

ed as inspired. Even Confucius who as we stated in a former article discouraged the study of spirituality in every form as decidedly dangerous, readily enough ascribes to these books full inspiration.

However, the English translator takes care, in his preface, to assure the reader that all allusions to heaven in them should be regarded as the ordinary practice of all people to use the expression as simply an indefinite thought about something supernatural. But we could not fail to come to a different conclusion on reading his translation, for this reason, viz., they connected these expressions with definite acts. Thus the King Shang, in undertaking to destroy the dynasty of Hsia declared that the will of heaven had been revealed to him concerning this matter, and that if he did not obey he would be as guilty as the wicked King himself. His words are, "The iniquity of Hsia is full, heaven gives command to destroy it. If I did not obey heaven my iniquity would be as great."

Another King reasons the same to his subjects when urging them to remove to a better location for a city.

It is true that, in part at least, these revelations were the outcome of divination; for divination in some form is alluded to, as in the following expression: "I have consulted the tortoise shell and have obtained the reply—this is no place for us." Also prayers to the ancestors of their race are mixed up with prayers to a supreme being. But our object in this article is only to trace, among all crudities of belief and practice, a definite spiritual sense of divine guidance, not merely realized and confessed after their national or individual history had been made, but whilst it was transpiring, and which clearly and unmistakably modified that history.

It is one thing for a man to acknowledge, in looking back over the history of his life, that there was a "divinity within," who shaped his course in spite of himself. But it is quite another matter to point to events in his life when he acted as consciously

carrying out some appointment of heaven. The former admission has no practical bearing on the man's life, but the latter is one of the chief, if not the chief factor in its history, and is big with future benefit to him and all concerned.

We also note the fact that this definite recognition of divine guidance was connected not only with superior piety, but also with superior morality. All who allude to this heroic age of Chinese history ascribe the highest style of virtues to the Kings and their counsellors, and ascribe the reverse to those who neglected to cultivate this spiritual element. Hence our argument, that even amongst the crudities of these early beliefs, faith in spiritual guidance, when it resulted in action, tended to virtuous conduct. What is it but the recognition, though in a rough imperfect way, of that power in man which makes for righteousness?

REMARKS IN A SCRIPTURE PASSAGE.

"And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body (now) as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old)." Roman 4-19.

NOW fit in this passage with the fact that Abraham, according to the Old Testament, had sons by another wife, long after the birth of Isaac, and subsequent to the death of Sarah. If it was of the nature of a miracle to have a son when he, Abraham, was a hundred years old, how great the miracle that he should have children by Keturah many years after! Does it not look at first sight to be an instance of a man of strong intellect unconsciously following traditional teaching rather than the free untrammelled deductions of his own independent thoughts?

Of course, we are well aware of the agitation this simple criticism will start in many minds. What men and women have accepted, by tradition as true they are required to go on accepting without inquiry as to the truthfulness or even reasonableness of such traditions. Traditional teaching requires