Why Protestant Missionaries in China Should Unite in Using the Term "Tien-Chu" for God.

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FIRST: Because thereby the entire Christian Church, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic, would come to be at one in China as regards the word for God. In Europe and in the United States, however Christians may differ in other respects, they are united in every language in the use of the word for God. So in the various languages spoken in the Turkish Empire, Christians, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic, are united in using the same word for God. The same is true in almost all the missions in India.

Are we then in China alone to differ on this point from the Latin and Greek churches? Are we to teach Christians among the 400,000,000 Chinese of this great empire, to call the God they worship by a different name from that by which he is called in these churches?

Still further: In Japan and Corea the Chinese language is used much as the Latin language was formerly used in the nations of Europe, and a vast number of Chinese words have been incorporated into the languages of these two nations. The Latin and Greek churches in Japan and Corea adopted the same words Tien-Chu (Lord of Heaven) for God, which they use in China. Are Protestant missions to differ with them on this point also in Japan?
and Corea? Are we to print our Bibles and tracts with words for God which they do and can not use, and so widen the breach which already exists between these different branches of the church of God.

Is it not time for missionaries in the field and for Bible societies and tract societies in the home lands, to call a halt and consider these questions? Is it not time to ask ourselves whether such a division in the church of the future in these lands is necessary? Whether it may not be safely avoided? Certain it is that the reformers never dreamt of introducing such differences into the churches; they fought their battles on other grounds.

Second. Because thereby Protestant missions in China and Corea and Japan would be at one among themselves as regards the word for God.

Eighty-five years have now elapsed since Dr. Morrison landed in Canton, and yet no agreement has been arrived at among Protestant missionaries in China on this point. Not only so their differences have spread into Corea, and will probably take root in Japan. The late Arinori Mori, author of a work on education in the United States, expressed to the writer his dissatisfaction with the word Kam now used by most if not all the Protestant missionaries in Japan for God.

At the present time there are three ways of representing the word God in translations of the sacred Scriptures into the Chinese language, and large editions are published with each. One of these has used for God the word Shen, which very many Protestant missionaries and all the Roman Catholics and Greek Catholic missionaries use for spirit when speaking of the Holy Spirit. Another is to use for God the word Shang-Ti, which the Roman Catholics after their long and painful controversy rejected as inconsistent with the purity of Christian doctrine, and which many Protestant missionaries at the present time strongly object to on the same ground; which also the Greek church does not use.

The third is to use for God the term Tien-Chu, which is also employed by the Latin and Greek churches. This was first employed by Protestants in printing the Scriptures in the edition of the New Testament, issued in Pekin in the year 1870 by the British and Foreign Bible Society. In 1872 another edition of the
New Testament was printed in Pekin, with *Tien-Chu* for God, by the American Bible Society; and since that time the same society has printed in different editions the Old and New Testaments and numerous editions of portions of the New Testament with the same word, *Tien-Chu*, for God.

Thus these three terms or expressions for God, not to speak of two additional formed by modification of adjectives, are in constant use among missionaries and Chinese converts. Not only is this state of things extremely embarrassing to the Bible societies in the home lands, but it can not be denied that such differences, involving as they do in the minds of many grave questions of doctrines and Christian teaching, are a source of very serious difficulty in mission work in China, producing separations and divisions among missionaries and their converts and threatening still greater evils in the times to come. Missionaries of one nation are divided on this point from other missionaries of the same nation. Missionaries of one church, of one society, are divided from missionaries of the same church, and the same society. Missionaries belonging to the same mission, to the same stations, even, are divided one from another. Presbyters are divided from Bishops, Bishops again from Bishops and Presbyters from Presbyters. Each holds his own view tenaciously, and the differences take root in the infant churches.

True the mighty power of Christian charity leads brethren to dwell together in mutual forbearance and harmony; but the differences are still there, and they are very grave. Nor is it of any avail to look back, as many have done, and sigh, "Alas for the differences entailed upon us by our predecessors." The true course is to meet the difficulties and solve them. It can not be right that they should remain permanently in the Christian church of China; that they should even pass over to another generation.

**Third.** The experience of eighty-five years has proven that the word *Shen* is insufficient as a translation of the word God, when it refers to the Supreme Being.

This word *Shen* has had a fair trial, with everything in its favor. The earlier missionaries, Morrison, Marshman and Milne, all used it and translated the word God by it in the first two versions of the Bible in Chinese. Thus it came down to their succes-
sors with the authority of their names, and its use has been persistently adhered to and ably defended by missionaries of later generations.

What has been the result? Even Morrison, though still advocating the use of *Shen* for God in his latest work, the *Domestic Instructor*, employed as many as eighteen other words or expressions for the Divine Being (some of which were quite remarkable, such as no missionary of the present day would think of using), thus indicating in his own mind a want of satisfaction with the word *Shen*. Milne, at the close of his brief ten years in the East, had become dissatisfied with *Shen*, and advocated the use of *Shang-Ti*.

