

THE  
**MORALS**  
OF  
**CONFUCIUS**  
A

*Chinese Philosopher,*

Who flourished above five hundred years before the coming of our **LORD** and Saviour **JESUS CHRIST.**

Being one of the  
Choicest Pieces of *Learning*  
Remaining of that Nation.

*The Second Edition*

*L O N D O N :*

Printed for *T. Horne*, at the *South Entrance*  
into the *Royal Exchange, Cornhill, 1706.*

Work in progress.

The text does not look original Confucius; it might be a translation from a translation or interpretation.

The content may be recommended for a background reading with regard to titles as,

Common Sense, The Age of Reason, by Thomas Paine;

Civil Disobedience by Henry Thoreau.

# Advertisement

**T**HE work here published, and wherein, as in epitome, is contained of all the Morals of Confucius the Chinese philosopher, is very small, if we respect the number of pages which compose it; but it is doubtless very great, if consideration be had to the importance of the things therein contained.

We may say that the Morals of this philosopher are infinitely sublime, but at the same time, pure, sensible, and drawn from the purest fountains of Natural Reason. Certainly, a reader destitute of the Lights of Divine Revelation, has never appeared with so much illumination and power. And as there is not any duty omitted by Confucius, so there is not any besides those here mentioned. He greatly extends his Morals, but not farther than needs must; his judgement ever telling him how far he must go, and where he must stop.

*In which he has a very considerable advantage, not only over a great number of pagan writers, that have treated of things of this Nature, but likewise over several Christian authors, who abound with so many false, or over-subtle thoughts; who almost everywhere surpass the bounds of their duty, and who give themselves up to their own fancy, or ill humour; who almost always digress from that just mean, where virtue ought to be placed; who, by their false portraitures do render it impossible to our practice, and consequently make few virtuous men.*

*The Author De la Maniére de bien penser dans les Ouvrages d'Esprit, who, to a style extremely polite and exact, always adds an exquisite judgement very well remarks the weakness and falsity of these words of a late writer. Everyone endeavours to possess the most room he can in his own imagination, and promotes and aggrandises himself in the world, only to augment the idea which everyone has of himself. Behold the end of all the ambitious designs of men, Alexander, and Cesar had no other*

*prospect in all their battles than this.*

*Indeed, Alexander and Cesar might, in their battles, not only have meditated on their interior image, and although the Thought then had, might prove true in some occurrence, yet it could not be so in the extent that was given it. There is therefore no worse thought than what he utters, who has composed the first treatise of the Moral Essays, and whose words we have just mentioned.*

*What the author of these essays lays down at first, and which he who composes the excellent dialogues already mentioned, would not take the pains to revive, is almost of this stamp; it is even somewhat worse, to which very little attention is required. I conceive, says he, that he who at first styled himself a *High and Mighty Lord*, looked upon himself as born upon the head of his vassals, and that it is this that he means by this epithet, *high*, so little suitable to the vileness of Men.*

*What signifies all this? Or rather, How dares one from a serious and grave air to advance things of this nature?*

*What is meant by these words, I imagine, that he who at the first styled himself a High and Mighty Lord, looked upon himself as advanced over the head of his vassals. These words can have but two senses; the one proper, the other figurative. The proper and natural sense is, that this lord imagined that his feet were rested on the head of his vassals, and that he walked upon their heads or higher; and that to see and command them, he was forced to look down. The figurative sense is, that this lord thought himself advanced in authority over his vassals, and that his rank and power were much more considerable than theirs. It is evident, that unless this lord had lost his wits, he could not imagine what the first sense signifies; and as for the second, which is figurative, it is very true: this lord had reason to consider himself as advanced above his subjects, it was his right to assume titles which denoted his power and authority, and he did no more than what those whom God has ordained to command others have always done. God himself, in his Scriptures,*

*calls them Gods, which is much more than high and mighty lords. So these other words, this epithet of high is so unsuitable to the lowness of men, are no more intelligible than the former.*

*These places, which we have observed, are not the only ones of this nature, which are found in the moral ways. there are infinite others much like. and not to go from the first treatise, can these possibly be solid.*

Although men should have made great progress therein (*the author speaks of the knowledge of things*), they would hardly be the more estimable; seeing that these barren sciences are so incapable of bringing any fruit, and solid contentment to them, that one is as happy in rejecting them at first, as in carrying them by long study, to the highest pitch they can be carried.

We are only capable of knowing one single object, and one single truth at once. the rest remains buried in our memory, as if it was not. Behold therefore our knowledge reduced to a single object.

Who is he that is not convinced, that

it is a baseness to think himself valuable because he is well clad, well horsed, that he has justly directed a ball, and walks with a good grace?

*What! Do not the sciences, and excellent discoveries, render a man more happy, content, and complaisant, when he understands the right use thereof? Is it not well known, that there are many divines, who are of opinion, that one of the things which will complete the happiness are the saints in heaven, will be a great knowledge of an infinite number of truths which are unknown to us upon Earth? Is it because our spirit can at the same time meditate only upon one single object, that it thence follows, that all the knowledge of an experienced man is limited to this single object, that he knows no other.*

*Behold therefore our knowledge reduced to a single object. In fine, is it a baseness for a knight, or courtier, to think he shall be the more esteemed, if he does what is suitable to his rank; if, among other things, he is properly habited, well horsed, and walks with a good grace?*

and would he not be truly worthy of contempt would he not discover a meanness of mind, if he had improper habiliments, if he should take no care and pains to be well horsed, if he should ride without any art, or walk like an infant!

We can aver, that in this abridgement of Confucius's morals, nothing will be found like what we have remarked. We shall here see moral essays which are master-pieces. Everything herein is solid; because that right reason, that inward verity, which is implanted in the soul of all men, and which our philosopher incessantly consulted without prejudice, guided all his words. Thus the rules which he prescribes, and the duties to which he exhorts, are such that there is no person which does not immediately give his approbation thereunto. There is nothing of falsity in his reasonings, nothing extreme, none of those frightful subtleties, which are observed in the moral treatises of most modern metaphysicists\*, that is to say, in discourses where simplicity, clearness, and

\*Voyez Traître de Morale de Auteur de la recherche de la vérité.

*perspicuity ought to prevail throughout, and make itself sensible to minds of the lowest rank.*

*We shall perhaps find this maxim a little relaxed, where Confucius said, that there are certain persons whom it is lawful to hate. Nevertheless, if the thing be closely considered, we shall find the thought to be just and reasonable. Virtue, indeed, commands us to do good to all men, as Confucius states it; but it requires not that we should effectually have friendship for all sorts of persons. There are some so odious, that it is absolutely impossible to love them; for after all, we only can love good; we naturally have an aversion for what appears extremely wicked and defective. All that charity obliges us to do on this account, is, to shew kindness to a person, when it is in our power, as if we loved him, notwithstanding the vices, malice, and great defeats, which are discovered in him.*

*Seeing that opportunity offers, we shall take notice, that the duty of loving our enemies, which Jesus Christ so much*

recommends in his gospel, is generally too much stretched. This duty is very difficult to perform in its just extent, without our rendering it yet harder, or rather impossible to practice, and capable of casting us into despair, and of making us fall into an entire relaxation. The generality of those that explain this duty, do speak as if we were obliged to retain in our hearts a tender amity for all our enemies, how wicked and abominable soever they be. Yet, this is not precisely that which the Son of God requires at our hands, because he demands not things absolutely impossible. His aim is to excite us to behave ourselves towards our enemies, whoever they be, as we do to them that we love. Indeed, the Scriptures do, in several places, by to love signify to do good, almost in the same manner as we do to those for whom we have a great affection. If this were a fit occasion, we might verify this with several passages. We shall satisfy ourselves only with alleging the example of God himself, which our Saviour proposes for our imitation. For, after hav-

*ing said, Matth. 5. 44, 45. Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; (for these are all as so many synonymous terms) he adds, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for he makes his Sun to rise upon the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust.*

*Now, it is certain, that God loves not the wicked and unjust, although he may do them good; he has had an extreme aversion for a Caligula, for a Nero, and other such like monsters; although he has caused his Sun to shine, and sent his rain upon them. But he has dealt with them as if he loved them; and it is after this manner also that we ought to deport ourselves towards our enemies. It is not that we are not bound sincerely to endeavour, what in us lies, to retain in our hearts some sentiments of friendship for them; but there are certain persons so lewd, so profligate, and so abominable, for whom it is impossible to have*

these sentiments. And it is upon this account that the charity is yet greater, more generous, and praiseworthy, when, notwithstanding that aversion which we cannot hinder ourselves from bearing to certain persons, we cease not to do them good upon occasion, with the prospect of yielding obedience unto God.

As for the rest, by what we have hitherto said it maybe judged how exceedingly the public is beholden to the R. F. Incorcetta and Couplet, who have translated, out of Chinese into Latin, the three books of Confucius, from which we have extracted this piece of morality, which is now divulged. We have selected the most important things, and have let nip several, which, although good in themselves, and particularly agreeable to the genius of the persons for whom they have been said and writ, would have seemed, perhaps, too common and inconsiderable in our Europe. And inasmuch as in the work of the R. F. Incorcetta and Couplet, a discourse is made concerning the origins of the Chinese nation, and of the most ancient books which this nation

*enjoys, and which were extant, several ages before that of Confucius, we have therefore translated what on this account is most necessary to be known.*

*It is here requisite, for the reader's satisfaction, to declare, that the Chineses, from the beginning of their origin to the times of Confucius, have not been idolators; that they have had neither false gods nor images, that they have paid adoration only to the Creator of the Universe, whom they have always called Xam-ti, and to whom their third emperor named Hoam-ti, erected a temple, which was probable the first that was built to God. The name of Xam-ti, which they attribute to God, signifies Sovereign Master, or emperor. It is observable, that there have been a great many of the Chinese emperors that have very frequently assumed the surname of Ti, which imports master, emperor, or that of vam, which signifies king; that there was one prince of the fourth race, who was called Xi Hoam Ti, the great, or august emperor; but there is not found any that has dared to assume*

*the title of Xam, that is to say, Sovereign, and that they have always respectfully left it to the absolute judge of the Universe.*

*It is true, that in China, sacrifices have ever been offered to diverse tutelary angels: but in the times which preceded Confucius, it was in respect of honouring them infinitely less than Xam-Ti, the sovereign lord of the world.*

*The Chineses served God with extraordinary pomp and magnificence, but at the same time, with a very modest and very humble behaviour; and said, that all this external worship was in no wise agreeable to the Divinity, if the soul was not inwardly adorned with piety and virtue. They highly honour their fathers and mothers, and persons advanced in age. The women were very virtuous; and in their habits and all their fashions great modesty was observed. The men and women, nobles and peasants, kings and subjects, did greatly esteem sobriety, frugality, moderation, justice, and virtue.*

*The religion and piety of the Chineses*

continued almost in this state unto the time of the philosopher Li Lao Kiun, who was contemporary with Confucius, and who first declared there were several Gods. Confucius put a stop to the torrent of superstition and idolatry, which began to overflow. But in fine, when Fohi's idol was brought from the Indies, that is to say, sixty five years after Jesus Christ, this torrent so strongly overflowed, that it made an irruption, the sad effects whereof are still seen.

It were to be wished that there had from time to time been raised of these Confucius's. Things would not be in the posture wherein they are at China. This great man instructed, as well by his manners and example, as by his precepts; and his precepts are so just, so necessary, and proposed with so much gravity, and at the same time with so much meekness and ingenuity, that they must needs easily insinuate into our hearts, and produce great effects therein. Read only this little treatise which is sufficient to give you a very great and plenary satisfaction.

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# THE MORALS OF CONFUCIUS A *Chinese Philosopher*

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THE FIRST PART  
*Of the Antiquity, and Philosophy of the  
Chineses.*

Although in this little work our design is only to relate what is most remarkable in *Confucius's* books, yet we are obliged to speak of some books which now have appeared in *China* before this philosopher. But this not being to be

done without reflecting a little backward, we will discourse one word concerning the origin and antiquity of the *Chineses*.

The *Chinese* chronologers do almost all agree, that *Fohi*, who began to reign 2952 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, was the founder of this monarchy. The *Chineses* that have interpreted these annals, make no difficulty to avow, that whatever is writ concerning *China*, before the reign of this emperor, is fabulous and suspicious: and one of their most renowned historians, named *Taisucum*, frankly confesses, that he is ignorant of what passed before the reign of *Xinum*, the successor of *Fohi*. There are only certain annals which the *Chineses* call the Great Annals, wherein the thing is otherwise read. The author of this prodigious Chronology, which contains almost a hundred and fifty volumes, reports that after the Creation of the World, there were three emperors: the one of Heaven, the other of the Earth, and the third of Men;

That the progeny of this last succeeded one another for the space of above forty nine thousand years; after which, thirty five imperial families do successively reign for several ages without interruption. This author likewise adds, that he justifies not what he says, and at last agrees, that it is more certain to begin with *Fohi*, and herein to follow the most famous and best reputed historians.

