

## **A Contrast between Christianity and Chinese Culture on the Concept of Conscience**

Paulos Huang

(Professor, School of Humanities Study, Shanghai University)

**Abstract:** A deep dive into conscience's nature and its reliability is made through a contrast between Christianity and Chinese culture. Both Christianity and Chinese culture value the role of conscience in guiding moral behavior, they differ significantly in their views on its source, nature, reliability, and relationship to authority and redemption.

**Key words:** conscience, original sin, authority, source, reliability

**Author:** Paulos HUANG, Professor, School of Humanities Study, Shanghai University. paulos.z.huang@gmail.com

I am intending to make a deep dive into conscience's nature and its reliability based on a contrast between Christianity and Chinese culture. Life is full of strange and varied experiences, and these often provoke a wide array of responses from different people. One common sentiment is: "As long as one lives by their conscience and feels no guilt, there's no need to consider the opinions or feelings of others or society." This perspective suggests that following one's inner moral compass is enough for a meaningful existence. But, is this truly the right outlook on life?

### **I. Does Everyone Have a Conscience?**

The question of whether everyone has a conscience delves into deep philosophical and theological considerations. According to Genesis 1:27, God created humans in His own image, which serves as the foundation for the belief that humans possess a conscience, a part of their spiritual essence. This divine imprint of the conscience is what distinguishes humans from other creatures. The Chinese Confucian philosopher Mencius once argued that the difference between humans and animals is subtle. While life itself sets humans apart from inanimate objects like dust and stones, the distinction between humans and animals is more complex. For Christians, what Mencius believed that truly makes humans human is the "breath of life" (Genesis 2:7)—the spirit that God breathed into man when He created him from dust. For Chinese, the concept of conscience doesn't align exactly with the Western idea of an internal moral compass or Christian understanding. Instead, it's linked

to virtues like ren (仁), or benevolence, which emphasizes compassion and empathy towards others, and li (礼), which refers to ritual and proper behavior. Confucianism stresses that **ren** is central to moral actions, guiding individuals to act with humanity and consideration in their relationships. **Li** promotes adherence to societal norms and rituals, creating harmony within society. Zhi (智), or wisdom, also plays a key role, helping individuals discern right from wrong. Daoism, with its focus on the Dao (道), suggests that aligning with the natural order leads to virtuous behavior. Thus, conscience in Chinese philosophy is tied to harmony, social duty, empathy, and wisdom, rather than a divine creation or solitary, internal sense of right and wrong.

Ecclesiastes 3:21 offers further insight into the nature of human existence. It suggests that while humans and animals face death, there is an important difference between them: the spirit of humans ascends to God, whereas the soul of animals returns to the earth. Those who are saved through Christ will have their spirits ascend to paradise, while those who remain unsaved will perish like animals. This reinforces the belief that humans, as beings created in God's image, are distinct from animals not only in life but also in the spiritual destiny after death.

For those still living, the "conscience" plays a significant role in moral decision-making. It is considered a gift from God, an innate aspect of the human spirit that guides people toward right and wrong. In principle, everyone possesses a conscience. Confucian Mencius described this conscience as being made up of the "Four Beginnings"—compassion, shame, humility, and a sense of right and wrong. These qualities serve as the foundation for key virtues such as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. In this way, conscience functions as the moral compass within each individual, guiding them toward virtuous behavior.

However, while everyone is born with a conscience, its reliability is not guaranteed. The classic Chinese novel *Water Margin* illustrates the complexities of conscience and its limits. In the story, Wu Dalang is betrayed by his wife, Pan Jinlian, who is having an affair with Ximen Qing. When Wu Dalang realizes the truth, he makes a desperate plea to Pan Jinlian, appealing to her conscience. He warns her that if his brother, Wu Song, were to learn of his death, he would seek vengeance. However, rather than being moved by this plea, Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing fear that Wu Dalang might expose their affair. To protect themselves, they choose to murder him. Wu Dalang's attempt to manipulate his wife's conscience, hoping it would spare his life, ultimately leads to his demise. The story raises the question: had Wu Dalang not made his appeal, might he have survived? Perhaps, but his attempt to manipulate Pan Jinlian's conscience led to a tragic end.

