

希伯来书四章第十二节

天主之言是活泼
的是有力的比两
刃的剑更快魂灵
骨髓都可剥开刺
入心懷意念都可
鉴观考察

1902 Peking Committee Bible

A Brief History and Explanation of Translation
Including Defense of Terms Used and Clarification
of Intent

By Nicolas R. Dunn



“你们当精考细读主的书”
— 赛34:16

Peking Committee Bible

Explanation of this Translation:

This translation is the preserved work of W.A.P. Martin, Henry Blodget, John S. Burdon, Joseph Edkins and Samuel J.I. Schereschewsky, who constituted the Peking Translation Committee. Its arrival came during a transitional stage of language development and translation in China. The labors of these men made such an impact that every subsequent major translation of the scriptures into Mandarin has used it as its source, never straying from the techniques and structure of this masterpiece. The committee convened and commenced to undertake this great work at a time when China embraced a strong literary population so distanced from the common colloquial language of the day, that a translation was necessary to provide the scriptures to the common man. The committee chose guan hua, the official court language of the day, resulting in a pure preservation of China's core language. These men manifested a rich knowledge of both Bible languages and Mandarin Chinese as they produced not only a literally accurate translation, but also an idiomatic reading thus preserving the intent and meaning found in the scripture. As for Bible translation, this work truly is the predecessor of modern Bibles in China in that it predates them by 30 years. Because of the purity of manuscripts used as well as the superiority of the translators' qualifications, this translation is worthy of reprint and most certainly will provide a reliable Bible. The original committee produced their initial work in 1872 for the New Testament and 1874 for the Old Testament. This was followed by a revision in 1899 for the Old Testament and 1902 for the New Testament. This reprint is the preservation of the committee's second revision and final work as a unit, as many of the members died shortly thereafter.

The goal of this reprint is to preserve an unmatched work in translation as well as offer a Bible translated directly from the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Textus Receptus manuscripts. Part of the work involved in this reprint was transcribing the complex characters used in the original into the simplified characters used in mainland China today. During this process, care was given to properly distinguish between male and female pronouns as during the time of translation, one universal term was used. Care has also been taken to preserve the translators' distinct form by maintaining the use of the original punctuation. Because of the

illegibility of the original microfilms, other copies of the same work were consulted and used to produce an accurate rendering of punctuation placement. All footnotes as well as italics are the original inclusions of the committee themselves. Because of liberties taken by printers and publishers of the day, the text was checked with three known copies of the committee's work. No changes have been made to the original work of the Peking committee. The utmost care has been given to preserving every character, and any deviation thereof is solely the cause of human error and not intentional. In addition, the reader should also realize that first editions of any work are notorious for overlooked errors. The original Peking Committee Bible had numerous typesetting errors that had to be corrected in later additions. The advent of the computer and desktop publishing programs have not eliminated this problem. If you find something you believe to be a mistake, please feel free to bring it to our attention. We will review such observations and make any legitimate corrections in later editions of this work.

Because of the exclusiveness of the Peking Translation Committee's work, a general name was used which is now shared by various other versions of scripture. To clarify and give complete recognition to the work of these men, this version will be referred to as the Peking Committee Bible (PCB).

Concerning the use of the term for God, the committee exclusively used **tian zhu**. They felt that the best expression of theos in Greek and elohim in Hebrew was the chosen term. Although the committee had hoped the term would be adopted by all Christians, they found the controversy over which term to use in expressing God, an insoluble one. Therefore, the American Bible Society, under whose auspices the committee was commissioned, allowed the use of various terms for God to be printed in future editions. Our prayer is that this Bible will serve as a beautiful translation of the words of God, as well as preserve a rich, idiomatic model of Chinese thought in regards to scripture. The committee's goal was to transpose the words of God so that the common man could read them in his native tongue without the knowledge of other languages. May God bless you as you read His words. As they are our only guiding light in a dark world.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
- Ps. 119:105

“主的言语是我足前的明灯、是我路上的光亮。” — 诗119:105



“你们当精考细读主的书”
— 赛34:16

Peking Committee Bible

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
- Matt. 24:35

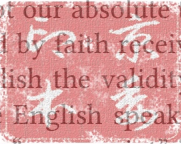
Since the beginning of time, the debate of the ages as always been, “yea, hath God said?” And with that simple rhetorical question started the controversy that would thrive in every home, church, country, and individual’s mind of whether or not God could be trusted. For the last 400 years, Bible believers have enjoyed a reprieve of sorts from the barrage sent by Satan himself as the Reformation masterpiece, the King James Bible, has stopped the mouths of both pope and plebeian. The English King James Bible has set the standard for the world in producing a Bible wherein versification, layout, canon selection, and style have been copied, compared to, criticized since its printing in 1611. There is no doubt the King James Bible is the Word of God to the nations. Although some would still adhere to Hebrew and Greek originals, I have still to find a man preaching from either as a complete volume, in any pulpit, in any place. As a compiled book, the King James is the perfect standard as it is the preserved Word of God. Indeed, God’s Word cannot pass away, and therefore one must ask which book is the preservation of God’s Word? And in tandem with this question we must enquire, “Is inspiration possible without Preservation?” As the situation applies to China, the question at hand was, “does a trustworthy Bible exist?” 你们当精读圣经，主的书，应该被用来产生一个可靠的翻译今天？“and if it does not, what should be used to produce a reliable translation today?” Were a new venture begun to translate the scriptures, there would be no doubt that the King James Bible should be used, simply for the sake of logistics, as no one speaks nor understands Biblical Hebrew or Koine Greek enough to undertake such a task effectively. It was these very questions that provoked my searching of China’s history for a preserved Bible. It did not take long to realize that today, scholars of the King James Committee’s caliber were nonexistent. Therefore in finding the Peking Committee Bible, it became necessary to see just how faithful it remained to the Book of books. It was in this quest that it became ever clearer that the battle continues to rage simply because man refuses to accept God’s preserved Word as the only beacon of truth. As a result, upon coming to China it became evident that although the English Bible is the preserved Word of God, how could the average Chinaman understand the Gospel in a language he had not learned? Some suppose we ought first to teach them English, yet, we have no assurance that this is possible for those unwilling or incapable. We then see the necessity of translation. A translation is a native rendering of the words of God to that people. Many have been shocked by statements such as, “The King James Bible corrects the Hebrew and the Greek.” However if one truly understands what a translation is, they would see that it most certainly would

correct any and all languages as they are not native. As you read this booklet, know that we can only hope to preserve in this reprint of the Peking Committee Bible, a faithful, native presentation of the words of God. It is my prayer that this translation will point Chinese-speaking people with an oriental mindset toward the Saviour of the world. As you delve into this letter introducing the Peking Committee Bible, I encourage you to ponder the heart and words of the King James Committee Translators:

"But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue? as it is written, "Except I know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh, a Barbarian, and he that speaketh, shall be a Barbarian to me." [1 Cor 14] The Apostle excepteth no tongue; not Hebrew the ancientest, not Greek the most copious, not Latin the finest. Nature taught a natural man to confess, that all of us in those tongues which we do not understand, are plainly deaf; we may turn the deaf ear unto them. The Scythian counted the Athenian, whom he did not understand, barbarous; so the Roman did the Syrian, and the Jew (even S. Jerome himself called the Hebrew tongue barbarous, belike because it was strange to so many) so the Emperor of Constantinople calleth the Latin tongue, barbarous, though Pope Nicolas do storm at it: so the Jews long before Christ called all other nations, Lognazim, which is little better than barbarous. Therefore as one complaineth, that always in the Senate of Rome, there was one or other that called for an interpreter: so lest the Church be driven to the like exigent, it is necessary to have translations in a readiness. Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of Laban were watered [Gen 29:10]. Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacob's well (which is deep) [John 4:11] without a bucket or something to draw with; or as that person mentioned by Isaiah, to whom when a sealed book was delivered, with this motion, "Read this, I pray thee," he was fain to make this answer, "I cannot, for it is sealed." [Isa 29:11]"

~ King James Translation Committee

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:” - 2 Pet. 1:19

Perhaps there is no more important nor controversial issue, as far as the missionary is concerned, than the work of translation. Although culture and language mastery are paramount, there is no more essential work than that of translation. For it is the concepts attributed to words that allow proper carriage of the gospel message to the regions beyond. How one views God, the resurrection and a virgin birth all hinge upon their clarity and transmission into the native tongue. Throughout history missionaries of every sect and religion have defined themselves by some translated work or concept. From the Anglican to the Zen Buddhist, their beliefs are defined by a textual or verbal standard that acts as divine authority in all matters of faith and practice. From this point of view it becomes evident that all beliefs meet on the same field when it comes to receiving truth. For those experienced in personal soul winning we have found that this truth is ever evident. It is not until the recipient can accept our absolute truth (The King James Bible), that he will act upon his belief and by faith receive Christ. Because of this fact it has become necessary to establish the validity of our Bible resulting in the proof of our faith. Being native English speakers,  “你们当精求细读主的书” - 卷34:16, this controversy over the authoritative authenticity of our manuscript is not near as heated as in foreign lands, for we have enjoyed the preeminence of the scriptures for over 400 years. The standard has been set, and as you make contact with those around you, seldom is their doubt as to the truth you preach. Although the barrage on the King James is continued by modern day scholars and textual critics, nothing is more convincing than the dominant history of our Bible. After translation, the King James Bible enjoyed 150 years of exclusive authority, even being proclaimed the national Bible of England herself. It has sold more copies than any other Book in existence and is recognized by all as “The” literary achievement of the world. With such an anchor to our faith, it becomes easy to forget that the battle of translation and its purity still rages across the globe in the form of translation into other languages. This is most certainly not to say that there has been no attack upon the King James and its validity, but rather that it is easily refuted by a mutually trusted and used Bible. Reflecting upon personal experience, I have found that initially my strongest defense for the King James was not always its predominant history, nor its evident exactness and perfection in translation, but rather the simple act of believing it in every word and passage found within its pages (Heb. 11:1). Every one of us has had to at some point or another simplistically trust our Bible in verses where its perfection was not so

evident. All of us have our Luke 3:36's¹ which are not always explainable but believed nonetheless. Being somewhat facetious, some have proclaimed that they would unashamedly believe the Bible even if it were to make so bold a statement as to say Jonah swallowed a whale; and in a Bible that relates stories of talking asses and the sun standing still, one is allowed to trust his God in such a confident fashion. This is not to say that these stories are unbelievable, but rather impossible for man to believe, and therefore scoffed at and rejected. Therefore it is our privilege to become "fools" for Christ, that we may become wise. You see, even with scores of books written proving time and time again the reliability of the King James Bible, we still have the most convincing anchor of our faith in the Author of the Book (Psa. 12:6-7). Having seen the solid enduring history of the King James continually proving its authority, this task of believing God at His word has become easy, and hereditary to many Christians. So much that seldom do we venture to ponder once in the early beginnings of God's translated words, proof was not so accessible, authentication was not so easily verified, and much of the Bible's success in its translated form in English was due to the unwavering faith of its audience. Even Ezekiel of the Old Testament rebuked the prophets of his day for saying, "Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken." Paul's Thessalonian epistles reveal to us a time of spurious letters written with injurious intent upon the church of God (2 Thess. 2:1-2). Times have not changed, the question still is, and always will be, "Yea, hath God said..." Perhaps the most minibus of facts concerning the King James Bible is that the world at this juncture in history was able to agree upon one Bible and its authenticity. This is not to say that every scholar, Christian, minister, and layman agreed upon its perfection, however, one cannot help but admit to its acceptance en mass by the English speaking world. One must then inquire, how it is that the King James Bible has been so well received? Can this be accomplished in another language? For us to fully understand these questions and formulate clear answers, we must revisit the circumstances that encompassed the King James committee. One may ask, "To what extent does this relate to the situation of Bible translation in Chinese?" In simple reply, it is so closely associated that to intimately understand translation and what is to be expected, one cannot be explained without the other. In order to reintroduce and relate this Chinese translation's peculiarities as well as explanations, we will delve into the work put forth by the Peking Committee. Therefore it is the goal of this letter to sufficiently answer many of the elemental objections,

¹ Some "scholars" contend that there is an addition of the name Canaan into the genealogy of Jesus. Although not an error, some would agree that passages of this kind tend to make the unprepared preacher sweat.

curiosities and presumable mistakes misconceived by the modern day reader of this Chinese translation.

“And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?”