It is not that in *Fohi*'s life they have not inserted an infinite number of fables, which might cause us to question whether this emperor ever was; for besides, that in the Great Annals, it is read, that *Fohi*'s mother accidentally stepping into a place where a giant had passed, she was suddenly encompassed with a rainbow, and that 'twas at this very moment, that she perceived herself with child of the founder of the *Chinese* monarchy, where it is also related that this founder had the head of a man, and body of a serpent. It is true, that these fables being very gross,

the generality of the *Chineses* deride them. They report, that the ground of this ridiculous tradition was the colour of *Fohi*'s body, which was marked with several spots; or rather, that it was a hieroglyph, whereby they intended to represent this prince, as a prince of extraordinary prudence. But although we had not this consideration and prospect, the genealogy of this king is so exact, so circumstantial, and so well prosecuted in the Chronological Tables of the *Chineses*, that it is not possible to imagine it only a fancy; so that there is certainly as little reason to deny, or even to question that *Fohi* ever was, as to maintain that *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Hercules*, and *Romulus* are only names, under pretence that the poets and gravest historians have intermixed the history of their birth with a thousand impertinent fables.

Nevertheless, these very Annals, which contain so many fables upon the account of *Fohi*'s birth, do say nothing of his predecessor's, and

do speak very imperfectly concerning his country; which makes us suspect that he was not born in *China*, and that he came thither from some other place. They only intimate, that he was born in a province called *Kensi*, where he indeed must necessarily arrive, supposing that he came from some other part into *China*: for after the Confusion of Tongues and Dispersion of the People, he must come from *Mesopotamia*, or from the Territory of *Sennaar*, to Land at *Kensi*, and afterwards arrive in the heart of the country, viz. in the province of *Honan*, where it is writ that he kept his court.

Although we cannot exactly know at what time *Fohi* laid the first foundations of his empire, yet it is very probable that it was not long after the Deluge: for indeed, if we vigorously follow the computations of the *Chineses*, and chronology of the *Septuagint*, it was not until about 200 years after, in a time when *Noah* was yet living; so that we may readily believe

that he is descended from this patriarch by *Sem*, who according to the sentiment of the whole world, had *Asia* for his inheritance. And that which more confirms us in our opinion, is, that in the *Chinese* language, *Sem*, which signifies to engender and produce, imports also life and sacrifice. Indeed, it is from *Noah*'s children, that all men since the Deluge are descended, and have received life, and have learnt to offer sacrifice unto God. Whereunto it might be added, that *Fohi* is by the *Chineses* called *Paohi*, which signifies also a victim, because he was the first of *Sem*'s posterity that introduced the Service of God and use of sacrifices amongst them.

But if we refuse to adhere to the computations before-mentioned, let us retrench, with their leave, the first six emperors, whose history cannot in every thing be true, and let us begin to compute only from the seventh, viz. from the emperor *Tao*. For from this emperor's reign, so many persons

have, by Cycles, computed and writ, whatever has passed in this kingdom, and have done it with so much exactness, and such a general uniformity, that we can no more doubt of the truth of their calculation, than of that of the Greek Olympiads, for we shall also find, according to that computation, that the origin of the *Chinese* nation was not long after the Flood; for from the time of *Tao*, to the year of this age 1688, it is four thousand forty and eight years.

This being so, it must necessarily follow that the first inhabitants of *China* had likewise the true Knowledge of God, and of the Creation of the World; for the idea of the true God, and the remembrance of the World's Creation continued a long time after the Deluge, in the minds of men, and even of those that were most corrupted, as the posterity of *Cham* for example. Indeed, besides that in the Annals of the *Chineses*, a discourse is there made concerning the Creation

of the World, although after a different method from Moses's History, yet it was not possible that these ideas of the true God, which the Creation of the World, and after that the Deluge had deeply engraved in their hearts, could be so suddenly effaced in such a manner, as that they should fall into idolatry, and follow after other Gods than he that had created them. But the more thoroughly to convince us of what we have been discoursing, it is needful only to consider the doctrine, sentiments and manners of the ancient *Chineses*, the books of their philosophers, and especially those of Confucius. Certainly we shall throughout observe the most excellent Morality that ever was taught, a Morality which might be said to proceed from the School of Jesus Christ.

The Books which the Ancient *Chineses* have writ, are exceeding numerous, but the chief are those which are called *Ukim*; that is to say, the five volumes, and those entitled

*Su Xu*, that is to say, The Four Books.

The first and chiefest of these five volumes is called *Xu Kin*. It is not necessary very amply to discourse of the antiquity of this Work; it is sufficient to say, that in perusing it we find, that the author wrote a long time before *Moses*. At first there is seen the history of three great kings, viz, *Tao*, *Xun*, and *Vu*, the last of which was the first and chief of the Family *Hia*, the most considerable of all the imperial families; and the two others have been famous law-givers, and, as it were, the *Solons* of *China*. Therein are afterwards found the most important constitutions that were made during the reign of the second family, or Imperial House called *Xam* and *Vu*, especially by *Chimtam*, who was the founder thereof; and who arrived at the empire 1776 years before the coming of Jesus Christ. In fine, a discourse is there made of the third family, wherein is chiefly related what was said or done most remarkable un-

der the government of the five first princes, and of the twelfth. There is represented the history of *Vuvam*, who was the chief of this third family, and the lucubrations and instructions of the illustrious *Cheucum*, the brother of this emperor, who was a prince highly esteemed, both for his virtue and extraordinary Prudence. This whole volume, not to multiply words, is only an historical relation, and collection of moral maxims, of harangues spoken by princes, of sentences uttered by the mouths of kings, and particular persons, and of precepts and counsel given to princes, wherein so much prudence, policy, wisdom and religion is set forth, that they might be given to all Christian princes.

The second volume, which is properly a recital of the customs and ordinances of almost twelve kings, is entitled *Pi Kim*. It is a collection of odes, and several other little poems of this nature: for music being greatly esteemed, and much used in *China*, and whatever is published in

this volume having respect only to the purity of manners, and practice of virtue, those that wrote it composed it in verse, to the end that every one being enabled to sing the things therein contained, they might be in every one's mouth. Virtue is there magnified and extolled to the highest degree, and there are so many things expressed after a method so grave and wise, that it is impossible not to admire them. It is very true, that therein are contained things very ridiculous, extravagant hyperboles in favour of certain princes, and murmurings and repinings against God and Heaven: but the most judicious interpreters are of opinion, that all this is suspicious; that those to whom they are attributed are not the authors; that they are not to be credited, as being since added. Indeed the other ancient odes, they say contain nothing ridiculous, extravagant, or criminal, as appears by these words of Confucius, *The whole doctrine of the three hundred poems is reduced to these few words, Su Vu Sie, which import*

*that we ought not to think any thing that is wicked or impure.*

The third volume is called *Te Kim*. In this volume, which is the most ancient, if it may be called a volume, nothing but obscurity and darkness is observed. *Fohi* had no sooner founded his empire, than he gave instructions to the *Chineses*; but the use of characters and writing being unknown, this prince, who could not teach them all with his voice, and who was moreover employed in the advancement of his growing monarchy, after a long and serious consideration, thought at last upon making a table, composed of some little lines which it is not necessary to describe. The *Chineses* being as yet dull and rustic, it is probable that this prince laboured in vain; and if it is true, that he accomplished his design, by the clear and easy explications which he himself gave for the understanding of these lines, it happened, at least insensibly, that this table became useless. For it is certain, that after his death no use

could be made thereof. Two thousand years from the foundation of the monarchy was near elapsed, no one being able any way to decipher this mysterious table, when at last an *Oedipus* was seen to appear: it was a prince named *Venvam*. This prince endeavoured to penetrate the sense of these lines by a great number of others, which he disposed after different ways; they were new enigmas. His son, viz. *Cheucum*, attempted the same thing; but had not the good fortune better to succeed. In brief, five hundred years after appeared *Confucius*, who endeavoured to untie this *Gordian Knot*. He explained, according to his understanding, the little lines of the founder, with the interpretations that had been made before him, and refers all to the Nature of beings and elements; to the manners and discipline of men. It is true, that *Confucius* being arrived at a more advanced age, acknowledged his mistake, and designed to make new commentaries on this enigmatic work:

but death hindered him from fulfilling his resolution.

To the fourth volume *Confucius* has given the title of *Chun Cieu*; words which signify the *spring* and *autumn*. He composed it in his old age. He discourses like a historian of the expeditions of divers princes; of their virtues and vices; of the fatigues they underwent, with the recompences they received. *Confucius* designed to this fourth volume the title of the *Spring* and *Autumn*, which is an emblematic title, because the States flourish when their princes are endowed with virtue and wisdom; which is represented by the *Spring*; and that on the contrary they fall like the leaves, and are utterly destroyed, when their princes are dispirited, or are wicked, which is represented by the *Autumn*.

The fifth volume entitled *Li Ki*, or *Memoirs of Rites and Duties*, is composed of two books, the matter of which is extracted by *Confucius* out of several other books, and of various

monuments of Antiquity. But about three hundred years after, all the copies of the work being burnt, by the command of a cruel emperor, called *Xihoamti*, and this loss being impossible to be repaired any other way, than by consulting the most aged persons that might have preserved any ideas thereof, it is not to be questioned that the work is at present exceedingly defective, even as the interpreters themselves acknowledge; there are indeed several things herein wanting, and a great many others added, which never were in *Confucius*'s copies. However, in this whole volume, such as it now is, he treats of the rites as well sacred as profane, of all sorts of Duties, such as were practised in the time of the three families of the princes *Hia*, *Xam*, and *Cheu*, but especially of that which reigned in *Confucius*'s time. These duties are those of parents to their children; those of children to their parents; the duties of husband and wife; those of friends, those

which respect hospitality, and those which are necessary to be performed at home, or abroad, or at feasts. He there discourses likewise of the vessels of the sacrifices, of the victims that were to be offered up to Heaven, of the temples to be chosen for that end, of the respect we ought to have for the dead, and of their obsequies or funeral rites. In a word, he therein treats of the liberal arts, especially of music, of the military art, of the way of lancing a javelin, and guiding a chariot. Behold in brief what the five volumes contain.

The four books, the three first of which are *Confucius's* books, whereof we design to speak, do comprehend the whole philosophy of the *Chineses*, at least, whatever this philosophy has most curious and considerable. They explain and more clearly illustrate what is writ in the five volumes: and although the authority of the five volumes be infinitely greater, by reason of their Antiquity,

than that of the four volumes, yet the four volumes exceed it, for the advantage that may be received therefrom. Indeed, besides that the *Chineses* do thence derive their principal oracles, and what they believe to be eternal verities; the *Literati*, which are philosophers that follow *Confucius*'s doctrine, and which have in their own hands all the employments of the nation, cannot arrive at the degree of a philosopher, and consequently to be Mandarins or Magistrates, without a great knowledge of these four books. They are, in truth, under an obligation, to know one of the five volumes, which they please to chuse, according to their fancy and inclination: but as for the four books, they are indispensably obliged to know them all four by heart, and thoroughly to understand them; the principal reasons of which are as follows: the first is, that *Confucius* and *Memcius*, who writ the fourth book, have collected what is best and most exquisite in the works of the Ancients. The

second is, that they have added several good things to the discoveries and thoughts of their ancestors. The third, that *Confucius* and *Memcius* propose their doctrine after a clearer and more polite method than was formerly done. In fine, it is because *Confucius* and *Memcius* have, in the four books, avoided the dull and harsh style of the Ancients, and that by a smooth style, although without pride and arrogance, they have added ornaments to the naked simplicity of the Golden Age.

We have nothing to say concerning the fourth book, because this work of *Memcius* has not as yet appeared in *Europe*: but before we proceed to speak of *Confucius*, it is necessary to publish the merit of this philosopher, together with the most remarkable passages of his life.

*Confucius* was born 551 years before the coming of Jesus Christ. He was of a most noble extraction; for, not to mention his mother, who was of an illustrious birth, his father, who

had been advanced to the first and chiefest offices of the empire, was descended from the last emperor of the second family.

Dispositions to virtue appearing sometimes in the tenderest years, *Confucius*, at six years old discovered nothing of a child: all his ways were manly.

At the age of fifteen years, he applied himself to the reading of the Ancients, and having selected those which were most esteemed, and which himself judged the best, he thence extracted the most excellent instructions, with a design first to profit himself, thereby to make them the rules of his own conduct, and afterwards to propose them to others. At twenty years old he married, and had a son named *Peyu*, who died at fifty. He was the only child he had, but his race extinguished not; he had a grandson called, *Culu*, that was an honour to his ancestors. *Cufu* applied himself to philosophy, he made commentaries on his grandfather's books, was

advanced to the highest dignities, and his House is so well supported, and his posterity have always been so considerable both for their promotions and opulence, that this family is at present one of the most illustrious in *China*.

Confucius exercised the Magistracy at divers places with very good success, and with a great reputation; his greatest aim being the public good, and the propagation of his doctrine, he ambitiously sought not after vain-glory in these sorts of employes. Insomuch, that when he accomplished not his end, when he saw himself frustrated in the hopes he had of being enabled more easily to diffuse his Lights, from an high place, he descended and renounced the office of a Magistrate.

This philosopher had three thousand disciples, among which, there were five hundred that managed the most eminent charges in several kingdoms, and seventy two whose virtue and knowledge was so extraordin-

ary, that the Annals have preserved their names, surnames, and the names of their country to posterity. He divided his doctrine into four parts; so that *Confucius's* school was composed of four orders of disciples. Those of the first order applied themselves to cultivate virtue, and thereby to impress strong dispositions in their heart and mind. Those of the second order addicted themselves to the art of ratiocination and rhetoric. The third studied politics. And the business and employment of the fourth Order, was to write in a smooth and neat style, what concerned morality. Amongst these seventy two disciples, there were ten that signalised themselves, and whose names and writings are in great veneration.

