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THE  
NOTIONS OF THE CHINESE

CONCERNING

GOD AND SPIRITS:

WITH

AN EXAMINATION OF THE DEFENSE OF AN ESSAY,  
ON THE PROPER RENDERING OF THE WORDS ELOHIM AND THEOS,

INTO THE CHINESE LANGUAGE,

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THE UNITED STATES TO CHINA.

BY THE

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OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

HONGKONG:

PRINTED AT THE "HONGKONG REGISTER" OFFICE.  
1852.

Levy



Dwight Hall

table of terms transliterated in Legge's book and their  
transliteration according to the Wade-Giles system

<u>Legge</u>	<u>Wade-Giles</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>
Shang-te	Shang-ti	shang-dee
Te	Ti	dee
T'ae-kieh	t'ai-chi	tai jee
Tau	tao	dao
Yi-king	I-ching	ee-jeeng
T'een	t'ien	tyien
Choo He	Chu Hsi	Jew Shee
le	li	lee
Ki	ch'i	chee
Chau	Chou	joe
She King	Shih-ching	shyr-jeeng
Shoo King	Shu-ching	Shoo-jeeng
Le Ke	li-chi	Lee-jee
Chun-tsew	Ch'un-ch'iu	chun-chyo
Fuh-he	Fu-hsi	Foo-shee
Chow Leen-ke	Chou Lien-hsi	Joe Iyen-shee
Woo-kieh	wu-chi	woo-jee
Ching	ch'eng	Cheng
K'ang-he	K'ang-hsi	kang shee

THE  
NOTIONS OF THE CHINESE

CONCERNING

GOD AND SPIRITS, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

In the Defense of his Essay advocating the rendering of the words *Elohim* and *Theos* by the Chinese term *Shin*,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Boone takes the field against all comers. Dr. Medhurst, Sir George Staunton, Dr. Bowring, Mr. Doty, and myself, are all met, and, as he hopes, not only foiled, but overthrown. One cannot but admire the boldness of his attacks, the ingenuity of his dispositions, and the earnestness which animates his whole treatise, and well befits the importance of the subjects contested. Notwithstanding these merits, however, the repeated study of his reasonings has only confirmed me in the opinion that the attempt to use *Shin* for God proceeds from false principles, and is attended with the most pernicious effects, and I venture therefore to reargue with him the theses—that the *Shang-Ti*<sup>2</sup> *par excellence* of the Chinese is the true God, that *Elohim*, *Theos*, and *God* are relative terms, and that *Shin* means *Spirit*, and, in the translation of the Scriptures, can only be employed to render *ruach* and *pneuma*. I am the less unwilling to enter again upon the discussion, because it seems to me that the notions of the Chinese concerning *God* and *Spirits* can be put in a clearer light than has yet been thrown upon them. If the success of my endeavours shall not be thought equal to my own hopes and wishes, let the desirableness of the objects sought to be accomplished justify me from the charge of unnecessarily intruding my views upon the public. To set forth with distinctness the opinions entertained by so large a portion of the

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<sup>2</sup> 上帝



human race on the important subjects just mentioned, is a matter worth attempting, and when a Missionary believes that the word of God is in danger of being circulated among the Heathen in a version deplorably erroneous, it is his duty to do what he can to avert so great an evil.

Dr. Boone's conclusion that *Shin* must be used to render *Elohim* and *Theos* rests on the following propositions:—

"1st. The Chinese do not know any being who may truly and properly be called God; they have therefore no name for such a being, no word in their language answering to our word God.

"2d. That, this being the state of things, we must seek the general name of their gods, and content ourselves with the use of the word in Chinese that answers to our words a god, gods, as the best that can be done under the circumstances.

"3d. That *shin* is the general or generic name of the Chinese gods; and therefore it follows,—That this word should be used to render *Elohim* and *Theos* into Chinese."

The position which he thus takes up is certainly a bold one. He admits himself that it is open to attack from five different quarters, and enumerates so many counter propositions, the establishing of any one of which would invalidate his argument. My plan, however, does not require me to enter into a separate detail of all of these, and I shall content myself with an explicit statement of the grounds on which I, for myself, repudiate his conclusion, and the maintenance of which will constitute the subject-matter of the subjoined chapters.

Against his first proposition—I maintain that the Chinese do know the true God, and have a word in their language answering to our word God, to the Hebrew *Elohim*, and to the Greek *Theos*.

Against his second proposition—I maintain that no "general or generic name" can be used to render *Elohim*, *Theos*, or *God*, because these are all relative terms. Though I should fail, therefore, in establishing, beyond the possibility of contradiction, the former thesis, it will still be necessary to seek for a relative term in Chinese, to render *Elohim* and *Theos*. Who cannot use for that purpose the generic *Shin*, and it may be that the name, or title of the highest being known by the Chinese will answer sufficiently well.

Against Dr. Boone's third proposition—I maintain that *Shin* does not answer even to our words a god, gods, but is the generic name in Chinese corresponding to our word *spirit*, to the Hebrew *ruach*, and to the Greek *πνευμα*, and that it ought therefore to be employed to render those terms, and those alone.

Thus, Dr. Boone and myself are opposed to each other on every head, & shall endeavour dispassionately to exhibit the reasons which compel me to dissent from him, and adopt the conclusions which I have just stated—remembering always that to establish truth is a much nobler accomplishment than to confute error. I would rather perform the part of a didactician than of a controversialist.