- Acts 2:8

Translation:

Translation is a most elusive work that confuses both scholar and student. It is presumed by many to be a science structured by laws, form, and order that undeniably produces a nonnegotiable literal rendering of the source text. It is presumed that should two men, located in two separate countries, living in two different eras, given the same source text, translating into the same target language, would produce the exact same results. As naïve as this may sound, it is generally supposed by many, and evidenced by such statements as “the King James Bible says the same thing the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts say,”² and “translation is a science as provable as gravity.” Seldom is it recognized that translation is in fact a living, breathing process that stays congruent with the source and target languages (2 Tim. 3:16). So great is the difference of the two concepts that rarely do two scholars of two opposing eras agree upon the finished work. The success of Homer’s *Iliad* and Greek tragedy into English is still the debate of Universities from England to America. We differentiate our graduate work as the sciences and the arts, and today we are still unable to place translation in one or the other. It has been said, “Translation as a science, is a dream of the linguistically illiterate.” As faithful protectors (2 Tim. 2:2) of the King James, some fear that this means our Bible cannot be perfect. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, it makes what the King James Committee produced more of a miraculous feat. To fully understand what translation is we can only trust our source of all authority – the Bible. By the Bible’s own definition, translation from one point to the next is always God taking the original and making it better, thus solidifying it. The Lord translated the kingdom of Saul to David (2 Sam. 3:10); Enoch was translated from earth to heaven (Heb. 11:5), and ultimately you and I will be translated to heaven after we drop this robe of flesh (Col. 1:13). One may object that to view these passages in this light is to twist the scripture, however one must admit that translation as explained by the Bible is inevitably a good thing. It is never

² The King James was obviously translated from the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Textus Receptus and preserved a literal rendering of the text. However there are many places where liberty was used and the translators translated the same Greek/Hebrew word with differing English words in various fashions. See Job 3:8, Acts 12:4 and every reference concerning the Hebrew *sheol* and Greek *hades*, *gehenna* that was translated as one word “hell.”

expressed to be a substandard or equal state; it always excels the former for it is in the mother tongue. As it relates to translation of the scripture into other languages, we realize that it is the constant comparison of the finished work with the source text that cause the most problems. It must also be noted that within the confines of the English language, translation is also viewed as a positive movement from one location to another. Etymologically speaking we use various forms of the word today. We often speak of *transferring* funds or *transfusing* blood and the *transcontinental* railway - all denoting a perfect passage from source to destination. In music we talk of *transposing* the keys; that is to properly take the structure, laws, and theory of one key and perfectly transpose it into another. Never is a transposition an exact rendering of the other key, as were we to draw our source from the key of G, there is, for sake of harmonic completeness the necessity of a sharp on the F note. Yet, consider if our target key is that of A flat, the inclusion of a sharp would produce a sound resembling chaos and disconnection. One may contend that even in transposing keys of music, every key has a perfect equivalent in the target key, to which I am in perfect agreement. You see, it is the equivalent and how it is manifested in the target key that must be defined, for every key will manifest the equivalent differently. Some have, based upon Eugene Nida's³ rules of translation, created only two categories for our beliefs to fall under. This is further applied in Bible college where we have been influenced to believe that all corrupt translations fall under *dynamic translation* and only the pure translations falls under *literal translation* (*verbal*). However this offers no explanation of the places in the King James Bible where idioms were used to express thoughts found in the original. Or where a colloquial saying was used, following the meaning rather than the literal words (ie., God save the King, God forbid). At a minimum we must confess that the italics found in a King James Bible are not a word for word rendering of the original, as by their own admission they were added for fluency within the target language. Immediately, accusations began to rise and it is supposed attack has been hurled upon the word of God. We have arrived at this hazardous juncture because of our insistence to define our beliefs by the world's distinctions. It is our futile attempt to prove that the King James is an exact word for word rendering of the original languages, our motive being to make bold statements to the effect that the English King James is the exact copy of original and they are both perfect. If translation truly is the equivalent of the source in another language, could that language require the presence of a flat

³ A translation scholar who created our modern day terms Dynamic and Literal Equivalence. Although his research has been most helpful in defending the literality of the King James text, many have poorly taught his concepts resulting in the assumption that the English Bible was mechanically translated with no deviation from the original whatsoever.

or sharp (ie., italics or idiomatic expression) to make the production suitable in the end? Should we really strive to define ourselves by secular definition, limiting our stance to one or the other? How can you recreate the sources, setting, and leading of the Holy Spirit of the King James translators so as to scientifically explain why they correctly translated *pascha* as passover every time save once in Acts 12? Can you scientifically prove why they translated *tanniyn* as whales (Gen. 1:27), serpents (Exo. 7:9), dragons (Deut. 32:33), and sea monsters (Lam. 4:3)? Have you ever wondered why Jesus, when quoting the Old Testament, often quoted it slightly different, and yet He never considered this poor translation work, or an attack on the original? Perhaps they understood something we do not, that translation is a living breathing act of God that conveys the truth, literallity, and message of scripture into an entirely different culture. Is this to say the King James lost meaning in translation because they did not mechanically render a consistent word for word rendering of the originals? We find ourselves in somewhat of a juxtaposition, for if we believe that we have a literally translated work, then we will struggle to prove its consistency; if we claim a dynamic approach, we allow complete liberty to subject the word of God to man's pathetic idiomatic thinking. Therefore it becomes necessary to redefine our views concerning translation as it applies to our Bible. Man cannot define what only God can do. In Acts, the miracle at pentecost was not that men spoke in tongues, but rather, that men heard in their own tongue. God did not, in the space of a millisecond, cause the hearers to understand Hebrew, but rather allowed the Hebrew that the Apostles spoke to be heard as an actual native language of each individual recipient. Because scripture is "given" by inspiration, we realize that it is the giving of scripture that is God breathed.⁴ Therefore, one must wonder, was there a word for word equivalent from Hebrew to Arabic, Cretian, or Cyrenian on the day of Pentecost? Or was it transposed from beautiful Hebrew into beautiful Libyan? Why is this concept so important? Because man, in attempting to understand how God's Word can be perfect in Hebrew, Greek, and English, yet have the variations that exist in all three, has forced it to be dead, and as science would have it, reproducible in mathematical formula. It becomes the responsibility of the child of God to trust the composer, as well as the composition. To trust the translators, as well as the translation. You see, our Bible was neither dynamic nor literal, as that would render versions as different from our Bible as the

⁴ Note that inspiration is on the giving of scripture not on the scriptures themselves. Obviously Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:21), yet God's emphasis is not on the scripture as much as it is the preservation (giving) of it. You can clearly see this concept when looking at the general way God uses the word *scriptures*. It is always in reference to what God has preserved, not always everything he has "breathed" through man.

Good News for Modern Man version and Young's Literal translation. You see, God's preservation was present in the giving of scripture.

Oft times, we have found ourselves in defense of our Bible, and as we muster strength to stave off the devil's attacks, we boldly proclaim "the translators had wisdom and overabundant qualifications to translate the original words with some amount of variation." If we are to claim such liberty for our beloved King James, can the same liberty be claimed for translation into yet another language? There is no doubt that the King James Bible is God's paramount work of His Word. As Enoch "was not" on the earth, but lived on in heaven, so the Originals (as found in Hebrew and Greek – bound together as one Bible) are not, but the translation of them into English lives on as the standard for the world – every Bible version, in every language using its structure, versification, and chapter divisions as well as selected canon.⁵ With such an impressive resumé, can we be so bold as not to expect from a translation any more than the translators (King James Committee) expected of their amazing work? We most certainly can be, and we must make our aim the same as theirs, as we hope to use a Bible in Chinese that is the "best" they could render. The miracle was that God, in His wisdom, took the "best" the King James translators could do and made it perfect (complete) and inspired (preserved) through His Spirit. Did not Zerubbabel build a temple that was said to not compare to the original (for the people wept when they saw it and said it was "as nothing") yet the prophet Haggai tells us that the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former (Hag. 2:1-9)? We must with the utmost wisdom view translation work cautiously as it pertains to other languages, relying upon the spirit of God not to subject the finished work to the same mechanical specifications placed upon our Bible. Will we allow this translation liberty in how it manifests God's words in another language? I pray we will, all the while having faith in the translation and translators if found to be the product of God's hand.

Translation as it pertains to Chinese is a most complicated task. To the western mind, the clearest, purest rendering of a translated text is defined as being literal, or as we like to say, verbal. The beauty of the English language is its ability to be specific and exact through the avenue of definite articles, prepositions, and a very intricate use of verb tense. However the Chinese language is the complete opposite. Oriental languages are defined as being idiomatic; simply put, the Asian mind thinks in whole thoughts. To the Asian reader, a broad idiomatic translation best defines a successful translation. It

⁵ Not that the King James Committee selected the canon, but rather that the original authors did not, and this was all work that led up to the production of the King James Bible.

is the ability to choose a word that encompasses not only the thought, but a poetic broadness in meaning that could suggest several different meanings. In Chinese thought, it is the absence of absolutes that is considered beautiful and masterful. Immediately, the translator has come face to face with the crux of difficulty in Chinese translation. An example is that of Ephesians 1, where the Bible refers to the believer who is “in Christ” no less than seven times. To our mindset, for a man to be “in Christ” is a most vivid description of the intimacy that can be shared with Christ when a man is safely trusting in Him for salvation. The currently used Chinese Union Version attempts to mimic the English by placing the character *li* (里 [meaning physically *in*]) in every instance. However, we find that this concept is completely foreign to a Chinese mindset. In English we refer to someone being “in love,” “in complete harmony,” or “in complete misery.” Physiological feelings can be described by this small preposition, but in Chinese “in” is mostly in reference to a physical literal location. The Peking Committee handled this well by using a rich abstract character which denotes that it is through Christ, or as a direct result of being with Christ.⁶ As afore mentioned, many have accused the King James Bible of dynamic translation by its handling of “God forbid.” They claim these words are not in the original and were they literally translated, they would produce “be it far from me” rather than the former rendering. However we see that the translators successfully transposed the original meaning found in the Greek by using “God forbid” denoting the highest degree of objection in the English language. Why then, will we refuse the Chinese translation because it possibly does not correspond with our sermon outline emphasizing the English preposition “in”? Although this may seem insignificant, this is the practice of those who would seek to criticize a Bible by their own understanding. It is the practice of poor language students to create sermons in a mother tongue and attempt to force them into Chinese. A note must be made here concerning reliance upon English dictionaries to explain Chinese words. Many, who will not commit themselves to the discipline of fully learning the Chinese language, will rely upon English dictionaries. In our technological generation, there are a multitude of varying computers and programs, and many assume that these can bridge the gap of difficulty in language-learning and feel somehow that their use is sufficient. However caution must be exercised. Even in our own language we have seen the changing of word definitions, which is why most are extremely reliant, if not exclusively reliant, upon using a Websters 1828 dictionary to define the King’s English. Can you not picture the bewildered English student trying to grasp how *let* can mean *allow* and *hinder*? If we

⁶ The character used is 藉, meaning *by, through, as a result of*

cannot trust American English dictionaries as they pertain to the King James Bible, how then can we trust English definitions of Chinese words, which are still the product of the secular world? One such example is that of the Chinese word *ke ai* (可爱); out of the three leading dictionaries used by foreign students in China today, the meaning given was *cute, likable*. Therefore in Psalm 84:1, God's amiable tabernacles are going to be translated as “cute” or “loveable” tabernacles. Yet were we to read the word as it is to be understood by a Chinaman, we would find that amiable, grand, or lovely would fit better. Upon occasion, these definitions have no noticeable problem, however one must always be careful when defining a language with any other method other than that language itself. This shoddy practice is often used by self-professed Greek scholars who simply pick any available synonym of a Hebrew or Greek word and claim that the King James is wrong on account that they didn't pick the word a modern day idiot picked. We will return to this important point later as it pertains to “hell” in Chinese.

Much has transpired in China since the establishment of communism. As a matter of fact, China's estate has been anything but stable for well over two centuries. Through this unrest, the culture, language, and government have undergone radical change. At the close of the 19th century, we would have beheld an entirely different China than the one we see today: libraries the size of city blocks, scholars well versed in cultural prose and poetry, and a thriving economy. Such a strong emphasis of preserved literary works that the scholar was able to read and interpret poetry from previous dynasties dating back over 1000 years. By the time the Peking committee had convened, China was at the close of her cultural climax. With the onset of the opium wars the former literary class was diminishing, yet there still remained a significant remnant, so much that the committee went on to translate a Bible in the literary language of the day known as Classical Chinese. But the direction of China was changing; China would no longer be separated by these two classes. They began to use the “people's language” for all commerce, study, and day-to-day dealings. It was during this transition that the Peking committee produced their work. At this point, grammar was still based in the literary context, word meanings still carried their ancient meanings and had not been redefined to match the then expanding western world's way of thinking. Punctuation was non-existent, following the same style as used before. Idiomatic expression was at its height and China aimed to preserve it in the use of the people's language. However, this period did not last long, as China began to feel the presence of other nations such as England, America, Germany and France. This brought on China's very own higher criticism era. Slogans of “Better translation! Updated grammar!

More like the originals! Literal not idiomatic!” began to fill the air. Not even 30 years after the successful acceptance of the Peking Committee’s Bible did the American Bible Society turn their sites to a more lucrative venture – producing a Bible that was “better than the last.” As we know, this is an unending process, it will go on forever; as the Bible puts it, they will be ever learning, but never able to come the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. 3:7). Anyone who has spent a considerable amount of time in China, will agree that there is the absence of absolute truth in just about everything. Nothing is concrete, nothing is untouchable to the scrutiny of pretending scholars. In English mindset, because of the King James Bible, written word is considered absolute (Ec. 8:4). It leaves little room for conjecture or supposition. This nonexistence of absolutes in China is not solely the product of the early 20th century, but rather found its roots in Confucianism under the concept of a “two-dimensional world.”⁷ This is the view that everything falls under the category of two (this is the root to the *yin yang* [阴阳] that has been popularized by the world). It is this concept that robs the Chinese of the ability to understand the Biblical truth of *body*, *soul* and *spirit*. They only acknowledge that man has a body and spirit. This is evidenced by their inability to separate soul and spirit; only the Bible makes this distinction in 1 Thess. 5:23. It is this concept that forces all things to be placed in heaven (atmospheric) and on earth. To the Chinese, there is no additional element which can explain things outside of our world, resulting in an open door to atheism. All this contributed to the inability to establish absolute truth in Bible form. Even the Chinese Union Version promoted by Protestants in China and the government has been unable to hold this standing as it has undergone countless revisions and reworks of grammar and vocabulary. So we see the attack upon the Peking Committee’s work and all Bibles that have been in China is the same – the nonexistence of absolute truth. Some would contend that this is untrue, but for those who have lived in China, you know that all laws are breakable if you have the right amount of connections (*guan xi*). Finishing my fourth year of Chinese, I attended a class on Chinese thought and philosophy. One day while teaching us the basis for Chinese thinking, the teacher mentioned the concept of two. Using the basest of examples, she picked up a chalkboard eraser and asked us all what it was. I, being the logical American, immediately raised my hand and said “a chalkboard eraser.” She, almost gleefully yet sternly, told me “no” it was much more. She continued to tell us that it could be a hat, or a weapon, or a decoration; it could be used to comb a dogs fur, etc., it was anything but an eraser. I responded that regardless of what it *could* be used for, it *was* and always *would be* an eraser. She then



⁷ From 中国文化概论

told me what would forever help me understand why logic and fact never get you very far in China when it comes to convincing someone of truth. She said, “Nothing is what it is supposed to be; it is only what I perceive it to be.” This gibberish did not enlighten me as far as understanding this strange reasoning, but it did give me a guideline for understanding my previous failures to teach absolute truth. For those who have studied *lao zi*, we see the roots to this philosophy in the first statement of his famed *dao de jing* (道德经).⁸ Therefore, strictly from a translator’s perspective, we see that successful translation in China is not as easy as previously imagined.

