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Any honest critic, who had committed himself to a similar blunder in dealing with a figurative passage quoted from the Greek tragedians or the English poets, would be terribly ashamed of himself when his blunder was exposed. Let us hope that the sceptical critics of the Bible may have the grace to blush when they find how childish a blunder they have made in taking the verses of a poem, not simply for a prose description of an actual event, but for a grave record of a stupendous and incredible miracle. S. COX.

THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATION.

I.

I PURPOSE in the following paper to make a few remarks on the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which is called the Septuagint, and after briefly glancing at its history, to give one or two illustrations of its interest and importance. It is unfortunate, but, amid the conflicting claims of so many great branches of study, it is perhaps inevitable, that Hebrew should, with rare exceptions, form no part of ordinary school training, and that, in consequence of this, the large majority even of the clergy of various denominations are unacquainted with the language in which were enshrined the oracles of God. When the period of training is over, most men find themselves plunged in the pressing occupations of daily duty, and are simply unable to secure any adequate leisure for special studies, even if the heavy labours of life leave them

with sufficient unexhausted energy to face the severe self-discipline required for the acquisition of a new and difficult language. But since this is the case, it becomes still more desirable that they should have something to help them besides the English version, and as the large majority possess some knowledge of Greek, the study of the Septuagint would still be valuable even if it did nothing more for them than to present the old truths in the freshness of another language. This venerable translation has, however, as we shall soon see, far higher claims than this to the notice of the student, and is worthy of far deeper attention than it has received from any except a very small number of English and foreign theologians.

The well-known facts of the history of the Septuagint are, briefly, as follows :—

A book is still extant, which professes to have been written by a certain Aristeas, a distinguished officer in the service of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The account given in this book is, that Ptolemy, hearing of the Pentateuch from Demetrius Phalereus, whom he had appointed librarian of his new Alexandrian library, was desirous of adding so ancient and sacred a volume to his literary treasures. Being informed by Aristeas that the Jews would not be likely to conform to his wishes while so large a number of them were kept in the condition of slaves, he expended the enormous sum of 660 talents in ransoming 198,000 of them, and then despatched Aristeas with an embassy bearing magnificent presents to the High Priest Eleazar, and requesting that he would send him a copy of the Law, with some Jewish scholars capable of

translating it. Six were accordingly chosen out of each tribe. On their arrival, the king feasted them for seven days, tested their wisdom by seventy-two questions, which they answered successfully; and then assigned them a lodging on the shore, in which, by combined labour, they succeeded in producing their translation in seventy-two days.

A story never loses by repetition, and by the time of the Christian era the current belief, which was unhesitatingly accepted by Irenæus and many of the Fathers, was that the translators had all been separated from each other, and in an incredibly short time had each independently translated the entire Old Testament. On comparing the seventy-two translations they were found to be verbally identical, and it was therefore a necessary inference that the work could only have been accomplished by the direct inspiration of God. Some ruinous buildings on the shore at Alexandria were pointed out as the actual cells in which the translators had worked, and so general was the credence given to the story, that Justin Martyr was actually taken to visit these ruined cells as one of the recognized sights of Alexandria. Jerome, with his usual intellectual independence, contemptuously rejects this falsehood, and points out that even Aristeas does not say a word about any such miracle,—"the office of translator being wholly different from that of Prophet." Jerome was far too learned to be unaware that the Septuagint abounded in most serious errors, and he can hardly be speaking from any very grave conviction when he says that the translators may have had the guidance of the

Holy Spirit in their occasional additions to the words of the Hebrew text.

Although for centuries the letter of Aristeas was accepted as genuine, it is now universally known to be nothing more or less than a spurious work of imagination. The date of its composition is uncertain, but it is probably not earlier than fifty years before the Christian era; and if so, it must have been written more than two centuries after the events which it professes to relate. The entire narrative, in its glaring improbabilities, has all the character of a gorgeous romance, and the Sophist who wrote it betrays himself by the reckless prodigality of his exaggerations. Yet he built his story on one or two actual facts, and, alike in his book and in the quotation from another book, ascribed to Aristobulus, which is preserved by Clemens of Alexandria, we see that the Jews in the century before Christ, believed that the Greek version of the Bible had its origin in Alexandria about B.C. 280, and that the nucleus of it was formed by the version of the Pentateuch.

