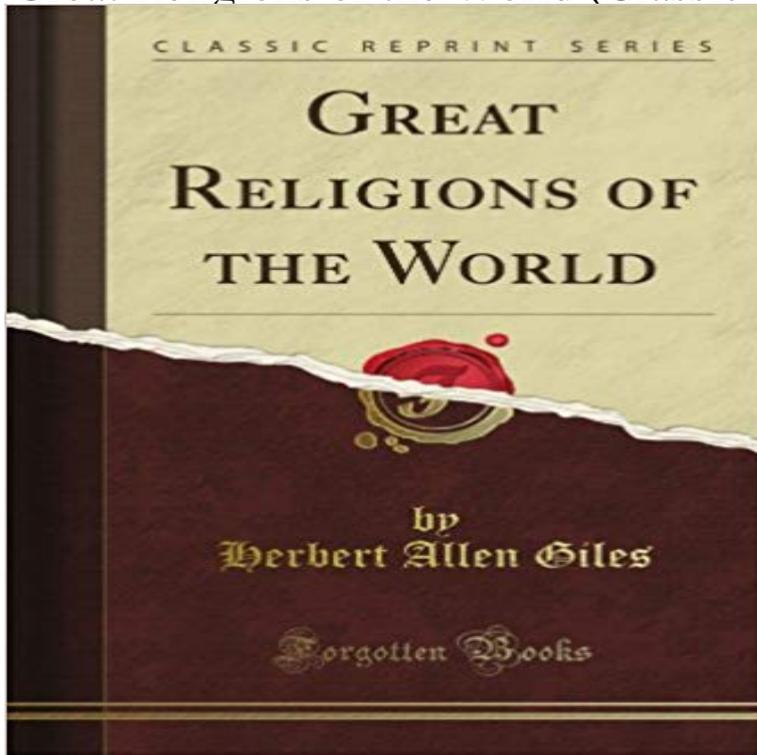


Great Religions of the World (Classic Reprint)



Kung-F u-T se, or, asL atinized by the Jesuit missionaries, Confucius, the great philosopher of China, according to the best authorities, was born in the state of Loo, within the district later known asK eo-fu-hien, in the Province of Shantung, June 19, 551 B.C. He was the son of a high government official, who died when the boy was three years old. His early education was supervised by his mother, a woman of illustrious birth, and remarkable stories are narrated of his fondness for study and his proficiency, while a child, in philosophy. From his seventeenth to his twenty-fourth year he was employed in the public service, and at thirty he entered upon his career as a teacher of morality and philosophy. He had married at an early age; but after his wife had borne him a son he divorced her, that he might attend more closely to his studies. For a time he lived in seclusion, in contemplation. When, however, he felt himself sufficiently well grounded for the task he had set for himself, he reappeared in public and began to seek the courts of princes, who at this period were very numerous inC hina, and had formed what would now be called a powerful inter-state confederacy. His first journeyings were through the various states of the Chinese Empire, whose princes he earnestly urged to establish wise and peaceful administrations. While doing so he also made himself intimate with all ranks of society, pleading for the promotion of virtue and social order. Within three years he is said to have effected a thorough change in the moral condition of the country and to have gained three thousand disciples, ten of whom were so thoroughly informed on all the then essentials of knowledge that they became known as the ten wise men of China. From the princes of his own country he next sought the kings of neighboring realms. He returned to his native state at the age of fifty-f(Typographical errors above are due

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