

practically synonymous, and that therefore Mark's use of *ἐπί* in this context bears the same meaning as it does in Jeremiah 5:9, i.e. *unto* or *with*, and the thought behind the phrase is that of immorally *going after* her, for the action of *neighing to* (*χρημετίζω ἐπί*) was equivalent to that of committing adultery with.

This is the more probable meaning, and it has the advantage of involving the application of *αὐτήν* to the last woman mentioned in the previous clause; this is better than referring *αὐτήν* to the more distant object.

Some Thoughts on Revision of the Bible in Chinese

R. P. Kramers

In previous issues of this Journal some references have already been made to the highly complex problem of revision of the Chinese Bible. The first time it was done by the Rev. A. H. Jowett Murray in a Review of a new Chinese draft translation of the New Testament,¹ and the second time by myself in an article reporting the results of a series of discussions which Mr. D. Lancashire and I had with the translator of this same draft version, the Rev. Lü Chên-chung.² Both articles concentrated on an evaluation of Mr. Lü's work in comparison with the so-called Mandarin Union Version, the latter being the translation used in most Chinese Christian churches today. My aim in writing again about this matter is, by stating the whole range of problems involved, to invite helpful criticism by the readers of this Journal as to a possible future policy.

History

To begin with, we have to recall that, in approaching the problem of Bible revision in Chinese, we are entering a field in which Bible translation has a long and important history, a history which is closely linked up with one of the most gigantic missionary enterprises in the world. It is not necessary for our purpose here to recall the earlier landmarks of this history, but we shall start out from the situation in 1890, the year of the great all-China missionary conference in Shanghai. Far-reaching decisions were taken there on the preparation of three Chinese versions of the Bible. The first two projects concerned a version in so-called 'High Wênli' or high classical written style, and one in 'Easy Wênli' or simple classical style. At that time it was only natural for these two projects to have preference, because we were still in the days of the

¹ "A Review of Lü Chenchung's Revised Draft of a New Translation of the New Testament in Chinese", in *The Bible Translator*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1953, pp. 165—167.

² "On Lü Chen-Chung's New Testament Translation", in *The Bible Translator*, Vol. 5, No. 4, October 1954, pp. 184—190.

Chinese Empire, when the classical Chinese pattern of life, at least in its outward forms, still reigned supreme. And indissolubly linked with this classical pattern was the classical language, modelled on the style of the ancient Chinese canonical writings and early philosophical literature. In the eyes of the educated this language was the only vehicle worthy of transmitting a wisdom which was laden with authority over life and death. It was not a spoken language, but it had a highly compelling power to the initiated because of its concise, yet suggestive, symbol-like script.

There is evidence that this feeling about the classical language has by no means died down yet. As late as the 1940's, in the midst of the Chinese war of resistance against the Japanese, Generalissimo Chiang K'ai-shek took the initiative towards having a new translation made of the Psalms and the New Testament,³ precisely in this classical language. But too much has happened during this last half century for classical Chinese ever to regain its former position of prominence. And this brings us back to the third translation project decided upon by the missionary conference in 1890, the project of a Bible translation into *kuan-hua* or Mandarin colloquial.

Almost from the beginning Protestant missionaries, mindful of the great European Bible translations, paid a great deal of attention to various local Chinese dialects, with the aim to reach everybody in his own tongue directly and not through the conventional medium, imposed by tradition and enjoyed by the few, of the classical written language. This had already led to many translation efforts into several dialects, including 'Northern Mandarin' or 'Peking Mandarin'. 'Mandarin' was a name which covered a widespread group of dialects having a comparatively close affinity with each other and ranging over three-quarters of China (the fourth quarter being the south-eastern section, from north of Shanghai to the province of Kuangtung, an area of a much greater dialectal complexity). It was called Mandarin, because it was the colloquial of the official class. There were several varieties of it: Northern, Central, Western and Southern Mandarin. In view of this situation we can readily understand that the translation committee of this Mandarin version had to undertake the hazardous task of producing a version which, as far as possible, would please most missionaries within the Mandarin-speaking areas. They often had to resort to compromise between different idioms, though Northern Mandarin can be said to have had precedence over the other varieties.

