duty."⁶ It governs him in his other

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1. Li Ki, Bk.XXI, Sect.II:11, SBE, V.28, p.227.
2. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Pt.I, Chap.XIX, Four Books, pp.185-6.
3. Confucian Analects, Bk.II, Chap.5, Four Books, p.11.
4. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.XXI, Sect.I:5, SBE, V.28, p.211-12.
5. Li Ki, Bk.XXVII:17, SBE, V.28, p.290.
6. Li Ki, Bk.XXI, Sect.II:14, SBE, V.28, p.229.

relationships, for instance,

"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 the duties of office, he be not reverent, he is not filial; if with friends he be not sincere, he is not filial; if on the field of battle he be not brave, he is not filial; if he fail in these five things, the evil (of the disgrace) will reach his parents;- dare he but reverently attend to them?"¹

Filial piety places upon the superior man the imperative of having posterity² to perpetuate the family line in order to continue the sacrificial system. Its demands precede those of wife and children.³

(2) Benevolence. Mencius considered benevolence the distinguishing characteristic of man.⁴ Previously he defined it as "the feeling of commiseration",⁵ and, with this to guide, the "gentler" virtues have been classified.

(a) Love. In the Mean we read "Benevolence is (the chief--element in) humanity, and the greatest exercise of it is in the love of relatives,"⁶ but Mencius rises to greater heights in one passage on love, when he includes others evidently outside of the family circle:

"That whereby the superior man is distinguished from

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1. Li Ki, Bk.XXI, Sect.II:11, SBE, V.28, p.226.
2. Works of Mencius, Chap.XXVI:1, Four Books, p.189. 4.1.26
3. Ibid., Chap.30:2, p.213. 4.2.30
4. Ibid., Bk.VII, Pt.II, Chap.16, p.361.
5. Cf. ante, p.32.
6. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.II:6, SBE, V.28, p.312.

other men is what he preserves in his heart;- namely, benevolence and propriety.

"The benevolent man loves others. The man of propriety shows respect to others.

He who loves others is constantly loved by them. He who respects others is constantly respected by them.

Here is a man, who treats me in a perverse and unreasonable manner. The superior man in such a case will turn round upon himself- 'I must have been wanting in benevolence; I must have been wanting in propriety:- how should this have happened to me?'

He examines himself, and is specially benevolent. He turns round upon himself, and is specially observant of propriety. The perversity and unreasonableness of the other, however, are still the same. The superior man will again turn round on himself- 'I must have been failing to do my utmost.'

He turns round upon himself, and proceeds to do his utmost, but still the perversity and unreasonableness of the other are repeated. On this the superior man says, 'this is a man utterly lost indeed! Since he conducts himself so, what is there to choose between him and a brute? Why should I go to contend with a brute?'"¹

The principle so beautifully stated falls short in the example. A more general statement of it is given by the same author:

"In regard to people generally, he is loving to them, but not affectionate. He is affectionate to his parents, and lovingly disposed to people generally. He is lovingly disposed to people generally, and kind to creatures."²

The opposite capacity is recognized as present in the "good" nature of man, e.g., "To love those whom men hate, and to hate those whom men love:- this is to outrage the natural feeling of men."³

(b) Generosity.

"The superior man does not take all the profit that

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Pt.II, Chap.XXVIII:1-6, Four Books, pp.209-10.
2. Op.cit., Bk.VII, Pt.I, Chap.XLV, Four Books, p.352.
3. The Great Learning, Li Ki, Bk.XXXIX:33, SBE, V.28,p.422.

he might do, but leaves some for the people. It is said in the Book of Poetry 'There shall be handfuls left on the ground, and ears here and there left untouched;- for the benefit of the widow.'¹

One is reminded of Hebrew custom exemplified in the Book of Ruth.

(c) Tolerance. However lofty the attainment of the superior man, he is not licensed to sit in judgment over the less perfect even while stimulating them to performance:

"The Master said, 'Long has the attainment of perfect humanity been difficult among men; it is only the superior man who is able to reach it. Therefore the superior man does not distress men by requiring from them that which (only) he himself can do, nor put them to shame because of what they cannot do. Hence the sage, in laying down rules for conduct, does not make himself the rule, but gives them his instructions so that they shall be able to stimulate themselves to endeavour, and have the feeling of shame if they do not put them in practice. (He enjoins) the rules of ceremony to regulate the conduct; good faith to bind it on them; right demeanour to set it off; costume to distinguish it; and friendship to perfect it:- he desires in this way to produce a uniformity of the people.... -2

(3) Righteousness. Under this caption fall the more rugged virtues of the superior man. The Classics are not sparing in their admiration of these qualities to be cultivated. "The Master said, 'The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential.'³
"Benevolence is the tranquil habitation of man, and righteous-

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1. Li Ki, Bk.XXVII:32, SBE, V.28, p.296.
2. Li Ki, Bk.XXIX:22, SBE, V.28, p.336.
3. Confucian Analects, Bk.XV, Chap.XVII, Four Books, p.163.

ness is his straight path."¹ "Never has there been a case where (his inferiors) loved righteousness, and the business (of the superior) has not reached a happy issue."² "The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness."³ Confucius deplures the state of those in whose minds the practise of righteousness is not uppermost, so that he says,

"When a number of people are together for a whole day, without their conversation turning on righteousness and when they are fond of carrying out the suggestions of a small shrewdness;- theirs is indeed a hard case."⁴

Mencius valued righteousness more than life.⁵

(a) Rectification. The superior man "rectifies himself, and seeks for nothing from others."⁶ "The Master 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.'⁷ The necessity of having one's purposes rectified, stressed in one way and another, reminds one of the admonition of Solomon to keep the heart with all diligence since out of it are the issues of life. Confucius puts it "The superior man, in the world does not set his mind either for any thing, or against any thing; what is right he will follow."⁸

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.III, Ch.X.2, Four Books, p.179.
2. The Great Learning, Li Ki, Bk.39:37, SBE, V.28, p.423.
3. Confucian Analects, Book IV, Ch.XVI, Four Books, p.34.
4. Ibid., Bk.XV, Ch.XVI, Four Books, p.163.
5. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Ch.10:1, Four Books, p.287.
6. The Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.1:35, SBE, V.28, p.306.
7. Confucian Analects, Bk.VI, Ch.17, Four Books, p.54.
8. Ibid., Bk.IV, Ch.X, Four Books, p.32,

(b) Sincerity. Closely related to rectification of purpose is sincerity. The Classics have a good deal to say of this. "Is not the superior man characterized by a perfect sincerity?" queries Confucius.¹ The superior man's practise is consistent with his profession.² He is sincere in his intercourse with friends.³ He is ashamed of anything that smacks of hypocrisy in dress, speech, or conduct.⁴ "The superior man is not affectionate to others with his countenance (merely) as if, while cold in feeling, he could assume the appearance of affection."⁵ If in the service of a ruler, he may be required to pledge his life for his sincerity.⁶ He is sincere in his sacrifices,⁷ for the spirits "accept only the sacrifices of the sincere."⁸ Sincerity, to Mencius, is the way of Heaven; to attain it requires understanding of what is good; it wins the confidence of others and enables the superior man to influence others.⁹ And Confucius advises his disciples to "hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles."¹⁰

(c) Earnestness. It is but a step from sincerity to earnestness. "The Master said,

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1. Cf. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.1:35, SBE, V.28, p.306.
2. Cf. idem.
3. Cf. Confucian Analects, Bk.I, Chap.IV, Four Books, p.3.
4. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.29:23, SBE, V.28, p.337.
5. Li Ki, Bk.29:50, SBE, V.28, p.349.
6. Cf. ibid., Bk.29:35, SBE, V.28, p.344.
7. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.8, Sect.II.2, SBE, V.27, p.405.
8. Shu King, Pt.4, Bk.V, SBE, V.3, p.99.
9. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.III, Chap.12:1-3, Four Books, p.179.
10. The Confucian Analects, Bk.I, Chap.8:2-4, Four Books, p.5.

' The superior man wishes to be slow in his words and earnest in his conduct!"¹ And again he regards it the part of wisdom "to give one's-self earnestly to the duties due to men."²

(d) Virtue. Confucius considered the exercise of virtue as a personal obligation. In his discussions of "perfect virtue" with his disciples he variously defines virtue, but it seems apparent in almost every instance that he regards it as a moral dynamic. He speaks of the being able to practise gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness and kindness, as constituting perfect virtue.³ And again the observation of the rules of propriety constitutes virtue,⁴ or the control of the tongue.⁵ Especially in the following passage does it seem to imply moral dynamic:

"The Master said, 'When a man's knowledge is sufficient to attain, and his virtue is not sufficient to enable him to hold, whatever he may have gained, he will lose again.
"When his knowledge is sufficient to attain, and he has virtue enough to hold fast, if he cannot govern with dignity, the people will not respect him."⁶

The man of virtue values his virtue more than life. For example, "They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve

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1. The Confucian Analects, Bk.IV, Chap.24, Four Books, p.36.
2. Ibid., Bk.VI, Chap.20, Four Books, p.36.
3. Cf. Confucian Analects, Bk.XVII, Chap.VI:1, Four Books, p.184.
4. Cf. Ibid, Bk.XII, Chap.I:1, Four Books, p.114.
5. Cf. Ibid., Bk.XII, Chap.2, Four Books, p.115.
6. Confucian Analects, Bk.XV, Chap.32:1-2, Four Books, p.167.

their virtue complete."¹ The translator of the passage suggests that justification of suicide is implied as in certain cases expressive of high virtue.²

Virtue is the ground of the superior man's love for another.³ Mencius concedes that men may take opposite attitudes toward a certain moral issue, yet all be motivated by the aim to be perfectly virtuous.⁴ His injunction is "Honour virtue and delight in righteousness, and so you may always be perfectly satisfied."⁵

(e) Purity. Confucius has summarized the substance of the Book of Poetry in a single sentence,- "Have no depraved thoughts."⁶ He numbers lust among the three things which the superior man guards against, especially in his youth.⁷ The Shih King gives us a very searching paragraph:

"Looked at in friendly intercourse with superior men, you make your countenance harmonious and mild; anxious not to do anything wrong. Looked at in your chamber, you ought to be equally free from shame before the light which shines in. Do not say, 'This place is not public; no one can see me here.' The approaches of spiritual beings cannot be calculated beforehand; but the more should they not be slighted."⁸

(f) Intellectual integrity.

