

Should the study of ethics be abolished.

the philosophical mind of the nineteenth century. But philosophy is of no value, for one does not attempt to practice it. Every school boy knows over eating injures his health, yet he can not help eating so much when he sits before some delicious dishes. Every bachelor knows over drinking is the cause of liver complaint, yet he will gladly empty a bottle or two when invited. So no man can act up to his standards of right. Such is the common weakness arising from philosophy. On the other hand Chinese ethics has no such weakness because it is dogmatical, because it binds us to do right by the chains of duty. Beside, the dogmas contained in it, are ^{as well} applicable to us as to the people of ancient times. Look at the history of Europe. Christianity has had the sole spiritual sway for two thousand years. During these times, every thing has undergone many vicissitudes. The invention of gunpowder completed the destruction of feudalism. The maritime discoveries of the 15th century effected great changes in commerce and trade. The Aristotolian system was thrown aside and the Baconian method has taken its place. All else has changed: but the mighty religion has never received the slightest shake during these stormy periods. In fact, the wheel of truth though in the perpetual revolution rotation, is only repeating the same process. The relations of a parent and a child, a wife and a husband, a vassal and a sovereign are independent of time & place. They are always the same from time immemorial up to the present. Chinese ethics which took deep root in Japan about fifteen hundred years ago, was indeed the chief agent in effecting intellectual development and moral improvement. Our ancestors believed Chinese ethics and how admirable was their morality. They were loyal as a parent vassal, dutiful as a child, tender as a husband, affectionate as a parent, sincere as a friend. Indeed they thought this honour as the sole treasure they had in the world. They even went through

fire and water for the sake of it. Twenty ^{one} years ago, a violent storm passed over the calm waters of the Japanese sea, and every thing of old school suffered shipwreck & the solid valuable ethics sunk and passed into oblivion. When the storm had passed over, the new light of western civilization began to shine over us. Since then, our science, ^{had} progressed, our arts ~~has~~ refined and every other branch of learning has made a vast progress during these twenty one years. But what a lamentable thing it is that our ethics has made a vast retreat during the same period. The old Japanese spirit has frozen in our veins and lie in a perpetual dormant state. If we don't stir it up by the stimulation of ethical moral culture, we can never exist as a nation - a happy prosperous, powerful nation.

Gentlemen: I am very sorry to find so many of our schoolmates to be such inveterate enemies to Ethics. For my part, I am one of those who enlist themselves under the banner of Ethics, and must confess that Ethics is a friend instead of an enemy, from whom you may ask advice in distress, with whom you may consult in trouble, who is the comforter of your sorrows as well as the partner of your joys. The chief point on which my opponents like to dwell is that Ethics is of no use for those who have received a course of education and have already attained the age of discretion. This is an objection scarcely worthy of a reply. Knowledge and morality not only do not always keep the same pace, but often run in the opposite direction. We often find a man of talent committing a great crime and a virtuous person who can by no means be called a learned scholar. The human mind is a barren tract of land which when left uncultivated yields no crops. If you sow the seed of science in it, you are certain to have a crop of science; if you sow the seed of literature, you are also certain to have a crop of literature; but you can never expect a crop of morality from the seed of science or literature. Thus a man live without knowing anything about ethics, even when his other faculties attained the very perfection. Such a man has no fixed principle, no fortitude against temptations. As a plant on the water, flows forward and backward as the wind blows, so he acts rightly or wrongly as the fortune turns. He is always driven to the verge of absurdity and ruin and his life is certain to end in disgrace and in folly. A bird without wings is not a bird at all, however bright its feathers and however melodious its song may be. A man without a virtue can scarcely be called a man, however brilliant his talent and however great his accomplishment may be. There is another objection that Chinese ethics, being a mere collection of dogmatical sentences, can not find its way into