

Some time ago I read (about) some statements about the wonderful insights into human life that are contained in the Essays of Montaigne and thought I would enjoy reading some of his works. Accordingly I purchased a copy of Montaigne's Essays. In the preface I found the statement that this translation of Montaigne from the original French is the one made by Florio in the sixteenth century. It said that there have been other translations since that time, but that since none of them gets the flavor of Montaigne's original writings so well as this one by Florio, it was decided to use his text in the present publication. I found that the language of the book was very similar to that of the King James Version of the Bible, having been translated at about the same time. As I began to read, I found it rather heavy going. There were many words and many syntactical usages quite different from those that are in common use today. The labor of reading it was about double what it would be in a present-day translation, and in some cases it would be only by using a dictionary of the language of three hundred years ago that one could not tell what the words meant at all. God gave us His revelation, not merely for one century, but for all the centuries of the present era, from the time when it was first written, right up to the end of the entire age. During this period there have been many changes in human life. Concepts that were accepted as inevitable and universal have come to be completely discarded. Meanings of words change. People's attitude toward life is altered in many regards. There are many ways in which a person of today is much closer to one who lived in the ancient world than to those who lived three hundred years ago. God gave His revelation to present His truth to people of all periods. This is a tremendous accomplishment, yet it is a very difficult one. It adds to the problem of correctly understanding details of the meaning of His revelation.

A great difficulty in understanding the Bible comes from the problem of the nature of human words. Human words are an attempt to express ideas. Almost any idea can be expressed in various ways. It is rare, however, that any one of these ways precisely and completely expresses the idea. Words are used differently by different writers and in different periods of time. They are constantly developing and changing.