And thus much might indeed have been easily conjectured without the aid of tradition. The Septuagint (for which I will now use the recognized abbreviation, LXX.) shews the clearest possible traces of its birthplace, alike in its phraseology, its peculiar inflections, and its intellectual bias. The account of Aristeas, that the translators were sent from Jerusalem, falls at once to the ground when we notice these peculiarities. Even supposing these to have been familiar with Hellenistic Greek, Jews from Jerusalem would not have represented the

Hebrew *Ephah* by the Egyptian *Oiphi*, or have represented *Zaphnath Paaneah*, the title bestowed on Joseph, by its proper Egyptian equivalent, *Psom-thom-phaneek;* nor, again, would they have changed the *rush* into a *papyrus*, nor have introduced the word *hippodrome* into Genesis xxxv. 19. Still less would they have rendered the word *Thummim* by *Truth* and so, apparently, have identified the "gems oracular" of the High Priest's breastplate with the sapphire pectoral worn by the chief of the Egyptian hierarchy. If these facts are alone decisive for the Alexandrian origin of the version, the date may be inferred within certain limits from various allusions. The reference in the prologue of Ecclesiasticus shews that most of the Old Testament had been translated before the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes II., B.C. 170; and in the apocryphal additions to Esther mention is made of Ptolemy Philometor, B.C. 181. There is no certain evidence to establish the date of special portions. In Joshua viii. 18 we find the word γαισὸς for Joshua's spear, and as this is said to be the Gallic word for a javelin, Hody and others have inferred that this book cannot have been translated before B.C. 250, about which time Gallic mercenaries began to be employed by the Egypto-Macedonian kings. But the argument is too precarious to be of much value.

We may, however, safely conclude that, about two-and-a-half centuries before the Christian era, the Law was first translated at Alexandria from its original Hebrew, and that the impulse which had led to its translation gradually brought about the completion of the work. Beyond these facts all is

uncertain. The ignorance of the Hebrew language, which went on increasing after the the days of the Captivity, would have made a translation of the Scriptures into Hellenistic Greek — which at that time was the language mainly prevalent in all civilized countries—an inestimable boon to the Jews of the Dispersion; and probably this need would alone have been sufficient to induce some competent scholars to undertake the task of enabling their countrymen to read their own sacred law. But there is nothing unlikely in the supposition that the literary curiosity of a cultivated court like that of the Ptolemies may have given an additional and powerful stimulus to a work which would not have been likely in any case to be left incomplete. Ptolemy Soter and his son Ptolemy Philadelphus may have been pleased to secure for their famous library so unique a treasure. In spite, however, of the attempt of the Jewish philosopher Aristobulus, or the writer who assumes his name, to prove that the Greeks plagiarized from the Septuagint their philosophic theories, nothing is more certain than that, among the Gentiles, the translation remained completely unnoticed. The Jews, as a rule, were at once detested and despised, and Pagan writers troubled themselves very little about what Juvenal calls "the secret volume of Moses." Even so late as the age of Tacitus, the account given by that eminent and careful historian of Jewish affairs is to the last degree erroneous and grotesque.

But the fate of the Septuagint among the people for whom it was mainly written was widely different. It occupied among them a position in no

respect less important than the English version does among us. When we find Josephus fully accepting the fable of the pseudo-Aristeas, and a writer so learned as Philo making exclusive use of the Septuagint, and quoting it on all occasions without the slightest misgiving, we can understand the reverence in which it was held, and the fact that the Jews, who used it in all their synagogues, appointed a feast-day in commemoration of its completion. The very name, Septuagint, is said to be derived from the sanction given to it by the seventy members of the Alexandrian Sanhedrin. It is, however, at least equally probable that it derived the name from the number of translators so confidently assigned to it in the romance of Aristeas.