Significance of the Mandarin Union Version

Though we may say that, at that time, there was no single standard for a spoken national language, yet there existed a very important genre of popular novels and stories, written down in several varieties of Mandarin. This category of literature, openly (but by no means privately) disdained as a genre by the educated, was widely spread among the population. Mandarin, therefore, had already a written tradition,

³ The Psalms were published in 1946 by the Commercial Press, Shanghai. The New Testament was never published. The translator commissioned by Chiang K'ai-shek was Dr. John C. H. Wu.

and when, not long after the Chinese revolution of 1911, there followed a literary revolution which advocated a written language approximating colloquial instead of the time-honoured classical style, it was only natural that Mandarin was chosen as the most suitable vehicle. We must now compare dates: the decision to produce the Mandarin Union Version was taken in 1890, a first draft of the New Testament appeared in 1907, and the complete Bible, with a revised New Testament, was published in 1919. The Chinese revolution took place in 1911, and what is called the 'Literary Renaissance' began in 1917. A comparison of these dates immediately shows the great significance of the Mandarin Union Version in that it appeared at precisely the right time, as well as the providential foresight inspiring the initiators of this translation project at a time when nothing in the existing situation could point towards such a rapid and radical change in the language situation. Not only was this timely appearance of the Mandarin Union Version in tune with the general spirit of the times, but because of it this Version could also play a rôle in contributing towards the formation of the new literary language, which now was no longer called *kuan-hua* or Mandarin, but — clearly showing the aim of the reformers — *pai-hua* or 'plain language'.

But this revolution which took place in the linguistic field was an outward, though extremely important, sign of a spiritual crisis which was rocking the whole of traditional Chinese society. Western notions had been influential in bringing about a revolutionary tension in the old empire, hastening the day of the Chinese revolution. Christianity, brought through the efforts of Western missionaries, was very much seen as part of this Western impact, so it was understandable that a translation of the Scriptures, which were in many ways so fundamental to Western notions, and moreover a translation making use of *pai-hua*, the new literary medium, could not have appeared under more favourable circumstances.

Further language development

The *pai-hua* movement really marked the beginning of a new development in the field of language. It is a highly significant fact that soon the term *pai-hua* had to make place for the term *kuo-yü*, 'national language'. This change in terminology indicated that the literary 'Renaissance', begun by a handful of intellectuals in Peking, had gained the official sanction of the republican leaders. *Kuo-yü* became the vehicle of the newly-born Chinese nationalism, and it began to be promoted by official means. Where the missionary translators of the Mandarin Union Version often had to look for a compromise between various dialectal forms, the now official policy was to eliminate major divergencies by a process of education.

In the meantime, Western cultural influence gained momentum after the revolution. The fruits of 'Western learning' came to be felt in most of the new literature. Many of the new generation of writers were deeply influenced by the products of Western (including Russian) literature. At the same time they often drew upon the rich resources of local idiom and also of the classical literary language. In these various ways they greatly helped establish a *kuo-yü* tradition, building up this language to

a worthy literary medium. But *kuo-yü* was to be the language of a modern nation. There was a high tide of reaction against the time-honoured traditions which had upheld the old empire. New values had to take the place of the old traditions, but at the same time these old traditions could not be totally discarded if China was to preserve her national identity over against the threatening flood of Westernization.

All this could not but leave its deep imprint on the process of development in *kuo-yü*, and bring about important changes in this language since the time of publication of the Mandarin Union Version. It is as yet difficult to assess the exact nature of this language development, but we may in general point towards two tendencies:

a. A change in vocabulary, technical, political, social and cultural, under the influence of Western ideas, and, behind this, a change also as regards thinking patterns and processes in the direction of Western thinking, which in turn deeply influenced Chinese syntax.

b. Promotion of the use of popular local idiom as an assertion of indigenous popular culture, and in general a tendency towards a closer assimilation to colloquial patterns.

