

China has complicated religious systems. The primitive religion of China was a species of nature-worship. Hills, rivers and ancestors received offerings. "Heaven," "the Supreme Ruler," and a fabled "Six honoured Ones," were worshipped. Divination was practised, but no rewards or punishments of conduct were inculcated.

*Blending of the three great religions.*—There are three prominent religions in China at present, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, but no person is exclusively of either. A Chinaman is a religious triangle, and when he becomes a Christian, Christianity wins a triumph over three opposing faiths at once, one of which has laid hold of the intellect, another of the conscience, and the



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third the affections of the people. The blending of these is seen in the fact, that while Confucianism is theoretically the only religion of the state, Taoism furnishes the gods of literature and of war, as well as the patron gods of each city and town, while Buddhist priests must be invited to assist in religious ceremonies, and the whole resolve themselves into the worship of gods and ancestors. Buddhist and Taoist priests attend the same weddings and funerals and pray side by side, as if their systems of religion were identical in origin and purpose, with merely an accidental difference of name.

Two popular forms of the religious thought and habit of the Chinese demand special notice.

*Ancestor Worship.*—The worship of ancestors antedates, but