There are two preliminary points on which Dr. Boone lays much stress, and his remarks on which require some criticism. He maintains that all his opponents have erred fatally in the view which they have taken of the word God, and that thus the very spring of their reasonings is vitiated. Going astray at the first step, the more they write, and the longer they dispute, the farther will they be at last from the goal which they wished to reach. And moreover, he says that all parties admit that there is no word in Chinese answering to *Elohim* and *Theos*. No matter, therefore, how they weary themselves to determine the meaning of those terms, their toil will prove "Love's labour lost." Supposing they should be successful, they have to express the result of their investigations in a language which has no characters adequate to the purpose. Their case is as hard as that of the Israelites, whom Pharaoh required to make bricks, without giving them straw to make them with.

Now, as to the second of these points—Dr. Boone ought not to have expressed it so unqualifiedly as he has done. By what he has written, he has done me, for one party, some injustice. The case is this:—In English, we use God properly and improperly, as it is said: we apply it, that is, to Jehovah, the only true God, and we apply it away from Him, to all false gods. Dr. Boone accordingly distinguishes between God, with a capital G, and god with a small g—though the Hebrew knows nothing of such a graphical discrimination. The Chinese have a word, he says, which has the meaning of god with the small g, but not the meaning of it with the large G. They have a word which means a god, but not God, and he proposes to take that word and make a god God. In my opinion, the Chinese have a term which means God, the true God, and they have also applied it away from him, only not so extensively as *Elohim* and *Theos* were applied away from him. Its meaning is the same as that of God, whether written with a large g or a small one. It has been used in the two ways in which God has been used, only, while the Chinese have given it the same kind of improper signification, they have not done so to the same degree. Entertaining this opinion, I can by no means admit that there is no term in Chinese answering to *Elohim* and *Theos*.

As to the first point—the charge brought by Dr. Boone that his opponents have all taken a wrong view of the word God—it is stated distinctly enough in the following paragraph:—

"Of the word God, the several parties writing on this question, take widely different views in many respects; but it seems to me there is one error which has chiefly misled Dr. McMillan, Sir George Staunton, Mr. Hastings, and Dr. Legge, and which we must be careful not to fall into, if we would keep the real point of nearly equally before us. The error, to which I allude, is that of regarding the word God as the "symbol of an idea," to use Sir George Staunton's expression, instead of regarding it, as it really is, as the name of a *bona fide* being, of whom, after we have exhausted all the ideas of which we are capable, we can form but very inadequate conceptions."

This doesn't seem right.



make known to him his error, we do not discard the word *Father*. We only tell him that he has been honouring "a Being," as his father, who is not such, and we disclose to him another "Being," who is such. The "Being" may vary, but the "name" remains unchanged.

Here Dr. Boone may say that I am assuming my thesis as proved—that God is a relative term. Let the reader therefore attach, in the meantime, as little weight as he can to this illustration by means of the word *Father*. The previous examples, however, of *Hadj Elolhim*, and the Mahomedan *Allah*, can hardly fail, I think, to satisfy his mind, that Dr. Boone is labouring under some confusion of ideas, whatever it be, in laying it down, as the first point to be decided, that we are to determine whether the *Being* indicated to the Chinese, by the term which we wish to employ for *Elolhim*, be the same with the *Being* indicated to us by our word God. The full exposure of his error must be reserved to a subsequent part of the discussion. I grant to him, however, that it can only be proved that the Chinese know the true God, by showing that they predicate of the highest Being whom they worship what can be predicated only of Jehovah. Accordingly this I proceed to do in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER I.

THAT THE CHINESE KNOW THE TRUE GOD, AND THAT THEIR  
RELIGION IS PROPERLY MONOTHEISTIC.

Do the Chinese know the true God? Among all the Beings whom they worship, does one stand forth, so pre-eminent in his attributes, so distinguished from all the others, that we cannot but recognize in him the high and lofty One, who doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, the blessed and only Potentate, of whom and through whom and to whom are all things? These questions I answer unhesitatingly in the affirmative. The evidence supplied by Chinese literature and history appears to me so strong, that I find it difficult to conceive how any one, who has studied it, can come to the opposite conclusion.

Dr. Boone, in 1848, when he wrote his Essay on the rendering of *Elolhim* and *Theos*, supposed that it was admitted, by all the Protestant Missionaries at least, that the Chinese did not know the true God, nor any Being, who might truly and properly be called God. On this supposition his argument for the use of *Shin* was founded, and it was involved in every step of his reasoning. The "Defense" of his Essay, however, contains all the proof which he could collect to substantiate the assertion that China is indeed a country without God, and it will be necessary that I subject to a careful examination the grounds on which he makes his negation, while I endeavour to adduce the positive evidence that the Chinese know Him who is the Creator, the Preserver, and the Governor of the Universe.

When affirming formerly that the '*Shang-Ti*' of the Chinese is "God over all, blessed for ever," I said that the proof of the affirmation was to be sought by making the largest possible collection of examples in which the expression was used, and trying whether God would be an appropriate, or rather the appropriate, rendering of it in every case. But Dr. Boone objects that in proposing such a proof I was contenting myself with a mere "*petitio principii*." The mode of expression which I employed was suggested by the recollection of the following passage in one of Stewart's Philosophical Essays:—

"The meaning of many words of which it is impossible to exhibit any sensible prototypes, is gradually collected by a species of *induction*, which is more or less successively conducted by different individuals, according to the degree of their attention and judgment. The connection in which an unknown term stands, in relation to the other words combined with it in the same sentence, often affords a key for its explanation in that particular instance, and in proportion as such instances are multiplied in the writings, and conversation of men well acquainted with propriety of speech, the means are afforded of a progressive approximation towards its precise import. A



familiar illustration of this process presents itself in the expression which a reader naturally employs for deciphering the meaning of an unknown word in a foreign language, when he happens not to have a dictionary at hand. The first sentence where the word occurs affords it, is probably, some foundation for a vague conjecture concerning the notion annexed to it. By the author, some idea or other being necessarily substituted in its place, in order to make the passage at all intelligible. The next sentence where it is involved renders this conjecture a little more definite; a third sentence contracts the field of doubt within still narrower limits, till, at length, a more extensive induction fixes completely the signification we are in quest of.<sup>1</sup>