In the year 1851 one-third or more of all the missionaries in China had ceased to use *Shen* for God. During the period which has elapsed since that date one mission after another has abandoned its use, some deciding for *Shang-Ti*, others for *Tien-Chu*, while no mission which has once abandoned the use of *Shen* has ever returned to it; and few, if any, of the more recently formed missions have adopted it. These have chosen to use either *Shang-Ti* or *Tien-Chu*. There are missions which are now in a transition state, some members having left the use of *Shen*, while other members still continue its use. In those missions where it has not been formally abandoned, the inquiry may fairly be raised as to how far in offering prayer, and in devotional language generally, some other word is substituted in its place. How far those who still adhere to its use have come to feel that the word, *as standing for God*, is insufficient to meet the religious wants of the Chinese mind.

On the whole the outlook for *Shen*, after eighty-five years of its use, is not encouraging. What with its constant use for Spirit in the expression the Holy Spirit, both by Roman and Greek Catholics, and also by a large part of the Protestant missionaries, and its constantly diminishing use for God, he must be sanguine indeed who can still hope to see it prevail as the word for God, and to see all Christians united in its use.

**Fourth.** Christian charity requires concession on the part of those who use *Shang-Ti* for God to their brethren who cannot
conscientiously use this word, and who have adopted Tien-Chu, the word used by the Latin and Greek churches.

It is undeniable that in the question as between the use of Shang-Ti and the use of Tien-Chu for God, there lies a deep doctrinal difference of opinion. It was thus in the controversy which vexed the Roman church for one hundred and twenty years, and it is thus in the Protestant church at the present day. The question at issue may be stated in the following manner: Get safe in the interests of Christian theology to teach the knowledge of the true God, Jehovah, in the use of the term Shang-Ti, which has always, from the earliest dawn of Chinese history to the present day, been the name of the chief object of worship in the national cult, an object of worship having at the present day in Pekin an altar the most magnificent in the empire, to which according to the dual system of Chinese philosophy, there is a correlated altar (the altar to Earth, as this is the altar to Heaven) only second to it in magnificence; having also a ritual in which are prescribed the times, places and manner of worship, the various offerings to be presented, the sacrificial vessels, the sacrificial victims and the persons by whom this worship is to be performed, all laid down in the statutes of the Empire with a minuteness of detail, exceeding if possible, that with which the worship of Jehovah is laid down in the law of Moses; an object of worship standing at the head of and most intimately associated with, a great multitude of other objects of worship, including the sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, seas and various parts and powers of nature, the deceased emperors of the reigning dynasty, the first founders of the Chinese Empire, the deceased emperors of all preceding dynasties, deceased sages and heroes, all of which objects of worship, in the eyes of the Chinese Nation, belong to one authorized and orthodox cult? Get safe to call the true God Jehovah by the name of the chief object of worship in such a system, that is to say Shang-Ti?

To this question, as among the Roman Catholics so among Protestant missionaries, there has always been a large number who have given a negative answer. They affirm that to use the word Shang-Ti for God is contrary to the spirit of Scripture teaching, which would forbid the identifying of the true God, Jehovah, with any one of the gods, great or small, of the nations; that it would
be contrary to what has taken place in the history of the propagation of Christianity in other lands, since the case has never been known in which the worship of the true God, Jehovah, has been taught in the use of the name of the chief object of worship of a non-Christian nation, an object of worship having an altar and ritual as above described. It was not so in Egypt, not so in Greece, not so in Rome, not so in Babylon, and it is not so in India at the present day. Moreover in China the Nestorians did not use Shang-Ti for God, nor do the Mohammedans at the present day.

Some among those who would give these reasons against the use of Shang-Ti for the True God, Jehovah, are prepared to go further, and affirm their convictions that the ancient religion of China, which also is the religion underlying all others in the Chinese mind at the present day, is a pantheistic nature worship, at the head of which stands the worship of Heaven or Shang-Ti, which object is represented sometimes with greater, at others with less of personality, but never as God the Creator of all, before all and above all, as well as in all and through all. Moreover that the entire system is pervaded by the dualism of Chinese philosophy.

In their view the words of Neander in regard to the Manicheans have an important application in the present case, in which the attempt is made to use Shang-Ti for the God of Christians. "In those nature religions, instead of the idea of the personal living God, such as he declares himself to be in revelation, the pantheistic view predominates. Hence the seeming resemblance must transform itself into an essential difference. And if those old religions, in consideration of such a supposed relationship, were to be transported into Christianity, it could be no otherwise effected than by severing Christianity itself from its natural connection with the preparatory revelation of Judaism, and by fusing it with a pantheistic nature religion, transforming it into an entirely different thing."

Doubtless many of that large number who now use Shang-Ti for God, would regard the above as a partial and unfair view of the case. But it has not been taken without careful and protracted study of the question, and it is held at the present time by many in the Protestant church, as it was held in the Roman Church by
those who opposed the Jesuits until it finally prevailed. Nor is this view any more likely to die out in the Protestant church than it was formerly in the Roman church. What course should then be taken by those who use *Shang-Ti* for God?

Some of these have held, "That with the literary sect and in the state religion, the two characters *Shang-Ti* are not only honorable, but the name of the true God;" and they have rejoiced to acknowledge the *Shang-Ti* of the Chinese classics and the *Shang-Ti* of the Chinese people, as him who is God over all, blessed forever." Others have supposed the *Shang-Ti* of the ancient classics to be the true God, while in later times the knowledge of him became obscured. Still others have held that the words Heaven and *Shang-Ti*, while not having exactly the same meaning as the word God, were a very near approach to this and were the most available words the Chinese language affords to express the idea of the Christian God.