How many translators were actually employed upon it must remain uncertain, but it is quite clear that the work was completed in different portions, and that the authors of it were very differently endowed. The work of about fifteen hands may perhaps be traced in it; and so far were they from being able to advance any claim to inspired direction, that no attentive reader of the version can avoid the conclusion that some of them were very indifferently acquainted with Greek, some of them very indifferently acquainted with Hebrew, and others wholly incompetent for their task from their entirely inadequate knowledge of either language. The most successful versions are those of the Books of Leviticus and Proverbs. The translation of the Prophets is often quite unintelligible; that of Job is poetical, but imperfect; that of Isaiah harsh, poor, and constantly erroneous; that of Daniel so

hopelessly bad that the version of Theodotion was substituted for it, and it fell into such desuetude that it was for a long time believed to be no longer extant. It was, however, found at Rome in 1772. How, in the face of such phenomena as these, Mr. Greenfield, so late as 1850, could come forward as a staunch supporter of the Divine and inspired authority of the LXX., is an astonishing proof of the lengths to which even a learned man may be carried in defence of a favourite theory.

The importance of the LXX. may be briefly summed up under the following heads:—

1. The theological phraseology of the New Testament was found by the apostles ready created by the Old Testament translators. Many separate terms of the most immense importance, such as *σάρξ*, "flesh," *πνεῦμα*, "spirit," *δικαιοῦν*, "to justify," *κύριος*, "Jehovah," *ἀγάπη*, "love," *ἁγιάζειν*, "to sanctify," *εὐχαριστεῖν*, "to give thanks as an act of worship;" and many phrases like *πιστεύειν τῷ Θεῷ*, "to trust in God," *ἀπάτη τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, "the deceitfulness of sin," *ἐκκακεῖν*, "to faint," *ἐντυγχάνειν τινι*, "to make supplication for," *στηρίζειν τὴν ψυχήν*, "to strengthen the soul," &c., are derived from recognized Hellenistic expressions adopted by these Alexandrian translators. Missionaries, who often find such enormous difficulty in rendering into foreign languages the simplest and most familiar terms of religion and morality, will at once appreciate the importance of the service which the LXX. thus rendered to the Apostles and the Evangelists.

2. The dissemination of it prepared the way for

Christianity, by tending to diffuse the expectation of a coming Saviour. Wherever, throughout the civilized world, any Jews were to be found, there was always a synagogue, and in these synagogues the Old Testament was read in a language which was the vernacular of most, and was familiar to nearly all. Without any actual knowledge of the sacred books themselves, it is clear that some conception of the subject of the prophecies would thus find its way among the Gentiles, and would account for the general diffusion of an expectation that a new Deliverer would soon arise in the East, the prevalence of which is mentioned by Suetonius and Tacitus. That expectation must have had no small influence in arresting the attention of the Gentile world to those who came to announce its fulfilment.

3. It effectually precluded the falsification of the Old Testament scriptures in the interests of Jewish controversy. A single instance out of many will suffice to shew the importance of this consideration. No Psalm is more frequently quoted by the New Testament writers, in its Messianic application, than the twenty-second, and the Jews, who had freely adopted Messianic applications of many Psalms long before their controversies with the Christians began, would have gladly got rid of such a passage as "*They pierced my hands and my feet.*" Accordingly they prefer to read, *kâarî*, "like a lion," —though the sense thus given is very obscure— for *kâarû*, "they pierced." But turning to the LXX., we find that they translated the word by ὤρυξαν, "*they transfixed*," and this becomes a strong argument for the latter reading. It was a fortunate

circumstance, both for Jews and Christians, that any tampering with the Scriptures on dogmatic grounds was, to a great extent, prevented by the existence of a translation which furnished abundance of important evidence for the condition of the Hebrew text fully two centuries before the possibility of such controversies had arisen.

