

three and a half centuries old, and the English language has greatly changed.

Apart from guesses made from the sentence as a whole, very few people today would know what is meant by such words or phrases as "We do you to wit" (2 Cor. 8:1), "leasing" (Ps. 4:2), and "froward" (2 Sam. 22:27). Much more serious than the cases where a word has become obsolete are the many instances where a word that is still in use has changed its meaning, as in Psalm 119:147, "I prevented the dawning of the morning."

When the writer began to teach Hebrew he endeavored to have his students understand precisely what the various forms of Hebrew mean. In many instances there is one form for the second person masculine singular of a verb, another for its second feminine singular, another for its second masculine plural, and still another for its second feminine plural. Thus four different possibilities in Hebrew may all be expressed in English by the word "you." It was my thought that students would find it easier to learn Hebrew if the language of three centuries ago were used in the exercises, with the old English pronoun "thou" used for the singular and "you" for the plural, thus having two possibilities for the four Hebrew forms instead of only one. Before long, however, I found that most students today, even college graduates, have little understanding of what "thou" means. Given sentences to translate from English into Hebrew they were just as apt to render "thou" by the plural as by the singular. This made me realize that many of the words used three hundred years ago convey little meaning to most people living today, and that where the Hebrew has a distinction that cannot be expressed in modern English a translator must either ignore it or indicate it by a footnote.

Unless one has personally tried to make a translation from one language to another he cannot realize the difficulties of such a task. Although some linguists have declared that any thought that can be clearly expressed in one language can be clearly expressed in almost any other, the manner of expressing it may be very different. A word-for-word translation can easily give a completely false idea. 21