More recently, further language developments have taken place, some of which may be of lasting quality. These developments are due to the dominance of China by its new masters, the communists, whose new political jargon is entering deeply into every sphere of social and personal life. Moreover the communists, at least in their beginning years, made profitable use of the hunger for Chinese national self-assertion prevailing especially among the intelligentsia by stimulating and reviving folkloristic traditions of the ageless Chinese common people.

Present situation

Keeping in mind our problem as to a possible revision of the Mandarin Union Version, we now have to face the various aspects of the present situation which are of importance in determining the possibilities of such a project. The dominant aspect of this situation is, of course, the fact that the mainland of China is, perhaps for a long time to come, cut off from the Western world as regards a constructive contact and co-operation between the churches of China and of the West. The churches in China now have to find their own way in their witness for Christ under new and revolutionary circumstances. In the absence of this living contact, which alone can reveal to us the true experiences which give context and value to the written word, there is still this written word which, by the flood of recent publications in communist China, can at least keep us in touch with any major development in the language.

There are very few regions outside the China mainland where *kuo-yü* is spoken as a popular language. On Formosa there is a comparatively large population of 'mainlanders', among whom are many Christians. The Nationalist Government is promoting by many means the use of *kuo-yü* among the resident groups of Formosa. By far the most important of these groups is the Fukienese population which has immigrated there in the course of centuries, and which still uses the Southern Fukienese or Amoy dialect for their daily language. It is among these Fukienese that the largest organized churches are to be found.

Their Bible is the Amoy dialect version, prepared long ago by Presbyterian missionaries who have worked among the Amoy people for so long. For the last half century Formosa was a Japanese protectorate, which means that, instead of experiencing the development of *kuo-yü* on the mainland, they had learned Japanese as a second language, to be used for official purposes. Though many of them have now mastered *kuo-yü*, to them it will be a new official language for a long time before they will come to regard it as their own native tongue.

Hong Kong presents a slightly different picture. Most of the traditional population is Cantonese, and Cantonese is the most widespread language of communication. In language development there is a parallel here with formerly Japanese-occupied Formosa: conditions of government and trade greatly stimulated the use of English as a second language, and there was no political or economic need for the Hong Kong population to acquire the use of *kuo-yü*. Yet the latter has made much headway during the last decades, if only because it gradually replaced the classical literary language in the newspapers and other publications. This means that those who can read are able to read *kuo-yü*. To this the fact must be added that Cantonese has remained a colloquial, and is seldom written down. The general feeling among Cantonese seems to be that their vernacular, because of the many weird characters needed to write it down, looks shamefully barbaric in comparison to the grace and beauty of the traditional written language. In this connexion it is curious to note that, while there exists a (not very satisfactory) Bible translation into Cantonese, nearly all Cantonese-speaking congregations in Hong Kong use the Mandarin Union Version. It is from this version that the preacher reads aloud, which means that this form of oral communication by declamation is restricted to those who are already familiar with the written text, while only those who are able to read can perhaps make out the meaning of what is read aloud. On the other hand, *kuo-yü* not being the people's native tongue, it may also for a considerable period of time be felt as a literary medium only.

The *kuo-yü-speaking* element of the population must be sought among the many refugees, and it is the intellectual element in these circles which through various publications contributes towards maintaining the standard of *kuo-yü*.