In the process thus exhibited by the learned Professor, I do not see that there is any *petitio principii* involved, nor is there any in the application of it, which I sought to make. I had before me two terms by which it was proposed to render God in Chinese—*Shên* and *Shang-Te*. I adduced a number of examples from Chinese writers, containing the term *Shên*, and showed that to make it stand for God in them turned them into sheer nonsense. Dr. Boone and his friends are fond of quoting the words of Horace:—

"*Si volent ius,  
Quem jures arbitrium est, et jura, et norma loquendi.*"

But he quotes them incorrectly, and to serve a purpose altogether different from the intention of their author. "Many words," says Horace, "which have fallen into disuse, will be revived, and many which are now in honour will fall into desuetude, if use will have it so." Now the use or usage of the Chinese language will not have the term *Shên* to mean God. It cries out against such a signification of it, in ten thousand examples, in books and on the lips of the people. Dr. Boone may try to force it to have such a meaning, but he would more easily with his single strength stem the overwhelming rush of mighty waters. On the other hand, a number of examples, containing the expression *Shang-Te*, being adduced, and the other parts translated correctly, it was found that by substituting God for *Shang-Te* the whole conveyed a good and natural sense. From such an induction I concluded that *Shang-Te* meant God, and might be used, wherever we had to translate *Elolâm* and *Thaos*. The induction might be incomplete. I begged Dr. Boone to tell us if it was so. The field of Chinese literature was before him. Would he go through the length and breadth of it, and pick up a few examples, that would place *Shang-Te* in the same predicament as *Shên*—examples in which the rendering of *Shang-Te*

<sup>1</sup> Philosophical Essay, by Professor Dugald Stewart. The Essay "On the tendency of some late Philological speculations."

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Boone gives us—

"*Si volent ius,  
Quem jures arbitrium, et jura et norma loquendi.*"

—an unscannable line. He quotes the passage to show that "words are the mere creatures of usage," and that, no matter what meaning a word has in use, we may give it another!

by God would make nonsense? He may say, indeed, that he was not to be dictated to, as to the manner in which he should conduct either his attack or defense. Still, I think he might have acceded to my request. Had he produced one example, where *Shang-Te* cannot be rendered God, it would have had more weight with me than all the reasonings against its use within the 168 pages of his book. But not a single such expression is forthcoming. His sole reply to my proposal is—Dr. Legge contents himself with a *petitio principii*. At this part of his defense, however, he has one remarkable sentence, to which I wish to call particular attention. "If Dr. Legge," he says, p. 18, "will prove to us that the Being called *Shang-Te*, in any one of the quotations he gives us, is truly and properly God, we will admit that the *Shang-Te* mentioned in all the other passages is God too, as we have no doubt that they all refer to the same Being." It is admitted that one undoubted instance where *Shang-Te* stands for God—the true, the only God—would to Dr. Boone decide this part of the controversy between him and myself. I hope to produce in the sequel many instances, in which it is impossible that any but the true God can be the subject. In the meantime, I only observe, that if Dr. Boone were Dr. Morrison, whose authority in favour of his views is so earnestly pleaded, then our strife would be ended. The latter, in a passage which has been already quoted in this controversy, in his Dictionary, under the character *Yuen*,<sup>1</sup> says—"Kiang Yuen, a female, famous in ancient story, and whose name is mentioned in the She-king, in connection with *Te* and *Shang-Te*, as expressive of the most high God."

Before he will admit that *Shang-Te* is truly and properly God, Dr. Boone insists that one of two things be clearly shown—namely, that passages be adduced predicated of self-existence of him, or at least the creation by him, out of pre-existing matter, of the heavens and the earth, and all things that now exist. On the latter point I am prepared most fully to meet his requisition. Nothing can be more positive and direct than the ascription of creation to *Shang-Te*. At the same time, I must be permitted to enter a protest against his demands, as unjust, if it were to be argued from our not being able to meet them, that *Shang-Te* cannot be God, and that the expression ought not to be used to render *Elolâm* and *Thaos*. The Apostle says that "God left not himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us sign from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." The course of Providence is therefore sufficient to raise the minds of men to the knowledge of God, and Dr. Boone knows well that the Chinese ascribe to *Shang-Te* their fruitful seasons, and recognize him as the Lord and Governor of heaven and earth.



only indicate the union and dispersion, the out-going and in-coming of a couple of vapours? Is this to be our God?

6. The speculations of the atheo-political philosophers have never affected either the established religion of China, or its popular belief. By their own admission, their doctrines were innovations on the prevalent modes of thinking, and, since Choo He published his voluminous works, though some learned men may have speculated in their studies over his mystifications both concerning *Shang-Te* and the *shin*, in the cabinet and among the people at large, the former has continued to be "bond fide" God, and the latter have continued to be "bond fide" spirits. The proof of this has to be adduced in the exhibition of the Religion of China, against the representations of it quoted by Dr. Boone from Visdelou and Dr. Morrison. In leaving the Sung philosophy, I may venture, after the above remarks upon it, to repeat, that the appeal made to it by Dr. Boone was ill-judged. If it make against those who wish to use *Shang-Te* for God, much more does it make against himself who wishes to use *shin*.