*Confucius*, throughout his doctrine, had no other intent than to dissipate the mists of the mind, to extirpate vice, and re-establish that integrity which he affirmed to have been a present from Heaven. And the more

easily to attain this end, he exhorted all those that heard his instructions, to obey Heaven, to fear and serve it, to love his neighbour as himself, to conquer and submit his passions unto reason, to do nothing, say nothing, nor think nothing contrary to it. And what was more remarkable, he recommended nothing to others, either in writing or by word of mouth, which he did not first practise himself. His disciples also had for him a veneration so extraordinary, that they sometimes made no scruple to pay him those honours, which were used to be rendered to those only that sat upon the throne: an example of which we will give you. It was an ancient custom among the *Chineses*, to place sick persons' beds on the North-side; but because this situation was the situation of the King's Beds: when a king visited a sick person, the bed was removed to the South-side, and it was a crime not to do it. Confucius had some disciples, that, in their sicknesses, ren-

dered him such a homage. We must not here forget one very remarkable thing which the *Chineses* relate. They report that *Confucius* continually used to say that *the Holy Man was in the West*. Whatever his thoughts were, it is certain that sixty and five years after Christ's birth, the emperor *Mimti*, excited by the philosopher's words, and much more, as it is said, by the image of the Holy Hero that appeared to him in a dream, sent two ambassadors into the West, there to find out the *Saint and Holy Law*. But these ambassadors landing at a certain and not far from the Red Sea, and not daring to venture farther, they advised about taking a certain idol they found there, which was a statue of the philosopher called *Foe Kiao*, that had appeared in the Indies, about five hundred years before *Confucius*, and brought into *China* *Fohi*'s idol with the doctrine which he had taught. Happy had been their embassy, if instead of this Doctrine they had returned into their

own country with the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, which *St. Thomas* then preached in the Indies; but this Divine Light had not as yet reached thither. From this unhappy time, the generality of the *Chineses* have followed after idols; and superstition and idolatry daily making new progress, they by little and little forsook the doctrine of their master, have neglected the excellent instructions of the Ancients, and in fine, being grown contemners of all sorts of religion, they are fallen headlong into atheism. They could not indeed do otherwise, in following the execrable doctrine of that impostor *Fohi*, who taught that *the Principle and End of all things was Nothing*.

To return to *Confucius*, whose doctrine was so repugnant to that of *Fohi* and his followers; this illustrious philosopher, who was so necessary and helpful to his country, died in the 73 year of his age; a little before the sickness which snatched him from the *Chineses*, he with great bitterness

of spirit, lamented the disorders of his time; and expressed his thoughts and grief, by a verse which may be thus translated, *O great Mountain!* he meant his doctrine, *O great Mountain, what art thou become!* *This important machine is subverted!* *Alas!* *There are no more wise men, no more saints!* This reflection so grievously afflicted him, that he presently languished; and seven days before his death, turning towards his disciples, after having testified his regret and trouble to see that kings, whose good conduct was so necessary, and of such great importance, would not observe his maxims and instructions, he dolorously subjoins, *seeing that things go thus, nothing more remains than to die.* He had no sooner uttered these words, but he fell into a lethargy, which ended with his death.

Confucius was buried in his own country, in the Kingdom of *Lu*, whither he was retired with his dearest disciples. For his sepulchre they chose a place near the City of *Kiofeu*,

on the bank of the river *Su*, in that very academy where he used to teach, and which is at present seen environed with walls, like a considerable city.

It is not possible to express the affliction which the death of this philosopher caused to his disciples. They bitterly bewailed him; they put on mourning weeds, and were under such great anguish, that they neglected the care of their nourishment and their life. Never was a good father more regretted by dutiful and well-bred children, than *Confucius* was by his disciples. They were all in mourning and tears a whole year, some three years: and there was one, who being more truly sensible than the rest of the loss they had underwent, stirred not, for six years, from the place where his master had been buried.

In all the cities, there are seen magnificent colleges, which were built in honour of *Confucius*, with these and other such like inscriptions, written in characters of gold. *To the great Master.*

*To the illustrious king of the learned. To the saint, or, which is the same thing among the Chineses, To him that was endowed with an extraordinary wisdom.* And although it be two thousand years since this philosopher's decease, they have so great a veneration for his memory, that the magistrates never pass by these colleges, without stopping their stately palankins, wherein they are carried for distinction sake. They alight, and after some few moments prostration, do march a little way on foot. There are even emperors and kings who disdain not sometimes to visit these edifices where the titles of this philosopher are engraved, and to perform it after a glorious manner. Behold, the exceeding remarkable words of the emperor *Tumlo*, who was the third emperor of the preceding family called *Mim*. He pronounced them one day, when he was disposed to go to one of those colleges already mentioned; *I adore the master of kings and emperors. Emperors and kings are lords*

*and masters of their people; but Confucius has proposed the true methods of governing these very people, and of instructing the ages to come. It is therefore convenient that I go to the Great College, and there offer some presents to this great Master who is no more, to the end that I may shew how much I honour the learned, and how greatly I esteem their doctrine.* These extraordinary marks of veneration do intimate that the virtue and merit of this philosopher have been extraordinary. And certainly this excellent man was also endowed with admirable qualifications. He had an aspect both grave and modest; he was faithful, just, cheerful, civil, courteous, affable: and a certain serenity, which appeared in his countenance, gained him the hearts and respect of all those that beheld him. He spake little, and meditated much. He eagerly pursued his studies, without tiring his spirit. He contemned riches and honours when they were obstacles to his designs. His whole delight was in teaching and

making his doctrine savoury to many. He was severer to himself than others. He had a continual circumspection over himself, and was a rigid censurer of his own conduct. He blamed himself for not being assiduous enough in instructing; for not shewing vigilance enough in correcting his own faults, and for not exercising himself, as he ought, in the practice of virtue. In fine, he had one virtue rarely found in great men, viz: humility: for he not only spake with an extreme modesty of himself, and what concerned him, but he with a singular sincerity declared to the whole world, that he ceased not to learn, and that the doctrine he taught was not his own, but the doctrine of the Ancients. But his books are his true portraiture, which in this place we proceed to expose to view.

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*The Second Part*

**A COLLECTION**

Out of

*Confucius's Works*

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**THE FIRST BOOK**

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THE First Book of *Confucius* was published by one of his most famous disciples named *Cem-cu*; and this learned disciple wrote very excellent commentaries thereon. This book is, as it were, the Gate through which it is necessary to pass to arrive at the sublimest wisdom, and most perfect virtue. The philosopher here treats of three considerable things.

1. Of what we ought to do to cultivate our minds, and regulate our manners.

2. Of the method by which it is necessary to instruct and guide others: and,

3. Of the care that everyone ought to have to tend to the sovereign good, to adhere thereunto, and, as I may so say, to repose himself therein.

Because the author chiefly designed to address his instructions to the princes and magistrates that might be called to the regality, this book is entitled, *Ta Hio, or, The Great Science.*

The Great Secret, says *Confucius*, to acquire true knowledge, the knowledge, consequently, worthy of princes, and the most illustrious personages, is to cultivate and polish the reason, which is a present that we have received from Heaven. Our concupiscence has disordered it, and intermixed several impurities therewith. Take away therefore, and remove from it these impurities, to the end that it may re-assume its former

lustre, and enjoy its utmost perfection. This, here is the Sovereign Good. This is not sufficient. It is moreover requisite, that a prince by his exhortations, and by his own example, make of his people, as it were, a new people. In fine, after being, by great pains, arrived at this sovereign perfection, at this chief Good, you must not relax; it is here that perseverance is absolutely necessary. Whereas men generally pursue not the methods that lead to the possession of the Sovereign Good, and to a constant and eternal possession, *Confucius* has thought it highly important to give some instructions therein.

He says, that after we know the end to which we must attain, it is necessary to determine, and incessantly to make towards this end, by walking in the ways which lead thereunto; by daily confirming in his mind the resolution fixed on for the attaining it, and by establishing it so well, that nothing may in the least shake it.

When you shall have thus fixed your mind in this Great Design, give up yourself, adds he, to meditation; reason upon all things within yourself; endeavour to have some clear ideas thereof; consider distinctly what presents itself to you; pass, without prejudice, solid judgements thereon; examine everything, and weigh every thing with care. After examinations and reasonings of this nature, you may easily arrive at the end where you must fix, at the end where you ought resolutely to stand, viz. at a perfect conformity of all your actions, with what reason suggests.

As to the means which a prince ought to use, to purify and polish his reason, to the end that it being thus disposed, he may govern his states, and redress and beautify the reason of his people, the philosopher proposes after what manner the ancient kings governed themselves.

That they might at last govern their empire wisely, they endeavoured, says he, prudently to sway a particular

kingdom, and to excite its members to improve their reason, and to act like creatures endowed with understanding. To produce this reformation in this particular kingdom, they laboured to regulate their family, to the end that it might serve as a model to all the subjects of this kingdom. To reform their family, they took an extraordinary care to polish their own person, and so well to compose their words and actions, that they might neither say, nor do anything that might ever so little offend complaisance, and which was not edifying; to the end that they themselves might be a pattern and example continually exposed to the eyes of their domestics, and all their courtiers. To obtain this exterior perfection, they strove to rectify their mind, by governing and subduing their passions; because the passions do, for the most part, remove the mind from its natural rectitude, do abase and incline it to all sorts of vice. to rectify their mind, to rule and subdue their pas-

sions, they so acted, that their will was always bent to good, and never turned towards evil. In fine, thus to dispose their will, they studied to illuminate their understanding, and so well to enlighten it, that, if it was possible, they might ignore nothing: for to Will, Desire, Love and Hate, it is necessary to know; this is the philosophy of Right Reason.

This is what *Confucius* proposed to the princes, to instruct them how to rectify and polish first their own reason, and afterwards the reason and persons of all their subjects. But to make the greater impression, after having gradually descended from the wise conduct of the whole empire, to the perfection of the understanding, he reascends, by the same degrees, from the illuminated understanding to the happy state of the whole empire. If, says he, the understanding of a prince is well enlightened, his Will will incline only to good; his will inclining only to good, his soul will be entirely rectified, there will

not be any passion that can make him destroy his rectitude. The soul being thus rectified, he will be composed in his exterior, nothing will be observed in his person that can offend complaisance. His person being thus perfected, his family, forming itself according to this model will be reformed and amended. His family being arrived at this perfection, it will serve as an example to all the subjects of the particular kingdom, and the members of the particular kingdom to all those that compose the body of the empire, Thus the whole empire will be well governed; order and justice will reign there; we shall there enjoy a profound peace, it will be a happy and flourishing empire. *Confucius* afterwards certifies, that the admonitions do no less regard the subjects than the princes; and after having addressed himself to kings, he tells them that they ought particularly to apply themselves rightly to govern their family, to take care thereof, and reform. *For*, he adds, *it is impossible that he that*

*knows not how to govern and reform his own family, can rightly govern and reform a people.*

Behold what is most important in *Confucius's* doctrine contained in the first book, and which is the text, as I may say, whereon his commentator Cemcu has taken pains.

This famous disciple, to explain and enlarge his master's instructions, alleges authorities and examples, which he draws from three very ancient books, highly esteemed by the *Chineses*.

The first book he mentions, which is of a later date than the rest, is entitled *Camcao*, and makes up a part of the chronicles of the empire of *Cheu*. This book was composed by a prince called *Vuvam*, the son of king *Venvam*. *Vuvam* does therein highly extol his father; but his principal design, in magnifying the virtues, and admirable qualities of this prince, is to form according to this model one of his brethren, whom he would perfect in virtue: and it is observable, that he

ordinarily tells him, that their father had the art of being virtuous; *Venvam*, said he to him, *had the art of polishing his reason and his person.*

The second book, from whence *Cemcu* cites his authorities and examples, is called *Tar-Kia*. This book, which is a great deal more ancient than the first, was writ by a famous emperor *Xam*, named *T-Tin*. It is therein read, that this *T-Tin*, seeing *Tar-Kia* the grandson of the emperor *Chim-Tam* degenerate from the virtue of his illustrious ancestors, and carry himself after a manner wholly different from theirs; he commanded him to live three years in a garden, where was his grandfather's tomb; that this made so great an impression upon his spirit, that he changed his course. And that the same *T-Tin* who had done him so kind an office, having afterwards advanced him to the empire, *Tar-Kia* governed it a long time in great prosperity. *King Tam*, said *T-Tin* to *Tar-Kia*, *king Tam always had his mind disposed to cultivate that precious rea-*

*son which has been given us from Heaven.*

In fine, the third book, which is much ancienter than the two former, is called *Ti-Tien*; and upon the occasion of king *Tao*, it is there read that *this prince could cultivate this sublime virtue, this great and sublime gift which he had received from Heaven, viz. Natural Reason.*

It is evident, that *Confucius*'s disciple, by these authorities, designed to shew, or rather supposes that the whole world believes that we have all received from Heaven, those Lights which most men suffer to extinguish by their negligence, a reason which most men voluntarily slight and suffer to corrupt. And seeing that there were princes which have perfected these lights, which have bettered and improved their reason, we ought to imitate them, and that we, as well as they by their endeavours, may attain to such a perfection.