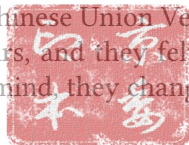
“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar;” - Rom. 3:4a

Trustworthiness:

Understanding the difficulty the translators faced in just producing an intelligible Bible let alone a literally faithful text, we are compelled to further understand what kind of men they were. What were their intentions with this translation? As one studies our King James Bible and we are bewildered by the methods used on some verse or another, it is always a comfort to understand the godliness, patience, and moral character of the translators. It provides a trust to their work even when we may not understand. It has been my practice when I read the King James and find a verse “你们当精考细读主的书” outside of my understanding, to acknowledge that my intellectual ability and understanding can never match the lowest of scholars who attended the work of translation on that committee. I also commit my way to the Author of the Book, and know that He is able to keep His own words, and although I do not understand, He does. Why then will we maintain such a humble submissive spirit as it pertains to our own beloved Bible, and become self-made scholars when it comes to the Bible in Chinese? Immediately one thinks of Jude and our command from the Lord to earnestly contend for the faith. When it comes to defending our Bible, I could not agree more, we must earnestly contend for the faith. The current Chinese Union Version has blatant omissions and blatant additions, both of which are condemned by our Lord in Revelation 22. We most certainly must identify and denounce such wicked mishandling of the Word of God. But as for the actual translation work of taking one language into Chinese, we must exercise caution, acknowledging our credentials may not be half of the original men who produced this work. This point is made to bring in the next topic concerning the translators and the “trustworthiness” of their work.

⁸ “道可道非常道” meaning “the tao is completely unknowable by man” or implying that what is known is not known.

The committee was comprised of Joseph Edkins, Henry Blodget, Joshua Burdon, W.A.P. Martin, and S.J.I. Schereschewsky. These men, who came from various backgrounds, all shared the same desire to translate God's words from what they believed to be the only reliable manuscripts – the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus. They were unified in their goal as they produced the first Bible translated in Chinese that found its source in these two manuscripts. Another advantage they had was the fact their work preceded the appearance of Wescott and Hort's Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts by a decade. As far as the New Testament is concerned, their convictions are manifest in the inclusion of 1 John 5:7, and the presence of Jesus Christ's name in every place it appears. It is a faithful translation adhering to the original in every place. As for the Old Testament, Schereschewsky was given the responsibility of translating it; he, too, remained faithful to the Masoretic by recording supposed numerical errors as they appeared in the original. What we find in their actions is a manifested attitude of submissiveness. They did not wish to interpret the Bible through translation, but rather transpose it as it appeared in the original. This fact alone shows a quite different situation than that of the Chinese Union Version. A good reliable Bible had been on the presses for 30 years, and they felt they could produce something better, and with that goal in mind, they changed the text cutting and adding all along the way.

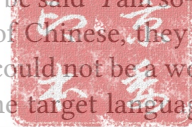


“你们当精考细读主的书”
— 赛34:16

It must also be noted that these men (the Peking Committee) were honest in their translation. There was the placement of footnotes telling every time they had deviated from the original. They made no reference to other manuscripts as there was only one being used. They also followed the pattern of the King James by including italics whenever they added words for fluency of text or definition of subject. Lastly, it must also be noted that these men had extraordinary knowledge of Chinese. Schereschewsky, within two years of learning Chinese, was already digesting ancient Chinese works. W.A.P. Martin was renowned for his knowledge of the classics, having read all Confucian texts, Laozi, Mengzi, and a number of other well known works. He also served as the first president of Beijing University. Joseph Edkins was the author of several works concerning China and the Chinese, two of which are still considered the most exhaustive in their field⁹. Burdon and Blodget were also outstanding in their spoken Chinese and all men had a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew (more than your typical 10 credit hours of the modern day Bible college student). Schereschewsky, being Hebrew by birth, naturally had a stronger grasp of Hebrew, therefore he was suitable for the Old Testament.

⁹ Chinese Buddhism and Chinese Confucianism

These men had reached a peak in linguistic study that compelled them to consider what kind of translation they would produce.

Within my first two years of being in China, I remember attending class and striving from day to day to understand this new and foreign language. My most effective plan of action was to find an English word I wished to use and find its Chinese equivalent. If I could understand what it was I was saying in Chinese, under the confines of English thought, I felt it would help produce a better use of the language. This method worked well until I found that many Chinese words do not have an exact English equivalent and although in one situation, they may share qualities with one English word, under any other circumstance you would need an entirely different word. It was not until my fourth year of Chinese that I began to define words in Chinese by other Chinese words. It was through the use of Chinese dictionaries that I began to realize that literal translation of an English thought in my head would come out stiff and non-native to the hearers. A very elementary example of this is in answering the phone. Many of we beginner Chinese students were corrected by a teacher when we made the statement on the phone “this is so-and-so.” In Chinese, it should be said “I am so-and-so.” Because the translators had attained a scholarly level of Chinese, they acknowledged that an idiomatic translation must be made. It could not be a word for word rendering without jeopardizing the meaning in the target language.  “你们当精考细读主的书”
These men had no intention of producing a word for word rendering, but rather a transposition of the meaning and thought, which included the literal meaning in a Chinese fashion. Before we are hasty to claim that the Bible is verbally inspired therefore we must translate a word for word rendering, do not forget that “scripture” is given by inspiration, that would be the scripture as referred to in Daniel (10:21) which may have referred exclusively to the Old Testament book of Jeremiah. And the scripture quoted by Jesus (Mat. 21:42), which was the Old Testament, and also the scripture as noted by Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16) which would have included some Gospels. It also speaks of the scripture that “saith unto Pharaoh” recorded in (Rom. 9:17). You see, the scripture is alive, it is God-breathed, and every time it is let out, God is in it. Do we not speak as the Oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11) when we preach, and are we not promised His Word will not return void (Isa. 55:11)? We are so consumed with proving when the Bible became scripture, that we forget, all three instances of the Book of Jeremiah (one destroyed in the fire, one buried in the euphrates and one in your hands) are considered God’s Word – with some “added” thereto (Jer. 36:32) - figure that one out. How? Because it is alive. Therefore before we make God’s Word say something it doesn’t. Realize that God will get His scripture

out in the way that will best manifest His grace to man in that language. Some may still argue that the “words” are the promise of preservation (Psa. 12:6-7), to which I agree completely. In English the basest unit of thought is not in letters, but in words. God’s promise of preservation is in direct relation to the thought attributed to each and every one (words). In Chinese, the basest unit of thought is not a word, but a character. In fact the Chinese word for words is a definition of complete thoughts, not individual words. In Chinese when speaking of words (*hua* [话]) it can only refer to complete formulated thoughts, such as sentences or statements. To denote the concept of words in Chinese as we understand it in English, we would inevitably call it a character (*zi* [字]). In fact the very structure used to describe literal meaning is *zi mian* (字面). Therefore we must be cautious not to scrutinize a Chinese translation based on English definitions of words and what they refer to. A very elementary example of this difference between Chinese and English concepts of words would be that of the phrases “He is coming” and “He came.” In English, we see a definite difference of meaning by the verb tense. However in Chinese, the two phrases would be said the exact same way, only distinguishable by context and situation. Although there is tense in Chinese, it is not manifested by words, but rather by modifiers placed at the end of a sentence. While discussing these very concepts, a missionary told me that one of the greatest problems of the Bible in Chinese was that it did not differentiate between “你们当精考细读主的书” 第341页 god and the God. In a language that has no definite articles this is not necessary. The book of Daniel helps us understand how the Chinese would handle such a problem by giving us two different words which work independently of definite articles¹⁰. We must realize that requiring the Peking Bible to literally make every word present as it appears in our English Bible in the same order, is to force an idiomatic language to become literal. Could you imagine taking our literal English language and forcing it to be idiomatic by broad words with no definite? I’ll tell you what you would have, it would be the Good News For Modern Man, or the Living Bible, or the New International Version.

Through their careful, thorough translation work, we see that the Peking Committee Bible is worthy of our trust. We must remind ourselves that these were men who were more interested in properly portraying the love of God in the mind of the reader than appeasing the time-wasting nuances of fellow missionaries. To see just how we can trust their work, we will proceed to objectively considering the text produced by these men.

¹⁰ Daniel uses 神明 for gods and 神 for god or deity. 天主 is used for “the” God.

“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

- 2 Cor. 4:2

Text:

Perhaps the most important topic to be addressed here is that of the text. For it is by the text produced that this translation rises or falls. Our greatest defense for our King James Bible is its ability to stand on its own. There is no fear that the diligent scholar may find a spurious verse that will crush the anchor of our faith – no, we can simply give it out and let it stand on its own. In this section we will look at some of the more obvious translation peculiarities and give thorough explanation. Mandarin has grown in this century to include many prepositions and verbs that are clearly brought from sister languages and are not native. Therefore there is always a group that believes they can produce a more literal Bible, with a stricter adherence to the originals. And as a result, it is believed there can never be a perfect Bible that will act as standard, simply because languages change and assimilate other cultures, thoughts, and concepts. The goal of this Bible has not been to preserve a strict mechanical preservation of every word in the order it appears, but rather to capture the original intent and meaning found in its source manuscripts while preserving the literal presence of every word, through the vehicle of idiomatic expression. While version after version will claim a better rendering, a more literal translation, or to be more like the originals in content, none can more natively express the meaning of the original languages than this translation can. This requires more work on the part of the translators in that they must possess the ability to read, write, and think in both target and source languages, resulting in a beautiful composition of both meaning and expression. The question is not, “Can a better translation be made,” but rather, “Is it necessary?” As aforementioned, translation is not a science that has a word for word equivalent for every expression. Because of this, words do not only have their primary meaning but they carry a secondary, third, and many times fourth meaning. And while the word may be interchangeable with its synonym in the source language, it is not certain that the target language enjoys the same luxury. In the following paragraphs such examples will be displayed to show the uniqueness of this translation as well as offer an explanation of the terms used.

One such example is that of the English word “giant.” In definition, “giant” can refer to stature as well as renown, therefore the rendering of “giant”

in Genesis 6:4 is beautifully translated expressing both the said men's stature as well as their renown. However in Chinese the word chosen was not as simple, and required that a less known expression be chosen¹¹. This character's primary meaning is not stature but rather renown, and the less known secondary meaning referring to stature is oft times forgotten. However were they to choose the word for "giant in stature" they most certainly would have lost the meaning found in the passage. In this minor example we see that translation is more than just matching words with their perfect linguistic antecedent; it is literally transposition into an entirely different way of expression. Another issue that must be addressed is that of carrying linguistic problems from another language into the target language. While in English the use of the definite article "the" when referring to God, alters the sense of the word emphasizing exclusivity, in other languages, where definite articles are absent (as Mandarin Chinese) this would not be a problem. Yet another example is found in James 5:16 which reads we must *confess our faults one to another*. In English the difference between confessing one's faults and one's sins is indescribable. But in Mandarin Chinese the word for fault, sin, offense, crime, and mistake is one general word.¹² Therefore to suspect this Bible of error because one assumes it teaches a man must confess his sins to another man, is to subject it to the linguistic laws of another language. It should also be noted, because of the lack of a strong Catholic presence, that I personally have never met a Chinaman who assumed this was true in reference to penance or confessing sins to a priest. This sort of error is extremely common as we Bible believers tend to throw the proverbial *baby out with the bathwater*. When other versions of the Bible began to make a presence in American culture, the well-meaning Bible believer began to attack anything and everything associated with that version, when in reality, much of what is recorded is correct simply because they have used 90% of a King James Bible and 10% of their own corruptions. The book of Mormon is a fine example of how a man took a King James Bible and corrupted it for his own intentions. But to dogmatically claim that every verse is a lie is to cut ourselves off at the knees. This tactic of half-truths comes from Satan himself, and began no later than Genesis 3 - "yea, hath God said..." Instead of incriminating false perversion of the scripture like the NIV, RSV, and the Chinese Union Version by the mass amounts of textual

¹¹ The word used is 伟人. Its original meaning is found in 古代汉语字典. Primary usage refers to renown, secondary is stature.