III. Against the affirmation that *Shang-Te* is truly and properly God, Dr. Boone pleads two descriptions of the State Religion of China, one by M. Visdelou and one by Dr. Morrison, enlarging upon them with various remarks and comments of his own.

"From their account," he says, "no one can make out that the Chinese are worshippers of the true God; nor, we should think, after reading it, could resist the impression, that his imperial Majesty and those who join with him in this worship, are wholly ignorant of the being we Christians call God."

And certainly, if their accounts be true, I and others must yield this portion of our ground. But they are as incorrect as they well could be. My own obligations to them, however, are not small. Necessitated, in consequence of them, to examine the religion of China at the proper sources, I found an amount of evidence, which I had not anticipated, and which affords me a delightful assurance that this most numerous people are not without the knowledge of God.

This department of our subject is, I think, the most important. Dr. Boone is of the same opinion. He reserves to the last, the two descriptions which he had at hand, and clinches with them his previous conclusions. The advice which he introduces from Visdelou is, indeed, most excellent—

"The Chinese are certainly in advance of other nations in the care and accuracy with which they have written their histories. Besides what we call history in general, they write also particular historical accounts of all things, amongst which religion holds the chief place.

"Each dynasty possesses a history of its religion. Thus it will not be difficult, instead of vainly disputing about their canonical books and about detached portions of passages, to gather from history, a decided opinion concerning the religion of each dynasty, and finally to decide if the religion of the Chinese be the religion of the true God."

The advice, every one must acknowledge, is good, and if evidence is to govern the strife that divides missionaries, the following this counsel must decide it one way or the other. Let me preface what results I have found in trying to do so, with two remarks:—

First, The reader will bear in mind, that the question is not exactly what Visdelou is made by Dr. Boone to say, to determine namely whether the religion of the Chinese be the religion of the true God. That I do not maintain. My thesis is—that the Chinese possess a knowledge of the true God, and that the highest Being whom they worship is indeed the same whom we worship. But they not only worship Him; they worship a multitude of beings besides, and with their knowledge of God have associated a mass of superstitions and follies. How would Dr. Boone answer the question, Is the religion of the Roman Catholics the religion of the true God? He would probably say—It is so, only exceedingly corrupted. The same is my reply to a similar question concerning the religion of the Chinese. I am not vindicating it, but I am satisfied that in it there is the knowledge and worship of the true God.

Second, It may seem an endless work to set forth the religion of China, as described in the histories of its several dynasties, in number more than twenty, and extending over more than 4000 years. The enquiry, however, need not be so laborious, for any one dynasty will serve as the representative in most respects of all the others.

"Let it not be imagined," says Visdelou, in the paragraph immediately succeeding that just quoted, "that the present religion of the Chinese is different from the ancient, for though there have been innovations from time to time, in respect to place, time, and form, yet the principal things are practised according to the ancient rites. Now-days, as at other times, they sacrifice to heaven, to the earth, to rivers, to ancestors, &c. Now-days, the ancient ceremonies are still in use, excepting a small number, which have been changed from no other motive, but that they have been deemed not agreeable to antiquity, only opinions in regard to this are different." He adds, "It is necessary to except, as we have already said, the sacrifices to the five *Shang-Tes*, which have been suppressed by the Ming dynasty, and by the present called the *Tai-tes*, which follows step by step the other, to which it succeeded."

Our way being thus cleared, I shall present, from "The Collected Statutes of the Ming dynasty," a variety of prayers and hymns, with explanatory notices, which will convey a correct idea of what the religion of China is, and especially of the Being who is the highest object of worship in it. In the sequel, I will consider, among other points, the change which the Ming is said to have made in the worship of previous dynasties.

Visdelou's text is, "... le dieu en fin si la religion des Chinois est la religion des adorateurs du vrai Dieu." By an unfortunate facility which follows him in making quotations, Dr. Boone overlooks the "des adorateurs." The omission does not do much harm here. In other places, it is more to be regretted.



introduced also the zalmian iddity, and after his death was deified by his subject. Now, according to the common chronology, Nimrod was contemporary with Shun. The beginning of the Assyrian monarchy by him is assigned to A. C. 2229. We know also, from the testimony of Scripture that the fathers of Abraham served other gods, and his grandfather Nahor, born A. C. 2151, was only about eighty years later than the Chinese emperor. The individuals who first entered into the north-east of China must have separated at a very early period after the deluge from the rest of the Noachic family;—why should we be stumbled at finding religion corrupted among them, separated from their brethren, contemporaneously with a similar degeneracy, obtaining among the mss, who continued in the vicinity of the land of Shinar, among whom in all probability, Noah and Shem went out and in? Dr. Boone's wonder at the little which tradition did for Shun might be directed with more reason to those patriarchs.<sup>1</sup>

There is another consideration which may be set against the early corruption of religion among the Chinese. How soon did the same elements

<sup>1</sup> One cannot help here being troubled with a most perplexing subject—the credibility of Chinese chronology. The commencement of Shun's reign is placed by De. Mailla, A. C. 2256, and by Dr. Morrison, A. C. 2230. Now, according to the received chronology, the dispersion from Babel took place A. C. 2230. In the same year, therefore, in which "the earth was divided," we find Shun succeeding in China to the throne of Yao, who had reigned 100 years—to a kingdom, ruled by an emperor, having under him twelve governors of districts, a host of nobles, ministers of agriculture, music, and public instruction, &c. It is evident that the fathers of the Chinese nation must have separated from the other descendants of Noah long before the time of Peleg. But from the deluge to the dispersion there elapsed only 113 years. There came out from the ark Noah, his wife, his sons and his sons' wives, only eight persons in all. If one son and his wife turned their faces immediately towards the East, it is not easy to conceive of their finding their way from Armenia across the intervening distance of desert to the territory of Shun-ee, and there growing within little more than a single century, into a numerous people, with an established government, and some scientific culture. It is impossible I think for such a thing to have occurred. Shall we discredit the records of the early Chinese history? They will not be discredited. One might as well deny the existence of the different geological strata and periods. They must be looked in the face. It will not serve the cause of Revelation to neglect them, or to deal with them as if they were only fable.