We must not here forget a remarkable thing which *Cemcu* relates, touch-

ing a basin wherein king *Tam* used to bathe and wash himself. He says, that these excellent words were there engraved: *Wash yourself, renew yourself continually, renew yourself every day; renew yourself from day to day.* And that it was to intimate to the king, that if a prince which governs others has contracted vices and impurities, he ought to labour to cleanse himself there-from, and to reduce his heart into its first state of purity. As for the rest, it has been an ancient custom the *Chineses*, to grave or paint on their domestic vessels some moral sentences, and strong exhortations to virtue: so that when they bathed themselves, or took their repasts there, they had these sentences and exhortations continually before their eyes. This ancient custom is still preserved. There is only this difference, says he that publishes *Confucius*'s works, that whereas heretofore the characters were graved or painted on the inside of the vessel, in the middle of the interior face, at present the *Chineses* do

most frequently grave or paint them on the outside, *satisfying themselves in this age, with the outward appearance of virtue.*

After *Cemcu* has spoken of the two first parts of his Master's doctrine, the one of which respects what a prince should do for his own perfection, and the other what he is obliged to do for the perfection and prosperity of others; he proceeds to the third and last part, wherein he discourses of the last end that everyone ought to propose as the Sovereign Good, and whereat he ought to fix. We must remember, that by the last end and sovereign good, Confucius understands, as we have already observed, an entire conformity of our actions with right reason.

After this, he alleges the example of that *Venvam*, already spoken of. And certainly this prince's conduct was so wise and regular, that we cannot without admiration understand how, by the sole lights of nature, he could have such ideas as he had, and could arrive at so sublime a virtue, as that where-

unto he attained. It will not be unpleasing, to see something of it here.

*Venvam*, faith the commentator, acknowledged, that the love which princes bear to their subjects, cannot but greatly contribute rightly to govern, and make them happy. And upon this consideration, he made this love his principal business, which he incessantly endeavoured to perfect. Behold the method he took! Because the principal virtue of a subject is to honour and respect his king, *Venvam* being as yet a subject, fixed himself to render this honour and respect; and took so great a pleasure in these sorts of obligations, that he always fulfilled them with great fidelity. As the first, and most important virtue of children to their parents is obedience, *Venvam*, in the relation of a son, adhered to this obedience; and incessantly acquitted himself of this duty with an extraordinary piety. The principal virtue of a father, adds *Confucius*'s disciple, is a tender love for his children: thus *Venvam*, like a father, stuck

close to this love, whereof he continually gave very signal proofs; not by a weak and criminal indulgence, but by the continual cares he took to reform and instruct them. In fine, fidelity is a virtue absolutely necessary to those that live in a society: thus *Venvam*, in speaking and acting with the subjects of this kingdom, kept close to this duty, and so strongly adhered to it, that he never promised anything, which he effected not with an unspeakable promptitude and exactness.

This prince, says Cemcu, was born of very virtuous parents, who had taken great care of his education, especially his mother *Taicin*, who had been a pattern of virtue; but he himself had so well improved his education, that he rendered himself an accomplished himself, and acquitted himself with so much reputation, and such a general esteem, even amongst foreign nations, that forty-four kingdoms voluntarily submitted to his empire. Nevertheless, adds he, this great

honour wherewith he was environed, was never capable of eclipsing him. He was endowed with an inexpressible and unparalleled modesty and humility. He very severely accused himself of not being virtuous enough; for one day when he was sick, the earth being shook with prodigious earthquakes, he sought the cause of this calamity, and of the wrath of Heaven, only in his own sins, although he was of a consummate virtue.

That which most appeared in *Ven-vam's* actions, was an extraordinary charity; a proof whereof we will here allege. In the annals of *China* it is recorded, that this prince having found in the field the bones of a man, to whom the honours of burying were refused, he immediately commanded them to be interred; and some of the bystanders saying, that the master of the deceased was unknown, and that for this reason he might not concern himself, it being founded perhaps on some custom of the country. *What, replies the king, he that holds the reins*

*of the empire, is not he the master of it? He that reigns, is not he the master of the kingdom? I am therefore the lord and master of the dead, wherefore then should refuse them these last offices of piety?* But this is not all; he had no sooner uttered these words, but stripping himself of his royal vestment, he commanded it to be used instead of a winding-sheet, to wrap up these bones, and bury them according to the manners and custom of the country; which his courtiers observing with admiration, they thus cried out, *If the piety of our prince is so great towards dry bones, how great will it not be towards men that enjoy life?* They made some other reflections of this nature.

Venvam's charity had properly for its object all sorts of persons, but particularly, elderly persons, widows, orphans and the poor, whom he protected and nourished, as if they had been his own children. It is believed that these charitable actions were the principal cause of the re-establishment of a

pious custom of the first emperors, and of a law which is still observed throughout *China*. This law enacts, *that in every city, even in the least, a hundred poor aged persons shall be maintained at the public charge.*

But *Venvam*, not satisfied with having given, in his life-time, instructions and examples of virtue; when he felt himself near death, not sufficiently relying on the force of his preceding instructions and examples, and knowing that the last words of dying persons do make a great impression, he likewise gave his son *Uvam* these three admonitions.

I. *When you see any virtuous action done, be not slack to practise it.*

II. *When the opportunity of doing a reasonable thing shall offer, make use of it without hesitating.*

III. *Cease not thy endeavours to extirpate and suppress vice.*

*These three admonitions which give you, my son, adds he, do comprehend whatever may produce an exact probity and excellent conduct.*

Behold doubtless an example which shews, that in this king's life-time, the *Chineses* had very rational sentiments, and that virtue, as I may say, was their passion. For in a word, the people generally conform themselves to the sentiments and manners of their kings.

*Regis ad exemplum totus componitur  
Orbis.*

There is nothing that gives a greater idea of the virtue of the ancient *Chineses*, than what they have writ and practised, in respect of their law-suits. they teach, that actions ought not to be commenced against one; that frauds, severities, and enmities, which are the general attendants and consequences of law-suits, were unbecoming men; that the whole world ought to live in unity and concord, and that to this end it behoved everyone to use their utmost endeavours, either to prevent lawsuits from arising, or to stifle them in their birth, by reconciling

the parties, or inspiring them with the love of peace; that is to say, *by engaging them to renew and improve their reasons*; these are *Cemcu's* own words.

But that which is most remarkable on this subject, is the extraordinary precautions which the judges took before any cause was brought before their tribunals. They with the utmost vigilance and attention examined the outside of the plaintiff, or him that began the suit; to the end that by this means they might know whether this man was thereunto excited by good motives; whether he believed his cause good, or whether he acted sincerely; and for this purpose there were five rules. By the first rule; they examined the placing of his words, and manner of speaking; and this was called *Cutim*, that is to say, *The Observation of the Words*. By the second, they considered the air of his countenance, and the motion of his lips, and this was called *Setim*, that is to say, *The Observation of the*

*Face.* By the third, they observed his manner of breathing, when he proposed his cause; this rule was called *Kitim*, that is to say, *The Observation of the Respiration*. By the fourth, they remarked whether his reply was quick; whether he gave not intricate, ill-grounded, uncertain answers, or whether he spake of any other thing than that in question; or whether his words were not ambiguous; and this was called *Ulhtim*, that is to say, *The Observation of the Answers*. Lastly, by the fifth, the judges were carefully to weigh the considerations and respect, to see whether there was no trouble, digression, or confusion; if there appeared not any sign of a lie and fraud; and this last rule was called *Motim*, that is to say, *The Observation of the Eyes*.

It was by these exterior marks that this ancient *Areopagite* discovered the most hidden thoughts of the heart, rendered an exact justice, diverted a great many persons from law-suits and frauds, and inspired in them the

love of equity and concord. But at present these rules are ignored in *China*, or at least wholly neglected.

So return to *Confucius*'s doctrine illustrated with the commentaries of *Cemcu*. This disciple set a high value upon a maxim which he had frequently heard his master repeat, and which himself also very strongly inculcated. It was this: *Always behave yourself with the same precaution and discretion as you would do, if you were observed by ten eyes, and pointed at by so many hands.*

To render virtue yet more commendable, and more easily to inspire the sentiments thereof, the fame disciple demonstrates, that, whatever is honest and advantageous, is amiable; and we are obliged to love virtue, because it includes both these qualities. That moreover virtue is an ornament which embellishes, as I may say. the whole person of him that possesses it, his interior and exterior; that to the mind it communicates inexpressible beauties and perfections; that as

to the body, it there produces very sensible delights; that it affords a certain physiognomy, certain transports, certain ways which infinitely please; and as it is the property of virtue to be calm the heart, and keep peace there, so this inward tranquillity and secret joy do produce a certain serenity in the countenance, a certain joy, and air of goodness, kindness and reason, which attracts the heart and esteem of the whole world. After which he concludes, that the principal business of a man is to rectify his mind, and so well to rule his heart, that his passions might always be calm; and if it happens that they are excited, he ought to be moved no farther than is necessary; in a word, that he may regulate them according to right reason. For, as for instance, adds he, if we suffer ourselves to be transported with excessive anger, that is to say, if we fall into a rage without any cause, or more than we ought when we have reason, we may thence conclude, that our mind has not the rectitude it ought

to have. If we contemn and mortally hate a person, by reason of certain defects that we observe in him, and render not justice to his good and excellent qualities, if endowed therewith; if we permit ourselves to be troubled by a too great fear; if we abandon ourselves to an immoderate joy, or to an excessive sorrow, it cannot be said that our mind is in the state wherein it ought to be, that it has its rectitude and uprightness.

*Cemcu* carries this moral a great way further, and gives it a perfection which, in my opinion, could never be expected from those that have not been honoured with divine revelation. He says that it is not only necessary to observe moderation in general, as often as our passions are stirred, but that also in respect of those which are the most lawful, innocent and laudable, we ought not blindly to yield up ourselves thereunto, and always to follow their motions; it is necessary to consult reason. As for example, parents are obliged to love one another, nevertheless, as

their amity may be too weak, so it may be also too strong; and as to the one and the other respect, there is doubtless an irregularity. It is just for a child to love his father; but if a father has any considerable defect, if he has committed any great fault, it is the duty of a son to acquaint him with it, and tell him what may be for his good; always keeping a due respect, from which he ought not to depart. Likewise, if a son is fallen into any sin, it is the duty of a father to reprove him, and give him his advice thereon. But if their love is blind; if their love is a mere passion; if it is flesh and blood which make them to act, this affection is an irregular affection. Why? Because it digresses from the rule of right reason.

We should injure the reader if we should omit speaking of the emperor *Tao*, whose eulogy is recorded in the work that affords the matter of ours. Never man has more exactly practised all these duties, which have been pro-

posed by *Confucius*'s disciple, than he. It may be said, if his portraiture is not flattered, that he had a disposition made for virtue. He had a tender, but magnanimous and well-disposed heart. He loved those that he was obliged to love, but it was without the least weakness. He, in a word, regulated his love, and all his passions, according to right reason.

This prince arrived at the empire 2357 years before Jesus Christ, he reigned a hundred years. But he ruled with so much prudence, wisdom, and so many demonstrations of clemency and kindness to his subjects, that they were the happiest people of the earth.

*Tao* had all the excellent qualities desirable in a prince; his riches made him not proud; his extraction, which he was so noble and illustrious, puffed him not up with arrogance. He was virtuous, sincere, and kind without affectation. His palace, table, apparel and furniture discovered the greatest moderation that ever was

seen. He delighted in music, but it was a grave, modest, and pious music: he detested nothing so much as songs wherein modesty and civility were blemished. It was not a capricious humour that made him dislike these sorts of songs it was the desire he had of rendering himself in all things pleasing unto Heaven. It was not avarice that produced in him that moderation which he observed in his table, apparel, furniture, and every-thing else; it was only the love he bare to those that were in want, for he only designed to relieve them. It was also his great piety, and that ardent char-ity wherewith he burned, which made him frequently to utter these admirable words. *The famine of my people is my own famine. My people's sin is my own sin.*

In the seventy second year of his reign he elected *Xun* as a colleague, who governed the empire twenty eight years with him: but what is most remarkable, and which deserves the praise and applause of all ages, is,

that although he had a son, he declared, that he appointed *Xun*, in whom he had seen a great deal of virtue, an exact probity, and judicious conduct, for his successor. And it being told him, that his son complained of his excluding him from the succession to the empire, he made this answer, which alone may be the subject of an excellent panegyric, and render his memory immortal. *I had rather my only son should be wicked, and all my people good, than if my son alone was good, and all my people wicked.*

Confucius's chief aim, as we have declared, being to propose his doctrine to kings, and persuade them to it, because he thought, that if he could inspire them with the sentiments of virtue, their subjects would become virtuous after their example; *Cemcu* explaining this doctrine expatiates largely on the duty of kings.

He principally applies himself to three things:

I. To shew that it is very important that kings behave themselves well

in their court and family, because their ways and actions are certainly imitated.

II. To persuade them of the necessity there is in general of acquiring the habit of virtue, and of performing the duties thereof in all places and upon all accounts.