Shall now those who use *Shang-Ti* for God assume that the objections to this term made by those who use *Tien-Chu* are without foundation, that they themselves understand this subject more thoroughly, are more free from prejudices, have a larger and wider outlook, and that their view will finally prevail, prevail not only in the Protestant church, but prevail also in the Latin and Greek churches, so that all will unite in using *Shang-Ti* for God? Shall they in this view persist in the use of *Shang-Ti*, seek for this term the exclusive patronage of Bible and Tract societies, and refuse all advances toward unity?

Is there not a better way? Does not the royal law of Christian charity point out a solution of these difficulties? Cannot *Love to the Brethren* accomplish that in the Protestant churches which required the stern authority of successive Popes in the Roman Church? Where no sacrifice of principles is involved it is honorable to make concessions to the weaker party. Be it that those who use *Tien-Chu* for God are thus regarded. Would it not be honorable in those who use Shang-Ti for God to concede the point to those who use *Tien-Chu*, thus bringing to an end this long controversy, and giving unity to the word for God to all who bear the Christian name in China? Such a course would occasion
devout thanksgiving to God, among all who seek to spread the
gospel in this great empire.

Fifth. This way out of the controversy, by the use of
Tien-Chu for God is not new to the thoughts of Protestant Mis-
sionaries; nor has it wanted the consent and advocacy of conspicu-
ous names on both sides of the question. In the year of 1847 Dr.
Medhurst wrote: "The Catholics, who have had a wider and
longer experience of China than we have, and who in their day
knew more of Chinese literature and ideas than we can expect to
know for the next century, are in this respect capable of affording
us a lesson. They on their first arrival in the empire adopted the
word Shen for God, and they in their translation of part of the
New Testament employed that word; but they have been com-
pelled to give it up, and have adopted instead Tien-Chu, as indicat-
ive of that unity and supremacy which Shen could never give.
If the rest of the brethren are of opinion that it would be better to
profit by their experience, I shall have no objection to adopt Tien-
Chu." (Italics by the writer of this paper.)

The first Bishop of the Church of England in China, the Rt.
Rev. George Smith, Bishop of Victoria, in 1851 wrote to the Rev.
T. W. Mellor, Editorial Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible
Society, as follows: "Tien-Chu (The Lord of Heaven) the
Roman Catholic term for God, has doubtless many things to
recommend it as preferable, being stereotyped by nearly a century
and a half of usage in a religion which numbers its tens of thou-
sands of converts in every province of the empire, and whose
religious nomenclature Protestant Christians have adopted in
most other points. * * * Glad should I be if the able pen of
Dr. Medhurst could induce the Protestant Missionary body to
accept Tien-Chu as the basis of compromise."

In the year 1864 the Rev. Dr. Maday, then Superintendent
of the American Methodist Mission, in Fuh Chou, proposed to
the Protestant Missionaries in China to use Tien-Chu for God,
and either Sheng-Shen or Sheng-Ling for the Holy Spirit. In a
letter dated July 13, 1876, he supports this proposition at length.
He writes among other things, "It is well to learn, even from our
enemies. The Romish Missionaries have fought the battle on the
term question and settled it for themselves. Why not accept this
term? Expediency aside, is it wrong for us to use the same terms for God and Spirit in China, when we are doing so in English?"

In the year 1865 the following paper was drawn up and circulated in Pekin largely through the exertions of the late Rev. Alexander Williamson, LL. D.: "In preparing and circulating a new Mandarin Version of the New Testament, we are unanimous in desiring uniformity of terms and propose to employ those which we find to afford the only practicable bases of union, viz: Tien-Chu for God and Sheng-Shen for Holy Spirit. In conforming to this basis we do not propose to restrict ourselves in any other respect for the present.'"


The Rev. J. S. Burdon, now Bishop of Victoria and South China, was absent at the time, being in England; and the Rev. I. J. Schereschewsky, afterward Bishop Schereschewsky, of the American Episcopal Mission, was also absent from Pekin. Consequently their names do not appear on the paper, although both of them warmly approved of it as a basis of union.

It is not strange that this proposition was not at once received by missionaries in the south of China. Changes in such matters, when not enforced, but made by conviction, take place slowly. Many of those who signed the paper became discouraged and did not consider themselves bound by it. Yet the movement for the use of Tien-Chu was permanent. Two editions of the New Testament were printed with Tien-Chu for God; the first by the British and Foreign Bible Society, the second by the American Bible Society, which society has since printed different editions both of the New Testament and of the Old Testament with Tien-Chu for God; also numerous editions of portions of the Scriptures. Many
tracts also have been printed with *Tien-Chu* for God in large editions.

Dr. Williamson, who in 1865 made the proposition above stated, wrote in a private letter twenty-five years later as follows: "*Tien* (Heaven) in the Chinese mind and in Chinese literature has very decided personality about it. Still I think the early Roman Catholics, in view of the whole case, did right in placing this personality beyond doubt and giving it emphatic prominence by adding Lord (*Chu*) to it, and thus setting God forth as *Tien-Chu*. I therefore wish our predecessors had adopted this term, as well as others bearing on religious nomenclature, at the commencement of their work in China."