¹² The word referred to is 罪. It is used to express offense as in 得罪某人, it is meant to express crime as in 犯罪, and expressed generality by the fact that a criminal and a sinner would both be called 罪人.

errors, omissions of Jesus name, complete removal of important verses like 1 John 5:7, and references to the blood, we begin to find any and all variations and build doctrines around them. The problem is not our firm stance of defense of the King James, but rather our demanding that the same problem be corrected in Chinese as is in English. For example, we make a strong point that the Bible never has Jesus calling Mary mother, and we say that is because Mary is not the mother of God. No – Mary is not the mother of God, but she was the mother of Jesus (Lk 2:41; Jn. 2:5). Do we really believe that Jesus as a two-year-old boy sounded out the words wo-wo-woman, instead of ma-ma? Do I believe the Catholics strain at a gnat and swallow a camel to prove Mary was the mother of God? Do I believe them to be wrong – absolutely. However the truth is God did give His Son a mother while on earth and her name was Mary. Some have attacked the Peking Bible because it does not handle the problem the same way as the King James. This would have been quite difficult in a society that places filial piety higher than human life. Disrespect to parents is still considered the “unpardonable” sin, if you will. Could you imagine the picture of perfection, God on earth, committing the worst crime conceived by man every time he addressed his mother? The committee, well aware of this problem, was sure to footnote what the original said and use the more acceptable respectful form of address. We must exercise patience and caution when deciding what is a textual attack upon the Bible and what is a variation due to translation. A friend of mine once wisely stated, “All the new Bibles have three kinds of problems. First are omissions of the original text: blatant removal of God’s inspired words. Secondly are additions: supplemental changes to make the Bible say what the translator thought it should say. Lastly are variations: places where the new versions, with harmful intentions, mind you, chose another rendering of the Hebrew or Greek word just to go against what the King James said.” Note that the first two are both condemned by scripture (Rev. 22), but the last is not untrue, as there are some words that do carry several meanings and must still be considered part of the definition. Continuing along this line of thinking, we see that choosing variable definitions, as well as constantly returning to the “original” manuscripts thereby criticizing the finished product, are the primary weapons used by Bible critics. A fine example of this is the Greek word *aniphero* found in the New Testament. The meaning is interchangeable in the Greek and means both *son* and *servant*. Therefore the translators of the King James Bible translated it as both son and servant. Modern Bible critics have reexamined the text and simply replaced the chosen word with its variant accordingly. When the Bible used son, the perversions used servant; when the Bible used servant they used son. Therefore we see that no matter how mathematical and rigid we

are in translation, someone can always choose another word found in that expression's definition and replace it. The same can be said of the Peking Bible. The reader will find many passages where a textual variant was used. What is the standard for choosing a word - it must always be context. An example of this pitfall is that of the word translated as "dragon." In Hebrew, we have a somewhat broad definition which manifests a *marine or land monster, whale, serpent, or vile person*. In English, we have the well-translated word "dragon" meaning almost the same thing: *crocodile with wings, a fierce violent person, reptile, or land monster*. What we're missing in the definition is that of the whale, but the translators using wisdom, translated *tannin* as "whale" in Genesis as well as in Ezekiel. This becomes very interesting as we look at Chinese. For their word for dragon has one meaning and one only: *fortuitous creature of luck*. We clearly see that the missing definition will require wisdom and cunning on the part of the translator, and this version does not disappoint. A harmony of four words is used to describe this fabulous creature. Crocodile, whale, dragon, and ravenous land animal are all used in this version, providing a built-in concordance for this mysterious monster. Immediately we are fearful that ravenous land animal is too much like the NIV rendering.¹³ However do not forget, this animal is included in the Hebrew meaning. Does that make the King James wrong? Absolutely not. It simply proves that the modern day perversions have one goal and one alone, to do the exact opposite of the King James. What is impressive is that the Peking Committee chose ravenous wolf, not only for its coordination to the Hebrew, but also because of its meaning. In Chinese it is often used as a fierce, wild, indescribable creature, but also is used to represent a nefarious person,¹⁴ just as the King James did with its use of dragon. So we see that had a mechanical method been used to translate we would have a literal rendering of the text that would completely miss the original intent and meaning of the authors. Furthermore it would create a misunderstanding to the Chinese reader as he tried to ponder how a dragon, the symbol of luck and blessing, could be used of a vile man.

Aside from those adhering to a strict mechanical literal translation, we have those who would hold to meaning rather than literal preservation, what some call dynamic translation. In other words, in places where a literal word for word equivalent was found, some would contend that meaning

¹³ The new versions use "jackal" yet it must be noted that this is in fact within the confines of the Hebrew word. However it must be noted that the Hebrew word also denotes a somewhat mythical nature to this creature, as does the English word dragon, and the Chinese word *chai lang* (豺狼), the English word jackal, however, does not.

¹⁴ Two Chinese idioms explain this concept: 豺狼成性; 豺狼当道.

should have been the target. A topic with much controversy is that of the term translated for hell. For those familiar with Biblical languages, the word is *sheol* in the Hebrew and *hades* in the Greek. The problem arises from an inability to understand diverse languages and distinguish elemental rules of translation. Once again we have incriminated the Peking Bible because the modern English Bibles all use *hades* instead of hell. In solving this problem one only need do a little extra study of both English and Chinese. One of the goals of the Peking Committee was to transpose the original meaning without relying too heavily on transliterations. Except in the case where occasion demanded a transliteration, such are widely avoided by translators as they are empty phonetic renderings that generally mean very little to the reader if context is not explicit or he has no previous knowledge of the word in the source language. Examples of such words are found in the cases of behemoth and leviathan; both are transliterations of Hebrew words as there were no satisfactory equivalents in the target language of either English or Chinese. Most transliterations are not questioned nor suggested when one can be avoided. The problem concerning *yin jian* (阴间 [hell]) arises from poor dictionary explanations and a misconception concerning translation into English that it would follow the same rules as those to be used translating into Chinese. Previously we referenced the danger of relying too heavily on English dictionaries for Chinese words. A prime example is how modern dictionaries handle the explanation of the word *yin jian*: these dictionaries translate the word as *hades* every time, therefore the unsuspecting student believes that this Bible has followed false versions of today by using a word that means *hades*. The main problem with this handling of Chinese words is that a Chinese-English dictionary should have Chinese-English words. For those familiar with English, we know that *hades* is not an English word at all, but a Greek one. So the dictionary is only defining a Chinese word as the secular world would view such a word, which is why *hades* is used. To translate hell in English as *hades* is to rely upon a transliterated word, as the word *hades* is not native to English. This was avoided by the King James using hell to translate both the Hebrew *sheol* and Greek *hades* and *gehenna*. The motive behind this was to preserve meaning by using a word that sufficiently expressed the concept of these terms as well as kept the expression in the English speakers native mindset. Therefore the translation into hell was not to show that the Greek *hades* was incorrect, but rather to show that an English word could be used that expressed the same concept. In Chinese we do not face the same problem. There are over 10¹⁵ different terms that could be used to describe hell and its setting. There was no

¹⁵ 阴司，地狱，阴间，无底坑，阴曹，阴府，地府，幽冥，冥府，黄泉

need for a transliteration as there were numerous options to choose from, so much that they were able to find equivalents to the source word used in Greek and still preserve the synonymic nature of hell's interpretation. This is further evidenced by the fact that future versions of the Chinese Bible attempted to transliterate these words (following the lead of the ASV and other perversions) by choosing phonetic equivalents to the Greek and Hebrew words.¹⁶ We are safer defining the Chinese word by its own meaning. In Chinese culture, *yin* is the negative principle found in the world; it represents darkness, pain, death, and shadows. This is coupled with the second character *jian* which means middle, in-between, place, space. So we see that the Chinese meaning itself would be better described as dark holding place. This is in conjunction with the Bible's description of hell. It is the place where unredeemed souls go to await their final judgment which will ultimately place them in the lake of fire. Some may contend that this definition does not include fire, however this is not so. If one were to rely upon scripture (Luke 16), he would find that the context explains that *yin jian* is a place of fire. But we must not forget that hell is a place of more than just one compartment, for there was also Abraham's bosom across the great gulf, thus the Psalmist's great prophecy "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" is clear when it describes that the Son of man would enter both compartments, first preaching to angels that were bound (1 Pet. 3:18-19) and then preaching grace (1 Pet. 4:6) to the Old Testament saints in Abraham's bosom. On this trip he managed to obtain the keys to hell (Rev. 1:18) and lead the souls of Abraham's bosom to heaven.

Another questionable translation is that of the word wine (*jiu* [酒]). It is supposed that a better translation could be found in using *pu tao zhi* to describe the non-alcoholic beverage of biblical times. Here, it is prudent to point out the unsuitability of placing a greater burden upon Chinese readers than we ourselves have carried. Our English Bible uses wine, as it applies to all variations of substance from the vine. Why then would we force this change in Chinese? Through study one must realize that grape juice is entirely a poor translation for the drink that was freshly squeezed, boiled, sweetened, and prepared for kings of Bible times (Neh. 1). No, this drink was so unique to middle eastern culture, that a generic word was necessary in English, Greek, and Chinese. It is supposed that the Chinese word *jiu* holds one meaning and one alone, that of alcoholic drink. Yet we see even in the translators' own work, they use the term interchangeably with non-alcoholic drink (Lk. 22:17-18; Mk.

¹⁶ Later translations used 哈地 and 基哈拿 for *hades* and *gehenna*; these are both phonetic renderings of the Greek words.

15:25). It truly is a generic term that represents the numerous words (13 in all) used in Hebrew for liquid from the grape. In Ancient China, it represented the beverage of banquets, the drink of statesmen and emperors¹⁷. Suffice it to say, a much more exhaustive work¹⁸ has been compiled on explanation and suitability of the word wine to express the middle eastern Biblical context. Here we will simply state, in many languages (English, Greek, Chinese, German, Spanish) a generic word is used to describe all beverages derived from the vine. As we see clearly from this example, the well-meaning Bible student may wish to clarify in another language what he considers unclear in the source. Much debate has been made over the translation of the word wine in English, therefore it is hoped that this can be remedied by using a word that expresses what the reader thinks it should. This is not faithful translation work, nor is it honest, as how one interprets the Bible may vary from the actual meaning (2 Pet. 1:20).

From this pitfall I wish to consider another controversial term found in the Chinese Bible. Since the earliest translation of scripture in China, we see two underlying debates; one is the debate over “the term question” which will be looked at in detail later; and two is the word translated for baptism. This debate is of note, simply because it still rages in churches all across the globe. Many have adamantly demanded the Bible translate the said word as *immerse* rather than *baptize*. And so the debate continues as we demand a Bible in the Chinese language that translates said word as *immerse* rather than *baptize*. By placing the explanation for wine and baptism under the same context I hope to show that there is a devastating danger to be found in translating definition rather than the actual word. As for the English Bible, there is no question, baptism was the correct term. Without a doubt baptism means immerse, but the translators wisely declined to translate the word as immerse. Many falsely state that the King James Committee was full of baby-sprinkling Anglicans and out of fear for Rome transliterated the word. Their assumption is false on numerous counts, firstly, after reading the letter to the readers, one can be assured there was no fear of Rome. Secondly, they were Anglicans, but sprinkling was not the mode of baptism until the Presbyterians forced it in. There is however, a rather large group of those who believe the term in Chinese should be translated as the meaning immerse and not as the word baptize. Firstly it must be noted that this debate is not a new one, starting with Robert Morrison we see that his choice of *xi* (洗) was criticized before his Bible was even published. During the same time, Joshua Marshman was working on his own

¹⁷ In Ancient writing the phrase 酒饭 was used to describe a banquet setting where food and drink were in abundance.

¹⁸ Bible Wines -William Patton

translation and chose the word *zhan* (蘸).¹⁹ All the while a controversy began that would constantly attempt to put forth new words to manifest meaning rather than equivalence. Fifty years later, the Peking Committee would enter the debate for their use of *xi* as baptism, just as Morrison had. The crux of the controversy is that many fear *xi* will promote baptismal regeneration and/or pedobaptism. As we will note later, many have feared the Catholic church to such an extent as to change the words of God in attempt to help Him clarify Himself. Having heard the experiences of those ministering in southern China (advocates of *jìn*²⁰) as well as those in the North (advocates of *xì*), the same results were seen concerning the acceptance of baptismal regeneration. The point being is that Chinese have accepted this heresy independent of the word used. One may argue that *jìn* is clearer and there is no reason it should not be used to express what was meant by the King James and the originals. There are many words in our supposed “archaic” Bible that could be “clarified” but the question remains, why? Many have felt that the use of *xi* leaves the reader associating water baptism with the forgiveness of sins as the word is also used in the concept of “washing.” However we must not forget that Chinese is idiomatic, and although the idea of washing is derived from this character, so is the word immersion. In a most simple example we still refer to developing pictures, which is full submersion into water, as *xi zhao pian*. The word itself in other context actually carries more of a meaning of immersion as in the example of *xi chen*²¹ Commonly further, one might “Bible the adherence to such a broad word, let us clarify with certainty?” However, could we have forgotten that the Bible does in fact list seven different baptisms and a generic, broader word was necessary?²² Such baptisms as that of fire (Mat. 3:11), Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), death (Ro. 6:3), and deliverance (1 Pet. 3:21), would be better understood as a complete plunge rather than a watery soaking.²³ Even early immersion advocates did not use *jìn* as they felt the idea of soaking did not properly describe “dip.”²⁴ Perhaps we have forgotten that Baptism is in fact a picture of

¹⁹ 蘸 meaning “to dip”

²⁰ 浸 is the term chosen today by many Baptist because it means “immerse”

²¹ The meaning of *xi* can also be fully understood by words such as “ethnic cleansing” (民族清洗) and “purge, plunge” (清洗); it means “complete, or all” such as “massacre” (洗城).

²² *Xi* is used both in the figurative sense as well as the literal sense, this allows the term to be used in reference to baptism of fire, spirit etc. (eg., 洗心革面, 洗心涤虑 – both meaning a complete reform or repentance).

²³ Although *jìn* can mean immerse, it primarily emphasizes the soaking process such as 浸漬, 浸泡, 浸沉.