Dr. Russell, late Bishop of Edinburgh, says in his "Connection of Sacred and Profane History"—"We are told by Ptolemy, that the Jewish missionaries to China were actually obliged to return to Rome to ask leave to use the Septuagint calculation, in order to satisfy the scruples of the better-informed in that country." It is well known that the chronology of the world from the creation up to the birth of Abraham differs very much in the present scriptures, and in the Septuagint version—so much so, that from the creation to the birth of Christ, there were, according to the Hebrew text, 4004 years, but, according to the Septuagint, 5507 years. Supposing that the chronology of the Septuagint may be sustained on other grounds, the reign of Shun will commence A. M. 3277, or 1015 years after the deluge, and he will have been contemporary with Terah, the father of Abraham. The existence of an ordered kingdom at that period in China is not more wonderful than the existence of the same in Egypt. According to the

of superstition, which disfigure it, enter into the Christian Church! The announcement in the New Testament is very express, that there is but one mediator between God and men; the warning is precisely given to beware of the worshipping of angels. And yet four centuries had not elapsed before martyr and saint-worship began extensively to prevail, and Ambrose of Milan proclaims that we ought to pray to our guardian angels, which is soon succeeded by the general worship of the heavenly spiritual host. With this fact before us—the worship of other beings besides God insinuating itself into the Christian Church, within less than three centuries after the apostles; in despite of the tradition of their doctrine, in despite of the more sure written word—however we may deplore the fact, we cannot be surprised at the *modified spirit* and hero-worship among the ancient Chinese. I lay great stress myself upon the qualifying term "modified." The Chinese have not given the name of God to the spirits of the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies, and of the various parts of nature, nor (excepting in a few questionable instances) to the departed heroes and sages whom they reverence. They have not confounded them with Him who alone is God. They are idolaters as the Roman Catholics are idolaters, but we may not call them polytheists any more than we should apply that name to those others.

Indeed, the analogy between the religion of China and that of the Papal Church is very striking, and we can account for it only by the fact that the great outline of the worship of heathen Rome was adopted by the so-called Christian Church. In his scheme of the Pagan, Papal, and Christian Churches, under the division of the objects of worship, Dr. Laue says concerning the second—"Besides the Supreme God, Jehovah, the Governor of heaven and earth, whom they pretend to worship, they have divers inferior deities, gods and goddesses, whom they divinely worship; *Diva or Santa Maria*, the Queen of heaven and mother of God; with *Diva Petrus*, St. Paul, St. John, St. Thomas, St. Stephen, St. Andrew, &c.; to whom they, as their numens, or intercessors, build temples, erect altars, and dedicate feasts; paying also so much reverence to the pagan gods as to keep up their names in the days of the week, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,

same system, from the deluge to Peleg are 631 years. A large colony might then have started from Babel, and travelled to the north-eastern part of China, and there is nothing improbable in its reaching the adjacent state, in which we find it in the time of Shun, during the intermediate four centuries and a half.

It is a question deserving consideration, which chronology to give in the Chinese version of the Bible. One, who has written well on ancient chronology, says—"Let a man carefully study the history of Egypt, Assyria, or China, or even of satrapies, and he is instantly confronted with facts, bearing the impress of striking biblical truth, which directly contradict the abbreviated Hebrew chronology. Does not this militated naturally deduce the conclusion, that revelation can be sustained only by the abandonment of legitimate research? that revealed truth can only stand by the renunciation of historic truth?" (Smith's Sacred Annals, p. 60.)



day, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; they have also tutelary and ethereal gods and goddesses to be applied to by several vocations, cities, families, orders, sick persons, as *Divus* or St. Nicholas, for the mariner; St. Windoline, for the shepherd; St. John Baptist, for the husbandman; St. Mary Magdalen, for the courtesan; St. Hubert, for the huntsman; St. Cripin, for the shoemaker, &c. The city, country, family, and physis gods are innumerable; St. George, for England; St. Dennis, for France; St. Mark, for Venice, &c.; gods almost for every disease; besides the god-making power, that is in the Pope and cardinals, to canonize what deceased worthies they please, and to appoint them temples, altars, orders, and festivals."

Nearly every point in this description is applicable to the religion of China. The supreme God is the same—"The Governor of heaven and earth;" it acknowledges a Queen of heaven, without adding to that title, however, that she is the mother of God. There are multitudes of saints and worthies, to whom temples are built, altars erected, and feasts dedicated. There are also tutelary or ethereal spirits, applied to by several vocations, cities, families, orders, and sick persons, and with the Emperor rests the power of adding to the number of these, and appointing them temples, altars, and festivals, as he pleases. All these saints or worthies, and spirits, we may, if we please, call the gods or inferior deities of China. But the Chinese themselves have not done so. They call things by their proper names. They have never deified their name for God as *Elohim* was deified. It is strange to deny, because they have not done so, that they have no such name;—as if there could not be monotheism without polytheism. It appears to me equally strange to seek in the fact of their *worshipping* many other beings, whose subordinate position their words of worship continually set forth, a proof that the *One Supreme Being* whom they adore cannot be truly and properly God.