This narrative highlights a critical point: although everyone is born with a conscience, not every conscience is reliable, and some may not be awakened at all. In some cases, a person's conscience may be clouded or weakened by self-interest, fear, or other factors. Additionally, some individuals may not be aware of the moral principles that should guide their actions, and therefore may not be sensitive to the moral implications of their decisions. This suggests that while the conscience is a universal gift, its function can vary significantly depending on an individual's life experiences, values, and spiritual state. In Christianity, the concept of original sin makes people despair to rely on people's conscience; but in Chinese Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism through a humanistic effort people are not so despair for consciences.

In conclusion, while the conscience is an inherent part of being human, it is not a foolproof guide to moral

decision-making. Its reliability depends on its alignment with divine truth and spiritual awakening. Therefore, while everyone may have a conscience, the way it functions can differ greatly from person to person.

## **II. Why Are People's Consciences Corrupted?**

The concept of conscience becomes increasingly complex when considering the fall of humanity and the consequences of original sin, as detailed in Genesis 3:14-19. Original sin profoundly affected the human spirit, corrupting the conscience and rendering it unreliable.

Originally, the conscience was an integral part of God's holy image within humanity. When God created humans, He endowed them with a moral compass, enabling them to distinguish right from wrong. However, the fall of man in the Garden of Eden led to the corruption of this divine image. The consequences of sin tainted the conscience, causing it to no longer reflect God's holiness in its purest form. As a result, while the conscience still retains the ability to guide people toward relative acts of goodness in front of the world, other human beings and oneself (*coram mundo, hminibus, ipse coram*), it is now incapable of achieving the absolute goodness that meets God's divine standard (*coram Deo*).<sup>1</sup>

Human nature, deeply affected by sin, was so thoroughly corrupted that, as Rom. 7:20 states, "There is no one righteous, not even one." This reflects the inherent flaw in human beings after the fall—their inability to consistently act in ways that align with God's perfect will. The conscience, originally created to guide humans toward holiness and righteousness, is now distorted and unreliable.

This fallen state of the conscience is evident in the paradoxical nature of human behavior. People may act with good intentions or even sincere belief, yet their actions can still be morally wrong or misguided.<sup>2</sup> A vivid example of this is seen in the crowds in Jerusalem during Jesus' final days. When Jesus entered the city, the people welcomed Him with great enthusiasm, shouting "Hosanna!" and laying down palm branches in His honor. Their actions seemed to be a sincere expression of praise and adoration. However, just days later, the same crowd, moved by external influences, demanded His crucifixion. This stark contrast between their praise and their subsequent rejection reveals the inconsistency of the human conscience. People are capable of sincere expressions of loyalty or goodness, but these emotions can quickly shift based on circumstances, leading to contradictory actions that expose the unreliability of the conscience.

The fall of humanity has left the conscience damaged, unable to be fully trusted. While the conscience still

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther teaches that a person lives simultaneously in two realms and must adhere to the distinct principles that govern each. In the kingdom of God (*coram Deo*), a person is made righteous solely through faith, without the need for works. In contrast, in the kingdom of the world (*coram mundo*), righteousness is demonstrated through good works that benefit both oneself and others. In other words, before God (*coram Deo*), righteousness is received passively by faith; before the world (*coram mundo*), it is expressed actively through deeds. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986), 45:79. (Hereafter cited as LW.) The texts of these six sermons may be found in WA 10III, 341- 352, 371-399.

<sup>2</sup> From St. Augustine to Martin Luther, the doctrine of original sin has becoming an official orthodoxy in both Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. Cf. Article "Original Sin" in *Catholic Encyclopedia*. *The Book of Concord Archived 5 July 2008 at the Wayback Machine* *The Defense of the Augsburg Confession, Article II: Of Original Sin; from an early Protestant perspective, part of the Augsburg Confession. Original Sin According To St. Paul by John S. Romanides.*

plays a role in guiding people's moral decisions, its capacity to consistently discern true goodness has been severely diminished. The human conscience is now subject to distortion by sin, leading people to justify wrong actions or fail to see the truth. Martin Luther disagreed with Erasmus on the freedom of will, the former considers that the bondage of will, but the latter believed that human will has freedom to follow God.<sup>3</sup> As far as the protestant theology is concerned, this does not mean that the conscience is entirely useless or devoid of value—it can still guide individuals toward some degree of moral behavior in this worldly life, but it cannot be relied upon as the sole measure of right and wrong.