III. To engage them not to impoverish the people, but to do all for their good and ease.

As to the first article, he makes use of several cogitations, which the book of odes affords him. But behold, in two words, the most considerable part of his discourse. If, says he, *a king as a father, testifies love to his children; if as a son, he is obedient to his father; if in quality of the eldest son, he is courteous to his younger brethren, and lives peaceable with them, if, as the youngest, he has a respect and esteem for the eldest; if he kindly uses those that are in his service; if he is charitable, especially to widows and orphans: if, I say, a king exactly ac-*

*quits himself of all this, his people will imitate him, and everyone will be seen to practise virtue throughout his kingdom. Parents will tenderly love their children, and give them a good education. Children will honour their parents, and render them due obedience. The elder will shew kindness to their younger brother, and the younger will have a respect and esteem for their elder, or for other persons for whom good manners requires that they should have respect; as, for example, for persons advanced in age. In fine, those that have estates, will maintain some widows, orphans, and some sick persons: for there is nothing that makes a greater impression on the minds of people, than the examples of their kings.*

As to the second article, where *Cem-cu* exhorts in general to the practice of virtue, he alleges for a principle this maxim, to which Christ himself seems to refer all his morality, *Do to another what you would they should do unto you;*

*and do not unto another what you would not should be done unto you.*

Amongst those in the midst of whom you live, says Confucius's disciple, there are some above you, others inferior to you, and others that are your equals. There are some that preceded you, others that are to be your successors; you have them on your right hand, and on your left. consider, that all these men have the same passions with you, and that what you desire they should do, or not do, unto you, they desire that you should do, or not do, unto them. What you therefore hate in your superiors, what you blame in them, be sure not to practise towards your inferiors: and what you hate and blame in your inferiors, practise not to your superiors. What displeases you in your predecessors, eschew, to give an example to those that shall come after. And as in case that you should happen to give them such an example, you would desire they should not follow it; so you should not follow the bad examples of those that have

preceded you. In fine, what you blame in those which are on your right hand, practise not to those which are on your left; and what you reprehend in those on your left hand, be sure not to practise it to those that are on your right. Behold, concludes *Cemcu*, after what manner we ought to measure and regulate all our actions! And if a prince thus exercises himself, it will happen that all his subjects will be of one heart and one mind, and that he will rather be called their father, than their lord and master. This will be the means to draw down the blessings and favours of Heaven, not to fear anything, and to lead a quiet and peaceable life. For in fine, virtue is the basis and foundation of an empire, and the source from whence flows whatever may render it flourishing. It was upon this consideration that an ambassador of the kingdom of *Cu* returned this excellent answer to a nobleman of the kingdom of *Cin*, who asked him, whether in his master's kingdom there were great riches and precious stones? *Nothing is*

*esteemed precious in the kingdom of Cu but virtue. A king of Ci returned almost the same answer. This prince treating of an alliance with the king of Guei, and the king of Guei demanding of him, if in his kingdom there were precious stones, he answered that there were none. How! Replied this king all in amaze, Is it possible that though my kingdom be lesser than yours, yet there is found a carbuncle whose brightness is so great, that it can enlighten space enough for twelve palanquins; and that in your kingdom, which is vaster than mine, there are none of these precious stones? I have four ministers, rejoins the king of Ci, who with great prudence govern the provinces i have committed. to them; behold my precious stones, they can enlighten a thousand stadia.*

Nor were the men only of *China* famous for their esteem of virtue; there were women that have considered it as a jewel of infinite value, and preferable to all treasures. An illustrious queen named *Kiam*, who reigned two

hundred years before *Confucius*, reclaimed her husband from sensuality and debauchery, by an action which deserves to be immortalised. She seeing that this prince continually resorted to the pastimes of debauchery, and abandoned himself to all sorts of pleasures, the one day plucked her pendants from her ears, and laid aside all her jewels, and in this condition went to the king, and spake to him these words with a sensible emotion, *Sir, is it possible that luxury and debauchery are so very pleasing to you? You contemn virtue; but I esteem it infinitely more than the most precious stones.* She afterwards enlarged upon this subject, and the action and discourse of this princess touched him so strongly, that he renounced his extravagancies, and gave himself up entirely to virtue, and the care of his kingdom, which he governed thirteen years with great applause.

In fine, as the last article, *Cemcu* represents to kings, that they ought not to oppress their people, either by

impositions, or otherwise; that to avoid being forced thereto, it is necessary to chuse wise, faithful, and virtuous ministers, and consequently not to admit into the management of affairs, those that are unworthy, and who by their cruelties, ambition and avarice, can only bring a vast prejudice to the state. He shews them, that they ought to lessen, as much as is possible the number of their ministers, and of all those that live at the public expense; to endeavour to excite all to work, and so to order it, that those who manage and disburse the treasure, may do it with all the moderation imaginable. Princes, adds he, ought never to seek private interest; they ought only to look after the interests of their people: to be loved and faithfully served, they ought to convince their subjects, by their conduct, that they design only to make them happy; which they will never do, if they heartily follow their particular interests, if they oppress and impoverish them.

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# A

## A COLLECTION

Out of

### *Confucius's Works*

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## THE SECOND BOOK

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**T**his second book of Confucius was published by his grandson *Cufu*. It treats of divers things, but especially of that excellent mediocrity, which must be constantly observed in all things, between the too much, and too little. Thus this book is entitled, *Chumyum*, that is to say, The Perpetual Mean, a mean constantly observed.

*Confucius* teaches at first, that all men ought to love this mediocrity, which they ought to search after with an extreme care. He says, that the perfect man always keeps a just mean, whatever he undertakes; but that the wicked always swerves therefrom, that he does too much, or not enough. When the Right Reason sent from Heaven, adds he, has once shewed a wise man the mean he ought to keep, he afterwards conforms all his actions thereunto, at all times, as well in adversity as prosperity; he continually watches over himself, over his thoughts, over the most secret motions of his heart, always to square himself according to this just Mean, which he will never lose light of; but the wicked being not restrained, neither by fear, modesty, nor the love of virtue, their extravagant passions do always carry them into extremes.

This philosopher cannot sufficiently admire this happy mediocrity; he looks on it as the most sublime thing in the world, as a thing most worthy of the

love and employment of the highest minds, as the sole path of virtue. He complains, that there always have been so few persons that have kept it; he diligently enquires after the cause thereof. He says, that as for the wise men of the age, they slight and contemn it, because they imagine it below their great designs, below their ambitious projects; and that as for dull persons, they very hardly attain it, either by reason they understand it not, or because the difficulty in attaining it astonishes and discourages them; and all this, adds *Confucius*, happens for want of examination; for if we diligently examined what is good in it felt, we should find that all extremes are prejudicial, and that the Mean alone is always Good and gainful.

He herein particularly alleges the example of *Xun* the emperor. He cries out, *How great was the prudence of the emperor Xun? He was not satisfied in the administration of state affairs, with his single examination,*

with his own particular judgement and prudence; he likewise consulted the meanest of his subjects. He asked advice upon the least things; and he made it a duty and delight to weigh the answers that were given him, how common so ever they appeared. when anything was proposed to him, which, after a strict examination, he was convinced was repugnant to the Right Reason, he acquiesced not, but with an open heart represented what was amiss in the counsel that was given him. By this means he made his subjects to place a confidence in him, and accustom themselves freely to give him advertisements, from time to time. As for the good and judicious counsels, he followed, magnified, and extolled them; and thereby everyone was encouraged, joyfully to declare his opinion. but if, amongst the counsels that were given him, he found that some plainly contradicted others, he attentively considered them, and after having examined them, he always took a mean, especially when it concerned the public interests.

Confucius here deplores the false prudence of the men of his time. It had indeed, very much degenerated from the prudence of the ancient kings. There is not, says he, any person at present, who declares not, I have prudence, I know what is necessary to be done, and what is not. But because now, profit and particular advantage are the only objects delighted in, it happens that we think not on the evils which may thence ensue, on the perils to which this gain and profit expose us; and that the precipice is not perceived by us. There are some that perfectly understand the nature and value of mediocrity, who chuse it for their rule, and square their actions thereby, but who afterwards, suffering themselves to be overcome by sloth, have not the power to persist. To what end, in these sorts of persons, does the knowledge and resolutions they have formed tend to? Alas! It was not thus with my disciple *Hori*; he had an exquisite discerning faculty; he remarked all the diffe-

rences that occurred in things. He always chose a mean, and never forsook it.

As for the rest, adds *Confucius*, it is not a very easy thing to acquire that *medium* which I so much commend. Alas! There is nothing so difficult; it is an affair which requires great pains and industry. You will find men capable of governing happily the kingdoms of the earth. You will see some that will have magnanimity enough to refuse the most considerable dignities and advantages; there will be some also that will have courage enough to walk on naked swords: but you will find few, that are capable of keeping a just Mean; that to arrive here at, art, labour, courage and virtue are required.

It was upon the account of this moral, that one of his disciples, who was of a warlike and ambitious temper, asked him, wherein valour consisted, and what was necessary to do, to obtain the name of valiant? Have you heard, says *Confucius*, of the valour of

those in the South, or those that dwell in the north, or rather of the valour of my disciples, who apply themselves to the study of wisdom? To act mildly in the education of children and disciples, to be indulgent to them; patiently to bear their disobediences and defects, is wherein the valour of the southern people consists. By this valour they conquer their violent temper, and submit their passions, which are generally violent, to the Right Reason: to lie down courageously in the camp, to repose quietly, in the midst of a terrible army; to see a thousand deaths before his eyes, without daunting; not to be disquieted, but make a pleasure of this sort of life. Behold what I call the valour of the Northern men! But as generally there is a great deal of rashness in all this, and that men often do not regulate themselves according to that Mean which everyone ought to seek after, it is not this sort of valour which I require of my disciples. Behold what his character ought to be!

A perfect man (for in short, the perfect men only can have a true valour) ought always to be busied, in conquering himself. He must suit himself to the manners and tempers of others; but he ought always to be master of his own heart, and actions. He must not suffer himself to be corrupted by the conversation, or examples of loose and effeminate persons; he must never obey, till he has first examined what is commanded him; he must never imitate others, without judgement. In the midst of so many mad and blind persons, which go at random, he must walk aright, and not incline to any party: this is the true valour. Moreover, if this very person is called to the magistracy, in a kingdom where virtue is considered, and he changes not his morals, how great soever the honours be, to which he is advanced; if he there preserves all the good habits, which he had when only a private man; if he permit not himself to be lead away with pride and vanity, this man is truly valiant. *Ah! How great is this valour!*

But but if on the contrary, he is in a kingdom, where virtue and laws are contemned, and that in the confusion and disorder which there prevail, he himself is depressed with poverty, affliction, reduced even to the loss of life; but yet, in the midst of so many miseries, he remains constant, preserves all the innocence of his manners, and never changes his opinion: *Ah! How great and illustrious is this valour!* Instead therefore of the valour of the Southern or Northern countries, I require, and expect from you, my dear disciples, a valour of the nature above mentioned.

Behold something which *Confucius* speaks, which is no less remarkable. There are some men, says he, which so surpass the bounds of mediocrity, by affecting to have extraordinary virtues; they covet always to have something marvellous in their actions, to the end that posterity may praise and extol them. certainly, as for myself, I shall never be enamoured with these glittering actions, where vanity and

self-love have ever a greater share than in virtue. I would only know and practice what it is necessary to know and practise everywhere.

There are four rules, according to which the perfect man ought to square himself.

1. He himself ought to practise in respect of his father, what he requires from his son.

2. In the service of his prince, he is obliged to shew the same fidelity, which he demands of those that are under him.

3. He must act in respect of his eldest brother, after the same manner that he would that his younger brother should act towards him.

4. And lastly, he ought to behave himself towards his friends, as he desires that his friends should carry them themselves to him. The perfect man continually acquits himself of these duties, how common soever they may appear. If he happens to perceive that he has done amiss in anything, he is not at rest till he has repaired his fault:

if he finds that he has omitted any considerable duty, there is not any violence which he does not to himself, perfectly to accomplish it. He is moderate and reserved in his discourses; he speaks with circumspection: if to him occurs a great affluence of words, he presumes not to expose it; he restrains himself. In a word, he is so rigorous a censurer of himself, that he is not at rest when his words correspond not to his actions, and his actions to his words. Now the way, cries he, by which a man arrives at this perfection, is a solid and constant virtue.

To this his master's doctrine, *Cufu* here adds a moral worthy of their meditation, who have a desire to perfect themselves. The perfect man, says this worthy disciple of so great a philosopher, the perfect man governs himself according to his present state, and covets nothing beyond it. If he finds himself in the midst of riches, he acts like a rich man, but addicts not himself to unlawful pleasures; he avoids luxury, detests pride, offends no body.

If he is in a poor and contemptible state, he acts as a poor and mean man ought to act; but he does nothing unworthy of a grave and worthy man: if he be remote from his own country, he behaves himself as a stranger ought to do; but he is always like himself. If he is in affliction and adversity, he does not insolently affront his destiny, but has courage and resolution; nothing can shake his constancy. If he is advanced to the dignities of state, he keeps his rank, but never treats his inferiors with severity; and if he sees himself below others, he is humble, he never departs from the respect he owes to his superiors; but he never purchases their favour with flattery. He uses his utmost endeavours to perfect himself, and exacts nothing of others with severity: It is upon this account that he expresses no discontent or anger to any person. If he lifts up his eyes towards Heaven, it is not to complain, for that it has not sent him prosperity, or to murmur, for that it afflicts him. If he looks down

towards the ground, it is not to reproach men, and attribute the cause of his miseries and necessities unto them; it is to testify his humility, that is to say, that he is always contented with his condition, that he desires nothing beyond it, and that with submission, and an even spirit, he expects whatever Heaven shall ordain concerning him. Thus he rejoices in a certain tranquillity, which may well be compared to the top of those mountains, which are higher than the region where the thunder and tempests are formed.