4. The quotations in the New Testament are often derived immediately from the LXX., and are still more often influenced by its renderings. The subject of these quotations has received great attention, being indeed all-important for those who would arrive at any true and unbiassed opinion on the nature of inspiration; and we find as the general result of many elaborate comparisons that, out of some two hundred and seventy-five passages quoted by our Lord and his apostles, ninety agree verbally with the LXX., while in the great majority of the remainder the differences are very slight, and are easily accounted for. It is an especially striking fact that, *in thirty-seven of these ninety passages*, the LXX. differs in a greater or less degree from the Hebrew, and is yet accepted freely by the New Testament writers. And this phenomenon becomes yet more important when we find that, in some of these instances, an argument is founded on the LXX. version which would find no countenance from the original Hebrew. Thus, "*Teaching for doctrine the commandments of men*" (Matt. xv. 9) differs very widely from "*Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men*" (Isa. xxix. 13). But St. Matthew is here following the LXX., as he invariably does in his "cyclic" quotations, *i. e.*, in

those which he has in common with the other Evangelists. Again, in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews there is an argument to prove the superiority of Christ to angels, which mainly turns on Psa. viii. 6. But in that passage the Hebrew has, "a little lower *than Elohim*," *i.e.*, "than God," and the entire argument is really made to depend on the word chosen by the LXX. to translate the Original. The acceptance of the LXX. by the whole Jewish community, and the reverence which they attached to it, made such an argument entirely cogent. It was only when the Jews began to find that the LXX. furnished many powerful weapons to Christian controversialists that they took a dislike to it, and are even said to have appointed a fast to deplore its very existence.

5. There are allusions and quotations in the ancient Fathers which, apart from the LXX., would be wholly unintelligible. When, for instance, St. Ambrose, in his orations *De obitu Theodosii*, says of Helena, "She worshipped Him who hung on the wood; . . . . Him who, *like a beetle, called to his persecutors*," &c.; and in his comment on Luke xxiii., "*He was the good beetle who called from the wood*"—how utterly should we be at a loss to explain the allusion, if the LXX. did not furnish us with the requisite clue. In Hab. ii. 11, instead of "the beam out of the timber shall answer it," we read in the LXX., κάνθαρος ἐκ ξύλου where κάνθαρος, which usually means "beetle," is explained by St. Cyril to be a technical term for "*a cross-beam*." Hence "bonus scarabæus," "the good beetle,"—astonishing as such a title may appear to

us,—was not unknown to Christian antiquity as a designation of our Lord. Again, when we find Tertullian challenging Marcion to tell him what he thought of David's prophecy, "*He reigned from the wood*," how much we should be perplexed to conjecture where any such prophecy occurred in the Old Testament, if we did not find ἐβασίλευσεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου in some MSS. of the LXX. in Psa. xcvi. 10. This reading found its way into the old Latin version, the *Vetus Itala*, and is referred to not only by Tertullian, but also by Justin Martyr.

6. The LXX. is very important, as illustrating the tendencies of Jewish thought among the most learned community of Jews who found themselves in contact with the greatest refinement of heathen culture. In reading the history of Josephus we see the constant attempt of that subtle renegade to soften down the opinions and the history of his countrymen in such a way, and so far as he could venture to do so, as to make them more agreeable and less incredible to his Gentile readers. We trace the same influences at work in the LXX. Thus in Gen. ii. 2 they change "the seventh day" into "the sixth day." In Exod. ii. 1, unwilling to allow that Amram apparently married his aunt, they render "the daughter of Levi" by "(*one*) *of the daughters of Levi*." In iv. 6, to avoid the mention of leprosy in connection with the name of Moses, they render the verse, "*his hand became as snow*." In iv. 20 they display an almost ludicrous touch of national vanity by converting the ass on which the wife and sons of Moses rode into "*the beasts of burden;*" just as, in 1 Sam. xv. 12, they accom-