"The Church of England Mission" in North China, at the head of which is the Rev. Bishop Scott, has from the first followed the usage of the Roman Catholics (*Tien-Chu* and *Sheng-Shen*) for God and the Holy Spirit.

It was to be expected that in the dictionaries made by Russians and Frenchmen, *Tien-Chu* would be given as the equivalent of the God of Christians. Mr. Herbert Giles of the British Consular Service in his recently published Chinese-English dictionary, after translating *Tien-Chu* as the "Lord of Heaven," adds this remark: "This term has been adopted by the Roman Catholics as the Chinese equivalent for God, and is the least open to objection of all terms so far in use amongst Christian missionaries."

Enough has been said under this head to show that the use of *Tien-Chu* for God, has seemed to many to afford a way out of the difficulties of the controversy.

**Sixth.** Answers to objections to the use of *Tien-Chu* for God.

It is implied in the remark above quoted that objections may be urged against every term which has been proposed, and it may be added, which can be proposed as a translation of the word God into Chinese. Objections to the words *Shen* and *Shang-Ti* have already been alluded to. It remains to state and to answer, so far as may be, objections which have been urged against the use of *Tien-Chu*.

Objection 1. The term does not correspond to *Elohim*, *Durs* and *Theos*, which words can be used in the singular or plural at pleasure and can be applied to false gods as well as the only true
and living God. This was a point of earnest contention in the argument of the first Bishop Boone; and it certainly is desirable that, as in the original language of the Sacred Scriptures and in the various languages of Europe, so in all other languages such a word should be formed.

But what if in the Chinese language such a term can not be found? It will be remembered by those who urge that Shen is such a term, that in the view of the greater number of missionaries in China, both Protestant and Roman Catholics, this word is insufficient to meet the higher uses of the word God to signify the one and only Creator and Lord, whom Christians adore and serve; while many regard the word as meaning spirit or spirits, and this alone.

It will be remembered also by those who contend that Shang-Ti is such a term, that this has never been used by the Roman Catholics as a general word for God, the gods, and it is regarded by the greater part of Protestant missionaries, among them many who use Shang-Ti for God, as out of place when applied to the gods generally. Thus it appears that neither Shen nor Shang-Ti in the view of most missionaries, correspond to Elohim, Theos and Durs. The same is the case with Tien-Chu. When used properly it signifies the true and only God, and may not be applied to false gods.

This leads to the question whether in the Chinese language it is necessary to find a word thus corresponding to the words Elohim, Theos and Durs; whether the Christian religion may not be taught to the Chinese in its integrity, while using one word for God and another word for gods, as is now done by the Roman Catholics and by many Protestants.

Some light on this question may be obtained by referring to what is done in India. It is well known that throughout the greater part of India the word deva is used for god, gods. It is also used for the true God as a translation of Elohim and Theos, generally in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, and wherever Mahratti is spoken. But in the greater part of India deva cannot be used for the true God. "Even in southern India it labors under the objection of having been more frequently used to denote a god than God. While in northern India it would be almost
unavoidable and universal that it should be understood by the ignorant as descriptive of inferior deities."

Among the fifty millions who speak the Hindustan or Urdu the word Khuda, Lord, is used for God. This is the word used by the Mohammedans for God. In the Hindi which is spoken by a still greater number of people the word Ishwara, Lord, is used for God and Para Ishwara, the Supreme Lord, for Jehovah. Also in some parts of Southern India, Ishwara with some qualifying adjective is used for God, while, as in northern India, the word deva is used for god, gods. Thus it appears that in the greater part of India the missionaries use one word for God and another word for god, gods. If such is the case in India, may not the same thing be done in China? If the Christian faith is taught in its integrity and purity in India, notwithstanding this infelicity in the language, may not the same result be secured in China?

Objection 2. It has been objected to the use of Tien-Chu for God that there are also Pagan associations connected with this term. Such an objection should be fairly met and receive all due consideration. It is said that Tien-Chu was one of the eight gods worshipped by the renowned Emperor, Ts’in Shi Hwang.

The mention of this worship is found in the words of Sz Ma Ts’ien, the great historian of China. It occurs incidentally in his account of the very ancient worship called Feng-Shan which was offered on the mountain Tai Shan in Shan-Tung. Ts’in Shi Hwang, having given offense to this literary man by his method of performing these sacrifices, was derided by them on account of a violent storm which he encountered in coming down from the mountain. Thereupon he went to the east and sacrificed to the famous mountains and great streams; also to “The eight gods.” The eight gods were Tien-Chu, Lord of Heaven; Ti-Chu, lord of earth; Ping-Chu, lord of war; Yin-Chu, lord of darkness; Yang-Chu, lord of light; Yueh-Chu, lord of the moon; jih-Chu, lord of the sun; and Ssu Shih-Chu, lord of the four seasons.