²⁴ The first Bible translated from the Masoratic and Textus Receptus manuscripts by Joshua

the washing away of your sins (1 Pet. 3:21) and although a symbol, it should carry a meaning of washing. Note that all the baptisms mentioned in the Bible carry the same symbolic overtones; burial, resurrection, and cleansing. Furthermore, Chinese, as English, contextually proves baptism by immersion. In every occurrence of the ordinance, those who received baptism came up out of the water. We must also remember the background of the translators; how is it that Morrison, Edkins, Schereschewsky, Milne, Martin, Burdon, and Blodgett all who either received baptism by immersion or used it for their converts, used a term that supposedly promoted sprinkling or baptismal regeneration? An attribute that both the Peking Committee and King James committee shared was that of unbiased translation work. The King James Committee comprised of mostly Episcopalians and/or Anglicans did not force translation to match their interpretation of scripture, but rather strove to translate the source language as it was into the target language. One must also consider the many concepts of Christianity that are missing in Oriental thought. Specifically in Korean and Thai, the concept of baptism is absent, so much that both Catholic and Protestant churches were forced to institute a neologism. So in common day to day life, to use this term would render the listener confused as it is not used under any other context other than the religious. This is different than the situation in English, as the term baptism is used by people saved and unsaved.²⁵ As it pertains to English, we have a word completely foreign to English speakers, so much that Mormons, Catholics, Church of Christ, and Baptists all use the same term to describe an ordinance as versatile in meaning to each respective religion as a symbol (Baptists), salvation (Church of Christ), not to exclude reconciling of the dead (Mormonism), and sprinkling of infants for salvation (Catholic). So we see that the same term is solely understood by interpretation. Chinese is the same as English in that the term can stand alone for both religious and nonreligious. Well-meaning denominationalists – Baptists (I speak in regard to those who would change the word of God to match a denomination, for when the Baptist does this he leaves his structure of conviction and becomes a denomination) have feared the words baptism,

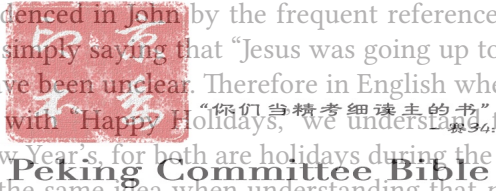
Marshman used *zhan* 蘸 to describe baptism. Most likely due to the lack of versatility found in its definition. There are no figurative uses of *jin* therefore phrases such as, “baptism of the Spirit, death, or anything not having to do with water” give a strange interpretation as *jin* is always associated with water.

²⁵ “Baptized in money, food, drink” - if one questions the usage, the Websters 1828 dictionary should be consulted. It defines the word as being both literal and figurative, as well as encompassing both christening and immersion. Point being, let the Bible define the Bible, we know Baptism is by immersion because of the Bible usage as well as context, the same can be done in Chinese concerning the word *xi*.

filled with the Holy Ghost, laying on of holy hands, bishop, God save the King, and wine. The devil wrests the Word of God (2 Pet. 3:16), he does not need to use any other method, for he knows the words are correct; he just needs to change their meaning. If we forever fear false religions using biblical terms to define their faith, we will always unconsciously feel a redefinition of terms is necessary (particularly in the fashion of altering the words of God). Of note is that the Catholics themselves fear that the term used is not strong enough to support their views on sprinkling, therefore they use *sheng xi* (圣洗).

At the start, the question of the Easter/passover translation is referenced. For those of us who believe the Word of God is correctly translated in every instance, including Acts 12:4, we are forced to decide the standard we will apply to this Chinese translation. Will we require a rigorous word for word rendering of the English text, or a transposition of the thought and intent as well as literal meaning of the Bible? The translation of Easter is a perfect springboard from which to address this question. Simply put, will trusting the translation of this Chinese Bible jeopardize our “every word” belief as it applies to the King James? On two occasions I have watched missionary friends open a Chinese Bible and hurriedly look at Acts 12:4, only to disgustedly close the book, certain of its error as it did not translate the term *pascha* in the Greek as Easter. In our belief concerning the preservation of Scripture, we have somehow forgotten that the preservation of scripture requires inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Cor. 3:17). In our statements concerning the King James Bible, we rightly claim belief in a perfect Bible. This is true in two regards. Firstly, perfect is used to mean without error, and in this regard the King James is in fact perfect. Secondly is that perfect is defined in the English Bible as meaning “complete” not always sinless or without error (2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Thess. 5:17). In this regard the King James does not fail, as it is in fact complete. The use of italics rendered the natively Greek and Hebrew text into “complete English.” By the use of italics and idiomatic expression, God’s words were transposed from one language to another. In other words the perfect transposition of the text into English left us a Bible that stands alone without reliance upon original Greek or Hebrew. The measure of success is based upon the simple truth that the translators provided all the tools necessary for understanding the Bible in its pages through context. For instance should a word have a broader meaning in one language than the other, the translators contextually rendered the text several different ways so as to build an innate concordance/dictionary. Acts 12:4 and the King James translators choice of Easter is easily understood and

defended in many works.²⁶ In English, the translators faced a very legitimate fear of confusion in the text. In Greece today, to say the phrase “Happy Easter” is no different than to say, “Happy Passover.” It is a generic term that simply means “holiday.” However in English we have two definable holidays that often coincide within the same days and could be misunderstood without some clarification. The English Bible masterfully handles this distinction by telling you that Peter’s demise would come after the days of unleavened bread, after Easter. However in a language where there is no differing term for Easter and Passover and the two were in fact one term, this would be useless to try. Chinese is the same in that a borrowed term is used. Anyone who has spent any amount of time in China knows that they have as little regard for American holidays as we do for Chinese holidays. In fact, when referring to New Year’s Day as it pertains to the westerner (January 1st), there is always a clarification needed by the Chinese as the term used is exactly the same as the Chinese New Year (Feb - March). Therefore we have one universal term in Chinese that is used for both holidays. Greek also used a universal term for holiday, as to them, only their own national holidays were recognized. This is further evidenced in John by the frequent reference to Passover as “a feast of the Jews,” simply saying that “Jesus was going up to Jerusalem for the holiday” would have been unclear. Therefore in English when someone greets you in December with “Happy Holidays,” we understand that to mean both Christmas and New Year’s, for both are holidays during the winter months. In Greek we behold the same idea when understanding that *pascha* is a generic term for holiday. Why did the English clarify which holiday? Because to the English mind there were in fact two holidays that the text could be referring to, and they clarified that it was the pagan holiday Easter and not the Jewish holiday Passover. One may claim that since both Passover and Easter are foreign concepts to Chinese, why not use two different terms? The answer is simply that the Jewish idea of passover was understood in Chinese through the avenue of the Old Testament, but the concept of Easter is still foreign to the Chinese. Many will unintelligibly contend that the word does in fact exist as Chinese Christians everywhere celebrate Easter. However it must be noted that the word they are using is not the pagan Easter of the Bible, but rather the western idea of Resurrection Day, and in fact translates just that way into Chinese. Therefore it would seem odd that Herod the pagan king would like to kill Peter after the Lord’s Resurrection Day. It is better to skip the confusion and translate a generic concept generically as it applies to the target language.



Peking Committee Bible

²⁶ Problem Texts – Peter Ruckman; The Book of Bible Problems – Gerardus D. Bouw; The Answer Book – Samuel Gipp.

Maybe an Easter rendering would better suit the Catholic influenced preacher who still likes to collect eggs and enjoy the company of a white bunny rabbit after church, but it certainly does not support the biblical rendering of the pagan holiday observed by the likes of Herod and other predecessors of the Catholic church.

For some time I have hoped to find a solution to the problem of Body, Soul and Spirit, as it is translated into the Chinese language. Although 1 Thessalonians 5:23 can clear up any confusion as to whether man is a tripartite being or not, there is still the issue of whether the concept exists in other cultures. As mentioned before in this letter the Chinese have always patterned everything after a dualistic ideology. This concept presents problems in understanding the trinity as well as man's trinity. When dealing with English, we find that the translators had a vast number of words to choose from to clarify each part that makes up man. Take for example the idea of the Greek word *pneuma*, it is translated as Spirit, Ghost, air, spirit, and spirits. It is noteworthy that the Greek does not define nearly as clear as the English especially when it refers to the crucifixion. Jesus in three different gospels is said to have "given up the ghost," "commended His spirit," and "breathed his last." According to English this is all very clear as it tells us how man is created – three parts. Upon death, Jesus commended his spirit to the God Who gave it (Ec. 12:7), and his soul went down to hell to preach to the spirits bound (1 Pet. 3:19), and led captivity captive (Eph. 4:8), as his body gave up its last breath. Through this I hope to point out that this doctrine was not near as evident in the Greek as it is now in the English, simply because Greek does not have the distinction that English does as it pertains to man's soul and spirit. We face this same problem as it pertains to Chinese. Like Greek, the Chinese word for *spirit* or *life force* is the same as that of *breath*. In other words when you see *spirit* in Greek, it is up to your King James Bible to determine whether it is *breath*, *spirit* or *life*. Some may presume to rely upon context, however in Chinese the term can be literal *air* or *life essence*; this can make things somewhat indistinguishable. Simply put when Jesus died, all the corrupt Bibles in English tell you that He stopped breathing, but your King James tells you that He gave up the ghost, something left His body when He died. In Chinese when someone stopped breathing, and when he gave up his ghost, so to speak, the idea was generally translated as *jue le qi* (绝了气) which could be understood in one of two ways: "His life force ceased" or "He breathed his last." Either way the clearest in this case is the language that supports a biblical tricotomy as found in scripture. So really it is not a far stretch to cause a Chinaman to admit that when one gives up his

last breath that his spirit leaves him, but we must teach them that their “life force” or “spirit” was given by God. For some time I detested the absence of this vital truth in Chinese culture only to find that there is no way any culture without the Bible can understand man as a tripartite being. In fact even in secular America your Sigmund Freuds and other educated idiots opt to notify the school system and the national media that your child is only body and soul. Why is the truth absent from their minds as well as the Chinese? Their ignorance comes from the fact that man apart from God will never recognize that his very life essence was given from God and he without God cannot exist (Gen. 2:7). This is why the concept is missing in Chinese thought (Isa. 51:13). Without the Bible to tell you that God created man (body), breathed in him the breath of life (spirit), and man became a living soul (soul), you wouldn’t have a clue you were made up of three parts. Therefore the question inevitably arises, “Can we then teach, through translating these words differently, this biblical truth?” I believe the Chinese Bible we have reintroduced attempts to bridge this gap. In Thessalonians we see all three distinctions given, however in other places when Jesus gives up His ghost, in Chinese and Greek it can go either way, as His spirit or soul. Therefore in a language such as Chinese where there has only been allowance for the duality of man, a third concept must be introduced. This is not difficult as it applies to body and soul, but spirit as the Bible teaches it, is somewhat elusive. The only concept extremely close is that of “life force” which is dangerously close to Buddhist and Daoist teachings. In conclusion, the Chinese mind must be reeducated that his spirit was given by God, his body is only clay, and his soul will live on forever in heaven or hell.

A roadblock that is often faced in any translation is that of cultural idioms and customs as they pertain to linguistics. Derogatory remarks in our native tongue such as “he is as fat as a pig” only leave the Chinese recipient delighted that you have chosen a fortuitous blessed animal to represent his persona. The humor of this problem can be seen from Chinese to English as well. For instance, in Chinese a most hurtful statement would be to accuse someone of “not being a person.” However in English were one to slander another with this remark, it would end in laughs. In certain cultures, certain words, animals, ideas, etc., carry either positive or negative meaning. For the Chinese it is dogs and ducks, for the English speaker it is pigs and snakes (ie., crooked as a snake; deceitful like a snake). Many of these preexisting feelings come from cultural habits that have been present among the people for centuries. Somewhere around 300 B.C., Buddhism left many social superstitions which are still present today in China. Among the Chinese still exists an aversion to cold water; this

is a Buddhist concept finding its source in *feng shui*.²⁷ Nearly two centuries later we find the Chinese unwilling to put ice in their beverage, unwilling to get their heads wet, and oft times fearful to even bathe. Every culture will fall victim to such word associations, however as they apply to scripture, this makes the task of the translator all the more difficult as he strives to bring these word pictures into another language. One such example is that of the Jewish idea of circumcision. In America we do not have as serious a problem simply because the culture, language, and thought process have all been influenced primarily by the Bible. However, even in the New Testament, we see a difference in cultures from that of the old, and the importance that should be placed upon a religious rite such as circumcision. We see Paul masterfully handle it with the Galatians as he clearly notes that there is no redemptive power in such an act, and as far as God is concerned, has no bearing on any spiritual being. Yet Paul was still careful not to diminish the symbolical power of this Jewish concept when speaking of a circumcision not made with hands (Col. 2:11,13). In Chinese the concept is introduced well, and the Chinaman is able to understand that this observance was a Jewish practice dating back to the covenant Abraham established with Jehovah God. It is not until we are introduced to the Prophets that we began to face cultural differences. God often refers to a wicked, vile, and unclean people as “uncircumcised,” this presents a small problem in China as this practice is nonexistent, and therefore the association is taken to mean that the uncleanness and villainy come from being uncircumcised. The Peking Bible handles these instances well by using the words unclean and uncircumcised interchangeably. For it is the idea of these nations uncleaness that is manifest in Hebrew by stating their uncircumcised state. In Chinese, this truth is understood by describing their uncleanness through their actions. This point is emphasized only to show that words are sometimes more than just literal mechanical processes, they are in fact ideas specified by tense, meaning, and application. We see such an example in our English Bible as it pertains to Job 3:8. In this passage the word *mourning* is actually the Hebrew word *leviathan*. While some would try for a retranslation, we see that translating the meaning rather than the proper noun gives us a built-in definition of this terrible creature of Isaiah 27 and Job 41. The same truth is also evident in Job where the Hebrew word *abaddon* is translated as *destruction* and *destroyer*. In Revelation we see that the powerful angel released from the pit carries a somewhat harrowing name which means destroyer, which in context is defined in the Hebrew tongue as being *abaddon*. These words show the translators’ thorough familiarity with the text; they realized many

²⁷ Chinese Buddhism. Joseph Edkins 1893 pg. 274

word forms are actual synonyms for an entire concept. In English we have these today in such forms as “You Benedict Arnold” or “May I get your John Hancock;” all of these are concepts that, generally speaking, would only be intelligible by an American. In Hebrew, to call someone uncircumcised was to refer to their rejection of Jehovah God’s covenant through the nation of Israel. It was the Peking Committee translators’ wisdom that chose to translate the meaning rather than the synonym. Some may contend that this is to deny verbal inspiration, as the word form would be changed, however we see this practice all throughout our English Bible as many Hebrew names were in fact a word present and in use in their vocabulary. A simple example is that of the name Jacob, which is translated in some places as deceit, deceiver, or deceitful. If one were to claim such strictness in translation, we would have beautiful Bible verses that would read like, “The heart is Jacob, and desperately wicked.” One must never forget it is the practice of “shock and awe” preachers who rely upon such ludicrous findings to make potent their sermons, forever claiming the Bible is clearer or better said in this language or that, all the while only having a maximum of two years of Greek or Hebrew, somehow believing that their “credentials” and I mean that in the loosest sense, give them the authority to interpret God’s Word how they please. If we will take the King James as is, in every instance, we most certainly must allow the same liberty with the Peking Committee Bible as long as there is no attack upon God’s words.