modate the prophet Samuel with a chariot, which has no existence in the Hebrew. In the same verse, instead of, "Moses took the rod of God in his hands," they quietly substitute, "*the rod which was from God.*" In vi. 12, "I am a man of uncircumcised lips" becomes, "I am unable to speak;" and, in verse 30, "thin-voiced." In the fifteenth verse "the son of a Canaanitish woman" becomes "the son of a *Phœnician* woman." In iv. 24, instead of "Jehovah met Moses" they make it, "*an angel of Jehovah.*" In the twenty-sixth verse of the same chapter they change, "Surely a bloody husband art thou to me," into "*The blood of my child's circumcision hath ceased (to flow).*" In v. 3, "lest he fall upon us with pestilence and with the sword" becomes the much more euphemistic, "*lest death and slaying should befal us.*" In xii. 40, to remove an obvious difficulty, they add to "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt" the words, "*and in the land of Canaan,*" was 430 years. Similar instances might be indefinitely multiplied, and perhaps the most remarkable are those which, like several of the above, are suggested by the obvious desire to avoid the simple anthropomorphism of the Pentateuch, or to soften down all expressions which they think unworthy of the dignity of God. Thus, in Exod. iv. 16, instead of, "thou shalt be to him instead of God," we have, "*thou shalt be to him to the things which relate to God.*" In xxiv. 10, 11, "they saw the God of Israel" becomes "*they saw the place where the God of Israel stood,*" and "the body of heaven" is changed into "*the appearance of the firmament of heaven.*" In the

following verse this tendency to substitute their own conception for an honest translation is singularly apparent: it runs in the Hebrew thus: "And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink." Now, according to our modern notions of a translator's duty, they ought to have given the sense of this quite literally, and not to have substituted for it any glosses, or euphemisms, or comments, or paraphrases of their own. But the views of the translator of Exodus were evidently quite different. He probably thought that he was rendering an essential service in supplying his readers with the meaning which he fancied that the writer implied, or, at any rate, *ought* to have implied. In fact, he seems to have considered it to be his duty to improve upon his original by the gloss. "*And of the selected of Israel not one was wanting* (διεφώνησε), *and they appeared in the place of God, and eat and drank.*" For similar reasons, in xv. 3, for "the Lord is a man of war" we have, "*bringeth wars to nought.*" They quietly omit—and this can hardly have been accidental—the strong condemnation of xxxii. 9, "*And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people;*" and in the twenty-second verse they soften, "thou knowest this people, that they are set on mischief" into "*thou knowest the impetuosity of this people.*"

These instances, mostly selected from a single book, are sufficient to shew the kind of view which the most learned Jews took of their own Scriptures two centuries before Christ. My object in this paper has merely been to mention some of the

peculiarities of this Alexandrian version, and I have probably said enough to shew that it abounds in points of interest and value to the theologian. I hope in a second paper to furnish a few other instances in which the LXX. supplies us with particulars of great interest, derived from the ritual practices or the floating traditions of the Jews. Apart from any intrinsic interest which they may be found to possess, some of them throw very valuable light on the condition of the text, and suggest the solution of more than one historical difficulty.

F. W. FARRAR.

THE GLORIOUS COMPANY OF THE APOSTLES.

BY THE LATE REV. T. T. LYNCH.[1]

ST. MARK iii. 14.

It is both instructive and pleasant that we should have an acquaintance with the twelve apostles at least so intimate and friendly as that we shall know each of them when we meet him, and be able to distinguish the one from the other. But it is not easy to remember twelve separate men, and it is much less easy to remember twelve separate names, unless we so group them as to aid the memory and that one shall serve to recall another. The apostles are grouped in this helpful way in the Scriptures of the New Testament. We have a list of their names in each of the Gospels, and again in the Acts of the Apostles. In all these lists Peter stands first, and

[1] Notes of an Expository Discourse by the late Rev. T. T. Lynch. Expanded by the Editor.