

## ETHNICAL SCRIPTURES.

## CHINESE FOUR BOOKS.

[PRELIMINARY NOTE. Since we printed a few selections from Dr. Marshman's translation of the sentences of Confucius, we have received a copy of "the Chinese Classical Work, commonly called the Four Books, translated and illustrated with notes by the late Rev. David Collie, Principal of the Anglo-Chinese College, Malacca. Printed at the Mission Press." This translation, which seems to have been undertaken and performed as an exercise in learning the language, is the most valuable contribution we have yet seen from the Chinese literature. That part of the work which is new, is the Memoirs of Mencius in two books, the Shang Mung and Hea Mung, which is the production of Mung Tsze (or Mencius,) who flourished about a hundred years after Confucius. The subjoined extracts are chiefly taken from these books.]

ALL things are contained complete in ourselves. There is no greater joy than to turn round on ourselves and become perfect.

The human figure and color possess a divine nature, but it is only the sage who can fulfil what his figure promises.

The superior man's nature consists in this, that benevolence, justice, propriety, and wisdom, have their root in his heart, and are exhibited in his countenance. They shine forth in his face and go through to his back. They are manifested in his four members.

Wherever the superior man passes, renovation takes place. The divine spirit which he cherishes above and below, flows on equal in extent and influence with heaven and earth.

Tsze Kung says, The errors of the superior man are like the eclipses of the sun and moon. His errors all men see, and his reformation all men look for.

Mencius says, There is not anything but is decreed; accord with and keep to what is right. Hence he, who understands the decrees, will not stand under a falling wall. He, who dies in performing his duty to the utmost of his power, accords with the decrees of heaven. But he who dies for his crimes, accords not with the divine decree.

There is a proper rule by which we should seek, and whether we obtain what we seek or not, depends on the divine decree.

Put men to death by the principles which have for their object the preservation of life, and they will not grumble.

#### THE SCHOLAR.

Teen, son of the king of Tse, asked what the business of the scholar consists in? Mencius replied, In elevating his mind and inclination. What do you mean by elevating the mind? It consists merely in being benevolent and just. Where is the scholar's abode? In benevolence. Where is his road? Justice. To dwell in benevolence, and walk in justice, is the whole business of a great man.

Benevolence is man's heart, and justice is man's path. If a man lose his fowls or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart.

He who employs his whole mind, will know his nature. He who knows his nature, knows heaven.

It were better to be without books than to believe all that they record.

#### THE TAOU.

Sincerity is the *Taou* or way of heaven. To aim at it is the way of man.

From inherent sincerity to have perfect intelligence, is to be a sage by nature; to attain sincerity by means of intelligence, is to be such by study. Where there is sincerity, there must be intelligence. Where intelligence is, it must lead to sincerity.

He who offends heaven, has none to whom he can pray.

Mencius said, To be benevolent is man. When man and benevolence are united, they are called *Taou*.

To be full of sincerity, is called beauty. To be so full of sincerity that it shines forth in the external conduct, is called greatness. When this greatness renovates others, it is called sagemess. Holiness or sagemess which is above comprehension, is called divine.

Perfection (or sincerity) is the way of heaven, and to wish for perfection is the duty of a man. It has never been the case that he who possessed genuine virtue in the

highest degree, could not influence others, nor has it ever been the case that he who was not in the highest degree sincere could influence others.

There is a divine nobility and a human nobility. Benevolence, justice, fidelity, and truth, and to delight in virtue without weariness, constitute divine nobility. To be a prince, a prime minister, or a great officer of state constitute human nobility. The ancients adorned divine nobility, and human nobility followed it.

The men of the present day cultivate divine nobility in order that they may obtain human nobility; and when they once get human nobility, they throw away divine nobility. This is the height of delusion, and must end in the loss of both.

#### OF REFORM.

*Taou* is not far removed from man. If men suppose that it lies in something remote, then what they think of is not *Taou*. The ode says, "Cut hatchet handles." This means of doing it, is not remote; you have only to take hold of one handle, and use it to cut another. Yet if you look aslant at it, it will appear distant. Hence the superior man employs man, (that is, what is in man,) to reform man.

When Tsze Loo heard anything that he had not yet fully practised, he was afraid of hearing anything else.

The governor of Yih asked respecting government. Confucius replied, Make glad those who are near, and those who are at a distance will come.

The failing of men is that they neglect their own field, and dress that of others. They require much of others, but little of themselves.

#### WAR.

Mencius said, From this time and ever after I know the heavy consequences of killing a man's parents. If you kill a man's elder brother, he will kill your elder brother. Hence although you do not yourself kill them, you do nearly the same thing.