With regard to this worship it is to be observed first, that the going to Tai Shan to perform the rites Feng-Shan was very infrequent, only a very few out of all the emperors of China having done this and that but once in a lifetime. Second that the worship of “the eight gods” was quite distinct from this worship on
Tai-Shan, and is only mentioned as having been performed once by T'sin Shi Hwang, and never by any other emperor. Third, that beyond the bare mention in this place, no information in regard to this worship is accessible to scholars generally, and nothing whatever is known of it to the common people, so that only a few students of antiquity know of it, and their conjecture is that it may have been some worship handed down in the feudal kingdom of which T'sin Shi Hwang was chief. Fourth, that it is not supposed that the state worship of this great emperor differed from that of the other emperors of China.

Just as little is known of the worship of Tien-Chu by a tribe of Mon-gods called the Hsien-Fu, who were subject to the Huns, and afterwards submitted to Wu Ti of the Han dynasty, nothing beyond the bare mention.

Besides these there is in Buddhist books mention of the God Indra, in Chinese Yien ToLo, one of whose titles is Neng-Tien-Chu, the powerful Lord of the Devas, the Chinese word Tien (Heaven) here being used for the word Deva, gods.

The answer then to the objection from the pagan uses of the term Tien-Chu is that such uses are very infrequent, are quite unknown to the common people and not generally known to scholars, while its use to designate the God of Christians is known throughout the Chinese Empire. In this connection the mind naturally turns to the associations connected with the term Shang-Ti and the objection to its use for God stated above, on the ground that it not only was the name of the principal object of worship of Ts'in Shi Hwang but of all the emperors who preceded him, as it has also been the name of the chief object of all the emperors who have succeeded him down to the present day, who all at the winter solstice worship the "Glorious Heaven, Shang-Ti," as at the summer solstice they worship the "Glorious Earth the Spirit," and that the term Shang-Ti is inseparably bound up in the Chinese pantheon.

Objection 3. It has been objected to the use of Tien-Chu for God, that the words Tien (Heaven) and Chu (Lord) are in apposition and often mean only Heaven, so that non-Christians misunderstand the doctrine and suppose us to teach that Heaven is the God we worship.
This objection would not, of course, be urged by those who think the Tien (Heaven) of the Chinese worship signifies the same or nearly the same as the God whom Christians worship, but only by those who wish to escape this, in their view, pantheistic worship.

In considering this objection it is to be observed that the same might also be urged against the use of Tien-Fu for Heavenly Father, which is universal among the missionaries in China and is regarded not only as a correct but a very happy form of expression. The objection would be that the combination Tien-Fu means only Heaven as Father, Father and Heaven being the same. Certainly this would be the meaning if the word Fu were placed before Tien so as to read Fu Tien. In this it would correspond with Fu Tien in the expression everywhere current, Fu Tien, Mu Ti, Father Heaven, Mother Earth. One and the same answer may be given to this objection against the combinations Tien-Chu and Tien Fu. It is that they are very infrequently employed in Chinese literature or in the speech of the common people, so that the meaning attached to them is easily fixed by Christian usage. In fact the native Christians very frequently drop the word Tien and use Chu alone, as do the Mohammedans, thus showing how they understand the continuation Tien-Chu. On the other hand they never drop the Chu or Fu so as to use Tien alone, for they all know that the God they worship is not (Tien) Heaven but the Lord of Heaven.

These combinations Tien-Chu, Tien Fu are to be widely distinguished from Tien-Ye, Lao Tien Ya (Sire Heaven, old Sire Heaven) which are everywhere in use among the people of China and are simply a personification of Heaven, the word Ye being attached to Heaven with careless ease containing slight honor, amounting almost to slang; it is evident in numerous other expressions in which the same word Ye is used. Some of these are Sire Heaven, Sire Heaven and Earth (Nature), Sire City God, Sire Sun, Sire Moon, Sire Kitchen-God, God of Wealth, Sire Local Deity, Sire Dragon King, Sire Buddha, etc., etc.

Objection 4. It has been objected to the use of Tien-Chu for God, that in this combination the character Chu may sometimes be used as a verb and the passage from the Shuoh Wen is cited,
in what it is said that Heaven controls (*Chu*) descending down of air or breath to influence all things. In answer to this objection it is sufficient to say that the word *Chu* when thus combined with Heaven (*Tien*), is very seldom used as a verb; and whenever it has this signification the fact is very easily determined by the connection.

Objection 5. It has been objected that the expression Lord of Heaven localizes God, since God is not only the God of Heaven, but of the earth also and of every part of the universe. But it should be remembered that the expression Lord of Heaven by no means confines the power of God to Heaven, but rather exalts it over all parts of the universe. The Heavens are conceived of as the most grand, exalted, vast of all God's work, and in speaking of the Lord of Heaven we set his glory above all creative things. Thus in the Bible, especially in the books of Ezra, Nehemia and Daniel, which were written after the people had been brought by captivity into contact with the ethnic religions in Babylon, we find the true God, Jehovah, often called the God of Heaven. So far from localizing God the design was to exalt him, not only above all false gods but above the most glorious parts of the frame of nature, and so as above and over all.