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1. Confucian Analects, Bk.XV, Chap.8, p.161.
2. Cf. idem., translator's footnote.
3. Li Ki, Bk.II, Sect.I, Pt.I:18, SBE, V.27, p.128.
4. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.VI, Pt.II, Chap.VI:1-2, Four Books, pp.308-9.
5. Ibid., Bk.VII, Pt.I, Chap.9:3, Four Books, p.329.
6. Confucian Analects, Book II, Chap.2, Four Books, p.10.
7. Cf. ibid., Bk.16, Chap.7, Four Books, p.177.
8. Shih King, Decade 3, Ode 2, SBE, V. III, p.415.

In a series of warnings to rulers contained in the Shu King we find the following:

"When you hear words that are distasteful to your mind, you must enquire whether they be not right; when you hear words that accord with your own views, you must enquire whether they be not contrary to what is right."¹

(g) Personal discipline.

There is no relaxation on this road of self-culture, for

"The Master said, 'The superior man, by his gravity and reverence, becomes every day stronger (for good); while indifference and want of restraint lead to a daily deterioration. The superior man does not allow any irregularity in his person, even for a single day; - how should he be like (a small man) who will not end his days (in honour)?'"²

The superior man is temperate, active, and watchful of his company.³ He is urged to exercise self-control.⁴

(h) Fortitude. The fortitude

of the superior man is not born of a stoicism, but of an inner consciousness of virtue. "The Master said, 'When internal examination discovers nothing wrong, what is there to be anxious about, what is there to fear?'"⁵ "The superior man is satisfied and composed; the mean man is always full of distress."⁶ Therefore the superior man does what he believes to be right and maintains his inner peace. His

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1. Shu King, Bk.V:2, Pt.IV, SBE. V. III, p.100.
2. Li Ki, Bk.XXIX.6, SBE, V.28, p.331.
3. Cf. Confucian Analects, Bk.I, Ch.14, Four Books, p.8.
4. Cf. Shih King, Decade V, Ode 2, SBE, V. III, p.359.
5. Confucian Analects, Bk.XII, Ch.Iv:3, Four Books, p.116.
6. Ibid., Book VII, Ch.36, p.71.

portrait is drawn for us in the Doctrine of the Mean:

"....how firm is he in his fortitude! He stands erect in the middle, and does not incline to either side;- how firm is he in his fortitude! If right ways prevail in (the government of his state), he does not change from what he was in retirement;- how firm is he in his fortitude! If bad ways prevail, he will die sooner than change;- how firm is he in his fortitude."¹

(4) Propriety. Propriety is the observance of the five relationships,- ruler and minister; father and son; husband and wife; elder brother and younger; friend and friend; and the rules of propriety regulate the conduct of the superior man in these five relationships.

"The decreasing measures in the love of relatives, and the steps in the honour paid to the worthy, are produced by (the principle of) propriety."² The Classics bristle with reference to the proper conduct in these relationships. The function of the rules of propriety is discussed quite at length and we quote a passage which seems to summarize it quite adequately:

"The rules of propriety serve as instruments to form men's characters, and they are therefore prepared on a great scale. Being so, the value of them is very high. They remove from a man all perversity, and increase what is beautiful in his nature. They make him correct, when employed in the ordering of himself; they ensure for him free course, when employed towards others. They are to him what their outer coating is to bamboos, and what its heart is to a pine or cypress. These two are the best of all the productions of the vegetable world. They endure through all the four seasons, with-

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1. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Book XXVIII, Sect.I:19, SBE, V. 28, p.303.
2. Ibid., Li Ki, Book XXVIII, Sect.II:6, SBE, V. 28, pp.312-13.

out altering a branch or changing a leaf. The superior man observes these rules of propriety, so that all in a wider circle are harmonious with him, and those in his narrower circle have no dissatisfaction with him. Men acknowledge and are affected by his goodness, and spirits enjoy his virtue."¹

Confucius regarded them as essential to life:

"It was by those rules that the ancient kings sought to represent the ways of Heaven, and to regulate the feelings of men. Therefore he who neglects or violates them may be (spoken of) as dead, and he who observes them, as alive."²

The right relations which the rules of propriety seek to maintain are given in the Li Ki as follows, though elsewhere they appear in variations:

"What are the things which men consider right? Kindness on the part of the father, and filial duty on that of the younger; righteousness on the part of the husband, and submission on that of the wife; kindness on the part of elders, and deference on that of juniors; with benevolence on the part of the ruler, and loyalty on that of the minister;- these ten are the things which men consider to be right. Truthfulness in speech and the cultivation of harmony constitute what are called 'the things advantageous to men'. Quarrels, plundering, and murders are 'the things disastrous to men.' Hence, when a sage (ruler) would regulate the seven feelings of men, cultivate the ten virtues that are right; promote truthfulness of speech, and the maintenance of harmony; show his value for kindly consideration and complaisant courtesy; and put away quarrelling and plundering, if he neglect the rules of propriety, how shall he succeed?"³

The right relations are concretely expressed by means of ceremonies for which a cosmic origin is claimed.⁴ By them the "worship of ancestors" becomes a concrete expression of the proper filial regard for one's relatives in

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1. Li Ki, Bk.VIII, Sect.I, SBE, V. 27, p.394.
2. Li Ki, Bk.VII, Sect.1:4, SBE, V. 27, p.367.
3. Ibid., Bk.VII, Sect.II:19, SBE, V. 27, pp.379-80.
4. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.VII, Sect.IV:4-5, SBE, V. 27, pp.386-8.

graduating scale. A passage uttered by Confucius himself will serve to illustrate this thought:

"....The object of all the ceremonies is to bring down the spirits from above, even their ancestors; serving (also) to rectify the relations between ruler and ministers; to maintain the generous feeling between father and son, and the harmony between high and low, and to give their proper places to husband and wife. The whole may be said to secure the blessing of Heaven."¹

Sincerity is demanded in the exercise of propriety, for

"Acts of propriety which are not really proper....the great man does not do."²

(a) Reciprocity. Within the realm of propriety in human relationships a conflict between one's duty to himself and to others often arises, and Confucius recognized this fact and attempted a reconciliation when he said,

"Fidelity to one's self and the corresponding reciprocity are not far from the path. What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others."³

There we have the Golden Rule of Confucianism. A conversation with one of his followers reveals the importance with which "the Master" regarded this rule:

"Tsze-kung asked, saying: 'Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice of all one's life?' The Master said, 'Is not Reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.'⁴

Another phase of reciprocity is discussed in

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1. Li Ki, Bk.VII, Sect.I:10, SBE, V. 27, p.371.
2. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Pt.II, Chap.VI, Four Books,p.196.
3. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.I:32, SBE, V. 28, p.305.
4. Confucian Analects, Bk.XV, Ch.XXIII, Four Books, p.165.

another conversation:

"Someone said 'What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?'"

"The Master said, 'With what then will you recompense kindness?'"

"Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness."¹

Confucius felt that when one returned kindness for injury he was motivated by protection for his own person, possibly in another encounter.² He also felt that to love those whom others hated as well as hating those whom others loved could only bode ill for the individual.³

(b) Propriety of speech. The superior man is circumspect in his speech. "Words and actions are the hinge and spring of the superior man. The movement of that hinge and spring determines glory or disgrace. His words and actions move heaven and earth;- may he be careless in regard to them?"⁴ He is threatened with the ill results which may follow an instance of carelessness:

"Do not speak lightly; your words are your own. Do not say 'This is of little importance; no one can hold my tongue for me.' Words are not to be cast away. Every word finds its answer; Every good deed has its recompense."⁵

(c) Humility. Though a characteristic of the superior man, and specifically commanded

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1. Confucian Analects, Bk.XIV, Ch.35:1-3, Four Books, p.152.
2. Li Ki, Bk.XIX, SBE, V. 28, p.332.
3. Great Learning, Li Ki, Bk.XXIX:33, p.422.
4. Yi King, Appendix III, Sect.I, Ch.8:42, SBE, V. 16, pp. 361-2.
5. Shih King, Decade III, Ode 2, SBE, V. III, p.415.

for self-culture, it is repeatedly used as means to end, - to gain the confidence of the people and hence their submission; but the admiration for this quality in man is unfeigned. "Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men take no note of him?"¹ His conduct is idealized thus:

"He does not himself set a high value on his service; he does not himself assert the honour due to his person. He is not ambitious of (high) position, and is very moderate in his desires. He gives place willingly to men of ability and virtue. He abases himself and gives honour to others. He is careful and in fear of doing what is not right. His desire in all this is to serve his ruler."²

"The Master said, 'The superior man will decline a position of high honour, but not one that is mean; and riches, but not poverty...!'"³

"The Master said, 'The superior man exalts others and abases himself; he gives the first place to others and takes the last himself;- and thus the people are taught to be humble and yielding...!'"⁴

(5) Knowledge and understanding. These seem to be used somewhat interchangeably in the classics. Moreover, sometimes understanding or knowledge is the basis of moral perfection, sometimes a result of moral perfection, as illustrated by the following:

"The understanding (of what is good) springing from moral perfection, is to be ascribed to the nature; moral perfection springing from the understanding (of what is good) is to be ascribed to instruction. But

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1. Confucian Analects, Bk.I, Ch.I:1, Four Books, p.1.
2. Li Ki, Book XXIX:25, SBE, V. 28, p.338.
3. Li Ki, Book XXVII:7, SBE, V. 28, p. 286.
4. Li Ki, Book XXVII:9, SBE, V. 28, p.287.

given the perfection, and there shall be understanding; given the understanding, and there shall be perfection."¹

"He extensively studies what is good; inquires accurately about it; thinks carefully over it; clearly discriminates it; and vigorously practises it...."²

It was believed that some were born with the knowledge of the duties involved in the five relationships, that some knew them by study; and that some knew them as the result of painful experience. "But the knowledge being possessed, it comes to one and the same thing."³ Learning is indispensable and the superior man is to be untiring in his propensity for investigation. "The extension of knowledge is by the investigation of things."⁴ And the results which are promised extend from sincerity and rectification to cultivation of the individual, then to regulation of family, state and kingdom.⁵ The sage is the supreme example of the embodiment of understanding, for

"It is only he possessed of all sagely qualities that can exist under heaven, who shows himself quick in apprehension, clear in discernment, of far-reaching intelligence and all-embracing knowledge, fitted to exercise rule; magnanimous, generous, benign, and mild, fitted to exercise forbearance; impulsive, energetic, firm, and enduring, fitted to maintain a strong hold; self-adjusted, grave, never swerving from the mean, and correct, fitted to command respect; accomplished, distinctive, concentrative, and searching, fitted to exercise discrimination."⁶

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1. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk. XXVIII, Sect. II:21, SBE, V.28, pp.318-9.
2. Ibid., p.318.
3. Cf. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.28, Sect. II:10, SBE, V.28, p.313.
4. The Great Learning, Li Ki, Bk.39:3, SBE, V.28, p.412.
5. Cf. ibid.
6. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk. Bk.28, Sect.2:54, SBE, V.28, p.327.

2. Social Aspect.

a. The family.

Our previous discussion on filial piety illustrates the importance attached to the family as the social unit, and that the proper relationship of the members of the family constituted the pattern for the other social relationships, and trained the members of the family for proper conduct in the larger social group. Three of the relationships governed by the rules of propriety are family relationships, - father-son, elder-brother - younger-brother, and husband and wife. "Filial piety and fraternal submission! - are they not the root of all benevolent actions?"¹

(1) Marriage. Marriage is contracted by the parents and go-betweens, and the young people are not to override their prerogatives.² The husband is also directed by his parents in the place that he gives to his wife in his harem, and his love is governed by their wishes. A passage in the Li Ki describes the proper attitude of the husband:

"If a son have two concubines, one of whom is loved by his parents, while he himself loves the other, yet he should not dare to make this one equal to the former whom his parents love, in dress, or food, or the duties which she discharges, nor should he lessen his attentions to her after their death. If he very much approve of his wife, and his parents do not like her, he should divorce her. If he do not approve of his wife, and his

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1. Confucian Analects, Bk.I, Chap.2:2, Four Books, p.3.

2. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.III, Pt.II, Ch.3:6, Four Books, p.144.

parents say, 'she serves us well,' he should behave to her in all respects as his wife, - without fail even to the end of her life."¹

The duty of the wife is faithfulness. "Once mated with her husband, all her life she will not change (her feeling of duty to him), and hence, when the husband dies she will not marry (again)."² Woman's place is one of subordination to man's. It is character^{er}istically stated as follows:

"The woman follows (and obeys) the man:- in her youth she follows her father and elder brother; when married, she follows her husband; when her husband is dead, she follows her son...."³

When a conflict arises between the two duties imposed by filial piety, - marrying according to the parents wishes, and having posterity, the latter takes precedence.⁴ Concubinage is an ethical necessity in view of the duty imposed by filial piety to carry forward the family line by means of posterity.

(2) Duties of children. The younger brother is required to obey the elder brother.⁵ Yet the proper relationship is love, according to Mencius. "A benevolent man does not lay up anger, or cherish resentment against his brother, but only regards him with affection and love."⁶

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1. Li Ki, Bk.X, Sect.1:16, SBE, V. 27, p.457.
2. Li Ki, Bk.IX, Sect.III:7, SBE, V. 27, p.439.
3. Li Ki, Bk.IX, Sect.III:10, SBE, V. 27, p.441.
4. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Pt.I, Ch.26, Four Books, p.189.
5. Cf. ibid., Ch.27:1, p.189.
6. Works of Mencius, Bk.V, Pt.I, Ch.III:2, Four Books, pp.225-6.

Obedience is due the parents from both son and daughter-in-law.¹ The same love is due to the mother as to the father.² Both are nourished in life and cherished in death.

(3) Discipline. The superior man is responsible for the maintaining of discipline in his own family:

"He establishes restrictive regulations in his household:- (he does so), before any change has taken place in their wills....When 'the members of the household are treated with stern severity,' there has been no (great) failure (in the regulation of the family). When 'wife and children are smirking and chattering,' the (proper) economy of the family has been lost."³

"Mencius said, 'If a man himself do not walk in the right path, it will not be walked in even by his wife and children. If he do not order men according to the right way, he will not be able to get the obedience of even his wife and children.'⁴

(4) Divorce. Divorce is considered legitimate, as previously observed,⁵ and provisions are made for proper ethical conduct in the exigencies of the case.⁶

b. The state.

(1) The foundation of the state. From

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1. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.X, Sect.I:11, SBE, V. 28, p.453.
2. Cf. Hsiao King, Ch.V, SBE, V. III, p.470-1.
3. Yi King, Appendix II, Sect.II, Hex.37:1,3;Vol.16,p.312.
4. Works of Mencius Bk.VII, Pt.II, Ch.IX, Four Books, p.358.
5. Cf. footnote I, p.57.
6. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.XIII, Sect.I, SBE, V. 27, pp.42-45,57, and Bk.XVIII, Sect.II, Pt.II:34-5, pp.170-1.

the family as a unit the social organization broadens out into the state. The family is the pattern for the state, and its relationships are made to apply in the larger social unit. The thought is beautifully conceived in the following passage:

"When there is generous affection between father and son, harmony between brothers, and happy union between husband and wife, the family is in good condition. When the great ministers are observant of the laws, the smaller ministers pure, officers and their duties kept in their regular relations and the ruler and his ministers kept in their regular relations and the ruler and his ministers are correctly helpful to one another, the state is in good condition. When the son of Heaven moves in his virtue as a chariot, with music as his driver, while all the princes conduct their mutual intercourse according to the rules of propriety, the Great officers maintain the order between them according to the laws, inferior officers complete one another by their good faith, and the common people guard one another with a spirit of harmony, all under the sky is in good condition. All this produces what we call (the state of) great mutual consideration (and harmony).¹

Thus the ideal state is one in which the laws of propriety are maintained, and in which filial piety is exercised toward superiors. "Filial piety in the service of parents and obedience in the discharge of orders can be displayed throughout the kingdom, and they will everywhere take effect."²

(2) The function of the state. With the emphasis on the maintenance of a proper spirit of subordination of ruled to rulers, it is easy to feel that the

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1. Li Ki, Bk.VII, Sect.IV:13, SBE, V. 27, p.391.
2. Li Ki, Book XXI, Sect.I:15, SBE, V. 28, p.217.

state is regarded as prime and the individual citizens exist for the state, but an equal emphasis upon the obligation of the rulers to the ruled, plus a few definite statements to the contrary, assure us that the state exists for the benefit of the people. For instance, Mencius said, "The people are the most important element in a nation;....the sovereign is the lightest."¹ The government functions to lead the people aright, but it in turn is dependent upon the virtue of the individual citizen and the ruler to maintain its correct function. Confucius said "To govern means to rectify"² but he recognized his own responsibility to see to it that it did thus function.³ The voice of the people seems to be recognized as the voice of Heaven. "Heaven compassionates the people. What the people desire, Heaven will be found to give effect to."⁴ Mencius went into detail to explain to an inquirer by what authority the emperor ruled, and the substance of it is:

"Yaou presented Shun to Heaven, and the people accepted him. Therefore I say, 'Heaven does not speak. It simply indicated its will by his personal conduct and his conduct of affairs.....Heaven gave the empire to him. The people gave it to him. Therefore I said, 'The emperor cannot give the empire to another.'⁵

This is Confucianism's "divine right of kings".