In the sequel of this book, he discourses of the profound respect which the ancient *Chineses*, and especially the kings and emperors, had for their parents, and of the exact obedience which they paid them. If a king, said they, honours and obeys his father and mother, certainly he will endeavour to excite his subjects to follow his example. For briefly, a man that loves virtue, desires that all others should likewise esteem it, especially if

it is his interest that they should be virtuous. Now it is of great importance to a king, that his subjects do love virtue and practise it. Indeed, how can he hope to be obeyed by his subjects, if himself refuses to obey those that gave him life. After all, if a prince desires to bring his subjects to be obedient to their parents, he must shew kindness towards them, and treat them with that tenderness which fathers have for their children. For, we willingly imitate those whom we love, and of whom we think we are beloved. But if this prince, by his conduct, excites his subjects to give obedience to their parents, and afterwards obey him, as their common father, most certainly they will obey Heaven, from whence crowns and empires do come: Heaven, which is the Sovereign Father of all. And what will be the effect of this obedience? It will happen that Heaven will diffuse its blessings on those that shall thus well acquit themselves. It will abundantly recompense so admirable a virtue, it will make

peace and concord everywhere to reign; so that the king and his subjects will seem as one single family, where the subjects obeying their king, as their father, and the king loving his subjects as his children, they will all lead, as in a single, but rich, magnificent, regular, and convenient House, the happiest and most peaceable life imaginable.

To return to *Confucius*; as he knew that the examples of kings made a great impression on men's minds, so he proposes that of the emperor *Xun*, in respect of the obedience which children owe to their parents. *Oh, how great has the obedience of this emperor been*, cries *Confucius*. Thus, continues he, if he has obtained from Heaven the imperial crown, it is the recompense of this virtue. It is this virtue that procured him so many revenues, those immense riches, and vast kingdoms, which are only limited by the Ocean. It is this virtue that has rendered his name so famous throughout the world. In fine, I doubt not

but that long and peaceable life, which be enjoyed, ought to be considered as a recompense of this virtue. To hear this philosopher speak, would it not be said, that he has read the Decalogue, and understood the Promise which god has there made to those that honour their father and mother. But if, by what *Confucius* declares, it seems that the Decalogue was not unknown to him, it will rather seem that he knew the maxims of the Gospel, when we shall see what he teaches concerning charity, which he says it is necessary to have for all men.

That love, says he, which it is requisite for all men to have, is not a stranger to man. It is man himself; or, if you will, it is a Natural Property of man, which dictates unto him, that he ought generally to love all men. Nevertheless, above all men to love his father and mother, is his main and principal duty, from the practice of which he afterwards proceeds, as by degrees, to the practice of that universal love, whose object is all man-

kind. It is from this universal love that distributive justice comes; that justice, which makes us to render to every one his due, and more especially to cherish and honour wise and upright men, and to advance them to the dignities and offices of state. That difference, which is between the love we have for our parents, and that we have for others, between the love we bear to virtuous and learned men, and that we bear to those who have not so much virtue or ability; that difference, I say, is as it were a harmony, a symmetry of duties, which the reason of Heaven has protected, and in which nothing must be changed.

For the conduct of life *Confucius* proposes five rules, which he calls universal.

The First regards the justice that ought to be practised between a king and his subjects.

The Second respects the love that ought to be between a father and his children.

The Third recommends conjugal fidelity to husbands and wives.

The Fourth concerns the subordination that ought to appear between elder and younger brothers.

The Fifth obliges friends to live in concord, in great unity, and mutual kindness.

Behold, adds he, the five general rules, which everyone ought to observe; behold, as it were, the five public roads, by which men ought to pass. But after all we cannot observe these rules, if these three virtues are wanting, *prudence*, which makes us discern good from evil, *universal love*, which makes us love all men, and that *resolution* which makes us constantly to persevere in the adhesion to good, and aversion for evil. But for fear lest some fearful persons not well versed in morality should imagine, that it is impossible for them to acquire these three virtues, he affirms, that there is no person incapable of acquiring them; that the impotence of the man is voluntary. How dull soever a

man is, should he, says he, be without any experience, yet if he desires to learn, and grows not weary in the study of virtue, he is not very far from prudence. If a man, although full of self-love, endeavours to perform good actions, behold him already very near that universal love, which engages him to do good to all. In fine, if a man feels a secret shame, when he hears impure and unchaste discourses; if he cannot forbear blushing thereat, he is not far from that resolution of spirit, which makes him constantly to seek after good, and to have an aversion for evil.

After that, the *Chinese* philosopher has treated of these five universal rules, he proposes nine particular ones for kings, because he considers their conduct, as a public source of happiness or misery. They are these;

1. A king ought incessantly to labour to adorn his person with all sorts of virtues.

2. He ought to honour and cherish the wise and virtuous.

3. He ought to respect and love those that gave him birth.

4. He ought to honour and esteem those ministers that distinguish themselves by their ability, and those which exercise the principal offices of the magistracy.

5. He ought to accommodate himself, as much as it is possible, to the sentiments and minds of other ministers, and as for those that have less considerable employes, he ought to consider them as his members.

6. He ought to love his people, even the meanest, as his own children, and to share in the various subjects of joy or sorrow, which they may have.

7. He ought to use his utmost to bring into his kingdom several able artificers in all sorts of arts, for the advantage and convenience of his subjects.

8. He ought kindly and courteously to receive strangers and travellers, and fully to protect them.

9. Lastly, he ought tenderly to love the princes, and great men of his em-

pire, and so heartily to study their interests, that they may love him, and be ever faithful to him.

Rightly to understand the *Morals of Confucius*, it is here necessary to speak one word concerning the distinction which he makes between the *saint* and *wise*. To the one and the other he attributes certain things in common: but to the *saint* he gives some qualities and advantages, which he says, that the *wise* has not. He says, that reason and innocence have been equally communicated to the *wise*, and to the *saint*, and likewise to all other men; but that the *saint* has never in the least declined from right reason, and it has constantly preserved his integrity; whereas the *wise* has not always preserved it, having not always followed by the light of reason, because of several obstacles he has met with in the practice of virtue; and especially, by reason of his passions, where unto he is a slave; so that it is necessary, that he does his utmost, that he uses great pains and endeavours, to put his heart

in a good posture, and to govern himself according to the light of Right Reason and the rules of virtue.

*Cufu* reasoning hereon, the better to illustrate his master's doctrine, compares those who have lost their first integrity and desire to regain it, to those withered and almost dead trees, that notwithstanding have, in the trunk and roots a certain juice, a certain principle of life, which makes them cast forth shoots. If, says he, we take care of these trees, if we cultivate them, water them, and prune off the dead branches, it will happen that this tree will re-assume its former state. After the same manner, although one has lost his first integrity and innocence, he need only excite the good that remains, use pains and industry, and he will infallibly arrive at the highest virtue. This last state, says *Cufu*, this state of the wise is called *Giantao*, that is to say, *The Road and the Reason of man*, or rather, the way which leads to the Origin of the first Perfection. And the state of the *saint*

is called *Tientao*, that is to say, *The Reason of Heaven*, or the First Rule which Heaven has equally distributed to all men, and which the *saints* have always observed, without turning either on the right hand, or on the left.

As rules do in brief contain the principal duties, and that we may easily retain them, *Confucius* gives five to those that desire to chuse the good and i adhere thereto.

1. It is necessary, after an exact and extensive manner, to know the Causes, Properties, and Differences of all things.

2. Because amongst the things which are known, there may be some which are not perfectly known, it is necessary carefully to examine them, to weigh them minutely and in every circumstance, and thereon to consult wise, intelligent and experienced men.

3. Although it seems that we clearly apprehend certain things, yet because it is easy to transgress, through precipitance, in the too much, or too little,

it is necessary to meditate afterwards in particular, on the things we believe we know, and to weigh everything by the weight of reason, with all the attentiveness of spirit, and with the utmost exactness, whereof we are capable.

4. It is necessary to endeavour, not to apprehend things after a confused manner, it is requisite to have some clear ideas thereof, so that we may truly discern the good from the bad, the true from the false.

5. Lastly, after that we shall have observed all these things, we must reduce to action, sincerely and constantly perform and execute, to the utmost of our power, the good resolutions which we have taken.

We cannot better conclude this book, than with these excellent words of *Cufu*: take heed, says he, how you act, when you are alone. Although you should be retired into the most solitary, and most private place of thine house, you ought to do nothing, whereof you would be ashamed if you were

in company or in public. Have you a desire, continues he, that I should shew you after what manner he that has acquired some perfection governs himself. Why, he keeps a continual watch upon himself; he undertakes nothing, begins nothing, pronounces no word, whereon he has not meditated. Before he raises any motion in his heart, he carefully observes himself, he reflects on everything, he examines everything, he is in a continual vigilance. Before he speaks, he is satisfied that what he is about to utter is true and rational, and he thinks that he cannot reap a more pleasant fruit from his vigilance and examination, than to accustom himself circumspectly and wisely to govern himself, in the things which are neither seen nor known by any.

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# A

## COLLECTION

Out of

### *Confucius's Works*

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## THE THIRD BOOK

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**C**onfucius's third book is quite of another character than the two former, as to the method and expressions; but in the ground it contains the same Morality. It is a contexture of several sentences pronounced at divers times, and at several places, by *Confucius* and his disciples. Therefore it is entitled *Lun Tu*, that is to say, *Discourses of Several Persons that Reason and Philosophise together*.

In the first place there is represented a disciple of this famous philosopher, who declares that he spent not a day wherein he rendered not an account to himself of these three things.

1. Whether he had not undertaken some affair for another, and whether he managed and followed it with the same eagerness and fidelity as if it had been his own concern.

2. If when he has been with his friends, he has discoursed them sincerely, if he has not satisfied himself with shewing them some slight appearance of kindness and esteem.

3. Whether he has meditated on his master's doctrine; and whether after having meditated on it, he has aused his utmost endeavours to reduce it to practice.

Afterwards appears *Confucius*, giving lessons to his disciples. He tells them, that the wise ought to be so occupied with his virtue, that when he is in his house, he ought not to seek his convenience and delight; that when he undertakes any affair, he ought to be

diligent and exact, prudent and considerate in his words, and that though he has all these qualities, yet he ought to be the person in whom he ought least to confide, whom he ought least to please; that in a word, the wise man, always distrusting himself, ought always to consult those, whose virtue and wisdom are known unto him, and to regulate his conduct and actions according to their counsels and examples

What do you think of a poor man, says one of his disciples to him, who being able to extenuate and diminish his poverty through flattery, refuses to accept this offer, and courageously maintains that none but cowards and low-spirited men do flatter? What do you think of a rich man, who notwithstanding his riches, is not proud? I say, replies Confucius, that they are both praise-worthy, but that they are not to be considered as if they were arrived at the highest degree of virtue. He that is poor, ought to be cheerful and content in the midst of his indi-

gence. Behold wherein the virtue of the poor man consists; and he that is rich, ought to do good to all. He that is of a poor and abject spirit, does good only to certain persons; certain passions, certain particular friendships cause him to act; his friendship is interested; he disperses his wealth only with a prospect of reaping more than he sows; he seeks only his own interest: but the love of the perfect man is a universal love, a love whose object is all mankind. A soldier of the kingdom of *Ci*, said they unto him, lost his buckler, and having a long time sought after it in vain, he at last comforts himself, upon the loss he had sustained, with this reflection. A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier of our camp has found it; he will use it. It had been much better spoken, replies *Confucius*, if he had said, a man has lost his buckler, but a man will find it, thereby intimating that we ought to have an affection for all the men of the world.

Confucius had a tender spirit, as may be judged by what we have said, but it was great and sublime. The ancient *Chineses* taught, that there were two gods which presided in their houses, the one called *Noao*, and the other *Cao*. The first was respected as the tutelary god of the whole family, and the last was only the god of the fire hearth. Nevertheless, although the last of their genius's was very much inferior to the first, yet to him were rendered greater honours than him that had all the domestic affairs under his protection; and there was a proverb which implied, that *it was better to seek the protection of Cao, than of Noao*. As this preference had something very singular; and seemed, in some measure, even to encounter those which were promoted to grandeur in princes courts. *Confucius* being in the kingdom of *Guez*, and meeting one day with a prefect, who had great authority in this kingdom, this minister puffed up with the greatness of his fortune, supposing that the philo-

sopher designed to procure some favour from the king, demanded of him, by way of merriment, the meaning of this proverb, so frequent in everyone's mouth, *It is better to seek the protection of Cao, than of Noao.* Confucius, who presently perceived, that the prefect gave him to understand, by this question, that he ought to address himself to him, if he would obtain his request from the king his master; and who at the same instant made this reflection, that to gain the good will of a prince's favourite, it is necessary to offer incense even to his defects, and to force oneself to compliance unworthy of a philosopher, plainly told him that he was wholly differing from the maxims of the age; that he would not address himself to him, with any address he wanted, to shew him that he ought to do it; and at the same time to advertise him, that though he should answer his question, according to his desire, he could reap no benefit thereby, he told him *that he that had sinned against Heaven, should address himself*

*only to Heaven.* For he adds, *to whom can he address himself to obtain the pardon of his crime, seeing that there is not any deity above Heaven.*

Confucius recommends nothing so much to his disciples as clemency and courtesy, always grounded upon this maxim, that we ought to love all men. And to make them better to apprehend the truth of what he said, he made an instance of two illustrious princes, that were distinguished for this very thing in the kingdom of *Chuco*: these princes, says he, were so mild and courteous, that they easily forgot the most heinous injuries, and horrible crimes, when the offenders shewed any sign of repentance. They beheld these criminals, though worthy of the severest punishments, as if they had been innocent; they not only forgot their faults, but by their carriage, made even those that had committed them, in some measure to forget them, and lose one part of the disgrace which remains after great lapses, and which can only discourage in the way of virtue.

