

exercises a jurisdiction over all the gods of the spirit world, similar to that exercised by the Emperor over all his subordinates in the Empire. The one is supreme among men, while the other is supreme among the gods and men. Thus the correlation of the government of the living and of the dead is complete; and it could be logically completed in no other way: for the official etiquette of the world of darkness is similar to that of the world of light. Therefore, a superior is not expected to worship the correlative deity of his subordinate.

And while the correlative deities of all the above officials are only of equal rank; yet the fact that they have been apotheosized, makes them their superiors, and fit objects of worship. There are thousands of other officials with their correlative deities, in the various branches of the Government, but I have taken only those who govern the people directly, whose correlative deities are appealed to in cases connected with Ancestral worship.

#### ASSISTANTS TO THE GODS.

All the gods described above have their assistants, attendants, doorkeepers, runners, detectives, and executioners; corresponding in every particular to those of the Chinese officials of the same rank. They cease business and take a month's holiday at the new year, just as the Chinese officials do: they occupy their yamens—the temples, and the people say, rotate in office, just as the Chinese officials do; while their subordinates, detectives, etc., are out on duty, at various strategic points of the city and country; guarding against the depredations of the turbulent and discontented spirits on the living, in order to preserve public tranquillity *i.e.* prevent sickness and calamity. These guardians of the public, are to be seen at their several stations:—some in the temples—in attendance upon their superiors;—some at the gates of the yamens—the large figures on the door:—some at the city gates; some at bridges in the city, and in the country; some at the forks of the road, while others will be found on guard in the city, where a north and south street is forced, by a blank wall, to turn at right angles. Here will sometimes be found, inserted in the wall, a stone slab, to fend off: in other more important and crowded streets, will be found a niche, containing small images, where candles and incense are often lighted.

This is considered a necessary precaution: for as spirits are said to move in straight lines, it is supposed that they

are annoyed at finding their course obstructed by a blank wall. But finding themselves in the immediate presence of subordinates of their own authorities in these images in the wall, is deemed quite sufficient to restrain their ill will, and prevent them from avenging themselves upon any one who might be passing at the time.

#### PECULIAR CUSTOMS.

The Chinese, in building their dwelling houses, avail themselves of their supposed knowledge of the reputed habits of spirits, and so construct them as to conduct the spirits out of, rather than into, the premises. This desirable end is accomplished by zig-zag passages, and by not placing doors or windows opposite to each other—a thing rarely ever seen in a Chinese dwelling house, and where it cannot be avoided in the front hall, a fixed screen is placed before the back door: and ingress and egress is around this screen. Other devices are adopted, where there is no official to look after them, to guard against the calamitous influence of the spirits of the dead.

The moment a man dies in China, a cup of cold water is placed at the door that he may take a last drink; then a suit of good clothes is burned that he may be made presentable in the next world: then a quantity of *din* is burned that the departed spirit may have the money to bribe those who may arrest him; then bed and bedding and personal articles are burned that he may be provided with necessary comforts. Annual offerings are made at the graves, of food, money, clothing, etc., which are burned, and supposed to be thereby transmitted to those for whom they are designed.

#### Parting Wishes and Last Words of Christ.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was about to leave this earth for a long absence of 1800 years, what were His final injunctions to His disciples? What was to be their special work all through the ages, and up to the hour of His return? Did He plainly express His wishes? or did He leave room to doubt what His desires were? If His commands during the days of His life and ministry had not made His wishes clear, certainly the words He spoke during the forty days of His mysterious tarryance among His people, after His resurrection and before His ascension, left no room to doubt!