Mencius saw a relationship between the conduct

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.VII, Pt.II, Ch.XIV:1, Four Books, p.359.
2. Confucian Analects, Bk.XII, Ch.XVII, Four Books, p.122.
3. Cf. *ibid.*, Bk.XVI, Ch.X, p.182.
4. Shu King, Part V, Bk.I, SBE, V. III, p.127.
5. Works of Mencius, Bk.V, Ch.V:5, Four Books, pp.230-32.

of the people and their economic condition, and said, "In good years the children of the people are most of them good, while in bad years the most of them abandon themselves to evil."¹ Therefore the function of the government was to regulate the economic conditions in order to control the conduct of the people. "When a country is well governed," said Confucius, "poverty and a mean condition are things to be ashamed of."²

The state has the prerogative to punish offenders, even by death,³ though Confucius frowned on this method of discipline, and expressed his belief in the effectiveness of a better way:

"Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it."⁴

Mencius felt that where there was a necessity for capital punishment, the reflection was upon the government for neglect in some way.⁵

It is quite evident from a number of passages that defensive warfare was sanctioned,⁶ and the need for military equipment emphasized, but it would seem from such a passage as the following that, at least, Mencius felt

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.VI, Pt.I, Ch.VII:1, p.280.
2. Confucian Analects, Bk.VIII, Ch.XIII:3, Four Books, p.76.
3. Cf. Shu King, Pt.II, Bk.I:3, SBE, V. III, p.41.
4. Confucian Analects, Bk.XII, Ch.XIX, Four Books, p.122-3.
5. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.I, Pt.II, Ch.XII, Four Books, pp.48-9.
6. Cf. Confucian Analects, Bk.XIII, Ch.XXX, Four Books, p.139; also, Ch.XXIX, p.139.

that aggressive warfare involving the loss of life was inconsistent with the ideal of benevolence:

"If it were merely taking the place from the one state to give it to the other, a benevolent man would not do it:- how much less will he do so, when the end is to be sought by the slaughter of men!"¹

(3) The rulers. "The exercise of government depends on (getting) the proper men. (Such) men are to be got by (the ruler's) own character." So says the Mean.² The cultivation of character begins at home, in filial piety, and consists in the development of the four principles of man's nature. Hence, the ruler should be a "superior man". Nine standard rules are given in the Mean for rulers:

"All who have the government of the kingdom with its states and families have nine standard rules to follow:- the cultivation of themselves; the honouring of the worthy; affection towards their relatives; respect towards their great ministers; kind and sympathetic treatment of the whole body of officers; dealing with the mass of the people as their children; encouraging the resort of all classes of artisans; indulgent treatment of men from a distance; and the kindly cherishing of the princes of the states."³

Great stress is laid upon the influence of the ruler upon the governed by his example. He is their model, and the level of their ethical standards and consequently their moral conduct rises and falls with his. Observe

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Pt.II, Ch.X:8, Four Books, p.316.
2. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.II:4, SBE V. XXVIII, p.312.
3. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.II:13, SBE, V. 28, p.314.

Confucius' statement:

"When a man who is over others transgresses in his words, the people will fashion their speech accordingly; when he transgresses in his actions, the people will make him their model. If in his words he do not go beyond what should be said, or in his actions what should be a model, then the people, without being commanded, will reverence and honour him." 1

And from the Shu King we have both the obligation to teach and live according to the rules of propriety in order to influence the conduct of the people:

"Diffuse widely (the knowledge of) the five invariable relations (of society), and reverently seek to produce a harmonious observance of the duties belonging to them among the people. If you are correct in your own person, none will dare to be but correct. The minds of the people cannot attain to the right mean (of duty); they must be guided by your attaining to it." 2

The result will be almost magic. The moral nature of the people will be made harmonious. 3 They will have confidence in their rulers, and the whole state will be tranquil and prosperous. The picture as given in the Mean is too beautiful to omit:

"By (the ruler's) cultivation of himself there is set up (the example of) the course (which all should pursue); by his honouring of the worthy, he will be preserved from errors of judgment; by his showing affection towards his relatives, there will be no dissatisfaction among his uncles and brethren; by respecting the great ministers he will be kept from mistakes; by kindly treatment of the whole body of officers, they will be led to make the most grateful return for his courtesies; by dealing with the mass of the people as his children, they will be drawn to exhort one another (to what is good); by encouraging the resort of artisans,

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1. Li Ki, Bk.XXIV:13, SBE, V. XXVIII, p.267.
2. Shu King, Part V, Bk.25:1, SBE, V. III, p.251.
3. Cf. Shu King, Bk.III, Part II, SBE, V. III, p.56.

his wealth for expenditure will be rendered sufficient; by indulgent treatment of men from a distance, they will come to him from all quarters; by his kindly cherishing of the princes of the states, all under heaven will revere him."1

Confucius likened such a ruler who exercised government by means of his virtue, to "the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it."2 Mencius gives us an example of a ruler who was so completely identified with his people that "if any one in the empire were drowned, it was as if he drowned him."3 Surely a high standard of responsibility, and one that demanded all that was included and more in the charge given to one state official:

"Offices should not be given to men because they are favourites, but only to men of ability. Dignities should not be conferred on men of evil practices, but only on men of worth. 4

C. Attainment of the Ideal

1. Difficulty of Attainment.

We have frequent admissions in the Classics that the attainment of the ideal, - the superior man, is difficult. We have some from the lips of Confucius, for example: "Long has the attainment of a perfect humanity been difficult among men! All men err in what they love...."5 One of his

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1. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.II, SBE, V. XXVIII, p.314-5.
2. Confucian Analects, Bk.II, Ch.I, Four Books, p.9.
3. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Ch.XXIX:4, Four Books, p.211.
4. Shu King, Pt.IV, Bk.VIII, Sect.2:1, SBE, V. III, p.115.
5. Li Ki, Bk.XXIX:20, SBE, V. XXVIII, p.335.

disciples confessed his impotency to attain to the doctrines of the Master in the following words:

"When I wish to give over the study of his doctrines, I cannot do so, and having exerted all my ability, there seems something to stand right up before me; but though I wish to follow and lay hold of it, I really find no way to do so." 1

2. Means of Attainment.

a. By understanding.

Knowledge or understanding of what is good has been given both as a fruit and a root of perfection, and we repeat it here in the latter aspect. In its positive aspect:- "It is not easy to find a man who has learned for three years without coming to be good,"² - the knowledge of good seems to be almost a certain guarantee of attainment. In its negative aspect,- "If a man have not a clear understanding of what is good, he will not attain to that perfection."³

b. By force of will.

It seems perfectly simple to Confucius that "If the will be set on virtue, there will be no practice of wickedness,"⁴ and as if in astonishment he exclaims, "Is virtue a thing remote; I wish to be virtuous, and lo!

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1. Confucian Analects, Bk.VII, Ch.X:3, Four Books, p.84.
2. Ibid., p.76.
3. Doctrine of the Mean, Li Ki, Bk.XXVIII, Sect.II:18, SBE, V. XXVIII, p.317.
4. Analects, Bk.IV, Ch.IV, Four Books, p.30.

virtue is at hand." And Mencius says, "Men must be decided on what they will not do, and then they are able to act with vigour (in what they ought to do)."¹

c. By perseverance.

If the superior man would maintain his position as such he must be constantly watchful. "The superior man does not, even for the space of a single meal, act contrary to virtue. In moments of haste, he cleaves to it. In seasons of danger, he cleaves to it."² And in a passage which sounds strangely like St. Paul's "pressing toward the mark" passage, Confucius says,

"So did the poets love (the exhibition of) humanity. (They teach us how) one should pursue the path of it, not giving over in the way, forgetting his age, taking no thought that the years before him will not be sufficient (for his task), urging on his course with earnestness from day to day, and only giving up when he sinks in death."³

d. By adherence to rules.

The rules of propriety are prescribed for the attainment of perfect virtue. When asked what the steps were, Confucius replied,

"Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not at what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety."⁴

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1. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Pt.II, Ch.VIII, Four Books, p.197.
2. Confucian Analects, Bk.IV, Ch.V:3, Four Books, p.30.
3. Li Ki, Bk.XXIX:19, SBE, V. 28, p.335.
4. Confucian Analects, Bk.XII, Ch.I:1, Four Books, p.114.

e. By observance of rites and ceremonies; music.

Great claims are made for the efficacy of rites in promoting righteousness and humility in that they set forth the correct relationships. Their value seems to be didactic.¹

Ceremonies, in that they produce the perception of right, regulate the conduct of the person. They are expatiated upon in detail in the Li Ki.² They should not be neglected by any one.

Music in that it produces repose is capable of regulating the heart and mind.³

Summarizing the effect of music and ceremonies, the Li Ki says:

"...the sphere in which music acts is the interior of man, and that of ceremonies is his exterior. The result of music is a perfect harmony, and that of ceremonies is a perfect observance (of propriety). When one's inner man is thus harmonious, and his outer man thus docile, the people behold his countenance and do not strive with him; they look to his demeanour, and no feeling of indifference or rudeness arises in them."⁴

They are lauded as instructive and transforming in their power, and preventative in their function.⁵

f. By the example of rulers.

This has already been considered at length and

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1. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.XXI, Sect.I:20, SBE, V. 28, pp.219-20.
2. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.XVII, SBE, V. 28, pp.98-116.
3. Cf. Li Ki, XVII, Sect.III:23-24, SBE, V. 28, pp.125-6.
4. Li Ki, Bk.XIX, Sect.II:8, SBE, V. 28, p.225.
5. Cf. Li Ki, Bk.XXIII:9, SBE, p.259-60.

the reader will recall that the ruler was considered the model for the people and a powerful stimulant to their virtue.¹

3. Incentive to Attainment.

Mencius would motivate a certain ruler to seek peace not for the profit which would ensue, but for righteousness' sake, - hence righteousness for its own sake, is the idea.²

Heaven helps only the virtuous.³ Virtue is rewarded by good fortune, lack of virtue by misfortune. "Heaven sends down misery or happiness according to their conduct."⁴ "Heaven graciously distinguishes the virtuous;Heaven punishes the guilty."⁵

The vision of a tranquil state was ever before the ruler.

D. Summary

Since in the next chapter we are comparing the ethics of Confucianism with the ethics of Christianity, we are refraining from any conclusions from the study of this chapter, and shall only stop here briefly in retrospect.

Confucian ethics has for its philosophical basis

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1. Cf. ante, pp.62-64.
2. Cf. Works of Mencius, Bk.VI, Pt.II, Ch.IV, Four Books, pp.304-6.
3. Cf. Shu King, Pt.V, Bk.XVII, SBE, V. III, p.212.
4. Cf. Shu King, Pt.IV, Bk.VI, SBE, V. III, p.102.
5. Shu King, Pt.II, Bk.III, SBE, V. III, p.56.

the belief in the innate goodness of man's nature, but recognizes the possibility and fact of evil intruding upon its goodness. In his fullest and natural development, he is the superior man. He needs but the natural development of the inherent principles of his nature, namely, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and understanding, to make him the superior man. His relationships have been clearly defined and rules formulated to guide him in his efforts at self-culture, and he is under the imperative of recognizing and abiding by these if he would attain. He is admonished to strive earnestly and persevere until death, and his rewards will attend him here and now.

