

they use in Sunday School is in some way a magical thing, or that the English words that it contains are the very words that Jesus spoke, they are apt to become easy prey later on for those who would destroy their faith.

God did not leave us in ignorance. He revealed Himself to the prophets of old and led them as they wrote down his message, part of it in Hebrew, part in Aramaic, and part in Greek. When we study it in the original languages and compare Scripture with Scripture, every idea that we can properly draw from it represents God's truth and is without error. If we take only one or two verses alone we can easily misunderstand them, and may even adopt ideas that are false, since almost any sentence in any language, if taken by itself, can be interpreted in more than one way.

If one spends a substantial amount of time studying any foreign language he soon discovers that there is no such thing as an exact translation from one language to another. When I first went to Germany to study I did not know German very well. When I finished my first meal in a restaurant I was anxious to get my bill so I could leave. I looked up "bill" in my little dictionary and found two German words for it. One of them meant "an account" and the other meant "the bill or beak of a bird". If I had asked for the wrong one the waiter would have wondered what I meant!

It is rare that a word in one language exactly corresponds to a word in another language. Many have two different meanings, sometimes not at all related. "Light" may be the opposite of "heavy" or it may be the opposite of "dark". In almost any other language these would be two different words. That other language in turn would have words that contain two ideas that English would have to express by different words. A word is not a point; it is an area of meaning, and the areas rarely correspond in different languages.

If children get the idea that the words of any English translation are exactly what God originally said they become easy targets for the unbelief that they will encounter in almost any public school or university. If they know what we really mean when we say that the Bible is a revelation from God, and understand what a translation really is, it will be far more difficult to lead them astray from the great truths that are plainly taught in any translation that has been honestly made.