A similar divergence between written *kuo-yü* and spoken vernacular may be noted in the various Overseas Chinese communities throughout South-east Asia. There are, however, some differences. In the first place, these communities often constitute minorities amidst populations whose languages they have to acquire in addition for purposes of communication. In this situation many families have, in the course of a few generations, lost their mother tongue. Secondly, their position as minorities proved a great stimulus for Chinese nationalist sentiment, so that there has been a fairly long and consistent propagation of the use of *kuo-yü* through the medium of the Chinese schools. Thirdly, the spread of *kuo-yü* helped overcome the difficulties in communication between speakers of different Chinese dialects. We may say, therefore, that *kuo-yü* has had a somewhat longer development in these communities

than in Hong Kong and among the Fukienese of Formosa. Nevertheless, here too it is still far from being identical with the spoken medium. In the various Christian communities, the Mandarin Union Version has also found a widespread usage.

Criteria for revision

We must now return to our specific problem, and turn our attention to the position of the Mandarin Union Version, making use of some general criteria for Bible revision.

1. Changes in the language in general. We have said enough, above, about the general trends of language development in China. It would seem from this that the nature of these changes is sufficient to necessitate a thorough revision of the language used in the Mandarin Union Version. Yet, as we also indicated above, this version did have by its timely appearance some influence on this process of change too. Moreover, a new language pattern has by no means crystallized yet, so that various stages of the written language still exist side by side. The old popular novels are still widely read and appreciated as well as modern literature. We must also ask the question if there has been any serious criticism during the past decades on the language of the Union Version. There have indeed been such language criticisms from the side of Chinese Christians, but, as far as I have been able to ascertain, pure language criticisms have been few, and seldom detailed.⁴ In so far as these criticisms are more detailed, they suggest a closer approximation to colloquial.

A great difficulty with such criticisms from Chinese quarters is also that they do not sufficiently distinguish between language and style criticism. It is, of course, always hard to draw a clear distinction between these two criteria. To an intellectual quite a different language may be intelligible than to a farmer, concurrently with the widely diverging esthetic appreciations of the two. Generalissimo Chiang K'ai-shek's endeavour, mentioned above, is a clear example of this. We must also realize that language and style criticism is very much bound up with the standpoint

⁴ From the Minutes of the Committee on Translations of the British and Foreign Bible Society we may mention the following examples: the Minutes of May 14th, 1924, record a letter by Dr. Sheppard, British and Foreign Bible Society Agent for China, reporting an interview which he had with Dr. T. T. Lew, Dean of the Theological School of Yenching University, and Dr. J. Leighton Stuart, the University's President. According to Dr. Lew many educated Chinese find the language of the Union Version often unnaturally strained, and the meaning could be brought out better by changes in construction. But Dr. Lew's main point, on which we shall have to come back below, is that he feels that such a necessary revision of the Union Version must be done by Chinese scholars.

The Minutes of 1944 record a letter by the Rev. J. C. F. Robertson, dated May 8th, from Chungking. Mr. Robertson writes that during the past two years he is more aware of a dissatisfaction with the present translation, among students and others — due partly to the present surge of nationalism, but partly also to a genuine feeling that the language of the Union Version Committee is not the language of the Chinese people today. A more detailed criticism, suggesting many lexical and syntactical alterations, was given by a Mr. Liu I-ling in a Chinese periodical with the English sub-title of *Comfort Quarterly*, published in Bandung, No. 14 (July 1954), pp. 2—6, and No. 15 (Nov. 1954), pp. 27—34.

and aim of the critics. The critic from outside the Church may view the Bible as one book among many, and his judgment is easily influenced by the fact that to him the Christian Message may sound "sheer foolishness" or at best be a "stumbling-block". On the other hand, he may be more in touch with the secular language development, and, since the Church may never forget that it is in the world, it is important to note and, if possible, to specify such criticism. Then there are various grounds for criticism emerging from within the Church. They vary from the one extreme of faithfulness to the letter of the Bible to the other extreme of wishing to remove something of the "stumbling-block" by employing as many elements of the pagan Chinese language as possible. Something will have to be said about this below, but here we must still point to another important factor: this is the lack of criticism on the language of the Union Version in Chinese Church circles. This is a common occurrence in any church, since the Bible is generally approached as a sacred text whose every word may contain a vital personal message, rather than a novel the literary merits and demerits of which may be judged.