CHAPTER III

ESTIMATE IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY

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A. Statement of the Principles of Christian Ethics

1. Its Basic Hypothesis

a. Man has a sinful nature.

"Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever," - so says the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and we can scarcely improve upon it as a concise yet comprehensive statement of the ultimate goal of man according to the Christian conception. It at once states the "summum bonum" for man, setting him in an ethical relationship to God, and implies the possibility in man for its attainment.

Both sacred and secular history deny the realization by man of this the highest good which Christianity postulates, and we are faced with the imperative of supplying an hypothesis which accounts for this failure and justifies the maintenance of the postulate.

b. Man is responsible for his state.

(1) Free will. The explanation is found in the free will of man. The Bible tells the story. Man was originally made in the image of God, - morally good, and actually capable of maintaining a perfectly ethical relationship to God, but morally free and capable of choosing to maintain or sever that relationship of unity with the purpose and life of God. Man exercised his prerogative

of choice and rebelled against the known will of God. All recorded history since attests consistently the rebellion by every human at one time or another against the will of God as recognized by him through conscience, however imperfectly that may function, through God's revelation in the natural world and in history. No man, save One, in all recorded history has dared attest his own sinlessness. Thus wrong moral choice is regarded as universal and as having become the common tendency of the nature of man.

(2) Conscience. Man is divinely endowed with the capacity to know right from wrong. In Christian experience this capacity becomes the active organ of the Holy Spirit, who quickens its activity and makes its functioning progressively more accurate, enabling man to know more perfectly the will of God.

(3) Natural world. Natural law is recognizable by man as an exhibition of God's will and as such is disciplinary in its effect. Man, while a part of nature and subject to its laws, yet transcends it and is able to control it for moral ends as he progressively discovers its laws. The example of Jesus illustrates this knowledge and control in its perfection.

(4) Divine revelation. God's will is recognizable in human history in His dealings with men, a part of which is recorded in the Holy Bible, and perfectly

in the character of Jesus Christ.

To summarize the philosophical basis for the Christian ethical system as Adam gives it:- Christianity postulates, first, a perfectly ethical God; second, a world of finite beings related to Him as creatures to Creator, each "so constituted as to be capable of moral life and action, i.e. action proceeding from freedom of will, actuated by a motive recognized as right, and directed towards an end apprehended as good or worthy;" third, a world created by this ethically perfect God and "so constituted as to be instrumental towards the realization of the ethical end or highest good", its laws expressing His will and made to further His ethical purpose; and fourth, a realizable "ultimate moral goal".¹

2. Its Ethical Ideal

a. Statement of the ideal.

The Christian moral ideal may be briefly expressed in the dictum "Ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."² Moral likeness to God, man's original state, - a life of perfection in communion with the Perfect One, is held up as the supreme goal.

The ideal has an individual and a social aspect. In its individual aspect it is called "Eternal Life", in

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1. Cf. David Stow Adam: A Handbook of Christian Ethics, pp.27-47.
2. Matt.5:48.

its social aspect it is called "The Kingdom of God."

(1) Individual aspect.

(a) Quantitatively and qualitatively defined. Eternal life, quantitatively and qualitatively defined, implies not only infinitely continuous existence, but a quality of life,- a life of communion with God. "And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."¹ MacKenzie elaborates it:

"By communion Christianity does not mean breaking the limits between the Infinite and the finite. These are not moral distinctions at all. They are not barriers to communion. What is aimed at is freedom from sin, and the acquisition of holiness. This communion is a moral life, and it aims at perfection through moral activity. It is, ideally viewed, a real ethical personal communion, in which all endowments and characteristics are morally potentiated to their highest degree. It is a personal life of righteousness saturated in the atmosphere of a Personal Holy Presence. The Christian ideal is at the same time the Highest Good. Viewed as Ideal, it waits its full realization; as the Highest Good, it is a present possession. Thus, while it awaits its full realization, it must be morally operative now. It is otherworldly, but it demands all reality as its content."²

It is a life characterized by happiness or blessedness.³

(b) Concretely realized. This ethical ideal finds its universal concretion in Jesus Christ.

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1. John 17:3.

2. Donald MacKenzie, Article on Ethics and Morality, in James Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, V.5, p.472.

3. Cf. Matt. 5:2-12

His character "transcends all racial limitations and divisions".¹ He alone of all men has attained to the perfection of God. He had no sin and reveals no consciousness of it. He lived in perfect harmony with the will of God, and in unbroken communion with Him. In Him is revealed what God is and what man ought to be. Fairbairn says,

"He is so typical that what He was every man may be, and all men ought to become. To follow Him is to save the soul; to assume His yoke and learn of Him is to find in the highest duty the most perfect rest. To have His mind is to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect. He is an embodied conscience, defining duty and executing judgment. To imitate Him is to be obedient to God; to be faithless to Him is to lose eternal life."²

To be like Christ is to be like God. The quality of eternal life is conformity to the image of Christ in Whom the moral ideal is perfectly realized.

(2) Social aspect. In its social aspect the Christian ideal is the Kingdom of God. It is the living union in love and loyalty to Christ of all individuals who have become participants of eternal life through voluntary moral surrender to the will of God as revealed in Christ. The Kingdom of God is in individuals; they are in it. The Kingdom of God is for the individual; the individual is for the Kingdom.³

The two aspects are blended and are made to aug-

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1. Andrew Martin Fairbairn: The Philosophy of the Christian Religion, p.369.
2. Ibid., p.358.
3. Cf. Matt.6:33.

ment each other, so that "the philosophical ideals of 'self-realization' and 'happiness' alike for the individual and for the 'greatest number' or 'humanity' will be seen to be brought together in harmonious unity."¹

b. Mode of realizing the ideal.

(1) Moral regeneration.

(a) Awareness of moral degeneration. "Except one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God" was Jesus' statement to an inquirer. In the same conversation He defines this rebirth as a generation of the Spirit. This constitutes the recognition of the moral impotence of man apart from an objective dynamic, the Holy Spirit. He does not violate the moral freedom of man, but comes as a gift subject to the receptive response of the individual.² It is at the point of conscience that His appeal is first recognizable in a quickening active effect. The awareness of moral degeneration becomes keen. Sin is seen as offending a holy God, and release from its guilt is sought in one way or another.

(b) Release from guilt. In the atonement by Christ release from the burden of guilt upon the conscience is historically provided in a way that commends itself as ethically satisfactory to the individual,

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1. David Stow Adam: A Handbook of Christian Ethics, p.58.
2. Cf. MacKenzie, op.cit., p.469.

which, far from compromising the ethical conception of God, strengthens it, and at the same time does not violate the newly awakened conscience of man, but enthrones it.¹

(c) Appropriation by faith.

Acceptance by faith of the atonement historically wrought by Christ initiates man into a reconciled relationship with God. Constituting as it does a voluntary unification with the purpose of God, it begins a life of communion with Him, the maintenance of which is dependent upon a continual appropriation by faith of the power of Christ. Adam has stated it aptly as follows:

"Christian faith is the means on man's side of appropriating the Divine gift of grace in Christ, and so of rising to the fulfillment of the moral ideal. It is just the response of the human soul in intellectual assent, grateful feeling, and true moral surrender to that highest self-revelation of God as love which is made to us in the fact of Christ and all that that fact implies.²

And summarizing the objective and subjective elements in the realization of the moral ideal, he says:

"Under the gospel dispensation, of which Christ Jesus is the centre, a new mode of realizing the moral ideal is presented to weak and sinful men, of which the leading features are

(1) God's communication of Himself - of His own Divine life - to mankind in redeeming love and renewing life-giving power through Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word; and (2) man's appropriation of this redeeming and quickening spiritual power through a living and vitalizing faith in Christ.³

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1. Cf. MacKenzie, op.cit., p.470.
2. Adam, op.cit., p.99.
3. Ibid., pp.94-5.

(2) Moral dynamic.

(a) Union with Christ. The highest good, the ethical ideal, conceived of as the perfection of God revealed in Christ, becomes a possibility for the individual Christian. Union by faith to Christ makes continually available and appropriable a reinforcement of the will to accomplish the will of God. As Hall puts it:

"We are in vital union with Jesus Christ who died once to sin, and rose, and we are risen in the likeness of His resurrection. This is Paul's teaching of a vital mystic union with the risen Christ by which an actual force for living the righteous life becomes ours."¹

(b) The love of Christ. The possibility of doing evil is not eliminated. Man by union with Christ does not thereby become a machine grinding out automatically the will of God with precision; he is still a free moral agent, but he wills to do the will of God, which will has become the inward principle of his life.² He is motivated from a law within rather than a law imposed from without, and that law is love. Our love is a response to His love. We love Him because He first loved us.³ "The ideal He is, He inspires man to become," by the dynamic enthusiasm called love,- "not an occasional and fitful but a constant energy, an invariable dynamic." The love of Christ

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1. Thomas Cuming Hall: History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity, p.76; cf. Romans 6:2-14.
2. Cf. Adam, op.cit., p.108.
3. Cf. I John 4:19.

is the powerful ethical energy inspiring man to likeness to His image, and reaching out to his fellowmen. "To love Him is to love man."¹ The union of lovers of Christ is the Kingdom of God, here and hereafter.

Thus, the perfection of Christ is the ideal, union with Christ supplies the dynamic, the love of Christ is the ethical energy - the motivation, faith is the hand that appropriates it all.

(c) Additional incentive. As an additional motivation, and as encouragement to perseverance the Christian is promised in the hereafter a restitution or compensation in a full and perfect enjoyment of life with God, infinite in duration and unmarred by failures or unrealized ideals.

c. Content of the Ideal.