Objection 6. It has been objected to the use of *Tien-Chu* for God, that the word *Chu* is needed as a translation of Lord, and that by its use in the combination *Tien-Chu* for God, we restrict our vocabulary so as to have but one word for Lord and God. That there is force in the objection no one can deny. It is frankly admitted that the Chinese language does not afford us the two words Lord and God, as do the Hebrew, Greek and Latin and the languages of modern Europe. The objections which lie against the use of either *Shen* or *Shang-Ti* in this sense have been already attended to. It is without the scope of this paper to give them in full. Suffice it to say that from the first entrance into China of those who had derived their monotheism from the Bible, neither of these words has been accepted by all as the word for God. The Nestorian Christians and the Mohammedans employed either of them. They used *Chu* (Lord) and *Chen-Chu* (True Lord) for God. They also brought in at times the word *Elohim*, as in our
day a Christian might introduce the word Jehovah in saying the true God, Jehovah.

The Chinese is not the only language in which the word Lord is used for God. As has been already stated, in the greater part of India Ishwara and Para Ishwara, Lord and Supreme Lord, are used for God and Jehovah; also among the fifty millions of Urdu speaking Mohammedans in India the word Khuda (Lord) is used for God. Moreover it has been observed that in China the combination Tien-Chu (Lord of Heaven) does in a measure relieve the difficulty. For in this way God is set forth as Lord over the most glorious, exalted and immeasurable vast of all his works, so that he alone can receive this appellation. Hence it is that the words Chu, Tien-Chu as a rendering for the words Lord God, so frequently occurring in the Bible, are not mere tautology, but conveys a most elevating conception of the Divine Being, in this respect having a decided advantage over the words Chu, Shang-Chu (Lord Supreme Lord), as a rendering of the same expression.

Objection 7. It has been objected to the use of Tien-Chu for God, that the decision to use this term was made out of China, among those not familiar with the language, and not understanding the nature of the case.

This objection, it will be observed, has force only as against the place in which the decision was made, and not against the decision itself, since a right decision may be made in a wrong place. The same objection may be urged against the use of Shang-Ti for God, since the British and Foreign Bible Society made its decision to use this term also out of China in Great Britain, and has adhered to this decision, with the single exception of printing one edition of the New Testament with Tien-Chu for God. Also the Scotch and National Bible Society formed its decision, and has, so far as is known to the writer, made no exception to its use of Shang-Ti. The combined action of these two societies has of course given great currency to this term. The greater number of missionaries cannot be expected to examine such a question for themselves, and very naturally accept what is given them by their societies. At the same time it has come to pass that those English missionaries, among them the Bishop and
Presbyters of the North China Mission of the Church of England, and the senior Bishop of the Church Mission Society in China, who cannot consent to the use of Shang-Ti for God, have been, and are still, unable to secure Bibles for their work from the two British Bible Societies.

The same objection, that of deciding the question out of China might at one time have been urged against the use of Shen for God, since the American Bible Society in like manner formed its decision to use this word for God. This society however subsequently listened to the representation of missionaries and changed its course so as to accommodate itself to their wants. Yet it still maintains the view which it has held from the first, "That the use of Shang-Ti is highly objectionable as having a pantheistic sense in the minds of the learned, and an idolatrous sense in the minds of the vulgar." As to the validity of the argument against deciding such a question out of China there is this to be said, In what is popularly known as the "Term Question" in China there are two questions involved, the one a question of theology, the other a question of philology, as to the proper use of words. The theological question centers in the identifying, or putting Chinese converts in a way to identify, the chief object of worship in the national cult of China, the Shang-Ti or Tien of the Chinese classics and of the Chinese people, with the true God, Jehovah, by using the name of the chief object of worship in this cult, Shang-Ti for the God whom Christians worship.

In such a question the opinion of judicious theologians in the home lands well read in church history, who have also made a study of comparative religions, must have great value. On the whole it would appear that a combination of Chinese scholarship with such theological attainments is needed, and that the place of the decision is a matter of less importance.

Objection 8. It is objected to the use of Tien-Chu for God that the decision to use this term was made by the Pope of Rome. This again is an objection, not so much against the decision itself as against the person from whom it emanates. A correct decision may be given by a person to whom it pertains not to give such a decision. The decisions of the Pope of Rome have just so much of force as they have of truth or reason in their favor. If they
are correctly formed judgments, agreeable to the Sacred Scriptures, and
commending themselves to the reason, they will stand. If
the contrary is true of them, they are without force and cannot
stand. It would be a task no Protestant would venture on to go
through with all the decisions of the Popes of Rome, and remove
from the church everything in doctrine and practice which has
been settled by such decisions.

While nothing is claimed for this decision on the ground of
the authority of the Popes of Rome, yet it is urged that in all fair­
ness the bare fact that the decision emanated from successive
Popes is not sufficient reason for its rejection. On the contrary,
if attention is given to the circumstances of the case and to the
history of the discussion much will be found to commend it to the
thoughtful consideration of those who do not acknowledge the
See of Rome.