Peking Committee Bible

I have saved the most pressing question for last – that of the term question. For the last 300 years, a controversy has raged with no resolution concerning the proper name to be applied to God. Because of the superior credentials of those who have already participated in this debate, and the diligence to prove each and every term, I will in no wise attempt to present a case for which term is correct, but rather define the position of each explaining why the committee agreed upon the use of *tian zhu* (天主). For simplicity, I will generalize each term’s positive and negative connotations.

Shang di (上帝) is native to the Chinese language and attributed to the Jade Emperor of ancient China. He was said to have the mandate of heaven and therefore (like Jesus) was the son of heaven - *tian*. Today in Hong Kong one can still see a shrine to the emperor who is said to be God. As the words *elohim* and *theos* denote a title in certain circumstances, *shang di* also clearly gives personality and title to the idea of deity. In regards to the generality of *elohim/theos/god*, *shang di* in no way shares this broad meaning and requires the use of *shen* (神) to define false gods. Advocates of China’s early belief in God theory, inevitably believe *shang di* to be the God of the Bible. Proponents

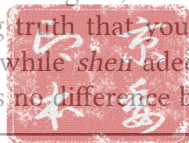
claim that similarities between ancient Chinese characters and the Bible story evidence an early belief in one true God. It is also said that the early name of China is “God’s Country.”²⁸ It is my opinion that these attempts to prove an early belief in the God of the Bible are not without reason, for if it can be established that early knowledge of God existed, then it would stand to reason that the term for God exists in the native constructs of the Chinese Language. Because of this view, as stated by Legge, the controversy really only exists between “tian zhu” and “shang di.” Another aspect of note is the general populace and Christian China’s view of the term. A Chinaman ignorant of all things spiritual will inevitably associate the Jade emperor and false deity to the term *shang di*, whereas the religious Chinaman will claim that *shang di* is the God of the western mindset and denotes the ancient Judaic belief in one God. This point is further evidenced by the fact that southern China, which was exposed to Christianity on a much larger scale than the North, has en mass accepted the use of the term *shang di*. Yet rural China and Northern China all attribute the title to the Jade Emperor or the Western idea of God. Burdon claims without foreign intervention, the Chinaman will never view *shang di* as God, unless told to do so. Therefore one of the strongest arguments against *shang di* is that it can be attributed to a false deity which already existed within Chinese thought. Many proponents of the term actually confess that the reasons for the term’s use fall within the same category of being a previously understood term to the Chinese mind. Because it is not foreign to the Chinese mind can be taught who God is, through the constructs of their of language. Summarizing, we know that *shang di* adequately conveys the personage of God by giving Him title, but insufficiently describes the general deistic nature of God. *Shang di* also adequately provides a term already recognized by the Chinese, yet fails to give God complete exclusivity from other false gods, especially as seen in Acts 19:35 when it applies to Jupiter.²⁹ Without rehashing previously compiled evidence for *shang di*, it will simply be stated that *shang di* is largely dependent upon belief that the concept of God existed in early Chinese thought.³⁰

²⁸ 神州 – Better translated as “Country of Mystery” rather than “God’s Country.”

²⁹ *Shang di* versions of the Bible omit “jupiter” as it is the same term.

³⁰ I, too, was of the persuasion that the earliest Chinese had a concept of God. My main arguments were that their language and worship as seen at the Temple of Heaven all pointed to an early belief in the one true God of the Bible. Other supporting evidences were the name of early China as well as the similarities of early stories concerning floods, creation, and giants with the Bible account of said events. However, the more one studies the clearer it becomes that all cultures, for they have the same source (Babel), point to the Bible account on all matters. To simply assume that similarities prove the belief in the God of the Bible is to make quite a leap. Even the character structure of ancient Chinese script must be recounted. Truly the structure does contain

Shen (神) is the “grafted in” term of the raging debate. Primarily Baptist influence brought in this extra factor, thus providing yet another twist to the insoluble controversy. *Shen* proponents feel that one term to define deity and The Deity is best manifest in the general term *shen*. As concerns the generality found in the terms *elohim* and *theos*, we see that *shen* arises as the most general and in this point holds a strong presence in the debate. In addition to this strong point, it must also be said that the personality of God can be proved in this term, and if taught can be understood by the Chinese mind to mean supreme God. One of the weak points of this term is that it cannot be a title, or, as it pertains to English, a proper noun as is the capitalized term God. Along these same lines, *shen* can never be clear in singular plural cases. It is never clear (outside of context) whether there is one or many. A prime example of this is Daniel 5 where Daniel is said to have the wisdom of the gods; in Chinese this is very confusing as the term *holy* is used in conjunction with these gods, therefore the Chinese reader is forced to assume that *shen* is singular and in reference to God. Not to mention that in John when Jesus sarcastically tells the pharisees they are “gods,” there is no way to differentiate this between the Bible’s underlying truth that you are a son of God upon salvation. Another drawback is that while *shen* adequately includes the idea of god, gods, and God, it also makes no difference between female, male, animal, etc. Therefore



“你们当精考细读主的书”

—卷34:16—

many similarities to the Bible, yet it must be noted that the language is one of the earliest known on earth and most certainly would have found some source from the Babel account. Note this can also be done with the Arabic Alphabet through the means of gematria. Because of our belief in the Bible, it must be admitted that all ancient civilizations knew some of the Bible accounts. Ancient Assyrian writings and records time and time again prove the Bible account of such happenings as the Esther story, and Babylonian invasion. Yet in the account of Jonah we see that it was still required that the Assyrian city of Nineveh be told of Jehovah God’s wrath to come on a people so wicked. My point being is that supposed evidence of a written language that tell the gospel story in Chinese, is a far cry from them actually knowing the God of the Bible on a personal level. I believe this is further evidenced by the presence of the Chinese Jews in Kaifeng, China. Many customs and ceremonial laws of the early Jews survived in a small Chinese pocket of Jews that lived among the Chinese. But through the research of many men, including Schereschewsky of the Peking Committee, these Jews were found to not have any real concept of the God of the Bible. Furthermore the term they translated for God was not *shang di*, the preexistent term used in China. Without belaboring the point, let it be said that evidence is purely circumstantial and can be just as much an evidence of a common source (such as the tower of Babel) as much as it can be of an early belief in God. It is my belief that if the concept of God existed in early China it was in the form of Heaven. Chinese native belief, Daoism, Buddhism, and all other false beliefs point to the superiority, even deistic nature of heaven. The Chinese mindset to this day differentiates natural and supernatural, and good and evil by heaven and earth. Even their most primitive way of cursing the name of God is done in the fashion of cursing heaven “我的天啊。” As the term *shang di* stands, in its highest regard it can only mean “Highest Emperor” or “Emperor on High.”

Peking Committee Bible

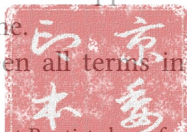
those who have spent any amount of time in China most likely have realized the idea that God could be a woman is very prominent and seen in many false religions. Yet another drawback to this general term is that when the statement is made that Jesus is God, in both written and spoken Chinese there is no singleness nor exclusivity attributed to His deity. While in English you could make the statement Jesus is God and knock out most false religions (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.) leaving them at odds with you, in Chinese to make such a statement only leaves the Buddhist in total agreement as there is no distinction between a god and the God.³¹ Closing upon this point let it be pointed out that the word *shen* is so general, it can include the meaning or idea of god, gods, female deity, male deity, spirit, spirits, ghost, mystery, miracle, vigor, nerve system, inner spirit or quality, fairies, pixies, and all other such mythical creatures. In fact, at no time in Chinese history has *shen* meant singular deity, and today is still only understood in that fashion after being taught otherwise. One of the main defenses of this term is that *tian zhu* and *shang di* can be confused with false gods, however it seems to be ignored that the term that has the most affinity with false gods is *shen*.

Tian zhu (天主) is by far the term under the most scrutiny, and strangely enough, is the expression chosen by the Peking Committee. A brief history of the word will reveal that this term gained its source from early Dominican Monks sent to China. Upon arrival, a large number of missionaries agreed that the idea of God was totally lacking in Chinese thought and therefore had to be taught by creating a term. However they feared that to use a neologism would be too confusing to the uneducated Chinaman as well as create an impersonal deity that was distanced from the common man. The result was a two-part appellation of the idea of God. *Tian zhu* is the use of two preexisting characters: 1. Tian – heaven, deity 2. Zhu – lord, ruler). One of the pros found in the term is that it can stand alone, and is not merely a name for God, but also an idea, for it conveys that He is the Lord, Steward of Heaven and Earth. It grants exclusivity as well as gives a proper name to the English “God.” Like *shang di*, it is inadequate to convey the generality of gods and also relies upon *shen* for differentiation. Like *shang di*, one of the less known attacks of this term is that there has been a false god in China known by this name, however this claim is unfounded as it lacks evidence of such a deity. If there has been a false deity attributed to this term it would be in the general fashion

³¹ My first hand experience in witnessing, upon many occasions has left me confused as I easily persuade the hearer that Jesus is God, only to find that he felt that Jesus was “a” god, one of many. Even the elemental question “Do you believe in God?” is very difficult to ask simply because phonetically it is unclear, and to ask it in that general way changes the meaning to, “Do you believe in spirits?”

as the two characters simply mean “Ruler of Heaven” in its basest form. A more well known aversion to the term is that protestants will be confused with Catholics because of the Church of Rome’s advocacy for the term.³² It is further feared that the Chinese will confuse us for Catholics as the name attributed to the Church of Rome is *tian zhu jiao hui* (天主教会). However, it must be noted that this is a general name that could be compared to the Church of God in America. Although our doctrine and view of salvation is totally different than that of the Church of God, we by no means would refuse the use of the term “God” on the grounds that we may or may not be confused with their heresy. Another example would be that of the Council of Nicaea which, to the Catholic world, settled the issue of Christ’s divinity. Do we fear the deity of Christ because of papal approval? No. We simply, clearly state that the Bible held this belief long before any council mandated it. It must also be noted that the early Jews of Kaifeng, China did use a term very similar to *tian zhu*.³³ It is still insisted that to relate “protestant” belief to the Catholic Church in such fashion is a stance that the early church would never have taken.³⁴ Therefore we see that the greatest opposition to the term is its possible confusion with the Church of Rome.

Having seen all terms in a general light we will conclude with the



“你们当精考细读主的书”

³² It should be noted that Baptists have fought for years not to be associated with Protestants as we never came out of the Church of Rome, but claim a confluent lineage from the first church started by Jesus Himself. So even if non-use of the term provides us division from Catholicism, we still find ourselves connected with religions ranging from Mormonism to Lutheranism.

³³ The term used by the Jews of Kaifeng, China was 艾天. It was a mixture of appellation and position, name and deity. This term, like *tian zhu*, gives personality as well as position to the idea of God. It is interesting to note that the Jews felt *shang di* was inadequate in conveying the person of God.

³⁴ Burdon makes a very good point to the effect that he would rather be associated with the God of the Catholics than with a heathen deity of a Godless country.

