

when wickedness prevailed upon the earth, the elements were thrown into disorder.

Virtue was enjoined by reference to the fact that the lives of men are open to the view of the spirits. Thus in one place we read, "When you are in friendly intercourse with superior men, you take care that your countenance is harmonious and mild, and are anxious not to do anything that is wrong. When you are in your chamber you ought to be equally free from wrong, in the presence of the light which shines into it. Do not say, 'The place is not public: no one can see me here.' The approaches of spiritual beings cannot be foreseen; but all the less should they be slighted." In another place we read: "Let me be reverent! Let me be reverent. The way of heaven is evident, and its appointment is not easily averted. Let me not say that it is high above me. It ascends and descends about our doings. It daily inspects us wherever we are."

The thought of immortality, or at least of a life after this, was simply and strongly held. More than among most nations that have reached so high a degree of civilization, there remained, among the Chinese, habits of thought that may be traced back to the lower life of the savage. The Chinese notion of the next life was of this primitive kind. According to the situation upon the earth was the situation in the next world. The ruler was a ruler still. The same counsellors were about him that formed his court upon the earth.

In the thought of the future life there was no play of the imagination. There was the simple recognition of the fact as it has just been stated. The thought of the continued existence of the ancestors had, like that of other spirits, a great moral influence. If a man honored his ancestors, and if in other respects he lived uprightly, then they would favor and protect him. By neglect of these duties he would lose their protection.

There is no reference to any punishment in the next world. What became of the wicked we are not told.

The morality thus enforced had in it little that was peculiar. The virtues that we commonly recognize as such, were enjoined. If there was a special emphasis on any one it was perhaps on reverence and obedience; though on the other hand, as the reference was very largely to rulers, the duties of the governor to the governed were largely dwelt upon.

This is substantially the religion into which Confucius was born in the year 551 B. C. Already, however, it had lost something of its vividness. The great ruler was no longer quite so distinctly personal as in the earlier days. Confucius appears to have been himself thoroughly religious, but religion entered very little into his teaching. He insisted on the observance of the religious ceremonies, as well as all the numberless other rules of pro-