In conclusion, the conscience, though originally created as a reflection of God's holiness, has been corrupted by original sin. This corruption makes it unreliable as a moral guide, capable only of pointing toward relative goodness social and ethically rather than soteriologically the absolute goodness that God requires. The fallen nature of humanity has left the conscience in a state of inconsistency and imperfection, making it crucial for individuals to seek a higher standard of moral guidance, one that comes from God's revelation and grace.

### III. The Diversity of Consciences

The concept of conscience varies significantly among individuals, primarily because of the diversity in human experiences, values, and upbringing. As Proverbs 21:2 states, "A person may think their own ways are right, but the Lord weighs the heart." This verse underscores the subjective nature of conscience—what one person perceives as right may be viewed as morally questionable by someone else. Therefore, the way people experience and interpret their conscience is deeply personal and influenced by their individual beliefs, cultural background, and life experiences.

The above example of how consciences differ can be seen in the relationship between Wu Dalang and Pan Jinlian from the classic Chinese novel *Water Margin*. Wu Dalang, who is betrayed by his wife, Pan Jinlian, believes that she will feel remorse for her actions, assuming that her conscience will align with his moral perspective. Wu Dalang, deeply troubled by the betrayal, seeks to appeal to Pan Jinlian's sense of guilt, believing that she will be moved by his moral anguish. However, Pan Jinlian does not share his sense of guilt. She may not see her actions as wrong at all, instead justifying her affair and subsequent betrayal of her husband for personal reasons. This scenario illustrates how people often project their own moral understanding onto others, expecting

---

3 Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio* (literally *Of free will: Discourses or Comparisons*) is the Latin title of a polemical work written by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1524.

Luther, Martin; Cole, Henry 1823, *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will: Written in Answer to the Diatribe of Erasmus on Free-will*. London: Printed by T. Bensley for W. Simpkin and R. Marshall.

Luther, Martin. *The Bondage of the Will: A New Translation of De Servo Arbitrio* (1525), *Martin Luther's Reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam*. J.I. Packer and O. R. Johnston, trans. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957.

Erasmus, Desiderius and Martin Luther. *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*. The Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition. Rupp, E. Gordon; Marlow, A.N.; Watson, Philip S.; and Drewery, B. trans. and eds. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969. (This volume provides an English translation of both Erasmus' *De Libero Arbitrio* and Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio*.) Luther, Martin; *Career of the Reformer III. Luther's Works*, Vol. 33 of 55. Watson, Philip S. and Benjamin Drewery, trans. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972.

Ruokanen, Miikka: *Trinitarian Grace in Martin Luther's The Bondage of the Will*. OUP Oxford; 1st edition, 2021.

them to feel the same way about right and wrong, even when their consciences differ.

Consciences vary not only because of individual experiences but also because people hold different beliefs about what is right and wrong. For example, individuals who subscribe to a philosophy like "survival of the fittest" or "every man for himself" may develop a moral framework that prioritizes self-interest and competition.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, those who follow teachings like those of Christ, which emphasize loving others as oneself, are likely to have a different set of moral values that emphasize compassion, selflessness, and care for others.

These differing worldviews shape how people interpret situations and make moral decisions. For instance, someone raised in a family or culture that values individualism may approach ethical dilemmas with a focus on personal freedom and autonomy. On the other hand, someone brought up in a more collectivist society may place a greater emphasis on the well-being of the group over individual desires. Similarly, a person who believes in the intrinsic value of honesty might view a small lie as a serious moral violation, while another, raised in an environment where "white lies" are tolerated for social harmony, might see the same lie as harmless.

The way each individual understands their conscience is influenced by their unique upbringing, education, and environment. People's values are shaped by the social, cultural, and religious contexts in which they grow up, making it difficult to create a universal standard for what is "right" or "wrong" based solely on personal conscience. What one person deems a moral duty, another might view as unnecessary or even wrong. As a result, consciences can vary widely, even within the same community or family.

In conclusion, the difference between consciences lies in the subjective nature of moral understanding. Personal beliefs, experiences, and cultural influences shape how individuals perceive and act according to their consciences. As the diversity of human experiences continues to grow, so too will the range of moral frameworks and consciences that guide people's decisions. Such a diversity may lead to a relativism (*i.e.*, The truth is relative) or nihilism (*i.e.*, The absolute truth does not exist at all). What can one's conscience do in face of relativism or nihilism?