2. Faithfulness to the original. Again there cannot be said to have been any large-scale criticism on this score, and yet the criticism there has been seems of more vital importance than the language criticism discussed above. Mr. Jowett Murray has already had something to say about the Union Version's faithfulness to the original in his article, and from it we catch a glimpse of the considerable tension which there must have been among the group of translators preparing this version: the tension between faithful literalism and smooth paraphrase. The Chinese critics mostly seem to belong to what are called 'fundamentalist' groups of the Christian constituency. These groups are often marked by their faith in the literally inspired truth of the Bible, and some of the criticisms do not always show a discernment for the problems involved in a Bible translation.⁵ But some of these criticisms show a great concern for a truthful presentation of the Christian Message to the Chinese people, and they express an awareness of the danger of too large concessions to Chinese idiom which might lead to a distortion of the essence of the Christian Message by the fact that this idiom is often rooted in Chinese religious notions embedded in this still pagan language.⁶ Such criticisms are extremely valuable for engendering a constructive theological discussion within the Chinese Church as to an honest and faithful interpretation of the Biblical Message from its own Chinese situation.

⁵ As may, for example, be seen from the reactions to the various notes contained in the text of the Union Version, informing the reader about the literal meaning of an expression in the original language. "If the original has these words", they say, "why then put it in a note instead of in the text?"

⁶ I have seen some constructive criticisms of this nature in two issues of a periodical called *Ling-shih chi-k'an* or *Spiritual Food Quarterly*, the periodical that was edited by Pastor Wang Ming-tao in Peking. The issues were Vol. 41 and Vol. 43-4, both published in 1937. The articles seemed to be the first two of a longer series. I also recall a criticism, stated to me by a Chinese Church leader in Indonesia, on the Union Version's translation of Luke 14:26. Instead of rendering the words "and hate not his father...", it chose the softer variant of Matthew 10:37, "...loveth father... more than me".

Under this second criterion we may also mention the achievements of more recent Biblical scholarship, the results of which might be incorporated in a possible revision of the Union Version. This is a self-evident matter, but it alone would involve a revision of a very limited nature. Yet one more thing has to be mentioned here. This is the fact that the missionary translators of the Union Version were careful, in difficult and ambiguous places, to make the Chinese translation as much as possible conform to the English Revised Version. In this way they no doubt hoped to avoid much misunderstanding in case diglots were published, and the Anglo-American preponderance in the Chinese mission field justified this care. But in the meantime the Revised Standard Version has come to the attention of many Chinese Christians outside China, and this will also be the case with the result of the new English translation now being prepared in England. Moreover, we must ask ourselves if the time is not gradually approaching in which Chinese Christians may come to their own understanding of the Biblical Message. But this carries us to the third criterion.

3. Translation by Chinese. A Bible translation should eventually be the work of indigenous Christians, and any translation for which the main responsibility lies with foreigners must have a preliminary character. I consider this the most serious argument behind most of the criticisms from Chinese quarters. At first sight such a criterion would seem to many to be inessential. After all, the Mandarin Union Version, and other great missionary versions, had been carefully gone through by very competent indigenous co-workers. Yet, while it is true that, in matters of language and style, they had a great and sometimes decisive authority, the final authority, especially in textual and exegetical matters, lay with the foreign translators. Now we may ask: what objections can be brought in against such a procedure, if the result is a remarkable piece of scientifically sound and artistically creative work? Does not nationalist sentiment play too large a rôle here? Looking at the history of China during the last decades, it is not surprising that the rise of Chinese nationalism should have its counterpart in the urge for complete independence from missions in many Church circles. Do we then have to doubt the sincerity of various statements by Church people to the effect that the time has come for Chinese Christians to make a new translation themselves?

