

Timothy was the son of a Greek father. His Bible was undoubtedly the Septuagint; this was to him what our King James' version has been to us—our text-book in the nursery. Yet in speaking to Timothy of the Scriptures which he had, the apostle reminds him (1 Tim. iv. 6) that he had been "nourished up in the *words of faith* and of good doctrine" (2 Tim. iii. 15); "from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iv. 15); "Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

It may be said in explanation of this use of the Septuagint in preference to the Hebrew text that the people could not understand the Hebrew; that even in Palestine the once sacred tongue was nearly forgotten. This is true, but not to such an extent as to account for the fact noted. The Hebrew was read in many of the synagogues of Palestine; the rabbis were familiar with it. Indeed, they insisted loudly upon its restoration, going so far as to commemorate the translation of the Old Testament into Greek by a day of fasting and humiliation.

But even if the people had entirely lost the Hebrew text, surely our Lord and the apostles could have literally translated from it. There is but one satisfactory explanation of their not doing so—viz., that they saw no reason for supplanting the accepted Septuagint version. For three hundred years after Christ the Christian Church saw no reason for reverting to the Hebrew. It was not until Jerome's day that the attempt was made, and even then it was opposed by such men as Augustine on the ground that the example of Christ and the apostles had made the Septuagint to be virtually the inspired Word.

Now the fact that the Septuagint was practically the Bible of Jesus, the apostles, and of the Church during all the ages of its planting, raises the question whether any features in which the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew can be essential to real inspiration.

There are several respects in which the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew. We limit the discussion in this article to one—viz., it is *not a literal* or *verbal* translation; it is a rendering only of the general thoughts, and not even then in rhetorical details.

We select almost at random. Take Psalm xxiii. We read in our Bibles, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

The Septuagint has it, "The Lord shepherds me." Here the noun is changed to a verb.

Hebrew: "He maketh me to *lie down* in green pastures."

Septuagint: "He makes me *dwell* (literally, encamp, pitch my tent) in a place of verdure."

Hebrew: "My cup runneth over."

Septuagint: "Thy cup *cheereth* me like the best (*of the wine.*)"

The translators have not only made free with the language, but have