Since in Jesus Christ we have a perfect realization of the Christian ethical ideal, an observation of the main features of His character as expressed in His life and teachings will furnish us with a basis of comparison with the content of other ethical systems. The content of the Christian ethical ideal is not a series of laws imposed from without but the legitimate expression of the law of love by which he is motivated. Paul seems to imply this in

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1. Cf. Fairbairn, op. cit., pp.508-13.

his exhortation to the Philippians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, and he adds: "for it is God who worketh in you to will and to work for his good pleasure."¹

(1) Individual.

(a) Love. The central law is love. It was preeminently embodied in Christ and reiterated in His reaffirmation and summarization of the Decalogue, - "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" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."² An amplification of the second commandment is given in the Sermon on the Mount where Christ commands His followers to love their enemies, "for", said He, "if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye?....Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."³ "Love is the fulfilling of the law,"⁴ is Paul's comprehensive statement. And again our Lord said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,"⁵ and He did.

Love expresses itself in humility,⁶ forgiveness,⁷

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1. Phil.2:12-13.
2. Mark 12:30-31.
3. Cf. Matt.5:43-48.
4. Romans 13:10.
5. John 15:13.
6. Cf. Matt.5:3, 6:1.
7. Cf. Matt.6:15.

kindness,¹ mercy,² returning good for evil,³ and reciprocity.⁴ Paul makes it indispensable to all amicable relationships and the greatest of the trio,- faith, hope, love.⁵

(b) Righteousness. The emphasis on a genuine inner motive is dominant in the ethics of Jesus. He that is angry with his brother is charged with the motive to kill;⁶ who thinks impure thoughts is guilty of adultery;⁷ and who prates his righteousness is guilty of insincerity of heart.⁸

Positively, righteousness is considered to be of so great value that the Christian not only yearns for it, but is willing to be persecuted for active efforts in seeking to establish it. It involves courage which finds its dynamic in love for Him, - "for my sake".⁹

(2) Social.

(a) The family. The family is regarded as a divinely appointed institution for the perpetuation of the race and the development of Christian character. Monogamous marriage was insisted upon by both

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1. Cf. Matt.6:1.
2. Cf. Matt.5:7.
3. Cf. Matt.5:38.
4. Cf. Matt.5:12.
5. Cf. I Cor.13.
6. Cf. Matt.5:21-22.
7. Cf. Matt.5:27ff.
8. Cf. Matt.6:1ff.
9. Cf. Matt.5:10-11

Jesus and the apostles. Divorce was conceivable only on the ground of infidelity.¹ Jesus sanctified the marriage relationship by His use of it as an example of His union with the body of believers, as also did Paul.² Love is the only legitimate basis.³

Duties of parents to children are equally emphasized with duties of children to parents, and the love relationship made typical of the relationship of God the Father and His children.⁴ But the claims of Christ on the individual take precedence over the claims of family when the two conflict: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."⁵

(b) The state. The state is organized for the protection of individual life and its authority for discipline is divinely appointed. The service of rulers is regarded as the service of God. Christians are to support the institutions of the state, but again the claims of Christ take precedence when a conflict between duties occurs. The state is temporary and provisional, and destined to pass away when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of the Lord and his

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1. Cf. Matt.5:32, Mark 10:6-9, I Cor.7:2.
2. Mark 2:19, Eph.5:22-32
3. Eph.5:22-32.
4. Eph. Ch.6.
5. Matt.10:37.

Christ, when no man will have to say to his brother "know the Lord" for His law will be written in their minds and hearts.

(c) The church. In its visible aspect the church functions for instruction, fellowship, discipline and edification of its members, and is an agency for extending the Kingdom of God. Its demand upon the individual Christian corresponds to the demand upon him to make Him known. In its invisible aspect it is the unit of the Kingdom of God. The church is the body of Christ, the Kingdom is His reign in the hearts of men.

(d) The Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is primary in its demands upon the individual and through the individual increasingly operates to transform the relationships in family, state, and church, to correspond to its ethics. Its dominion extends beyonds the bounds of nation, race, color, and transcends the limitations of time and space. Its reign is spiritual and eternal, but its reality in time is evidenced in transforming effect. Its law is love written in the hearts of its subjects.¹

B. Comparison and Contrast with Confucian Ethics.

1. As to its Basic Hypothesis.

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1. Cf. ante, pp.74-75.

"And God said 'Let us make man in our image after our likeness-....and God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good.'¹

This is the statement of the Christian Scriptures regarding the origin of man's moral nature, and yet the basic hypothesis of its ethical system is the universal and inherent inclination of human nature to sin.

Confucianism in contrast posits the inherent goodness of human nature. "The nature of man is good," said Mencius, in no uncertain terms.²

Confucianism and Christianity agree that human nature in its original state was good. But Confucianism contends that man's nature is now potentially good and his whole duty is to develop naturally that good nature. Consequently Mencius said, "If men do what is not good, the blame cannot be imputed to their natural powers."³ "The abandonment is owing to circumstances through which they allow their minds to be ensnared and drowned in evil."⁴ Christianity on the other hand holds that man's nature is now inclined to evil, accounts for it on the basis of the universal human experience, and explains it as the rebellion of the free-will of man against the known will of His Creator, resulting in a thwarting of the true purpose of life, namely, eternal, personal and satisfying communion with God.

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1. Genesis 1:26,31.

2. Cf. ante, p.29.

3. Works of Mencius, Bk.VI, Pt.I, Ch.6:6, Four Books, p.278.

4. Ibid., Bk.IV, Pt.I, Ch.7:1, p.280.

Both leave room for man's good nature becoming evil, but here they part company, for Christianity recognizes that human nature has become corrupted through sin and proceeds to deal with it accordingly. Confucianism proposes a means of retaining and developing the existing good nature; Christianity of regaining and expressing it.

Christianity makes man morally responsible for the sin in his life because of his capacity for knowing the will of God through conscience, and through natural and supernatural revelation, and because of his capacity by act of free will to choose the right or wrong thus conceived. Confucianism makes environment responsible for man's not retaining his good nature.¹

In Christianity nature is subordinate to man, though related by substance and destiny to him, is disciplinary in its immutable laws as revelation of the Divine order, but is usable by man for moral ends. Confucianism submits fatalistically to nature, seeks to divine from its mutations the will of Heaven, and strives to conform human conduct to the phenomena of nature. But man can, nevertheless, influence nature by his ceremonies.

Confucianism admits of no revelation of the will or purpose of God in history with which man's life is to conform. Christianity makes man additionally accountable

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1. Cf. ante, pp.31-32.

because of the revelation of His will in history and supremely in Jesus Christ.

2. As to Ethical Ideal.

a. In its individual aspect.

Confucianism has no absolute standard of goodness, but sets up a hypothetical variable being, a composite man, as standard. The perfection man is to strive for is the perfect realization of his own nature. Christianity sets the perfection of God Himself as the ultimate and absolute ideal of man, as the perfect character of God is revealed in Jesus Christ. The perfection to which man is challenged is found in a unity of life with a perfectly holy God, otherwise called eternal life.

Self-cultivation becomes the imperative in Confucianism. It constitutes the whole duty of man, and in this duty there is no recognition of obligation to God. "It is true that man's nature and the constitution of society are from Him, and that a performance of the duties belonging to the five relationships is obedience to His will; but the duties are enforced without any reference to God-....In the Chinese religion man's duty to God is left to take care of itself."¹

Love to God and love to fellowmen are inseparable in Christianity and imply the whole duty of man. "Love is

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1. James Legge: The Religions of China, p.106.

the fulfilling of the law."¹

Has any attained to the perfection of his own nature in Confucianism? Mencius held that Yaou and Shun, two ancient sages, had perfectly realized their own natures and challenges all to become like them.² He said, "The compass and square produce perfect circles and squares. By the sages, the human relations are perfectly exhibited."³ The sages Mencius would say were the patterns, yet none of them, not even Confucius, solicited others copying them, and none professed perfection.

Jesus Christ is presented in Christianity as the perfect manifestation of God. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He could say as none other ever did, "Who of you convicts me of sin?" He was recognized by others as sinless, He professed his own perfect unity with the will of God, and He called and stimulated others to emulate Him.

b. In its social aspect.

In its social aspect Confucianism idealizes an harmonious family and tranquil state maintained by a perfect and consistent recognition of the five relationships by all and wherein the observation of filial piety expressed in ancestor worship is the unifying principle. Its

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1. Romans 13:16.

2. Cf. ante, p.39.

3. Works of Mencius, Bk.IV, Pt.I, Ch.2:1, Four Books, p.168.

ideal is limited to a temporal state, and lacks a universal outlook.

Christianity's ideal is the Kingdom of God. It is the goal toward which all history is moving. It is universal in scope, eternal in duration, but progressively realizable through the union of persons controlled by a spiritual principle, - the love of Christ.

Confucianism makes the family and the state an end in itself; Christianity recognizes the essential provisional and disciplinary value of both, and while sanctifying both, makes them a means to a larger and more permanent end.

Both Confucianism and Christianity demand high character in rulers of the state, and loyalty on the part of subjects, but while Christianity's principle laid down by her Lord is "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's,"¹ where a conflict occurs "we must obey God rather than men."²

In Confucianism the State through its rulers is responsible for the development of character; in Christianity another organization, the church, functions for the development of Christian character through teaching, fellowship, and discipline.

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1. Mark 12:17
2. Acts 5:29.

