

his disciples collected in a book called "Discourses and Conversation." Here we find that he was a teacher of morality and not a founder of a religion. He teaches nothing about God and the future. When a disciple asked him how to serve gods or spirits, he said, "We cannot serve men; how can we serve gods?" His answer to an inquiry about death was, "We know not what life is; how can we know death?"

Loyalty to the king, faithfulness to friends, conjugal fidelity and fraternal love are inculcated as the cardinal virtues of man. Above all, filial piety is emphasized as being the root of all moral principles. The ancestral worship every man is enjoined to observe is the result of extending filial piety to the dead rather than the outcome of any positive belief in a future state.

I am unable to say when Confucianism was introduced into Korea. However, the credit of having brought the ancient classics of China to Korea belongs to Choi Chi Won, who lived about seventy years B.C.

During the dynasty of Ko Rio, between 917 and 1391 A.D., Confucianism gave place to Buddhism. But the abuses of the latter became so bad, that the founders of the present dynasty made Confucianism the national standard of morality to the utter neglect of Buddhism.

Thus Confucianism for twenty centuries, especially for the last five hundred years, has had an unlimited sway over mind and heart of the Korean. It is noticeable that while Buddhism and Christianity are divided into sects many and denominations not a few, Confucianism is practically the same in all countries. The different views which scholars hold concerning certain trivial points in the system are of so little importance that very few people know or care to know anything about them. This uniformity may be due to the early and free circulation of the classics and to the significant fact that the system teaches nothing that goes beyond what is Korean and seen. On the doctrines of predestination, which assign a man to heaven or hell before he was born, and of universalism, which maintains the final salvation of the devil himself—on such questions as these, lying beyond the definite grasp of reason, opinions naturally differ, thus giving rise to various schools. But it requires no exercise of faith to believe or deny any of the matter-of-fact teachers of Confucianism.

At any rate, the system is one "ism" in Korea. Its hold on the people may be seen in the universal practice of ancestral worship, the reverence with which all classes speak of Confucius and his disciples, and the essential parts which Confucian principles play in the liturgies, laws, and literature of the nation.

What has Confucianism done for Korea? With diffidence yet conviction I dare say that it has done very little, if anything, for Korea. What Korea might have been without Confucian teachings nobody can tell. But what Korea is with them every one well knows. Behold Korea, with her oppressed masses, her general poverty, treacherous and cruel officers, her