The impartial student of this controversy in the Roman church
will not fail to note that the decision to use *Tien-Chu* for God, and
not to use *Shang-Ti*, was made and enforced, not as against Prot­
estanism but as against Paganism, and that it was made appar­
tently contrary to all the worldly interests and outward prosperity
of the church; made in the face of great opposition from the
Chinese Government and consequent danger of persecution and
death; made after ineffectual efforts to adjust these differences in
China, at one time by a conference of the leading members of the
Jesuit order before the arrival of the other orders in China; at
another time by a conference of members of all the orders; and
finally that it was made and enforced, not as the single act of one
Pope, but by successive Popes through a period of many years,
the one decision being in fact like decisions, the first in 1656, the
last in 1743, most of them arrived at only after very careful and
deliberate investigations of the most learned theologians in Rome,
the testimony of the most able missionaries on both sides of the
question and of numerous Chinese being cautiously weighed and
duly estimated. Such considerations, and others which can not
be mentioned here, may suggest the question whether God in his
providence has not by these discussions in the Roman church
(though not unmingled with heat and animosity of feeling, as is
often the case in such controversies) and by the decision of so
many Popes, for the most part very carefully taken, indicated to his people in after times the proper course amid these very difficult questions which meet the Christian missionary in China. The decisions in regard to ancestral worship and the worship of Confucius are very generally accepted as correct by Protestant missionaries. Will it not be found that the decision to use Tien-Chu, and not Shang-Ti, was also correct?

Objection 9. It has been objected to the use of Tien-Chu for God, that Protestant Christians would thereby be confounded with the Roman Catholics. In this case the objection is not to the term itself, but to the supposed consequences of its use by the Protestants. It is said that the Roman Catholics are called in China the Tien-Chu Chiao, the church of Tien-Chu (the church of God), and if Protestants adopt the same word Tien-Chu for God they will inevitably be regarded as of the same religion. It should be borne in mind by those who urge this objection, that alike reasons against using the same word for God which the Roman Catholics use, must exist in every mission field in which the Roman Catholics have preceded Protestants, and in which they have called their church “The church of God.” Are the objections then prepared in every such case to use a different word for God? But this has not been done in other mission fields. In all Christian lands, and in almost every one of the non-Christian countries in which Protestant and Roman Catholic missions co-exist, the same word is now used for God in both. Not only so, but it is easy to see that the rule adopting a different word might in many cases cause great disadvantages to Protestant missions, by giving them an inferior word or indeed leave them in grave doctrinal errors, as, in the view of many, is true in the present case. But how far would those who oppose the use of Tien-Chu be willing to apply this principle? To the word for God only, or also to the word for Lord Jesus. Suppose the Roman Catholics in any country had called their church the church of Jesus (as Protestants in China have called the Protestant church), would Protestants in that country be debarred from using the same word for the Lord Jesus which they also use? Or, to turn the question around, if Protestant Christians in any country should precede the Roman Catholics and call their church
the 'Church of God,' or the church of Jesus, is it supposed that on this account the Roman Catholics would refrain from using the same word for God, or for Jesus, which the Protestants also use? At present Protestant missions in China are known as the *Yasu-Chiao* or the church of Jesus (or the church of Christ, the word Jesus being used in China much as the word Christ is used in western lands). Are Roman Catholics on this account to use a different word from that which Protestants use for the Lord Jesus, lest they should be confounded with the Protestant church? Such considerations seem insufficient on either side to warrant the avoidance of the words in question, thereby necessitating the search for some other word which may be less suitable for the purpose. The fear of being confounded with the Roman Catholics is not a sufficient reason to determine the choice of the word for God among Protestant Christians. These branches of the church of God are not to be distinguished from each other by calling God or Christ by different names, but by the things in which they really differ. The true Christian, be he Protestant or Roman Catholic, belongs to the church of God, also to the church of the Lord Jesus; and he places himself at a disadvantage before non-Christian hearers when he denies that he belongs to the one or the other. Some other way should be found for expressing his descent from those whom he regards to be in error. *The Roman Catholic church* is a name well known in other countries, which fitly distinguishes that branch of the Christian church from all others. Why not employ this designation in China? It is already employed to some extent and would quickly become current. The denial that one belongs to the Roman Catholic Church does not involve the denial of any Scripture truth, as does the denial that one belongs to the church of God or the church of Christ. Let not, then, a consideration which is just in its proper place and has its legitimate uses, be devoted out of such place and uses, and employed in a way not only to injure the Protestant churches in China but to cause lasting damage to the whole church of God, by creating dissensions not existing hitherto, and unknown in other parts of the world. In what has been written thus far, it has been conceded that by avoiding the use of *Tien-Chu* for God Protestants would be, either wholly
or to a great degree, distinguished from the Roman Catholics. But this is by no means the true state of the case. Whatever words are used for God, these two great branches of the Christian church must inevitably, for a time and to an extent, be confounded in the minds of the Chinese. They both accept and teach the great facts of the Christian religion as stated in the Apostle’s Creed, and they both reject and oppose the idolatry and nature worship of the Chinese. The teachers of both come from lands in the far West, and are similar in stature, complexion and general appearance. It is very natural that the Chinese should suppose them to be teachers of one and the same religion. Accordingly the two churches have been more or less confounded from the first until the present time, and that although different words have been used in most parts of China; nor is it seen that this confusion has been any greater in places where different words are used.

This evil may be greatly overestimated both as to its continuance and as to its results. Among church members it cannot long remain. The Roman Catholics are very careful to warn their converts against Protestantism, and Protestants are not less sure to warn the Christians under their instruction against the errors of Romanism. Thus the distinction between the two soon becomes known among Christians. This knowledge is rapidly communicated to those without, both by what is said and by what is written on the subject, as also by what is seen and manifest to all. Rulers and people gradually come to know that differences exist, and learn more or less correctly the origin and nature of these differences.