“But even if the use of the term Tien-chu did hopelessly confound us with the Roman Catholics, no one knows better than Dr. EITEL that the use of Shang-ti is in even greater danger of confounding Christianity with Confucianism or with Taoism. The reading men in China, on hearing this term from the mouth of a Christian teacher, at once think of the traditional meaning of the term as given in the Classics, and no amount of Christian explanation, especially by a foreigner, acquainted with the language but to a limited extent at the best, will take from them the ideas they have acquired from infancy, and for [11/12] the matter of that for well nigh 1,000 generations, about Shang-ti and Heaven. As for the mass of Chinese, every Missionary, whether opposed to Shang-ti or not, knows that the name suggests nothing but a Taoist idol. Confounded with the Roman Catholics forsooth! I would infinitely prefer to be confounded with those whom I acknowledge as Christians, and with whom I have no quarrel as to the nature of God, than to be confounded with heathen who know not and never have known God.” - J.S. Burdon

committee's choice of *tian zhu*. Much to my amazement the term with the least amount of defense is *tian zhu*. While *shang di* and *shen* advocates have written exhaustive works in defense of their respective terms, the Peking Committee made no such attempts. The term *tian zhu* separates in the Chinese mind the confusion that can be made between false gods and the God. It also does this without the use of transliteration or neologism. The committee found that great success followed this term as the Chinese upon hearing the word did not think Catholic or Protestant, but rather "Lord of Heaven;" immediately exclusivity is granted and an air of supremacy. Regardless of having been approved by papal bull, or given to us by a Dominican friar, the term stands alone in Chinese.³⁵ The committee furthermore makes the statement that Catholicism is not a major presence in China and therefore the term has no real connection with the Church at Rome. In fact only those who have been saved and educated as to what the Catholic church is would know this term is associated with it. To the unsaved Chinese, he would not make the mistake of thinking you were either Catholic or Protestant.³⁶ All things considered, the term for God in English is the same between all religions. The committee did not want to translate a Bible which was to be defined by its separation from the Catholic church. After all does not our King James use such terms as "bishop," "elder," "God save the king," "presbyter," and "baptism"? Are these terms incorrect, or thought to be translated better? No. False religions have simply twisted such terms to support their false teaching. Why then would we "twist" a term to support our idea of God, just to differentiate from the Catholic church? If it were up to most Baptists, they would translate "baptism" as "immerse" for clarity. This committee manifested its superiority to the task of translating by not allowing personal bias to affect their work. Have we forgotten that the King James committee produced a Bible in a time wherein baptism meant both immersion and sprinkling? How did they produce a Bible that refused personal bias? Because men of the day had a personal moral character which forbid them from translating according to mankind's narrow-minded doctrines. We can look through history and realize that today we have been afforded much more light than they, yet God, in His wisdom, was able to use their faithfulness to the words of scripture to produce a perfect Bible.

Richardson in his work *Eternity in Their Hearts*, contends that the

³⁵ Perhaps we have forgotten that Luther was Catholic, Knox a Presbyterian, the King James Committee were Anglicans, and Savonarola was a Dominican friar.

³⁶ Remember, that as Baptists, we are not associated with either sect, therefore for us to avoid one term and not the other for fear of confusion is to be inconsistent. And I fear just as much, association with Protestants who do not believe in Christ's redemptive power, as I do Catholicism which does the same.

concept of God can be found in all cultures in some form or another. In a general way I agree that man (Psa. 19) must admit the presence of a superior being. However, whether He is known by a native word to the language is difficult to say. Each culture must be pondered and taken into account individually. Please consider that Cornelius in Acts 10 knew of the Hebrew God, yet Peter still had to define for him Christ and His redemptive power. He knew God by His name, yet could not know His person. Acts 16 also shows us that the Athenians knew the concept of deity, by whatever name we want to call it, but they did not know God; it was not until Paul told them who the “Unknown God” was that they were able to grasp his difference with the idol they had erected. The point is, that although Paul referred to their altar to the unknown god as the Unknown God, they were incapable of accepting the God of the Bible based on the term written upon this heathen shrine. Paul did not appeal to their preexistent knowledge of this unknown god, but rather defined to them who He was. What is amazing to me is the very nature by which Paul defines who this god (*shen*) is by telling the Athenians He is the “Lord of Heaven and Earth” (*tian zhu*). While some contend that Paul referred to the true God and their unknown god as *theos*, we know that his definition of God was defined as being the Lord of Heaven. You see, no matter what you call God, for there are lords many, and gods many (1 Cor. 8:5), to us, there is only one God. While in China both *shang di* and *shen* strive to create a preexisting presence or concept of God and who He is, *tian zhu* simply states His name and authority, Lord of Heaven. Seeing the complexity of the issue I understand why the committee did not wish to debate their selection of *tian zhu*, as it would only shroud their monumental work in controversy.

“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” - Rom. 14:5

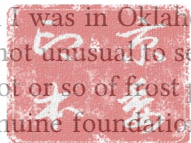
Closing Thoughts:

As I have studied the history of both the Chinese Union Version and the Peking Committee Bible, I constantly am reminded of John the Baptist. As he awaited the Christ foretold by his predecessors the prophets, he grew anxious as to whether Jesus was “He who was to come” or should he look for another. The more I understand John the Baptist the more I believe that he was not doubting Christ, but rather not fully understanding that Messiah, as according to Daniel, must be cut off (Dan. 9:26). Jesus in several situations, told his disciples of the death He should face as well as His triumphant resurrection. To their shame and confusion, they did not fully understand this aspect of prophecy. Even the disciples on the road to Emmaus were aghast at what had

transpired in Jerusalem only to frustratedly claim, “But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” (Luke 24:21) They were looking for a reigning messiah, not a crucified Christ. Was Christ not the reigning King of Bible prophecy? Of course He was, but as God’s grace would have it, the Jews refused their King thus giving us Gentiles salvation (Rom. 9). You see not having the whole plan of God in hand, they were unable to see the mystery of His suffering. And in this setting, John the Baptist was faced with the paradox of looking for the King of the Jews who would reign, not suffer. However Jesus reminded him of what the scriptures said: In the same manner you have seen the blind receive their sight and the lame walk again, you have seen scripture fulfilled as only the messiah could do. He had to realize that it was in fact God’s wisdom to only partially fulfill His plan for Israel. Contrary to the heresy of Calvinism, the Bible shows us clearly that mankind and his acceptance or rejection of God does in fact change the plan of God. It is appointed unto a man once to die, yet we see that Christ gives life and changes the preordained destiny of all those who will trust him. John and his disciples’ problem was simply that they were matching Jesus up with all the prophecies they held to be true concerning the messiah and not realizing there was more to the story. Was their view unfounded? No, yet we see that had they seen the whole picture, they would have understood the coming day of the reigning messiah. John had in his mind a preconceived idea of what he thought the messiah should be and fulfill at that time, yet we see that God’s will is known by Him alone (Mat. 24:36). As it applies to the translation of this Bible, I believe the same question is being asked: “Are you that which should come, or look we for another?” We too have our preconceived idea of what a translation should be, and certain guidelines it should follow. And were it to deviate in a single place from our preconceived idea, would we lose hope and seek another? I am not speaking of allowance for corrupt texts, but rather freedom for a Bible that used the same manuscripts we all attribute to our beloved King James. I speak more so of trusting the reliability of a Bible for its honesty and pure textual line, rather than subject it to amateur criticisms for its deviance from a Bible of an entirely different language. The question really boils down to whether or not God is able to preserve His Word in any language. I believe we all know the answer to that question because of the amazing blessing the King James has been for the last 400 years. For those critics who would tell us the King James Bible did not match their preconceptions of the of what a Bible should be and did not verbally translate in every place correctly, they fail to realize that God sees the beginning from the end and did what it took to give us the Bible in our mother tongue. How many unsuspecting Christians gave up their King James

“你们当精考细读主的书”
 赛 34:16
Peking Committee Bible

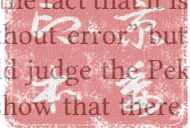
for a New King James that made the “thees” and “thous” easier to understand, simply because they were told it could be made better. I have often pondered why we refuse to allow the King James to be changed. Do we refuse it because it can’t be updated? No, we refuse it because it is unnecessary. For God needs no help in preserving His Word. He is the Author and Finisher of not only our faith, but also the Book you hold in your hand. John the Baptist could not understand how the suffering Christ could be one and the same as the reigning Messiah, yet God saw it from the beginning. Some ponder, how can this Chinese Bible which differs from my King James be from the same source as the King James? James tells us how we should view such things, “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?”³⁷ I believe all know it cannot. So rather than complaining that spring water doesn’t taste like mountain water, or city water doesn’t taste like bottled water, we should be more interested in whether or not it is poisonous. Where I come from in southwestern Colorado, I have realized that we have a different building code than that of the south, east, and north. When laying a foundation, by law, Colorado requires a four foot frost depth for water supply and pipe freeze prevention. When I was in Oklahoma, I realized this not a universal code. In Oklahoma it was not unusual to see a slab poured right over the water supply giving it only a foot or so of frost prevention. Not once did I question whether the slab was a genuine foundation or not, I simply realized that each region required different additions to their code to make the code complete in frost prevention. It would be foolish to move to Colorado and pour a slab over your water supply in the same fashion you would in Oklahoma under the pretense that you were going to stay faithful to the rules of slab pouring. No matter how different the method for making a sturdy protective foundation, I would never doubt the authenticity of the two varying foundations. Only if there were blatant omissions of essential building materials to make a solid wall would I fear and question its trustworthiness. If there were no inlet for the water supply, or someone used sand instead of concrete, these would all be justified worries. Translation of a Bible is very similar. What is my problem with the modern translations of the Bible, including the Chinese Union Version? It is their blatant omission of vital elements required to make a trustworthy Bible. They have not merely built a different Bible, they have corrupted the code of translating a Bible as laid out in Revelation 22. Why should one patiently await the outcome of a Bible like the Peking Committee Bible which may read differently than the King James? Simply because it is “complete” in that to the Chinese mind, it has properly preserved the words of God to the Chinese



Peking Committee Bible

³⁷ James 3:12

reader. It has not removed the necessary elements required in translating God's Word. Now as to a comparison between the strength of the foundation in Colorado and Oklahoma, who can tell? For the elements and possible dangers of a weak foundation are too different in the two locations. One can only individually search and study the workmanship and methods used to produce the foundation before one can pass judgment. Modern day scholars strive to find a version "more like the originals" while we Bible believers enjoy the scriptures as God's preserved Word, no need to redo it, or rework it, just fine as is. A few years back, a man told me he was looking for the perfect Word of God in Chinese. As we talked, I came to realize through his own words that he was looking for "A Chinese King James." I asked him, were we to produce said version, would it ever be exactly like its source? He admitted it could not be, for certain words, simply on the basis of different grammatical rules, would be added or rephrased for fluency. You see his problem was the same as John's, a simple lack of faith. His idea of perfect was a verbal rendering of every word in the order it appeared in the English Bible, only in Chinese. Many years ago I came to the conclusion that the King James is perfect in the fact that it has no errors, and also in the fact that it is complete. The biblical definition of "perfect" is not merely "without error," but rather "complete, lacking nothing." By this standard we should judge the Peking Committee Bible. Is it complete? Can it defend itself and show that there are no errors? Some may contend, "We can always make it better, or easier to be taught, or we can translate a different word to avoid criticism..." However true this statement is, we need only to trust God's ability to preserve. As mentioned before, it is the "giving" of scripture that is inspired. Have you ever pondered how bad it looked for Jesus to be "born of a virgin"? Can you not hear the jeering of the pharisees, "We be not born of fornication." Wouldn't God have saved himself some hassle if He would just have let Jesus show up on earth in a supernatural way other than that? Or why God allowed questionable characters such as Rahab to show up in the lineage of the perfect Son of God? Could He not have avoided that criticism by using someone else? You see with that thought process you eliminate God's goodness and grace. Could this Peking Committee Bible be done better? Perhaps. That is, perhaps based on the way you see it. Or could it be that God has given us a complete, without errors translation of His words and thoughts in Chinese that can stand on its own, if we would only trust Him? Through experience and faith I have found God's Word in English to be perfect without any error. Concerning the Chinese Bible, the only thing that can assure me of its adequacy to pass as the Word of God is the same standard: faith and experience. I am not prepared to reject a version having not read through it



Peking Committee Bible

entirely – I pray you will do the same. I encourage you to follow the advice of Gamaliel who so wisely said,

“If this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

Problem Passages:

Over the course of 150 years of defending our Bible against the “higher critics,” we have received light from the Lord through our native tongue that has strengthened our faith in the Book of books. These revelations have been called “double inspiration” and “advanced revelations” by Bible critics; whatever you call them, we can only admit that they are little “handfuls of purpose” (Ruth 2:16) deposited by the Father of Lights (James 1:17) for all those who will trust His Word. You see, because the Word of God is not bound (2 Tim. 2:9), we see that if planted in faith, ‘twill surely grow into a massive tree of textual beauty. However, these Bible-twisting heretics are not honest, not all of their attacks find their roots in the corrupt Westcott and Hort texts. Do not forget these are the same men who told you Mark 16:9-20 was not in the originals, and 1 John 5:7 was missing in the best manuscripts, and Luke 23:43 was added by the translators, yet when you pick up their corrupt Bibles you will find these verses there. Wait a minute! If those are not supposed to be there, why are they there? I mean, shouldn’t 1 John 5 be short a verse? Why the backflips to split verse eight - could it be they are hiding something? Shouldn’t Mark 16 be a whole lot shorter? Why the inclusion with a footnote? Let’s be honest, if they are indeed the “oldest” and “best” I would be toting those around with no shame. To the Bible critic it doesn’t matter, you do whatever people will buy, nothing more nothing less. You see they did more than just use a corrupt manuscript, they also checked out our reliable sources (Textus Receptus and Masoretic) and used variations found therein. Why would they do such a thing? To make you think all of their attacks were from corrupt sources therefore shooting yourself in the foot when you stood against them. These guys are never honest, they never tell you the truth; when they changed Isaiah 14:12, they made out as if it was from their superior manuscripts, not once did they tell you they got that from Luther’s German Bible. What they didn’t want you to know is that the King James translators knew Lucifer meant daystar, as indicated by its inclusion in the margin, but by using lucifer they gave us a name that had already been in use in the English language for years. The flank maneuver is nothing new, before you know it you are fighting the forefront while being attacked from

the rear. These self-proclaimed scholars are as crooked as a dog's hind leg, they will get you every chance they can.