But the positive proof that *Shang-Ti*, being the Creator, must be God—*God proper*—has been largely given. No doubt rests on my own mind as to the fact, and in the assurance, I breathe more freely, while contemplating the moral condition of the Chinese empire. If the people is the most numerous of peoples. Though we concede the highest estimate of the population—three hundred and sixty millions—~~as yet is the territory, that it will not be so densely inhabited as Belgium or England.~~ And then there is its antiquity. From the accession of Shun to that of the present emperor are 4060 years. How very large the proportion of the human race which has lived and died in this empire! The mind recoils shuddering from the thought, that generation after generation has descended to the grave, without one individual ever having had the thought of God in his mind, or the name of God on his lips. It is not possible that the nation should have subsisted

so long, without the knowledge of God. It is at the present day essentially the same in its religious notions, maxims of morality, and principles of government, as it was three thousand years ago. Subject to a Tartar tribe for the last two hundred years, it has yet subjected its governors by its moral and intellectual force. The example of *Gracia capta*, which captured its fierce conqueror, is more than realized in this extreme east. Moreover, in receiving Buddhism from India, China has admitted none of its *idols*. Let its moral state be compared with that of the Roman empire. Its temples are not pieces of abominable lust. Its people crowd to no such shows and games as these of the gladiators. I do not wish to eulogize Chinese virtue, or to exhibit the nation as a model to others. But it occupies a place all its own among the other heathen kingdoms of the globe. The extent of its duration, the numerosity of its inhabitants, its regard to decency, the superiority of its people in strength of character to the other natives of the East—all these are facts, which I cannot reconcile with the assumption that it has been all along and continues to be, without any knowledge of God. When I recollect how Sodom and Gomorrah were blotted from the face of the earth, because there were not ten righteous in them—how Israel and Judah were scattered from the land of covenant, because they departed from God, and made them molten images, and worshipped the host of heaven, and severed Babel—how the Egyptian and Assyrian and Persian and Grecian and Roman monarchies rose, and became vile, and then were smitten and perished—when I recollect these things, and am told to believe in the phenomenon of the Chinese empire, rising, increasing, and still existing, with no word in its language denoting God, I must confess that I am unwilling to admit the phenomenon, and rejoice, when I find on inquiry that it does not have an actual existence, but that, on the contrary, the Chinese know much of God, and have not given His glory to any other. That their religion is monotheistic, is a circumstance which has much to do with their long social subsistence. My own belief is, that it has more to do with it than all the other causes which learned and thinking men have assigned. The peculiarity of its geographical position has contributed to preserve China from powerful neighbours. Its principle of filial piety, and its educational system cutting out the best men to fill governmental offices, have done much to preserve its form of government, and suppress anarchical movements; but that which has been as salt preserving its parts from corruption and crumbling away, has been its ancient and modern holding to the doctrine of one only God.

The preceding pages have been occupied chiefly with a development of the state religion of China, and its observances, especially as these are practiced by the Emperor. But the views which have been set forth concerning *Shang-Ti* and the *shin*, and their mutual relations, are those which obtain



stood them of *Yuh-hwang*, a chief Taoist deity.<sup>1</sup> Such was very likely to be the case. The missionaries had only to say, "*Yuh-hwang* is not *Shang-te*. You call him so, but he has no right to the name. We announce to you the true *Shang-te*, Jehovah." The Jewish prophets had to claim the name *Elohim* in this way from *Baal*, and *Chemosh*, and other false gods, to whom it was given.

The authority of some Roman Catholic priests and converts has likewise been adduced lately, to show the danger of the name *Shang-te* being mis-

<sup>1</sup> Some very erroneous notions are prevalent about the deities of the Tao sect, and not only erroneous, but contradictory. For instance, in the "Anglo-Chinese Calendar for 1851," under the account of the principal Chinese festivals, it is said—"February 9th.—1st moon, 9th day, *Yuh-hwang* Shang-te's birthday: this deity is the highest of the Tao sect." Lower down on the same page, we find—"March 17th.—2d moon, 15th day, *Lau-kun* born." The principal deities of the Tao sect are—*San-shing*, three pure ones—*Shang-ti*, a supreme ruler subordinate to those three, and an infinity of inferior gods, and deified men. In these notions, from a noted Chinese scholar, we expect to find contradictions. On the contrary, however, we find, first, contradiction. In the one case, the writer tells us that *Yuh-hwang* *Shang-te* is the highest deity of the Taoists, and immediately after that their principal deities are the "three pure ones," while *Shang-te*—the same *Yuh-hwang* *Shang-te*, I apprehend—is only subordinate to them. We find, secondly, grave error. *Yuh-hwang* is indeed subordinate to the *San-shing*, but *Shang-te* is not, for the chief of the pure ones is himself a *Shang-te*. His complete title is given in the *Szechuen K'ao*, one of the commonest works among the people of this part of China, *妙無上帝自然元始天尊*, that is, "The infinitely mysterious *Shang-te*, the self-existing source and beginning, the Honoured one of heaven." *Shang-te* cannot be subordinate to *Shang-te*. In the large temples of the Tao sect, the images of the three pure ones—this infinitely mysterious *Shang-te* in the centre—are found in the principal hall, while *Yuh-hwang* occupies a small shrine behind them. The work referred to above, appends to the account of *Yuh-hwang*'s birth, succession to his father's throne, resignation of it, subsequence of exaltation, and apotheosis, two remarkable references, the last of which is—*帝臨玉闕統神人悉在鈞陶*, "*Yeh-wella* in the gemstone palace; all *shin* and men are made by him, as by a potter." How the truth everywhere beams out! *Shin* and men are not related as maker and creature. But both the *shin* and *Yuh-hwang* need not be wondered at, for Taoism recognizes the principle of *ne-tien* or incarnation of the Supreme Deities, and such incarnations both the *Heaven-tem* and *Yuh-hwang* *Shang-te* are held to have been.