One of this philosopher's great designs being to form princes to virtue, and to teach the art of reigning happily, he made no difficulty of addressing himself directly to them, and of giving them counsel. A prince, said he one day to a king of *Cu* called *Timcum*, a prince ought to be moderate, he ought not to contemn any of his subjects, he ought to recompense those that deserve it. There are some subjects that he ought to treat with mildness, and others with severity; there are some on whose fidelity he ought to rely, but there are some also whom he cannot sufficiently distrust.

*Confucius* would have princes desire nothing that other men wish for, although they are sometimes good things, which it seems they might desire without offence; he would have them to trample, as I may say, upon whatever may make the felicity of mortals upon earth; and especially to look upon riches, children, and life itself, as transient advantages, and which consequently cannot make the

felicity of a prince. The emperor *Tao*, says this philosopher, governed himself by these maxims, and under the conduct of so good a guide, he arrived at a perfection, where unto few mortals can attain; for it may be said, that he saw nothing above him but Heaven, to which he was entirely conformable. This incomparable prince, adds he, from time to time visited the provinces of his empire; and as he was the delight of his people, being met one day by a troop of his subjects; these subjects, after having called him their emperor and father, and after having testified their exceeding joy at the sight of so great a prince, cried out with a loud voice, to join their wishes with their acclamations, *Let Heaven heap riches upon thee! Let it grant thee a numerous family! And let it not snatch thee from thy people, till thou art satisfied with days.* No, replies the emperor, *send up other petitions to Heaven. Great riches produce great cares, and great inquietudes; a numerous progeny produces great fears!*

*And a long life is generally a series of misfortunes.* There are found few emperors like to *Tao*, cries *Confucius* after this.

That which generally occasions trouble to kings, that, which in some measure, redoubles the weight of the burden annexed to their crown, is either the few subjects over which they reign, or the little wealth which they possess. For in brief, not all kings are great, not all kings have vast dominions, and excessive riches, but *Confucius* is of opinion, that a king is too ingenious to torment himself, when these reflections are capable of causing the least trouble in him. He says that a king has subjects enough, when his subjects are contented; and that his kingdom is rich enough, when peace and concord flourish there. *Peace and concord*, says this philosopher, *are the mothers of plenty*.

In fine, *Confucius*, in speaking of the duties of princes, teaches, that it is so necessary for a prince to be virtuous, that when he is other-

wise, a subject is obliged by the laws of Heaven voluntarily to banish himself, and to seek another country.

He sometimes complains of the disorders of princes; but the great subject of his complaints is, the extravagances of private men. He bewails the morals of his age. He says that he sees almost no body that distinguishes himself, either by piety, or some extraordinary quality; that everyone is corrupted, that everyone is depraved, and that it is amongst the magistrates and courtiers chiefly that virtue is neglected. It is true, that *Confucius* seems to extend things beyond reason. Indeed, it was not much for this philosopher, when in a princes court he found but ten or twelve persons of an extraordinary wisdom, to cry out, *O tempora; O mores!* Under *Vuvam*'s reign, there were ten men of a consummate virtue and sufficiency, on whom this emperor might repose all the affairs of the empire; yet *Confucius* exclaims against so small a number, saying, that great en-

dowments, virtue, and the qualities of the spirit, are things very rare in his age. He had made the same complaints in respect of the emperor *Zun*, the first of the family of *Cheu*, although this prince had then five prefects of whose merit some judgement may be made by the history of one of these ministers, whose name was *Tu*.

This wise minister had rendered his memory immortal amongst the *Chineses*, not only because it was he that invented the secret of stopping or diverting the waters that overflowed the whole kingdom, and which made it almost uninhabitable, but because being an emperor, he always lived like a philosopher. He was of an illustrious family, for he could name some emperors of his ancestors; but if by the decadence of his house, he was fallen from the pretensions he might have to the empire, his wisdom and virtue acquired him what fortune had refused to the nobility of his extraction. The emperor *Zun* so thoroughly understood his desert, that he associated

him to the empire: and seventeen years after, he declared him his lawful successor, even to the exclusion of his own son. *Tu* refused this honour, but as he vainly denied it, and that his generosity might not suffer, in the pressing solicitations that were made him on all hands, he withdrew from the court, and went to seek a retreat in a cell: but not being able so well to conceal himself, as to remain undiscovered in the rocks of his solitude, he was forcibly advanced to the throne of his ancestors. Never throne was more easy of access than this prince's, never prince was more affable. It is reported, that he one day, he left his dinner ten times, to peruse the petitions that were presented to him, or to hear the complaints of the distressed; and that he ordinarily quit his bath, when audience was demanded of him. He reigned ten years with so much success, with so much tranquillity, and in such great abundance of things, that of this age it may be truly said, that it was a

Golden Age. Tu was 100 years old when he died, and he died as he had lived: for preferring the interest of the empire before that of his family, he would not let his son succeed him. He gave the crown to one of his subjects, whose virtue was known unto him. A prince, doubtless, is happy, when he can sometimes discharge himself of the cares which throw and press him, on such a minister; and Zun only could be so, seeing that he at one time had five, all worthy of being seated on the throne. But this number was not great enough for *Confucius*; it is what made him to grieve.

*Confucius* says that a prince ought never to accept the crown to the prejudice of his father, how unworthy soever his father might be thereof; that it is one of the greatest crimes whereof a prince can be guilty; and this occasioned him to relate two little histories, which suit admirably to his subject.

*Limcum*, says this philosopher, was a king of *Guei*, who was twice married. As chastity is not always the portion of princesses, the queen had unlawful familiarities with one of the nobles of his court; and this not being so privately managed, but one of *Limcum*'s sons by his first wife came to the knowledge of it, this young prince, jealous of his father's honour, so highly resented it, that he designed to kill the queen, which he concealed not. The cunning and guilty princess, who saw herself detected, and who had a great influence over her ancient spouse, alleged such plausible reasons to make him believe her innocence, that this poor prince, shutting his eyes against the truth, banished his son; but as children are not culpable for their fathers crimes, he kept *Che* with him: he was the son of this disgraced prince. *Limcum* died soon after. The people recalled the prince whom the queens debaucheries had banished; and he went to receive the crown, but his vicious son opposed

him, alleging that his father was a patricide: he raised armies against him, and was proclaimed king by the people.

The sons of a king of *Cucho*, continues he, followed not this way; behold a memorable example. This king, whose history we shall relate in two words, had three sons: and as fathers have sometimes more tenderness for their youngest children, than for the rest, he had so much for the last which Heaven had given him, that some days before his death, he appointed him for his successor, to the exclusion of his other brothers. This procedure was so much the more extraordinary, as it was contrary to the laws of the land. The people thought after the king's death that they might endeavour, without any crime, to advance the eldest of the royal family on the throne. This was executed as the people had projected it; and this action was generally approved. There was none but the new king who, remembering his fathers dying words,

refused to consent. This generous prince took the crown that was presented him, put it on his younger brother's head, and nobly declared that he renounced it, and thought himself unworthy of it, seeing that he had been excluded by his father's will, and that his father could not retract what he had done. The brother, touched with such an heroic action, conjured him the same moment, not to oppose the inclination of all the people, who desired him to reign over them. He alleged that it was he alone, that was the lawful successor to the crown which he contemned; that their father could not violate the laws of the state; that this prince was overtaken with too great a fondness, and that in a word, it in some measure belonged to the people to redress the laws of their kings, when they were not just; but nothing could persuade him to act contrary to his father's will. Between these two princes, there was a laudable contestation; neither would accept the crown; and they, seeing that this

contest would continue a long time, withdrew from the court, and were vanquished and victorious together; they went to end their days in the repose of a solitude, and left the kingdom to their brother. These princes, adds he, sought after virtue; but they sought it not in vain, for they found it.

He frequently relates short histories of this nature, wherein an heroic generosity is everywhere seen to discover itself. The women amongst the people, and even great princesses, are therein observed rather to chuse death, and that with their own hands, than to be exposed to the violences of their ravishers. The magistrates are there seen to quit the greatest employs, to avoid the disorders of the court; philosophers to censure kings upon their throne, and princes who make no difficulty to die to appease the anger of Heaven, and procure peace to their people.

After this *Confucius* shews how the dead ought to be buried; and as this was performed in his time with a great

deal of magnificence, so in funeral pomps he blames whatever seems like ostentation, and reproves it after a severe manner. Indeed one of his disciples being dead, and this disciple being buried with the usual magnificence, he cried out when he knew it, *When my disciple was alive, he respected me as his father, and I looked upon him as my son; but can I now behold him as my son, since he has been buried like other men?*

He prohibits the bewailing the dead with excess; and if, constrained by his own grief, he shed tears for this very disciple, he confessed he forgot himself; that in truth, great griefs have no bounds, but that the wise man ought not to be overcome with grief; that it is a weakness; it is a crime in him.

He gives great praises to some of his disciples, who, in the midst of the greatest poverty, were content with their condition; and accounted as great richest he natural virtues they had received from Heaven.

He declaims against pride, self-love, indiscretion, and against the ridiculous vanity of those that affect to be masters everywhere; against those self-conceited men who momentarily cite their own actions; and against great talkers; and drawing afterwards the portraiture of the wise man in opposition to what he has discoursed, he says, that humility, modesty, gravity, and neighbourly affection, are virtues which he cannot one moment neglect without departing from his character.

He says, that a good man never afflicts himself, and fears nothing; that he contemns injuries, credits not reproaches, and refuses even to hear reports.

He maintains, that punishments are too common; that if the magistrates were good men, the wicked would conform their life to theirs, and that if princes would only advance to dignities, persons distinguished by their honesty, and exemplary life, everyone would apply himself unto virtue,

because grandeur being that which all men naturally desire, every one willing to possess it, would endeavour to render himself worthy thereof.

He would have us avoid idleness; to be serious, and not precipitate in our answers; and that setting our selves above everything, we should never be troubled, either that we are contemned, or not known in the world.

He compares hypocrites to those lewd villains, who the better to conceal their designs from the eyes of men, do appear wise and modest in the day time, and who by the favour of the night do rob houses, and commit the most infamous robberies.

He says that those that make their belly their god, never do anything worthy of a man; that they are rather brutes than rational creatures: and returning to the conduct of the great ones, he very well remarks, that their crimes are always greater than the crimes of other men. *Zam*, the last emperor of the family of *Cheu*, says

*Confucius* on this occasion, had a very irregular conduct; but how irregular soever his conduct was, the disorders of this emperor were only the disorders of his age. Nevertheless, when any debauched, criminal, and infamous action is mentioned, they say it is the crime of *Zam*. The reason whereof is this, *Zam was wicked and an emperor.*

*Confucius* relates an infinite number of other things of this nature, which concern the conduct of all sorts of men; but most of the things that he says, or which his disciples do say, are sentences and maxims as we have already declared, the most considerable of which are these that follow.

## Maxims

### I.

**E**ndeavour to imitate the wise, and never discourage yourself, how laborious soever it may be: if you can arrive at your end, the pleasure you will enjoy will recompense all your pains.

### II.

When you labour for others, do it with the same zeal as if it were for yourself.

### III.

Virtue which is not supported with gravity, gains no repute among men.

### IV.

Always remember you are a man, that human nature is frail, and that you may easily fall, and you shall never fall; but, if happening to forget what you are, you chance to

fall, be not discouraged; remember that you may rise again; that it is in your power to break the bands which join you to your offence, and to subdue the obstacles which hinder you from walking in the paths of virtue.

#### V.

Take heed that your promises be just; for having once promised, it is not lawful to retract; we ought always to keep our promise.

#### VI.

When you pay homage to anyone, see that your submissions be proportioned to the homage you owe him. There is stupidity and pride in doing too little; but in overacting it there is abjection and hypocrisy.

#### VII.

Eat not for the pleasure you may find therein. Eat to increase your strength. Eat to preserve the life which you have received from Heaven.

#### VIII.

Labour to purify your thoughts: if your thoughts are not ill, neither will thy actions be so.

## IX.

The wise-man has an infinity of pleasures; for virtue has its delights in the midst of the severities that attend it.

## X.

He that in his studies wholly applies himself to labour and exercise, and neglects meditation, loses his time: and he that only applies himself to meditation, and neglects labour and exercise, does only wander and lose himself. The first can never know anything exactly; his lights are always intermixed with doubts and obscurities; and the last will only pursue shadows; his knowledge will never be certain, it will never be solid. Labour, but slight not meditation: meditate, but slight not labour.

## XI.

A prince ought to punish vice, for fear lest he seem to maintain it; but he yet ought to keep his people in their duty, rather by the effects of clemency, than by menaces and punishments.

## XII.

Never slacken fidelity to thy prince; conceal nothing from him which it is his interest to know, and think nothing difficult, when it tends to obey him.

## XIII.

When we cannot apply any remedy to an evil, it is in vain to seek it. If by your advice and remonstrance, you couldn't undo what is already done, your silence would be criminal; but there is nothing colder than advice, by which it is impossible to profit.

## XIV.

Poverty and human miseries are evils in themselves, but the wicked only resent them. It is a burden under which they groan, and which makes them at last to sink; they even distaste the best fortune. It is the wise man only who is always pleased: virtue renders his spirit quiet; nothing troubles him, nothing disquiets him, because he does not practise virtue for a reward. The practice of virtue is the sole recompense he expects.

## XV.

It is only the good man, who can, either make a right choice; who can love or hate with reason, or as need requires.

## XVI.

He that applies himself to virtue, and strongly addicts himself thereto, never commits anything unbecoming a man, nor contrary to the Right Reason.