3. As to Mode of Attaining the Ideal.

Both Christianity and Confucianism, having set up a high ideal, acknowledge the difficulty in attaining it.¹ Confucianism forthwith sets up more rules. Christianity acknowledges the utter moral impotency of man in his natural state to attain to the high ideal set before him, but offers him the alternative of accepting the consequences of failure forever to attain, or acknowledging his impotency, to accept a new moral nature imparted to him through the experience commonly called "conversion", or "the new birth". In providing the new it cancels the failures of the old, and that through a method which appeals to the recipient as ethically sound and stimulates him through a deep sense of gratitude to obedience and service. The new nature inclines him to obey the will of God as he now senses it more keenly through a conscience sensitized by the Holy Spirit.

✓ Confucianism strives to attain the ideal by rules, by law; Christianity's way is the way of faith.

Confucianism confounds knowledge of the way with moral capacity to attain.² It urges progress through force of will and perseverance.³ Christianity utilizes all these means, but provides a moral dynamic communicated by union with Christ. Confucianism imposes laws from without, and

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1. Cf. ante, p.65ff.
2. Cf. ante, p.65.
3. Cf. ante, pp.65-66.

proposes the reaction upon self of ceremonies, rites and music as a modifying force.¹ Christianity implants a new life principle and releases it to transform the conduct.

Confucianism charges rulers with responsibility by their example for the conduct of their subordinates;² Christianity makes every individual responsible for influencing others.

Righteousness for its own sake is the incentive set forth by Confucianism; virtue will be rewarded here and now, lack of it punished likewise.³ Christianity motivates righteousness by love projecting itself in gratitude to Christ. It does not deceive by promise of constant good fortune for righteous conduct, but on the contrary, warns of possible persecution for righteousness' sake. Yet it guarantees an inner satisfaction called "blessedness",⁴ here and now, and in the hereafter an abundant restitution. A future judgment of the righteous and unrighteous has no place in Confucianism.

4. As to Content of the Ideal.

Filial piety is for Confucianism the root of all virtue.⁵ Legge reports the storm of opposition from the Chinese which he encountered when a discussion of this

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1. Cf. ante, p.67.
2. Cf. ante, pp.67-8.
3. Cf. ante, p.68.
4. Cf. Matt.5:3-12.
5. Cf. ante, p.40.

subject took place, and when he tried to show how the Christian position was favorable to the progress of society and would enable each generation to start from a higher standpoint, he found he could hardly get a hearing. A common name of reproach given to a convert is "unfilial renegade". "I have heard," he says, "a hundred fierce controversies on the subject closed by the Confucianist's triumphant appeal, as he considered it, to the fact that Christians do not worship their father and ancestors...." The objection grows, undoubtedly, out of a misunderstanding of the context and spirit of such Scripture statements as "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children,"¹ and "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother.....he cannot be my disciple."²

Christianity maintains the commandment of the Decalogue, - "Honour thy father and thy mother," - but makes duty to God supreme. The relationship of love between parents and children, and the other family and social relationships, are the expression of the principle of love governing the entire life of the Christian. We should be inclined to identify filial piety in the Classics with love in the Christian Scriptures in many of its implications, for instance, - as basic to the other virtues, as reaching

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1. I Cor.12:14; cf. James Legge: Religions of China, pp.257-8.
2. Luke 14:26.

out to all relationships,- but here we stop, for Confucianism limits love to the horizontal relationships, and seeks to arouse it only by a feeling of obligation to parents for their biological function, and in the other relationships simply by a desire for a peaceful existence. Christianity intensifies the normal ^{filial} relationship and places it on a spiritual basis.

In its principle of benevolence considered as inherent in humankind, Confucianism has difficulty in reconciling duty to oneself with duty to his fellowmen. As do some primitive religions, it fails to make distinction between one's attitudes toward the individual and toward his transgression. Hence when an individual is offended, he legitimately first examines himself to see if he has been lacking in some virtue so as to arouse an unfavorable reaction in the other, but finding no basis for it in his own action, he may regard the other as a brute.¹ Christianity makes intense hatred for sin an obligation, but enjoins love for the offender. "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you,"² is the command of the Master, and He exemplifies it in His own conduct. Hatred is not condoned even toward enemies. Confucianism says "To love those whom men hate, and to hate those whom men love:- this is to outrage the natural feeling of men. Calamities are

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1. Cf. ante, p.42ff.
2. Luke 6:27-28.

sure to come on him who does so."¹ Or, even stronger, "It is only the truly virtuous man who can love others or who can hate others."² The Christian is to forgive seventy times seven. The principle of forgiveness is conspicuously obscure in the Classics, growing conceivably out of its tendency to minimize sin as a mere failure, ^{to attain} rather than, as in Christianity, an offense against a Person.

Generosity and tolerance compare quite favorably with the Christian attitudes.³

The emphasis on righteousness, sincerity of purpose and expression, and earnestness of prosecution, is equally prominent in Confucianism and Christianity.⁴ For example, -Christ's injunction to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and Mencius' evaluation of righteousness as more essential than life, compare very well. The same may be said of virtue, defined as moral strength. This is as close to furnishing a moral dynamic as Confucius gets, and it falls short of that furnished in Christianity, for it lacks a source outside of the individual.

The insistence in Confucianism on personal purity, self-control and fortitude is as strong as in Christianity,⁵ but the former supplies no motivation other than personal

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1. The Great Learning, Li Ki, Bk.XXXIX:33, SBE, V. XXVIII, p.422.
2. Ibid., vs.31.
3. Cf. ante pp.43-44.
4. Cf. ante pp.44-46.
5. Cf. ante pp.47-50.

satisfaction, social approval, or regard for the claims of filial piety upon one.

When we come to a consideration of one of Confucianism's major principles, - propriety,¹ we have nothing in Christianity approximating its content which at the same time makes such claims to essentiality in character formation. Honor to whom honor is due, and love governing all relationships, is Christianity's equivalent. But the prescription of ceremonies functioning to maintain right social relations is absent in Christianity.

The principle of reciprocity stated so similarly in both Christianity and Confucianism, in the latter takes a negative form, but how much significance one has a right to attach to this observation is difficult to say. Christ said, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."² Confucius said, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."³ Taking each as it stands, however, the positive form is characteristic of the spirit of Christianity in "going the second mile", and the negative form characteristic of Confucianism in its legal exactness in observing relationships. When comparing Confucius' principle of recompensing kindness with kindness and injury with justice,⁴ with

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1. Cf. ante, p.50ff.
2. Matt.7:12.
3. Cf. ante, p.52.
4. Cf. ante, p.53..

Christ's recompensing evil with good, the difference in attitudes becomes evident.

Circumspection in speech and action are enjoined alike by both systems.

Humility characterizes the "superior man" as truly as the sincere Christian, but some room is left for an ulterior motive in Confucianism,- an humble manner to gain the submission of others.¹

That a knowledge of the truth is fundamental to right moral choices is granted by both systems, but Confucianism practically confounds it with ability to act accordingly, thus correlating character with intellect.²

Christianity recognizes a moral impotence which may prevent men from attaining, though knowing the truth, and even willing to act accordingly, yet not finding the power to do so. "The evil that I would not, that I practise," said Paul.³ But in Christianity understanding,- discernment,- and power are available by the same Spirit.

C. Viewpoint as to Relative Values.

1. Permanent Values in Confucianism.

From the foregoing comparison of the ethical systems of Christianity and Confucianism, it has been shown

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1. Cf. ante, pp.53-54.

2. Editorial, Chinese Recorder, April 1923, p.194.

3. Romans 7:19.

that there is much in Confucianism that is not only commendable but much that is of permanent value and should, therefore, be conserved in an era when the tendency is to discard the old wholesale.

Not the least among these values is the importance given to the development of human character, and that "defined in terms of man's relation to his fellows."¹

Its ethical ideal is unquestionably of a high order.

Its emphasis on the practical in working out its ideal challenges admiration.

Its stress on the importance of investigation in order to secure an understanding of what is right might well be utilized by an experiential philosophy.

Its recognition of the interdependence of society is an attainment to which the modern world has not yet fully risen. The importance placed upon the example of the ruler in setting the ethical pace for the people is a phase of this, as well as its implication that political service should be regarded as an obligation.²

Its attitude toward punishment administered by the state is admirable.³

Its disapproval of aggressive warfare might well be emulated by our age.

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1. John Leighton Stuart: Christianity and Confucianism, Christian Message, VI, International Missionary Council, 1928, p.61.
2. Confucian Analects, Bk.XVII, Ch.1:2, Four Books, p.182.
3. Cf. ante, p.61.

2. Contribution Christianity Can Make to Confucian Ethics.

a. Conception of God.

Perhaps the greatest contribution Christianity has to make to Confucian ethics is its God. There is unmistakably a God-idea in the Confucian Classics. It is quite distinct in the earlier of the Classics, but becomes noticeably dim in the later ones. He is the unknowable, and the tendency of Confucius inclined to be laissez-faire. This much we are sure of, - the Confucian system assumed a Supreme power which cooperated in the production of the race, but whether or not that power was personalized is difficult to determine from the writings. Worship of it was not encouraged, and ethics were not motivated by any sense of obligation to it.

The agnosticism of the Confucian system was stated by a modern Confucianist thus:

"It seems to me, Christians and Confucianists do not differ very much on the belief in the existence of Shen Ling (spiritual and divine beings), but in one thing we differ fundamentally. Christians say: 'We know that God is personal;' whereas we Confucianists say: 'We do not know, for we have no way of finding out what God is like.'"¹

Since, as Ten Broeke says, the "power of religion to elevate moral ideals and to strengthen the springs of action is in proportion to the germinal character of the

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1. Lyon, D. Willard: Religious Values in Confucianism, Christian Message, V. I, International Missionary Council, 1928, p.84.

idea of the object worshipped,"¹ and we have no clear idea in Confucianism of God, and no enjoiner to worship Him, we can hope to find no incentive to attaining the ethical ideal, however high, arising from a conscious relation to Him. Hence, the ethical in Confucianism is entirely on the horizontal plane, and lacks an adequate ultimate goal.