#### **IV. What Kind of Conscience is Correct?**

Facing such a challenge to look for the correctness, we need to pay attention to the blinding nature of the corrupted conscience. A conscience corrupted by original sin can often mislead individuals, causing them to stray from truth and goodness. As 2 Corinthians 4:4 explains, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers." In this context, the "god of this world" refers to the forces that influence and distort human understanding, turning people away from divine truth. While conscience remains present in every individual, it becomes distorted through sin, causing it to prioritize self-interest and rationalization over moral clarity and godly principles.

When the conscience is corrupted, it becomes increasingly self-centered. Individuals may begin to view the world and their actions through the lens of personal desires, rather than through a framework of moral righteousness. This distortion often leads people to justify their behavior, even when it contradicts fundamental

---

<sup>4</sup> The social Darwinists are such examples.

ethical or spiritual truths. For instance, a person with a corrupted conscience might rebel against various forms of authority—not only secular or familial authority, but also spiritual authority. The corrupted conscience acts as a tool for self-justification, allowing the individual to rationalize decisions or actions that would otherwise be deemed immoral.

This misdirection of conscience can be particularly dangerous when it leads individuals to defy even divine authority. People may begin to believe that they are acting in accordance with God’s will, even when their actions contradict the teachings of Scripture. In some cases, those who outwardly appear to be religious may use their corrupted conscience to justify harmful or immoral behavior. They might claim to be following God's commands, but in reality, they are distorting or ignoring the truth of Scripture to suit their own desires or agendas.

A prime example of this is seen when individuals manipulate religious teachings to support their personal actions. For instance, someone might commit acts of violence or discrimination, claiming that they are serving God’s will, despite the clear message of love and forgiveness found in the teachings of Christ. In such cases, the conscience is no longer an objective guide but a tool of justification, allowing the person to feel morally justified even while engaging in actions that are, in reality, sinful.

As a result, a corrupted conscience becomes a barrier to spiritual truth. It leads individuals away from both divine and earthly authority, creating a disconnect between their actions and the moral principles that should guide them. People who are blinded by their corrupted consciences often live in opposition to both God’s truth and the ethical norms that govern society. They may struggle to recognize their own wrongdoings, as their conscience no longer serves as a reliable guide.

In conclusion, the blindness of a corrupted conscience is a dangerous force that misleads individuals and distorts their sense of right and wrong. This distortion turns the conscience into a tool for self-justification, allowing people to rationalize sinful actions and rebel against both divine and earthly authority. Only through spiritual renewal and the guidance of truth can a corrupted conscience be restored, enabling individuals to live in alignment with both moral clarity and God’s will.

## **V. The Chameleon Conscience**

Some individuals appear to adapt their conscience to fit their desires, changing their moral compass to justify their actions in any given situation. These people often claim to be guided by the teachings of Scripture or by moral ideals, but their behavior frequently reveals a different story. They manipulate their conscience to excuse betrayal, hypocrisy, and rebellion against authority, using it as a convenient tool for rationalizing self-serving actions.

In many ways, these individuals resemble a “chameleon”—shifting their moral stance to match whatever suits their needs or desires at the time. Much like a chameleon changes its color to blend into its environment, these individuals alter their interpretation of their conscience based on circumstances, making it appear as though they are aligned with righteous principles when, in reality, they are driven by personal motives. They may present themselves as morally upright or devout, but their actions often expose a different truth.

One of the defining traits of such people is their resistance to correction. Even when confronted with the

consequences of their actions, they persist in insisting that they are in the right. They often fail to recognize the harm they cause to others and may refuse to acknowledge that their behavior contradicts the values they claim to uphold. For example, they might speak eloquently about love, truth, and kindness, but their actions betray these principles. As Galatians 5:22-23 outlines, the fruits of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—should be evident in the lives of those who claim to follow Christ. If these qualities are absent in their actions, their claims to follow their conscience ring hollow.

These individuals ultimately replace God with their own desires. Instead of allowing their conscience to be shaped by the truth of Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they distort it to align with their personal wants and needs. They confuse their own feelings, desires, and reasoning with the voice of God, mistaking their own rationalizations for divine guidance. This distortion of conscience can be especially dangerous because it allows individuals to justify behaviors that are clearly contrary to God's will. In doing so, they deceive themselves into thinking they are acting in alignment with divine principles when, in fact, they are operating in opposition to them.