## XVII.

Riches and honours are good; the desire of possessing them is natural to all men; but if these good things agree not with virtue, the wise man ought to contemn, and generously to renounce them. On the contrary, poverty and ignominy are evils; man naturally avoids them: if these evils attack the wise man, it is lawful for him to rid himself from them; but it is not lawful to do it by a crime.

## XVIII.

I never as yet saw a man that was happy in his virtue, or afflicted with his defects and weaknesses; but I am

not surprised, because I would have him that delights in virtue, to find so many charms therein, that for it he should contemn the pleasures of the world: and on the contrary, that he who hates vice, should find it so hideous, that he should use all ways to keep himself from falling therein.

### XIX.

It is not credible that he who uses his utmost endeavours to acquire virtue, should not obtain it at last, although he should labour but one single day. I never yet saw a man that wanted strength for this purpose.

### XX.

He that in the morning has heard the voice of virtue, may die at night. This man will not repent of living, and death will not be any pain unto of him

### XXI.

He that seeks pride in his habits, and loves not frugality, is not disposed for the study of wisdom; you ought not even to hold correspondence with him.

## XXII.

Do not afflict on yourself for that you are not promoted to grandeur and public dignities; rather grieve for that you are not, perhaps, adorned with those virtues that might render you worthy of being advanced.

## XXIII.

The good man employs himself only with virtue, the wicked only with his riches. the first continually thinks upon the good and interest of the state; but the last has other cares, he only thinks on what concerns himself.

## XXIV.

Do unto another as you would be dealt with yourself: you only need this law alone; it is the foundation and principle of all the rest.

## XXV.

The wise man has no sooner cast his eyes on a good man, but he endeavours to imitate his virtue; but the same wise man has no sooner fixed his sight on a man given to his vices that mistrusting, he interrogates himself in a trembling manner, if he be not like that man.

## XXVI.

A child is obliged to serve and obey his father. Parents have their failures: a child is obliged to acquaint them therewith, but he ought to do it with moderation and prudence; and if whatever precautions he takes, he always meets with opposition, he ought to rest a while, but never desist. Counsels given to parents do frequently draw punishments and severities upon the child; but on this account he ought to suffer, not to murmur.

## XXVII.

The wise man never hastens, neither in his studies, nor his words; he is sometimes as if mute; but when it concerns him to act and practise virtue, he, as I may say, precipitates all.

## XXVIII.

The truly wise man speaks little; he is little eloquent. I see not, that eloquence can be of very great use to him.

## XXIX.

A long experience is required to

know the heart of man. I imagined, when I was young, that all men were sincere; that they always practised what they said; in a word, that their mouth always agreed with their heart; but now that I behold things with another eye, I am convinced that I was mistaken. At present I hear what men say, but I never rely thereon. I will examine whether their words are agreeable to their actions.

### XXX.

In the kingdom of *Ci* there was formerly a prefect that new his king. Another prefect of the same kingdom, beholding with horror the crime of this patricide, quit his dignity, forsook his wealth, and retired into another kingdom. This wise minister was not so happy as to find at first what he sought after; in this new kingdom he only found wicked ministers, little devoted to their master's interest. This, says he, shall not be the place of mine abode, I will elsewhere seek a retreat; but always meeting with men like to that perfidious minister, who by his

crime had forced him to abandon his country, dignity, and all his estate, he went through the whole Earth. If you demand my thoughts concerning such a man, I cannot refuse telling you, that he deserves great praises, and that he had a very remarkable virtue. This is the judgement that every rational man ought to make thereof; but as we are not the searchers of hearts, and as it is properly in the heart that true virtue resides, I do not know whether his virtue was a true virtue; we ought not always to judge of men by their outward actions.

### XXXI.

I know a man who passes for sincere in the people's mind, who was asked for something that he had not. You imagine, perhaps, that he ingeniously confessed that it was not in his power to grant what was asked of him. He ought to have done it, if his sincerity had answered the report it had amongst the people: but behold how he took it. He went directly to a

neighbour's house; he borrowed of him what was requested of himself, and afterwards gave it. I cannot convince myself that this man could be sincere.

### XXXII.

Do not refuse what is given to you by your prince, what riches soever you possess. Give your superfluity to the poor.

### XXXIII.

The defects of parents ought not to be imputed to their children; should a father, by his crimes, render himself unworthy of being promoted to honour, the son ought not to be excluded if he does not render himself unworthy; should a son be of an obscure birth, his birth ought not to be his crime: he ought to be called to great employments as well as the sons of the nobles, if he has the qualifications necessary. Our fathers heretofore sacrificed victims only of a certain colour, and pitched upon these colours according to the will of those that sat upon the throne.

Under the reign of one of our emperors, the red colour was in vogue. Think you, that the deities, to which our fathers sacrificed under this emperor's reign, would reject a red bull, because it came from a cow of another colour?

#### XXXIV.

Prefer poverty and banishment to the most eminent offices of State, when it is a wicked man that offers them, and would constrain you to accept them.

#### XXXV.

The way that leads to virtue is long, but it is your duty to finish this long race. Do not allege for your excuse that you do not have strength enough, that difficulties discourage you, and that you shall be at last forced to stop in the midst of the course: you know nothing, begin to run; it is a sign you have not as yet begun, and you should not use this language.

#### XXXVI.

It is not enough to know virtue: it is necessary to love it; but it is not suffi-

cient to love it: it is necessary to possess it.

### XXXVII.

He that persecutes a good man, makes war against Heaven: Heaven created virtue and protects it; he that persecutes it, persecutes Heaven.

### XXXVIII.

A magistrate ought to honour his father and mother, he ought never to falter in this just duty; his example ought to instruct the people. He ought not to contemn old persons, nor persons of merit: the people may imitate him.

### XXXIX.

A child ought to be under a continual apprehension of doing something that may displease his father; this fear ought always to possess him. In a word, he ought to act, in whatever he undertakes, with so much precaution, that he may never offend him, or afflict him.

### XL.

Greatness of spirit, power and perseverance, ought to be the portion of

the wise. The burden wherewith he is loaded is weighty, his course is long.

#### XLI.

The wise man never acts without counsel. He sometimes consults, in the most important affairs, even the least intelligent persons, men that have the least spirit, and the least experience. When counsels are good, we ought not to consider from whence they come.

#### XLII.

Eschew vanity and pride. Although you had all the prudence and ability of the ancients, if you do not have humility, you have nothing; you are the man of the world that deserves to be contemned.

#### XLIII.

Learn what you know already, as if you had never learned it: things are never so well-known but that we may forget them.

#### XLIV.

Do nothing that is unhandsome, although you should have art enough to

make your action approved: you may easily deceive the eyes of man, but you can never deceive Heaven, its eyes are too penetrative and clear.

XLV.

Never contract friendship with a man who is not better than yourself.

XLVI.

The wise man blushes at his faults, but is not ashamed to amend them.

XLVII.

He that lives without envy and covetousness may aspire at everything.

XLVII.

Would you learn to die well? Learn first to live well.

XLIX.

A minister of state never ought to serve his prince in his extravagancies and injustice. He ought rather to renounce his office, than to tarnish it by base and criminal actions.

L.

If innocence ceases to be a virtue, most of the great ones are fallen therefrom; but if you demand what must be done to recover this virtue? I an-

swer that it is necessary to conquer yourself. If all mortals could, in one day, gain over themselves this happy victory, the whole universe would, from this very day, re-assume a new form; we should all be perfect, we should all be innocent. It is true, the victory is difficult, but it is not impossible; for in short, to conquer yourself is only to do what is agreeable to reason. Turn away your eyes, stop your ears, put a bridle upon your tongue, and rather remain in an eternal inaction, than to employ your eyes in beholding sights where reason is stifled; than to give attention thereto, or to discourse thereon. Behold how you may overcome! The victory depends on yourself alone.

### LI.

Do not desire the death of your enemy, you would desire it in vain; his life is in the hands Heaven.

### LII.

It is easy to obey the wise, he commands nothing impossible; but it is hard to divert him therefrom: that

which often times rejoices others, makes him to sigh, and forces torrents of tears from his eyes.

### LIII.

Acknowledge your benefits by the return of other benefits, but never revenge injuries

### LIV.

In what part of the world soever you are forced to spend your life, correspond with the wisest, associate with the best men.

### LV.

To sin and not to repent, is properly to sin.

### LVI.

It is good to fast sometimes, to give your mind to meditation, and to the study of virtue. The wise man is taken up with other cares, than with the continual cares of his nourishment. The best cultivated earth frustrates the hopes of the labourer, when the seasons are irregular: all the rules of husbandry could not secure him from death, in the time of a hard famine; but virtue is never fruitless.

## LVII.

The wise man must learn to know the heart of man, to the end that taking everyone according to his own inclination, he may not labour in vain, when he shall discourse to him of virtue. It should not be that all men are instructed after the same way. There are divers paths that lead to virtue, the wise man ought not to ignore them.

## LVIII.

Combat night and day against your vices; and if by your cares and vigilance you gain the victory over yourself, courageously attack the vices of others; but attack them not before this be done: there is nothing more ridiculous than to complain of defects on another when we have the very same.

## LIX.

The good man sins sometimes, weakness is natural to him: but he ought to watch diligently over himself, that he never fall twice into the same crime.

## LX.

We have three friends that are use-

ful to us, a sincere friend, a faithful friend, a friend that hears everything, that examines what is told him, and that speaks little: but we have three also whose friendship is pernicious, a hypocrite, a flatterer, and a great talker.

### LXI.

He that applies himself to virtue, has three enemies to conflict, which he must subdue: incontinence when he is as yet in the vigour of his age and the blood boils in his veins; contests and disputes when he is arrived at a mature age; and covetousness when he is old.

### LXII.

There are three things that the wise man ought to reverence, the laws of Heaven, great men, and the words of good men

### LXIII.

We may have an aversion for an enemy, without desiring revenge: the motions of nature are not always criminal.

## LXIV.

Distrust a flatterer, a man affected in his discourses, and who everywhere boasts of his eloquence. this is not the character of true virtue.

## LXV.

Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great discourses, elaborate discourses, pieces of eloquence, ought to be a language unknown to him; his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks, but what language does it use, to preach to men? That there is a sovereign principle from whence all things depend; a sovereign principle which makes them to act and move. Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature, it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent.

## LXVI.

The wise man ought to hate several sorts of men. He ought to hate those that divulge the defects of others, and take delight in discoursing therein.

He ought to hate those that being adorned only with very mean qualities, and who being moreover of a low birth, do revile and temerariously murmur against those that are promoted to dignities of state. He ought to hate a valiant man, when his valour is not accompanied with civility, nor prudence. He ought to hate those sorts of men that are puffed up with self-love, who being always conceited of their own merit, and idolaters of their own opinions, do assault all, deride all, and never consult reason. He ought to hate those who having very small illuminations, do presume to censure what others do. He ought to hate proud men. In a word; he ought to hate those who make it a custom to spy out others defects to publish them.

## LXVII.

It is very difficult to associate with the populace. These sorts of men grow familiar and insolent when we have too much correspondence with them: and because they imagine they

are slighted, whenever so little neglected, we draw their aversion upon us,

### LXVIII.

He that is arrived at the fortieth year of his age, and who has hitherto been a slave to some criminal habit, is not in a condition to subdue it. I hold his malady incurable, he will persevere in his crime until death.

### LXIX.

Afflict not yourself at the death of a brother. death and life are in the power of Heaven, to which the wise man is bound to submit. Moreover, all the men of the earth are your brethren; why then should you weep for one, at a time when so many others remain alive?

### LXX.

The natural light is only a perpetual conformity of our soul with the laws of Heaven. Men never can lose this light. It is true, that the heart of man being inconstant and wavering, it is sometimes covered over with so many clouds, that it seems wholly extinguished. The wise man experi-

ences it himself; for he may fall into small errors, and commit light offences: yet the wise man cannot be virtuous, while he is in this state; it would be a contradiction to say it.

### LXXI.

It is very difficult, when poor, not to hate poverty: but it is possible to be rich without being proud.

### LXXII.

The men of the first ages applied themselves to learning and knowledge only for themselves, that is to say, to become virtuous; this was all the praise they expected from their labours and lucubrations; but men at present do only seek praise, they study only out of vanity, and to pass for learned in the esteem of men.

### LXXIII.

The wise man seeks the cause of his defects in himself: but the fool avoiding himself, seeks it in all others besides himself.

### LXXIV.

The wise man ought to have a severe gravity, but it ought not to be

fierce and untractable. He ought to love society, but to avoid great assemblies.

#### LXXV.

The love or hatred of people, ought not to be the rule of your love or hatred; examine whether they have reason.

#### LXXVI.

Contract friendship with a man whose heart is upright and sincere; with a man that loves to learn, and who can teach you something in his turn. Other men are unworthy of your friendship.

#### LXXVII.

He that has faults, and strives not to amend them, ought at least to do his endeavour to conceal them. The wise man's defects are like the eclipses of the Sun, they come to everyone's knowledge. The wise man ought upon this account to endeavour to cover himself with a cloud. I say the same thing of princes.

#### LXXVIII.

Readily abandon thy country when

virtue is there depressed, and vice encouraged; but if you design not to renounce the maxims of the age, in your retreat and exile, remain in your miserable country: for what reason should you leave it?

### LXXIX.

When your country's safety is concerned, stand not to consult, but make your point public.

### LXXX.

Heaven does not shorten the life of man; it is man that does it by his own crimes. You may avoid the calamities that come from Heaven, but you can never escape those which you draw upon yourself by the crimes.