Dr. Boone says, "The Chinese have not anywhere in the classical books, that we are aware of, given any account of the origin of the *shin* or of *Shang-te*; and, on the contrary, there are no passages which affirm the self-existence or eternity of either *Shang-te*, or any other of the beings, who are included in the class called *shin*." (Fessey, p. 41.) In the words just quoted, we have an account given of the origin of the *shin*. They are creatures like men, made by *te*. It may be said that the *Szechuen K'ao* is not a classical book, but it details popular notions. That the *shin* as a class are created beings, is the belief of the Chinese, which all who have mingled freely with them—Jews, Mohammedans, and Roman Catholics—readily acknowledge. It is a prepossession, and deserving to make a class of creatures into the one Creator.

understood in this way by the Chinese. I can well conceive how the former, having lost the term for their own use, should be glad to bring Protestants to the necessity of adopting that, which has no validity, but what it derives from a Pagan constitution. What their converts are quoted as saying, in reality, only proves the appropriateness of the term. One of them writes—"Heaven *Tien* *Shang-te*, and *Yuh-hwang* *Shang-te* are names of deities. The two characters *Shang-te*, among the literary sect are regarded as honourable, but it has happened that the devil has stolen them."<sup>1</sup> The assertion is correct, that the two deities whom he mentions are only devils—i.e.—*daimones*. But we have seen that with the literary sect, and in the state religion, the two characters *Shang-te* are not only honourable, but the name of the true God. Be it that the devils have stolen them, it is ours to reclaim them—and attribute them only to Him, whose they are.

I would say in fine, that if we abandon the use of *Shang-te* for God, we cut ourselves off from all sympathy with the Chinese people. If we speak to them of *shin*, that term has necessarily connected with it the idea of inferiority.

I am surprised that Dr. Boone should have overlooked a sentence in *Vieldeu*, where he has quoted a passage speaking both of the *Shang-te* and the *Kwei-shin* as formed. Near the close of his "Notice of the Yih-king," *Vieldeu* says—"Teh-yan-kong (Choo He) said, according to the witness of his disciple, the famous philosopher *Teh-yan-un-fan*, (Sing-ti-tai-se, L. 64).—When it is said that *T'ee-k'eh*, that is, the primordial reason, or first principle of all things, produced heaven and earth, and formed the *Kwei-shin* and *Shang-te* or the *Shang-te*, this tells us nothing else but what is comprised in the axiom of *Teh-yan-chung*—"T'ee-k'eh by its movement and repose produced perfect and imperfect matter." On reading this, I eagerly turned to the 51th book of the work referred to, and looked it carefully through, but found no such words as it of Choo He, or of *Teh-yan-un-fan*. I was fortunate enough to light on his original, however, in the 1st book of the *Pandects*, at the 74th page. The witness, is not *Teh-yan-un-fan*, who gives his testimony on another subject in the 73d page, but *T'oo San-yang*. The passage is as follows,—"又曰, 天生地, 成鬼成帝, 即太極動靜生陰陽之義." (He (i.e. Choo He) also said, The expressions, "The producing of heaven, the producing of earth, the completing the *kwei*, the completing the *te*," mean the same as this—"The *T'ee-k'eh* moving and resting produced the *yin* and the *yang*." *Vieldeu*, it will be seen, is very free in his rendering. The text speaks of the *kwei*, and not of the *Kwei-shin*, of the *te*, and not of the *Shang-te*, much less of *Shang-te*, and of the completing the *kwei* and the *te*, whatever that be, and not of the forming them. *Shang-te* cannot be intended by *te*, because, on Choo He's principles, *T'ee-k'eh* and *Shang-te* are the same. Perhaps the two *tes* are indicated, but two Chinese teachers, to whom I showed the passage, say that it ought to be read 成鬼成神—"the completing the *kwei*, the completing the *shin*." It would, if so read, be in harmony with Choo He's doctrine of the relation between the *T'ee-k'eh*, the *yin* and *yang*, and the *Kwei-shin*. As it stands, it is without parallel or analogy.

<sup>1</sup> Letter on the Chinese version of the Holy Scriptures, to the British and Foreign Bible Society, by the Bishop of Victoria. Supplementary Note. See Note 11, in the Appendix to this Chapter.



If we speak to them of *T'ien-chow*, distinguishing that name from *Shang-T'c*, we are the settlers forth of a strange god—a being, of whom their fathers have known nothing, and who has known nothing and cared nothing for them. The same evil consequence will arise from the transference of either of the original terms, *Eloah* and *Thos*. We must have a name which will not make void and of none effect the law of God written in their own hearts—a name that shall witness for Jehovah, in harmony with the witness of their own spirits. Such a name we have in *Shang-T'c*, and I believe in no other term. It has been used by them from time immemorial to denote God, as the Maker, Ruler, and Governor of the universe: it is now our privilege and duty still further to unfold to them His character, and especially to make known to them how He was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses.

#### APPENDIX.—Note I.

YASEROU.

PINXIAN.

REDS.

