

be regarded as such. Both he and his writings are the complete antithesis of Confucius and his manner of speech. He is profoundly mystical. His work is extremely obscure, and the translations of it differ widely among themselves.

There is great difference of opinion among modern scholars in regard to the nature of Tao. Some maintain that the word represents a theistic conception of an extremely high order ; while others maintain that it is a metaphysical principle.

As a moral teacher Lao-tszí is very different from Confucius. In some respects he anticipates the highest teaching of Christianity. He had faith in the power of love. He said : " I treat the good with kindness ; those who are not good I treat with kindness." Confucius opposed this teaching. Bad men he insisted, should be treated with justice. Practically, however, Confucius was in advance of Lao-tszí. The latter was a quietist. He believed in silent influence. His disciples withdrew themselves from the troubled scenes, into which Confucius and his followers pressed in order to introduce a better mode of life.

Taoism at the present day has lost all its dignity. It consists merely of the grossest superstitions.

When we speak of the three religions that exist in China we must not suppose that the people are divided, some belonging to one and some to another. There are no Buddhists strictly speaking, except the monks and nuns, and no Taoists except the priests. The people, in general, make use of one form of religion or another, according to circumstances. It is said that they turn to Buddhism very largely in regard to matters that concern the future life, while for good luck in the present they most often turn to the Taoist priests.