Z. K. Zia, in *The Confucian Civilization*, gives his evaluation thus:

"No one in Chinese history has ever had a clear conception of God. The Chinese were more concerned with Tao than with God.....Confucius did not know what kind of God he believed in. He stopped before he reached the highest good. He educated his pupils to the highest moral pitch and held them there, without attaching them to the highest Person. This is the greatest shortcoming of Confucius, and perhaps he knew it himself.... There has been no Jesus in China to reveal God unmistakably and distinctly....If only Confucius had known God a little better, the history of China would have been totally different and perhaps much more encouraging."²

The first great contribution, then, that Christianity has to make to Confucianism is its conception of an ethically perfect Personal God who created and controls the universe, and has a purpose toward which all things are moving. To this Person man is responsible for his moral actions.

That present-day China is sensing the need for a spiritual basis for her ethics is indicated by the at-

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1. James Ten Broeke: *The Moral Life and Religion*, p.184.
2. Quoted by D. Willard Lyons: *Religious Values in Confucianism*, *The Christian Message*, V. I, International Missionary Council, 1928, p.86.

tempts at syncretism and eclecticism by certain organizations.¹ For example, the quiet-sitting of Buddhism is combined with the ethical ideas of Confucianism, and other elements are fused.

b. Attitude toward nature.

The lack of an adequate God-idea in Confucianism has driven the popular mind to animism. Atkins describes the effect:

"Since everything, animate or inanimate, being nothing else than a part of the animated universe, has its good spirit or evil, the Shen and Kwei are everywhere. The gods are the 'good spirits' of anything one pleases, the celestial bodies, the sky pageantry, mountains and rivers, the furnishings of the Earth. The demons are equally the bad spirits of just these same things because the lower order shares everything impartially with the higher. Naturally the evil order, being nearer and more fearsome, asserted a dread sovereignty over the popular Chinese mind. No land is so demon-haunted as China. These evil spirits make the dark a terror. They besiege and capture the souls of the living. Their touch causes boils and tremors. The ghosts of the ill-buried dead, an old and universal superstition haunt their former dwellings.....²

While undoubtedly exerting a restraining influence, the general and regrettable effect of such an attitude toward the natural world has been a slavish submission to those forces in nature which in a Christian civilization have been conserved for great benefaction to the human race. The awakening to the benefits of scientific discovery has

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1. Cf. Charles S. Braden: Modern Tendencies in World Religions, pp.128ff; also T.C.Chao: Present-day Religious Thought and Life in China, in China Through Chinese Eyes, p.33 ff.
2. Gaius Glenn Atkins: Procession of the Gods, p.287.

been slow, but the tragic tendency to discard all spiritual forces as superstition has come in its wake.¹

✓ c. Problem of sin.

The second great contribution Christianity has to make to Confucianism is a more adequate reckoning with the fact of sin. Christianity begins where man actually is, and makes provision for release from a guilty conscience in a way that appeals to man as ethically sound and consistent with the character of an ethically perfect God and liberates him for a new experience. Christianity differs from Confucianism where it differs from all other philosophies. Jesus begins with the ethical subject much lower down. But He raises him far higher before He finishes. "While there is in Christianity an optimism which soars far above the highest aim of philosophy there is in it at the same time a pessimism far deeper than any found in philosophy, and the heights are not attainable without sounding the depths."²

d. Ethical ideal.

✓ Confucianism's ethical ideal is high in many respects, but not high enough. It stops with existence in time and offers no hope of perfection in a future life.

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1. Cf. David Willard Lyon: Will Confucianism be a Force to be Reckoned With in the Coming Days in China? The Chinese Recorder, February 1928, p.84.
2. James Stalker: The Ethic of Jesus, p.152,

It is hypothetical and variable. Christianity would offer it an ideal nothing short of the perfection of an ethically perfect God with whom man in fulfilling his true destiny is designed to live in perfect communion. Its ideal extends beyond the limits of time and holds out the hope of perfect realization. It is real and constant, and manifests its perfect realization in history in the character of Jesus Christ.

Frank R. Millican, writing for the Shanghai Missionary Association in 1931, calls attention to the fact that "Confucius at one time remarked that if only he could have met the perfect man he would be satisfied," and continues:

"What if he had met Jesus the Christ! It is our privilege to bring to modern China the vision for which Confucius longed and for which, I believe, many present-day citizens of China are still longing."¹

Confucianism's social ideal has proved to be outgrown by modern demands upon China. Some commentators detect in the Classics references to a vision of world brotherhood, but it seems extremely doubtful that the expression that all within the four seas will be brothers² to the superior man implies anything resembling Christianity's ideal of the Kingdom of God, of which the unifying principle is the love of Christ in the hearts of men expressing itself in love for all men. This ideal is not dependent upon the con-

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1. Frank R. Millican: Christian Message and Current Chinese Thought, Chinese Recorder, January 1932, p.18.
2. Confucian Analects, Bk.XII, Ch.5:4, Four Books, p.117.

tinuity of family lines or even the maintenance of states, but transcends and extends beyond these conceptions in time and space. It is a universal and spiritual, yet practical ideal, for it has already begun to be realized. In this conception the state and family are provisional.

e. Ethical principles.

Christianity, too, would augment or modify the content of the ideal.

The principle of filial piety to which so large a place is given in the Classics has tended to retard progress in China in reverence for the ideals of the ancestors. Christianity's principle of love applied to all relationships has no such retarding tendency, yet, far from diminishing the element so valued in Confucianism,- respect for family,- intensifies, motivates, and spiritualizes family relationships.

The demands of "young China" for modification of traditional marriage customs illustrate the tendency to recognize the value of Christianity's contribution to family life.¹ More and more women are given a place of equality with men.²

Emphasis on the external, due to the insistence on the rules of propriety and the ceremonies, tends to artificiality and ingenuineness, which, though offset by the

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1. Cf. Timothy Tungfang Lew: As it Looks to Young China, p.45.
2. Cf. *ibid.*, p.34; also H.C.Hu: The New Thought Movement, Chinese Recorder, August 1923, pp.452-3.

frequent exhortation to sincerity, would scarcely produce it. Christianity with its single life principle implanted within simplifies the determination of conduct.

The positive statement of the Golden Rule in Christianity as over against Confucianism's negative statement, and the respective implications have been given due¹ consideration.

f. Moral dynamic.

Confucianism is devoid of moral dynamic. It sets up an ideal, urges its attainment, but fails to reckon with the moral impotency of man's nature. Christianity recognizes the fact and meets the demand. The Christian has access to unlimited spiritual resources through his union with the living Christ, and appropriates it by faith and through prayer. He is motivated to a Christ-like life through love in response to the love of Christ, and in gratitude for his redemption.

Confucianism too lacks the stimulation which the hope of a future life gives, the nature of which is dependent upon the life begun here.

D. Summary

In this chapter we have considered the principles of Christian Ethics, compared and contrasted them with Con-

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1. Cf. ante, p.93.

fucian Ethics, and attempted to estimate the relative values of the two systems. We have found that the two systems differ in their basic hypotheses; that Christianity begins where man is; Confucianism begins where he ought to be. Further it has been shown that although Confucianism has a high ethical ideal, Christianity can augment it in its individual and social aspect, in its mode of realization, and in its content, and that the greatest contribution Christianity can make is its conception of God and His relationship to man.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Our purpose in this study as stated in the Introduction has been to investigate the ethics of Confucianism as found in its sacred scriptures in translation, to compare the results of our investigation with the Christian ethical system, with a view to determining the relative value of the systems for present-day China.

To gain a background for our investigation we first studied the historical development of the Confucian system through its chief exponents, Confucius, Mencius, Hsuncius, Chucius, and Wang Yang-Ming, noting in each case the contribution to Confucian thought, and ascertaining the survival of their ideas in modern Chinese thought and the general attitude on the part of Chinese today toward the system.

Our investigation of the Classics revealed first, that the basic hypothesis upon which the Confucian ethical system is founded is the innate goodness of man; second, that it fails to deal adequately with the problem of evil in the world; third, that it has a high ethical ideal, -the superior man,- but that it lacks religious sanction and motivation, and spiritual dynamic, and moreover lacks the encouragement and stimulus which a concrete example gives; fourth, that its social ideal has been outgrown by the demands of China as she finds herself in contact with world

powers and as her horizons of thought are being extended through scientific research.

Confucianism is not primarily a religion, and it is just in this respect that it fails to meet adequately the needs of a generation for whom great resources of power are available and who need a powerful dynamic to use those resources for moral ends.

A system which has survived six thousand years of history has unquestionably in it certain valuable qualities which will account for its survival, and no thoughtful individual would advocate discarding these; but a system which fails to provide for the most fundamental craving of the human heart must either suffer mutilation, or be supplanted by a system which incorporates its survival elements and supplies the missing qualities.

This, we believe, Christianity can do for China, - preserve those concepts which have permanent ethical value and supply the spiritual values which are so evidently lacking in Confucianism. One marvels again and again at the proximity of certain discoveries of truth which are so nearly identical to Christian conceptions, stated almost in the same words at times, and they indicate that God has not left Himself without a witness, but has, to those who have sought, revealed now and again glimpses of sublime truths; and He who is the Way, the Truth and the Life came not to destroy but to fulfill.

The Christianity which we propose to offer to China must be unadulterated by personal or racial prejudices, must be sincerely exemplified by Christ-like character, in short must be a faithful representation of the peerless Christ, Who if He be lifted up draws all men to Himself. In the radiance which streams from His Person lesser lights will be absorbed.

"The sacred Mountain caves in,
The roof beam breaks,
The Sage will vanish."

(Swan-song of Confucius)¹

1. Richard Wilhelm: Confucius and Confucianism, p.65.

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