When man says, I know well how to draw up an army, I am skilled in fighting, he is a great criminal.

## POLITICS.

Ke Kang asked Confucius respecting government. Confucius replied, Government is rectitude.

Ke Kang was harassed by robbers, and consulted Confucius on the subject. Confucius said, If you, sir, were not covetous, the people would not rob, even though you should hire them to do it.

Mencius said, Pih E's eye would not look on a bad color, nor would his ear listen to a bad sound. Unless a prince were of his own stamp, he would not serve him, and unless people were of his own stamp, he would not employ them. In times of good government, he went into office, and in times of confusion and bad government, he retired. Where disorderly government prevailed, or where disorderly people lived, he could not bear to dwell. He thought that to live with low men was as bad as to sit in the mud with his court robes and cap. In the time of Chou, he dwelt on the banks of the North Ka, watching till the Empire should be brought to peace and order. Hence, when the fame of Pih E is heard of, the stupid become intelligent, and the weak determined.

E Yin said, What of serving a prince not of one's own stamp! What of ruling a people which are not to your mind! In times of good government he went into office, and so did he in times of disorder. He said, heaven has given life to this people, and sent those who are first enlightened to enlighten those who are last, and has sent those who are first aroused to arouse those who are last. I am one of heaven's people who am first aroused. I will take these doctrines and arouse this people. He thought that if there was a single man or woman in the Empire, who was not benefited by the doctrines of Yaou and Shun, that he was guilty of pushing them into a ditch. He took the heavy responsibility of the Empire on himself.

Lew Hea Hooi was not ashamed of serving a dirty Prince, nor did he refuse an inferior office. He did not conceal the virtuous, and acted according to his principles. Although he lost his place, he grumbled not. In poverty he repined not. He lived in harmony with men of little worth, and could not bear to abandon them. He said, "You are you, and I am I; although you sit by my side

with your body naked, how can you defile me?" Hence when the fame of Lew Hea Hooi is heard of, the mean man becomes liberal, and the miserly becomes generous.

## VIRTUE.

Chung Kung asked, What is perfect virtue? Confucius said, What you do not wish others to do to you, do not to them.

Sze Ma Neu asked, What constitutes perfect virtue? Confucius replied; It is to find it difficult to speak. "To find it difficult to speak! Is that perfect virtue?" Confucius rejoined, What is difficult to practise, must it not be difficult to speak?

Confucius says, Virtue runs swifter than the royal postillions carry despatches.

The She King says, "Heaven created all men having their duties and the means or rules of performing them. It is the natural and constant disposition of men to love beautiful virtue." Confucius says, that he who wrote this ode knew right principles.

Confucius exclaimed, Is virtue far off? I only wish for virtue, and virtue comes.

Confucius said, I have not seen any one who loves virtue as we love beauty.

Confucius says, The superior man is not a machine which is fit for one thing only.

Tze Kung asked, Who is a superior man? Confucius replied, He who first practises his words, and then speaks accordingly.

The principles of great men illuminate the whole universe above and below. The principles of the superior man commence with the duties of common men and women, but in their highest extent they illuminate the universe.

Confucius said, Yew, permit me to tell you what is knowledge. What you are acquainted with, consider that you know it; what you do not understand, consider that you do not know it; this is knowledge.

Confucius exclaimed, How vast the influence of the Kwei Shin (spirits or gods). If you look for them, you cannot see them; if you listen, you cannot hear them; they

embody all things, and are what things cannot be separated from. When they cause mankind to fast, purify, and dress themselves, everything appears full of them. They seem to be at once above, and on the right, and on the left. The ode says, The descent of the gods cannot be comprehended; with what reverence should we conduct ourselves! Indeed that which is least, is clearly displayed. They cannot be concealed.

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VIA SACRA.

Slowly along the crowded street I go,  
 Marking with reverent look each passer's face,  
 Seeking, and not in vain, in each to trace  
 That primal soul whereof he is the show.  
 For here still move, by many eyes unseen,  
 The blessed gods that erst Olympus kept,  
 Through every guise these lofty forms serene  
 Declare the all-holding Life hath never slept;  
 But known each thrill that in Man's heart hath been,  
 And every tear that his sad eyes have wept.  
 Alas for us! the heavenly visitants,—  
 We greet them still as most unwelcome guests,  
 Answering their smile with hateful looks askance,  
 Their sacred speech with foolish, bitter jests;  
 But oh! what is it to imperial Jove  
 That this poor world refuses all his love!

C. A. D.