The natural course then is that Christians should state these differences plainly and fairly, in a spirit of love, defending in all lawful and just methods what is true and right, and waiting patiently the time when Roman Catholicism and Protestantism shall stand before the Chinese as they stand before the people of other lands. The supposed evils of being confounded with the Roman Catholics may be summed up under three heads. First, the being involved in the ill will and persecutions brought upon Christianity, the errors and misdeeds of the Roman Catholics. Second, the hindrances to Christian work and the fewness of accessions to the church, consequent upon the antipathy of the
people to the Roman Catholics and their methods. The way made easy for the perversion of Protestants to the Roman Catholic church.

However great these evils may seem to Protestants, it is doubtless true that in the view of Roman Catholics the evils of being confounded by the Chinese with Protestants are even of greater magnitude. Both sides should bear in mind that the things to which each church objects in the other are not for the most part such as excite animosity in the Chinese. They care very little whether the Virgin Mary is worshipped or is not, whether the Lord’s Supper is given in one kind or in two, whether the Bible is given to the people or is not. Their thoughts are directed to other issues, such as the antagonism of Christianity to the idolatrous worship of China, changes in long established usages, and possible political complications. Already they see the boundaries of their own country contiguous to those of territories belonging to three great nations of the west, and it would not be strange if national jealousy should sometimes connect these things with Christian missions.

Such being the case neither of these two branches of the church can expect wholly to avoid ill will and persecution. It would be in vain to suppose that either by standing alone could retain the good will of rulers and people; nor should an undue estimate be made of possible evils resulting from classing together all who bear the Christian name.

Moreover it is not to be forgotten that certain benefits have resulted to Protestants by being classed with Roman Catholics. Great joy was occasioned among Protestant Christians in 1844-1845 by the tidings that the toleration of Christianity in China had been secured by the French Minister, M. De La Grene. This Rescript of toleration was formally for the Tien Chu Chiao church of God (‘Roman Catholic Church’), but it was explained by high Chinese officials at the request of M. D. Lagrene as including all Christians, and granted as complete toleration to all Christian Churches as the writer of the Edict was able to grant from his knowledge of their differences. Ever since the year 1861 Protestant Christians have enjoyed to a greater or less degree, in the rural districts of China, the benefits resulting from the imperial
order by Prince Kung given to the Roman Catholics by way of explaining and enforcing the toleration clauses in the treaty with France, and protecting Christians from unjust assessments for idolatrous purposes. Up to the year 1882 this order of the Emperor's was the ground of appeal by Protestants in cases of oppression of Christians in country towns and villages. In that year (1882) the benefits of this order were formally extended to Protestant Christians by the government at the request of the American Minister, the Hon. J. B. Angell. Furthermore it is not too much to say that the concedance of Roman Catholic missionaries in all provinces of the empire, and the continued prosecution of their labors there, has made vastly easier that onward movement of Protestant Missions into the same provinces, which has characterized the last thirty years, and which gives promise of so great good in a time to come. Though a few converts may have gone to the Roman Church, not well understanding the points at issue between them and Protestants, it is also true that there are worthy members of Protestant churches whose first religious impressions were received from the Roman Catholics. Who can say that the gain in this respect has not been greater than the loss? There is a wider outlook in this matter than the fear of being confounded with the Roman Catholic. Protestant Christians are in China, not only to bring the Chinese to the Christian faith, but they also have an important mission for the Roman Catholics. Special efforts are being made in various nations of Europe, in Mexico, and in South America, to bring Roman Catholics to a Scriptural faith. How shall this be done in China but by putting the Bible into the hands of their church members? This, after three hundred years in China, the authorities of that church have not done. But in doing this shall we use in the Bible a word for God which they regard as the name of the object of worship in a Pagan cult, which they never use, and which they are bound by oaths and promises not to use on pain of excommunication? How utterly futile will efforts prove to influence them by such a Bible! With good conscience will their priests forbid its use. But if the same word is used for God which they also use, their priests will need some other reason for refusing to use the Sacred volume. They may be compelled at length to furnish a translation of their
own, as they have the Donay version to English readers. In our contentions in China with the Roman Catholics (for Paul must contend with Peter whenever the interests of the truth and of the church require it) we do, as it were, mount their deck and meet them face to face by the use of Tien Chu for God. Otherwise all our efforts for them will be put forth at the greatest disadvantage. No word in the Chinese language has more of religious reverence attached to it than the word Tien (Heaven). To this the word Chu, Lord (the word which the Mohammedans in China use for God), has been added by Christianity to make it personal, and to show that not the creature, but the creator of all is to be worshipped. Thus the word Tien-Chu will ever stand in Chinese as a protest against nature worship, and significant of the true God. It will be well for Protestants to consider whether, in leaving to the Roman Catholics a word so well calculated to excite the reverential feeling of the Chinese mind, they do not give to them the inside track in the race. We wish for them the best word; and we wish for ourselves nothing less than the best. There are two large cities in China in which are found laborers.