The chameleon conscience is characterized by a lack of consistency and authenticity. Rather than being guided by absolute moral truths, individuals with this kind of conscience rely on subjective reasoning to rationalize their behavior. This flexibility in their moral stance makes them unreliable and dangerous, as they can easily shift between right and wrong depending on what serves their interests at any given moment.

In conclusion, the chameleon conscience is a distortion of moral clarity, where individuals adapt their moral beliefs to suit their desires. These people use their conscience as a tool of self-justification, claiming to follow Scripture or moral ideals while their actions reveal a different truth. Ultimately, they replace God's guidance with their own desires, leading them to misinterpret their conscience and justify sinful behavior.

## **VI. Summarizing the Vital Role of Conscience in both Christianity and Chinese Culture**

In Christianity, the conscience is seen as a reflection of God's image within humanity, yet it is corrupted by original sin. In contrast, traditional Chinese philosophy, particularly Confucianism, views the conscience as inherently good and pure, requiring only cultivation. This divergence highlights the contrasting views on the nature, reliability, and role of conscience in shaping moral behavior.

As far as **source of conscience is concerned**, in Christianity, the conscience is understood as a part of God's divine image bestowed upon humanity. However, after the fall of man, it became marred by original sin. As a result, conscience is not inherently trustworthy in the absolute sense, although in ethical and social context it can produce certain relative goodness. It requires redemption and realignment with God's truth through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of Scripture. Christianity teaches that the conscience must be transformed and purified through divine revelation, as it is not sufficient on its own to lead an individual toward righteousness. The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in this transformation, helping believers discern God's will and guiding them toward moral clarity. In contrast, traditional Chinese philosophy, particularly the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, presents a much more optimistic view of the conscience. According to Mencius,

humans are born with an inherent sense of right and wrong. This conscience is composed of four innate moral impulses—compassion, shame, courtesy, and a sense of right and wrong—that can guide individuals toward virtuous behavior. In Chinese culture, conscience is seen as pure and untarnished by sin. Instead of needing redemption, conscience requires cultivation, which can be achieved through education, moral examples, and self-cultivation. This emphasis on moral development suggests that individuals are born with the tools to be virtuous, but they must nurture these impulses through proper guidance and effort.

As far as **nature and reliability of conscience** are concerned, Christianity teaches that the conscience, because of sin, is inherently unreliable. It can become seared, darkened, or corrupted, leading individuals to make moral decisions that are not in line with God's will. For this reason, conscience must always be tested and guided by Scripture, which provides the objective standard of moral truth. In Galatians 5:22-23, the fruits of the Holy Spirit serve as a measure by which Christians can assess the alignment of their conscience with God's will. In Christianity, the conscience is not an infallible guide; it requires continual renewal and sanctification. In contrast, Chinese Confucian philosophy assumes that following one's conscience is inherently virtuous, provided that one's actions align with societal norms and expectations. The focus is on personal cultivation, self-discipline, and learning. The conscience is seen as reliable if it has been properly nurtured through education, moral example, and practice. While Chinese culture values the development of moral character, it also emphasizes social harmony. The conscience is guided by an individual's duty to society, family, and collective good. As a result, the Chinese view of conscience tends to emphasize harmony and balance rather than personal moral transformation through divine revelation.

As far as **conscience and authority** are concerned, in Christianity, the conscience is always subordinate to the authority of God. Even the most sincere feelings or personal moral reasoning must ultimately submit to God's truth, as revealed in Scripture. The Christian conscience is not meant to act autonomously; it must be in harmony with divine authority. This perspective places God as the ultimate moral authority, and the conscience must align with His will, not personal desires or societal expectations. In Chinese culture, the concept of authority is often relational and horizontal, framed within the context of family and societal norms. The conscience is shaped by one's duty to others, especially to family and community, and the primary goal is to maintain harmony within these relationships. Authority in Chinese culture is often linked to fulfilling one's obligations, preserving societal order, and adhering to Confucian principles of propriety and respect. While there is respect for authority, it is not viewed as an absolute, vertical authority as in Christianity. Instead, authority in Chinese culture tends to be more fluid, shaped by the context of familial and social relationships.

