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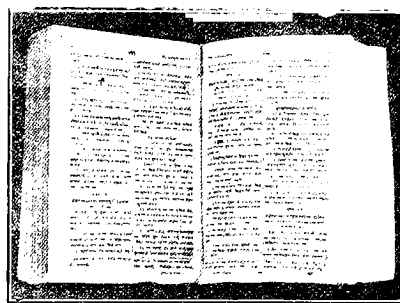
A Thought for Each Day

Sabbath, April 29. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. Deuteronomy 6:7.

It was the duty of parents to teach "the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments" to their children. Sometimes it seems as though Christian people have lost something of this ideal, and especially Christian fathers. There is a great tendency to trust the religious teaching of our children to others than ourselves. For the work of all such we cannot be too thankful, but we ought to remember that the first responsibility for the diligent teaching of the children belongs to those to whom they are entrusted as the most sacred and blessed gift of God.—G. Campbell Morgan.

Monday, April 30. What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. John 13:7.

Let believers learn to suspend their desires if God does not stretch out his hand to help as soon as they think necessity requires! Whatever may be his delays, he never sleeps, and never forgets his people.—John Calvin.



A "WOMAN'S" BIBLE

The "Marathi" Bible, translated, printed, and bound by women

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EDITORIAL

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CONFUCIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

By Rev. J. K. Robb, D. D.

What Paul said to the Athenians, "Ye are very religious," may very aptly be said of the Chinese. One who was well qualified to speak of this has said, "The Chinese are among the most religious people in the world. Their whole public and private life is impregnated by religious observances." Of the different faiths and philosophies that have had places in China, by far the most influential is Confucianism. Lack of space forbids more than the barest statement of some of the main precepts of this great man Confucius, for whom this system of ideals has been named.

Confucianism is primarily a system of political philosophy somewhat tinged in places with religious ideas. It is not, properly speaking, a religious system. The saying of Confucius, "Respect the gods, but have as little as possible to do with them," seems to represent fairly his attitude toward religion. He made no attempt to solve the problem of man's origin and destiny. He spoke with great reserve regarding the idea of a future life. Man's highest good is to be found in his temporal well-being. His most important relationship is to the state. Hence the first and most important of the five human relationships as thought of by Confucius, was that of ruler and subject. The highest individual duty is that of promoting the welfare of the state, and in promoting the state's welfare, that of the individual must first be promoted. To quote his own words, "He who would best serve the state must first regulate his own family. He who would regulate his family must first regulate his own person. He who would cultivate his person must first regulate his own heart. In order to rectify his heart, he must be sincere in his thoughts. The thoughts being sincere, the heart will then be rectified. The heart being rectified, the person is cultivated. The person being cultivated, the family is regulated. The family being regulated, the state is rightly governed. The state being rightly governed, the whole empire becomes tranquil and happy. From the Emperor down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person as the root of everything besides."

And yet certain religious elements were seemingly taken for granted by Confucius, even if not emphasized by him. He recognized two great duties both religious in character, state worship and ancestor worship. His great hope for China was that she might be "All under Heaven," a visible Paradise here on earth, ruled by the Emperor, the only Son of Heaven, who holds power and dominion over all the earth as his inalienable and indis-

putable right. His imperial laws would be heavenly laws, and, like the laws of Nature, unchanging and unchangable. The leading event in state worship was when the Emperor as the Son of Heaven, offered prayers for the people at the time of the summer solstice.

But it is in their ancestral worship that the Chinese of today most clearly show their devotion to the teachings of their great Sage. He did not originate ancestral worship, but he did give it a place and a sanctity that it did not have before his time. It is an expression of filial devotion which has many noble features, and the good of which ought not to be lost sight of in thinking of the idolatrous features of the system. One is reminded by it of "Honour thy father and thy mother," and while it has, unfortunately, become a system of false worship, if once rid of its pagan elements, might become a worthy and noble element in the building of Christian society.

In simple justice to the system of ethics taught by Confucius, it should be said that much of a commendable character is found in it. This system has never sheltered immorality. One writer has said, "It is a remarkable trait of Chinese idolatry as practiced by the followers of Confucius, that there is no deification of sensuality, which, in the name of religion, has shielded and given countenance to those licentious practices and orgies that enervated the minds of worshippers, and polluted their hearts in so many heathen countries." Although they are a licentious people both in word and deed, the Chinese have not endeavored to sanctify their immoralities by connecting them with religious rites. In this respect Confucianism presents a striking contrast to the practices of other pagan nations both ancient and modern. One of the eminent missionaries to China has said of the ethical and moral teaching of Confucius that "they are the purest that have ever originated in the history of the world independent of the divine revelation of the Bible, and Confucius has exerted a greater influence for good upon the race than any other uninspired sage of antiquity."

And yet this system, with all its excellencies, which are many, is fatally defective. For one thing, it lacks the fullness, the strength, the inclusiveness, of the Christian spirit. There is in it no doctrine of Divine love, nor any thought of a God who is love. There is but scant sympathy expressed for the poor, the unfortunate, the erring. There is no expectation of high moral character in ordinary people. Learning, not conversion, is the road to virtue. Sin is a mistake, but not a crime. And, as already sug-

gested, there is no hope or promise of a life to come.

It has been claimed that Confucius taught a form of the Golden Rule as given by our Lord. The Confucian statement is negative in form, and reads, "What you would not like when done to yourself, do not do to others." But in the mind of the Sage himself, this statement did not close the way for retaliation because of wrong suffered at the hands of another. One of his pupils is said to have asked him, "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" To which Confucius replied, "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." Which is in spirit simply another form of the old law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

And, just as in the case of every non-Christian system of ethics, Confucianism breaks down utterly in its attitude toward womankind. According to this system women are as different from men as earth is from heaven. Though they are human beings, they are of a lower state than men, and can never attain to full equality with them. Women can have no happiness of their own, but must find their happiness in living and working for men. Only as the mother of a son can a woman hope to escape from her degradation, and become in any real sense the equal of her husband, and then only in affairs of the home.

Confucianism is devoid of any real insight into the great facts of sin. Prayer has no definite place in this system. It does not explain the fact of death, and, with the possible exception of the doctrine of ancestral worship, no clear hope of immortality. It offers no comfort to ordinary mortals either in life or death. So it has been well said that the history of China shows Confucianism to be incapable of effecting for the Chinese people a new birth to higher and nobler life. The state of society in China today, after two thousand years of Confucian teaching and influence, demonstrates beyond a peradventure, the inherent and fatal weakness of this system. It sets up high ideals, but suggests no way for attaining to them. It calls for perfection in men, but fails to provide means for reaching that mark. When compared with the Gospel of the Son of God, it is at once seen that at every point where Christianity is strong, Confucianism is weak. Christianity has already shown by the service which it has rendered in China, what it can do, and which Confucianism has utterly failed to do. Christianity alone presents to Confucianism the perfect ideal of manhood, Jesus Christ. Christianity alone fulfills the Confucian dream of "All Under Heaven," in the Kingdom of God.