We must allow for an admixture of patriotic feelings in the above trend of thought. Chinese Christians cannot remain indifferent to the crisis which shakes their own people in its struggle to preserve its identity in the modern world. But there is also a Christian side to their argument. For the Christian faith is a response to God's Message. It is a response made by the Church, wherever and in whatever form it exists. The response is as varied as the people of the earth are varied. All human creation, with its multi-coloured aspects, its endless variety of surroundings, its multiple ways of expression in response to those surroundings, all this human creation is being brought to listen to the same Message and respond to it. The fact that the Message is the same means on the one hand: war with all the other messages people have responded to and which lie embedded in their speech and thought. "I am *JHWH* thy

God . . . thou shalt have no other gods". It does not mean, however, that the response must be uniform. Just as God confronted Adam with the animals and let him give names to them, in the same way did God use human language as a tool to witness of His revelation. God's revealed Word lies embedded in the texts of the Bible, and only faith can give us clear discernment and understanding in scrutinizing its pages. And, by nature lacking in faith, shall we presume to tell other peoples exactly what forms of Revelation they have to cull from every text? This is the reason why we are held to translate as truly and exactly as possible. This however, does not mean a translation as literal as possible. Truly here means: as in great honesty and faith I understand the Bible. If I really understand it, then I shall be able to find a way of expressing this *in my own language*. And this precisely is the task which the younger churches have to face sooner or later. Hence all translation work done by foreigners, however near to understanding the Chinese, means work which is necessarily of a preliminary nature. The fact, therefore, that here and there in the Chinese Church voices have been raised urging a translation by Chinese may also be a healthy sign that this Church is beginning to think of its own responsibility in this matter.

Possibilities of revision

Taken all together, the various criteria discussed above would seem to indicate that a revision in the nature of a complete re-translation by Chinese Christians will sooner or later become an urgent necessity. On the other hand, we have to be realistic in our search for possibilities of such a revision in the present situation. We may begin by reviewing what has been done and what is being done in the field of Bible translation into Chinese up to the present.

Since the publication of the Mandarin Union Version several new translations of the New Testament in *kuo-yü* have appeared. There was a translation by Wang Yüan-tê in 1933 and one by Chu Pao-hui in 1936. They may be considered an indirect result of the preparation of the Mandarin Union Version, since Wang was the helper of Mateer, the most prominent translator of the group and the strongest advocate of a faithful translation, and Chu's translation goes back to the version published by Sydenstricker after he resigned from the group of translators. The 'Bible Treasury Version', begun in 1932, is the result of co-operation between Chinese and foreigners and is of a more independent nature. It is a much more literal translation than the Union Version, and it tries to come as closely as possible to a concordant translation.⁷

None of these versions seems to have had a very wide circulation, nor do they seem to have had backing from the majority of Chinese

⁷ All this information is given in a Review of Lü Chên-chung's First Draft of his New Testament translation, written by 'Taddao and Anli', and sent to Mr. Lü who kindly showed it to me. The Review also mentions two Roman Catholic versions in *kuo-yü*, one of the New Testament, published in 1933, and a revised edition of the Gospels, published in Tientsin in 1941. We may add here that there appeared in Hong Kong a most important and thorough new translation of the Old Testament into *kuo-yü*, provided with copious notes, and prepared by a mixed Chinese-foreign group of Franciscan fathers. The work was begun in Peking, and the last volume was published in 1954. The entire work numbers eight volumes.

churches. The same is more or less true of the New Testament translation by the Rev. Lü Chên-chung, but then the first draft was published in 1946 for private circulation only, while the revised draft was not published until 1952 in Hong Kong, after the new revolution in China, which means that the time is not yet ripe for the conclusion that this one-man effort may remain fruitless. From what I said in my previous article in *The Bible Translator* on Mr. Lü's work it may have become clear that, in my opinion, we have to do here with a one-man effort, with its daring novelties but also its weaknesses, a translation marked by a painstaking honesty and faithfulness, though sometimes to the detriment of Chinese style, a translation aimed at serving future students of the Bible, in theological colleges as well as among laymen. Moreover, Mr. Lü is one of the few Chinese Christians with a theological training who have a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. We know of a Chinese businessman, at present still in China, who has been studying Hebrew for many years and may still be working on a new translation of the Old Testament. We also have news of a renewed interest in the study of New Testament Greek among some groups on the Chinese mainland, possibly with the aim of a new translation of the New Testament. But we cannot possibly assess the value of this other work, nor could Western Bible Societies directly contribute to these efforts.