As far as **the relationship between conscience and redemption** is concerned, Christianity teaches that redemption comes not through self-cultivation but through grace—specifically, through faith in Jesus Christ. According to Christian doctrine, the conscience is cleansed through Christ's sacrifice, and spiritual transformation is achieved through union with Him. Redemption is viewed as a gift from God, not something that can be earned through human effort or moral improvement. The Christian understanding of redemption involves a spiritual rebirth, in which the conscience is restored to its original purity through God's grace. In Chinese tradition, the concept of redemption is rooted in moral self-cultivation and the return to one's inherent

goodness. There is no belief in atonement for sin or the need for divine intervention to cleanse the conscience. Instead, perfection is pursued through education, virtuous living, and self-improvement. The Chinese view of moral development focuses on the individual's ability to cultivate virtue and fulfill their duties within society. Redemption, therefore, is a continuous process of self-cultivation and moral refinement, achieved through dedication to learning and following the example of virtuous role models.

In conclusion, while both Christianity and Chinese culture value the role of conscience in guiding moral behavior, they differ significantly in their views on its source, nature, reliability, and relationship to authority and redemption. Christianity emphasizes the need for divine guidance and transformation through grace, while Chinese culture focuses on the cultivation of an innate, pure conscience through education and moral example. These differing perspectives reflect the broader worldviews of each tradition and the ways in which they understand human nature, morality, and the pursuit of virtue. Ultimately, for Christians the human conscience is unreliable due to the corruption of original sin. People may act according to their conscience, but that does not guarantee righteousness. Only Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, can provide the clarity and redemption needed for a truly clear conscience. The Christian perspective places the conscience under divine authority, while the Chinese view emphasizes societal harmony. Both perspectives, however, recognize the profound role that conscience plays in moral decision-making.

This number is a special volume on Martin Lutheran studies in Chinese academia.

In the column of **Humanities, Theology, and Chinese National Studies** we have published Jason Lam's "Resurrection: An Overcoming of Human Nature? An Interdisciplinary Study on the Body, Identity, and Person", and Dalong YANG's "The Internal Logic of the Cultural Identity of Confucianism and Judaism from the Perspective of Sinicization of Religion: A Discussion based on the three inscriptions of Kaifeng Judaism".

**In the column of Practical Theology and Sino-Western Views on Church and Society we have published** Yen-Yi Lee's "Mirrors of Human Nature: The Philosophical Anthropologies of Classical Confucianism and the Theology of Orthodox Christianity", and "Wu Li and his *Tianyue Zhengyin Pu*: A Model for the Chinese-Characterization of Catholic Anthems in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties" by FU Yugang and YIN Ming.

In the column of **Chinese and Western Classics and the Bible we have published** "A Comparative Study on Transcendence between Christianity and Confucianism" by ZHANG Hua and ZHOU Dandan, and HUA Wei's "Pauline Pneumatology and the Chinese Rites Controversy: On the Theological Failure of the Holy See's Mission in the Early *Qing* Dynasty".

In the column of **Church History in the West and in China, we have published** YANG Yuanmeng's "The Inter-Cultural Observation of American Missionaries: A Study of the *Hainan News Letter*" and SUN Sangyang's "Christians from Zeng Guofan's Confucian Clan".

In the column of **Comparative Religious and Cultural Studies, we have published** LIN Xiaobin's "Between the Subject and the Transcendent: The Value-Adding Interpretation of Confucianism in *The True Meaning of Confucianism*" and TIAN Wei's "A transcendent view from the perspective of the relationship between God and man or the relationship between heaven and man: Take Christianity and Confucianism as

examples”.

In the column of **Reviews and Academic Reports**, we have published SHANG Changbao’s “Defending the Hardness of Double Predestination - Centered on Burtner's The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination”, “Transcendence, Internal Transcendence, Transcendence beyond Life and Death: A Review of *the Comparative Study of the Ethics of Life and Death between Mencius and Paul*” by Meng Yang and Paulos Huang, and John ZHU’s “A Brief Analyze on Characteristics of Marcion’s Theology: Also Refuting Adolf Harnack’s Research Paradigm”.

**中文题目：**基督教与中国文化在“良知”概念上的对比

**作者：**黄保罗，人文学院教授，上海大学，中国上海市宝山区南陈路 333，邮编 200444。  
paulos.z.huang@gmail.com

**提要：**通过对基督教与中国文化在良知概念上的对比，本文深入探讨了良知的本质及其可靠性。虽然基督教与中国文化都重视良知在道德行为指导中的作用，但它们在良知的来源、本质、可靠性以及与权威和救赎的关系等方面存在显著差异。

**关键词：**良知、原罪、权威、来源、可靠性