YASEROU was in the habit of writing extravagantly about the Chinese, and caricaturing their sentiments. Another Roman Missionary—Father Bjeret—accused him of flattery the son of the Emperor Kang-hi by saying that the fundamental principles of the Christian religion were the same as those of the *Yi-king*. His reply was, that he said so, not of religion, but of morals. In none of his writings to which I have had access, does there appear a disposition to judge too favourably of Chinese notions, but the reverse. In his observations appended to D'Herbelle's Notices of China in the *Bibliothèque Orientale*, we find various instances of this, of which the two following may serve as examples.

"The Chinese," he says, "have no other name to express the name of God but Heaven—a sure mark that they do not know him." Now the Chinese, it has been shown, use indifferently the words *Heng-chow* and *Shang-T'c*, just as we do Heaven and God. They repudiate, as strongly as we could do, the imputation that by Heaven they mean anything else but God who is far above.

Yasclou adds, "The Chinese give to their Emperor the title of *T'ien-t'c*, which signifies the Son of Heaven. They give him Heaven for his father, the Earth for his mother, the Sun for his elder brother, and the Moon for his elder sister." With this representation, I place, side by side, a sentence from Dr. Williams' *Middle Kingdom*—"The Emperor has been called by many ridiculous titles by foreign writers, as Brother of the Sun and Moon, Grandson of the Stars, King of Kings, &c., but no such epithets are known among the Chinese." If Dr. Williams' statement be correct, as I believe it is, it takes away much from the weight of Yasclou's authority on Chinese matters.

No Roman Catholic Missionary has left a greater monument of his knowledge of the Chinese language than the *Yen-wei-p'ing-k'uei*. His "*Nodda Lingua Sinica*," is an invaluable work, of which it would hardly be possible to speak in too high terms. A friend in Shanghai, has kindly favoured me with the following translation of the first chapter of his preliminary discourse to Gabril's translation of the Shoo-king. It is entitled "*De la Naissance de l'Univers*."

"Lo-pi 羅必 (1) states that he has learned from the *Yi-king* 易經 (2) in the article *Ta-chuen* 大傳, that 'the Heavens and the Earth have a beginning;

1. Lo-pi. This writer lived under the Ming dynasty. I shall frequently quote from him. The Hong-fu 洪武 is the year 1368, and commenced in the year 1372, A. C.

2. The *Yi-king*, is the name of the most sacred, and the most venerable of all the manuscripts which China has preserved to us. That which they call *Ta-chuen* is a further addition to the *Yi-king*, and which is commonly ascribed to Confucius.

and he adds, that 'if this be said of Earth and Heaven, with much greater reason may it be said of Man.' The chapter *Su-kwa* 序卦 (3) speaks very clearly of the origin of the world: 'After there was a Heaven and an Earth,' says the text, 'all material things were formed; afterwards male and female, then husband and wife, &c.' This cosmogony is not very different from that of Moses, who says, that God first created the Heaven and the Earth, then all kinds of creatures, and lastly the first man and woman.

"In the *Hsi-se* 繫辭 (2) are found these words: 'the *Y* 易 possesses the great extreme 太極: this has produced the couple 1, 兩儀; from this couple are derived the four images 四象, and from them, the eight symbols 八卦.' These eight symbols, four images, and this couple, lead the mind to the small lines (3) of which the *Yi-king* 易經 is composed, but since these lines are themselves so many enigmas, we must endeavour to discover their meaning.

"Lo-pi 羅必, explaining this passage of the *Hsi-se* 繫辭, says that 'the great extreme 太極 is the great unity, and the great *Y*, that the *Y* has neither substance nor form, and that all which has substance and form has been made by that which has neither form nor substance.' Tradition relates that 'the great extreme or the great unity comprehends three; that one is three, and that three are one.' Hoai-san-se 淮南子 (4) says also that, 'the being which has neither form nor sound, is the source whence have sprung all material beings, and all sensible sounds; that light is his son, and water his grandson.' To return to Lo-pi, he expresses the character 一 (5) by *Pi* 倍, a couple, and adds that they do not say cull 二, two, but leang 兩, because cull 二 would express before and after, while leang 兩 simply expresses mutual conjunction. The compilers of chronicles have put this passage from the *Hsi-se* at the head of their compilations, because they believe that the origin of the world is there spoken of, that the great extreme was only matter before any separation, as *Kong-gan-kou* 孔安國 (6) with several others, says expressly, that the couple 1 兩 designated matter as distinguished into pure and impure, subtle and gross, celestial and terrestrial; that, these afterwards uniting, there sprang from them four images 四象, or four principal kinds, whence came in the same way eight species of different beings, who uniting in pairs, produced sixty-four, which represent in general all the beings of which the universe is composed. Without attempting to examine into the truth or justice of this explanation, I inquire whence comes the great Extreme, which is thus restricted to express matter in chaos, and I find, that reason has proved to the most skilled Chinese philosophers, that this matter is not self-produced. The famous *Tcheou-lien-ki* 周濂溪 (7)

1. Gabril is another small treatise found in the same book, and of which I say also more than the author.

2. Hoai-san-se 淮南子 is a book for the Emperor's library, there are what are called *Yao* and *Yue*.

3. These lines are broken or solid; there are what are called *Yao* and *Yue*. The *Yao* lines are broken or solid; there are what are called *Yao* and *Yue*. The *Yao* lines are broken or solid; there are what are called *Yao* and *Yue*.

4. Hoai-san-se 淮南子 is a book for the Emperor's library, there are what are called *Yao* and *Yue*. The *Yao* lines are broken or solid; there are what are called *Yao* and *Yue*.

5. The character 一 (one) is the most important character in the *Yi-king*. It is the source of all things, and is the most important character in the *Yi-king*. It is the source of all things, and is the most important character in the *Yi-king*.