Looking over the field of possibilities, then, we must conclude that the work of Mr. Lü at present offers the best possibilities for a revision project of the Mandarin Union Version. In this case we must ask ourselves in particular the question: what is the value of Mr. Lü's translation work for a possible official revision of the Mandarin Union Version? Put otherwise: if from the above the conclusion is reached that a re-translation of the Bible by Chinese Christians may become necessary, could the translation effort of Mr. Lü, if properly extended and not continued as an isolated one-man effort, become this thorough revision and replace the Union Version? The answer to this cannot be 'Yes', simply because this would only be possible from a platform of the Chinese Church. We cannot presume here upon Church authority. The Church has usually to be won for a new translation, and this will always be a slow process. We must, however, not forget the few voices urging a revision, nor must we forget the vital relationship between Church language and the language of the world.

Official interest and encouragement from the side of the Chinese Church is, therefore, not likely for a long time to come. Moreover, we are facing a situation in which the Church on the mainland could never officially sanction an effort abroad (which does not, however, mean that there may be no unofficial interest). In the various Christian congregations among the Chinese in South-east Asia there are specific problems regarding the relation between *kuo-yü* and the various South-Chinese dialects. Hence it is not likely that an official sanction will come from those quarters.

All this is not encouraging from the point of view of Bible Societies which would rather wish to produce *official* versions. But does not this become increasingly difficult under the present circumstances in most parts of Asia? Formerly, the decision as to the preparation of an official

version, at least in China, was a matter which was settled between the various missionary bodies. With the growing independence of the younger churches in an increasingly independent Asia any revision project undertaken or sponsored by Western Bible Societies or missionary organizations would have to run the grave risk of not being accepted. The question to be asked in this case, therefore, is: do we, under the present circumstances, consider the possibilities inherent in Mr. Lü's undertaking sufficiently important to take this risk? Are foreign missionary agencies with a long period of service towards China under the obligation or not to continue this service in some form, even though we lack certainty that our services will be accepted?

It is clear in any case that such a project cannot without the authority of the Chinese Church be undertaken as *the* next official revision. This means that its aims would be somewhat more modest, in the nature of a sound *preparatory revision*. If for the particular contexts the reasons justifying a new translation are carefully recorded, this might greatly facilitate any future *official* revision work, and even be an essential contribution towards it. In the meantime, it could fill an immediate need among Bible students who are mainly confined to their own language for such a study. In this way the translation could be better tested out and find a measure of acceptance among Chinese Christians, thus contributing towards a theological deepening of the life of the Church.

But there is one indispensable condition for the undertaking of such a project, and I hope I have made this sufficiently clear in the above pages: if it is to be a genuine contribution towards the future of the Chinese Church, the main responsibility for such a translation will have to lie with Chinese Christian workers. To my mind this does not rule out co-operation and help from the side of Western agencies, provided this help is in principle not tied to the condition of Western leadership of the project. Only then may such a project have a chance of being a genuine step forward in the history of Bible translation into Chinese. Is it worth the risk?

Questions and Answers

The Rev. R. R. Covell is translating into Sediq (Tyal or Atayal), a tribal language of the mountainous area of central Formosa about Puli and along the east coast from Ho Pin to Hualien. The Gospel of Mark is about to be published.

Question:

The word used for 'Holy Spirit' is a word which means literally 'strength of God'. How far does an abstract expression of this kind embrace the full personal content and nature of the term 'Holy Spirit'?

Answer:

Though the word for 'Holy Spirit' means literally 'strength of God', for the actual term 'God's strength' we use another word meaning