As for the issue of so called "advanced revelations" found in our Bible, the natural question is, "Can they exist, are they possible?" As we have seen in our English Bible, they are in fact possible, and when beheld in the light of a mother tongue, they are an amazing thing. One such example would be found in Genesis 22:8 -

"And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering:"

Abraham tells his son that God will provide himself a lamb, no other translation nor Hebrew Bible was able to create this phenomenon as it appears in English. You see, the King James Bible translators not only accurately translated the Hebrew text which could read as the other "new" versions do, but gave you an "advanced revelation." That is, a prophecy that God would indeed provide Himself as the sacrifice for your and my sin. These amazing "graces" that God gives during the preservation of His Word (remember it is the giving of scripture that is inspired) are exclusive to a singular language and cannot be recreated nor required in another language. Modern day scholars, not sure what to do with such verses, incessantly claim, that King- James-Bible-only advocates believe in double inspiration. Apparently God believes in double inspiration in the case of Jeremiah. Isn't it amazing that as it pertains to English, the use of the word "image" in revelation can mean not only an idol, but also an apparition, perhaps a computer generated image? And as it applies to this generation where children spend over eight hours a day staring at this "image" almost as if they worship it, the King James is right on the money calling the beast an image. Isn't it something that *imagination* comes from the root word *image*, and is the description God gave of Noah's day, which is a parallel of the end times (Mat. 24)? Now how are you going to recreate that in the originals or in another language? You can't! See, words do not always mean the same thing, nor carry the same broad, or narrow meaning in every language. With this in mind, let us consider three passages that through the King James, have opened our eyes to the scripture, giving us a fuller meaning than even that of the original.

First we will consider Psalm 68, particularly verse 11, which I will list for convenience of viewing.

Psalm 68

1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate

him flee before him.

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.

15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever.

17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

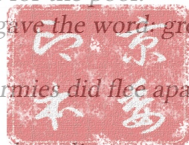
18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.

21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people



“你们当精考细读主的书”

—赛34:16

Peking Committee Bible

again from the depths of the sea:

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.

24 They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.

26 Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

27 There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.

28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war.

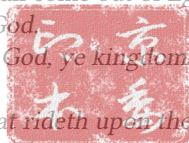
31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:

33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.

35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.



Peking Committee Bible

As referenced previously, we tend to, with good intentions, make an issue out of a non-issue. Every time a version reads differently we must be careful not to incriminate it solely because of variation, but rather on concrete connections to the corrupt manuscripts *Aleph* and *B*. In Psalm 68, we behold a verse that tells of *a company* in English (vs. 11), or a company of *women* in some other versions. Of course, because we have enjoyed the “advanced revelation” of the King James Bible, we have made this verse refer to the A.V. 1611. Considering our Bible, I believe it can be applied, but we must note that the context is not talking about the King James committee, it is talking about a battle to be fought and the situation surrounding it. Notice verse one clearly gives the setting: God arose (Mic. 1:3), the earth is shaking (vs. 8), He wounds the head of His enemy (vs. 21; Amos 9:1), He treads through the blood of His

enemies (vs. 23; Rev. 19:13), the temple is rebuilt (vs. 29). Therefore, we know that verse 11 can be applied to us, but not *only* us. The Chinese Bible places *women* in place of *those* seemingly altering scripture. Yet, even in English, we see God in His perfection, allowed the translators of the King James Bible to use a word that could mean both *women* and *men*, as *company* is neuter and can refer to both. My point is, that because we like to use this verse as a promotion statement for various ministries which print the word of God, the actual historical meaning of this verse cannot be to your printing ministry. We must not narrow the interpretation of scripture to the application only, but must also consider context. God is giving us, right in the middle of the Old Testament, a cross reference to 1 Timothy 3:16 that shows us the power of the Word given. Contextually, though, we need to decide “Can this verse be referring to women?” Note that the majority of the new versions in fact translate this verse similar to the King James text and use *company* or *host* with the word *those*; it is not apparent that the use of the female article in place of *those* is any attack upon the Masoratic text. As it pertains to Chinese, many have feared that this verse would then allow women to be pastors. For sake of clarity, let us literally translate this verse into English from Chinese. It should read: “The Lord on high gave His Word, great was the company of women who bore the glad tidings.” This in no way promotes, nor gives allowance for women to be pastors, especially as context tells us the setting. “你们当精考细读主的书” 第34章 God has gone to war (vv. 1,2,7,8,12,14,17,21,23) and a people have followed him (vv. 3,7,11,18,25). It further tells us the nature of the war was that God fought, and the company followed singing and praising God (vv. 3,11,25). This looks strangely familiar to a day when God will come *with* His saints (Jude 1:14), and they will not fight, but He will; these saints are also female (Rev. 19:7,8), as they are the bride of Christ and will follow Him singing a new song (Rev. 5:9). This company, as the Bible describes it, was women, playing their instruments and singing, telling the glad tidings of victory (Ex. 15:20-21; Jdg. 11:33-34; 1 Sam. 18:6-7; Jer. 31:4). So, what of the King James’ translation of *those*? What if it was a company of women? Either way, the text does not condone women preachers, nor does it destroy the King James’ “advanced revelation” in telling you that one day there would be a great company that would publish His Word (the King James Bible has been the best seller for years).

Secondly, let us consider Psalm 12:6-7.

PSALM 12

1 Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:

4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

There is no greater verse (vs. 7) that promotes the preservation of God's Word. One of the greatest wonders of the King James Bible is that through the avenue of "advanced revelation" we see a verse that generally uses the term "them" to refer not only to the context, but also to the verse preceding it. You see, contextually, we see that "the words" that are spoken of, are in direct reference to God's promise to "set them in safety" who are persecuted (vv. 4,8). However through God's foresight in the King James Bible, He gives us a closer look at "His words" and tells you that not only is His promise to the poor and oppressed like silver tried, but the "word" that is to come will also be purified seven times (Seven years to complete the King James, Seven languages that led to the King James, Seven English Bibles that contributed to it, Seven editions which standardized the spelling). In the midst of beholding the King James' amazing ability to translate the text in such a fashion, never forget that there is always a contextual, historical meaning to every passage. Were the Jews to claim that John the Baptist never existed in Jesus day because he was Elijah (Mat. 11:14), would be ludicrous, however to acknowledge that he was both, had the Jews believed, is correct. You see the term "them" in Psalm 12:7, is supposed to doubly refer to the words of God and the poor. So as to handle the Word of God correctly, we must be careful not to throw out context in order to prove a pet belief. Let us always be mindful that when defending our Bible, we ask for leniency as it pertains to the differences between the Cambridge and Oxford texts, therefore we should grant it when it comes to translation work. I mean, which is it? Spirit or spirit in Revelation 11:11?³⁸ Does that shake my

³⁸ Other differences include: Jeremiah 34:16: the present Oxford KJV has "whom he" while the present Cambridge KJV has "whom ye." 2 Chronicles 33:19: the present Oxford KJV has "sins" while the present Cambridge KJV has "sin." Nahum 3:16: at this verse, the present Oxford KJV

faith? No, not in the least. As for Psalm 12:7, some may fear that there is a big difference between the words being preserved from this generation forever and the poor being preserved. I agree, however no more of a difference than when Paul quoted Habakkuk 2:4 as if it referred to the saved, and Habakkuk in actuality, was speaking of the antichrist when he said “the just shall live by *his* faith.” I wonder, was Acts 2 a fulfillment of Joel 2, or is that yet to come? We are no strangers to Bible prophecy, we know that it was partially fulfilled, and the rest is yet to come, but you must notice the difference between the New Testament quote, “shall be saved,” and the Old Testament prophecy “shall be delivered”; two entirely different concepts, to two entirely different peoples. And that, my friends, is how God’s Word does not return void, you see it is alive, it breathes, it fulfills itself in the past, present, and future, in originals, copies, and translations.

Lastly, we will look at Isaiah 14:12. This, I must admit, is one of the more difficult passages to defend. However, I am confident that God is capable of keeping His own words. You see in the Chinese, the translation of *halel* is not *lucifer*, but is *morning star*. This immediately bares the marks of being a Westcott and Hort perversion. First let it be noted that there is a blatant attack upon the holy scriptures in every variation found in the works of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. However, do not forget that the underlying skill of the serpent in the Garden was that he beguiled Eve (2 Cor. 11:3). “你们当精仔细阅读主的书” 林前11:3 But is he used God’s Word, mixed with his own malevolent God-hating philosophy (Mat. 4:5-8). In throwing up a defense for our standard, we have claimed that the NIV, RSV, and ASV have made the devil and Jesus the same by translating them both as *morning star*. While I do believe that the ultimate goal was to muddy the waters, so to speak, I still wonder can the text, as found in Hebrew, be translated that way? We must clearly define what our objection is to translating it as morning star. I personally believe there is no problem with this translation; the crux is simply that “they” say it is a mistranslation. Therefore our defense should be why *lucifero* is correct, rather than why *morning star* is incorrect. In other words, it can be both. Now I am curious as to why we have never complained of the King James equating angels to Jesus being the bright and morning star in Job 38:7. Was Lucifer not a morning star (Eze. 28)? Are not angels called stars (Rev. 8:11; 9:1; Acts 7:43)? Does the devil not imitate Jesus at every turn (he is the son of perdition, Jesus is the Son of God; Lucifer is the son of the morning, Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness). Also of note is that in the Chinese, Jesus, in Revelation, calls Himself “the” Bright (adjective) and Morning Star (proper noun), in Isaiah 14:12 in the Chinese, Satan is called “a” bright (adjective)

has “fleeth” while the present Cambridge KJV has “flieth.”

morning star (noun).³⁹ As far as our native tongue goes, morning star can refer to Venus, Mercury, Lucifer (Greek word for phosphorus), the sun, the moon, and as we see in the Bible, angels, Satan, devils (Jude 1:13), and Jesus Christ Himself (Rev.22:16). Therefore let our defense be that the King James gives us a proper name for Satan, whereas the Chinese Bible simply tells you what he was. Could it be that the light bearer had a name already in use in English? This is evidenced in the fact that Jerome's Latin had already begun using it to describe both morning star and Lucifer. Could it not be said that Lucifer, that old serpent the devil, was a morning star? Let us ponder for a moment Chinese, since there really is no name for Satan in use, we could give him one, or translate the meaning, both would be acceptable. For those familiar with Chinese, did it ever occur to you that were the translators to use a transliterated term (the suggested *lu xi fu*), the argument could be made that Isaiah 14 is just a metaphor of a Tyrenian king named Lucifer? Did you ever stop to wonder, how that in translating Lucifer in Chinese as morning star, made no question as to the fact that it spoke of more than just a king, but a being (one that used to be a star, created perfect in beauty – Eze. 28) who had fallen from heaven to the lowest hell, and not in a figurative sense? What we English speakers have forgotten, is when we hear *Lucifer*, there is no doubt as to who it is; the idea that Satan and Lucifer were synonymous had already been well established in our culture.⁴⁰ The term was perfect in that 16th century English often referred to the morning star as *Lucifer*. To use a name in Chinese would have made him just a mere person, a mere king, just another term that would have required the Hebrew and Greek to explain. I do find it interesting that other languages have encountered this same problem. The Spanish Bible uses *lucero* in Isaiah 14:12 as does it in 2 Peter 1:19 noting that “morning star/Day star” and “Lucifer” are interchangeable. It is noteworthy that the King James translators, in their marginal notes, called Lucifer “day star, morning star.” Luther's German Bible also translates it as morning star. Upon hearing this, it seems as though I have taken the side of the modern day Bible critics, however note, our problem has never been that certain words could not have been translated different ways, but rather that the King James chose what was perfect and correct in every

³⁹ In Chinese, as there are no definite articles, this is understood by the following difference between the verses: Isa. 14:12 “你这明亮的晨星...” - by the inclusion of 这 in Chinese it denotes “a bright morning star.” Rev. 22:16 “...我是明亮的晨星。” - the use of the sentence structure 是...的 indicates “the bright morning star.”

⁴⁰ Satanists, Hollywood, and Authors all know, outside of any Bible knowledge, that Lucifer and Satan are one. In fact the only ones who don't seem to know this, are the modern day Bible correctors who insist that Lucifer is incorrect so as to strip you of the knowledge of who he is.

instance, for its target crowd. We need not put on the face of the Bible critics to defend our own Bible, critics demand that “it can be translated better.” We simply need to trust.

In closing this section, let it be noted that were we to put the shoe on the other foot, we would find someone could use our reasoning to attack the King James. For instance, in the Chinese Bible, the translators took the Hebrew word *abaddon* and translated it as a proper noun. Therefore in Job 28:22, we are able to see that *abaddon*, or, as in the English, *destruction*, speaks: this is of note, as we know if there were an angel of death, Revelation 9:1-12 would be a description of him. It seems Paul is addressing actual living beings when he says, “O death, where is thy sting, grave where is thy victory.” Can we say that the English is not as clear as the Chinese? No – it is better rather to say, “Destruction is a name given to Abaddon in Revelation.” Can you not see the built in concordance God has given us in how He lays out scripture, regardless of the language? Another such example is found in Job 33:23 where the Chinese Bible translates *messenger* as *angel*, yet we know they are used interchangeably in the English Bible, so are they used in the Chinese.

Know that all of this puts us in a precarious position. We must always remember, prior to 1880 there were not exhaustive works defending the King James. Why? It was unnecessary. Men could discuss why Lucifer could mean day star without fearing it was an attack upon the Bible, for it was in their own notes. Today, we have been forced to question each and every deviation from our beloved King James Bible. I, too, believe we cannot bend, nor waver our stance for the Bible. My hope is that we will not force this Chinese version to be birthed in struggle and criticisms; let us realize that the advent of criticism has not yet dawned in China, be assured it will come, but until then, we shall remain faithful to the words of God and how they were manifest through His servants, the translators.

Peking Committee Bible



“你们当精考细读主的书”
— 赛34:16

Peking Committee Bible



“你们当精考细读主的书”
— 赛34:16

Peking Committee Bible



For more booklets or other
inquiries please write:
Nicolas R. Dunn
jingweiben@gmail.com