Chronicles

Jerome (c. AD 347–420)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Chronicles

[Translated by Kevin P. Edgecomb] BEGINNING OF THE PROLOGUE OF SAINT JEROME TO THE BOOK OF PARALIPOMENON

If the version of the Seventy translators is pure and has remained as it was rendered by them into Greek, you have urged me on superfluously, my Cromatius, most holy and most learned of bishops, that I translated the Hebrew scrolls into Latin words. For what has formerly won the ears of men and strengthened the faith of those being born to the Church was indeed proper to be approved by our silence. Now, in fact, when different versions are held by a variety of regions, and this genuine and ancient translation is corrupted and violated, you have considered our opinion, either to judge which of the many is the true one, or to put together new work with old work, and shutting off to the Jews, as it is said, ”a horn to pierce the eyes. The region of Alexandria and Egypt praises in their Seventy the authority of Hesychius; the region from Constantinople to Antioch approves the version of Lucian the Martyr; in the middle, between these provinces, the people of Palestine read the books which, having been labored over by Origen, Eusebius and Pamphilius published. And all the world contends among them with this threefold variety.

And Origen certainly not only put together the texts of four editions, writing the words in a single row so that one regularly differing may be compared to others agreeing among themselves, but what is more audacious, into the edition of the Seventy he mixed the edition of Theodotion, marking with asterisks those things which were missing, and placing virgules by those things which are seen to be superfulous. If, therefore, it was allowed to others not to hold what they once accepted, and after the seventy chambers, which are considered without a single author, individual chambers were opened, and thus is read in the churches what the Seventy did not know, why do my (fellow) Latins not accept me, who thus put together the new with the inviolate old edition so that I might make my work acceptable to the Hebrews and, what is greater than these, to the authors, the Apostles? I have recently written a book, ”On the best kind of translating,” showing these things in the Gospel, and others similar to these, to be found in the books of the Hebrews: ”Out of Egypt I called my son,” and ”For he will be called a Nazarene,” and ”They will look on him whom they have pierced,” and that of the Apostle, ”Things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, and had not arisen in the heart of man, which God has prepared for those loving Him.

The Apostles and Evangelists were certainly acquainted with (the version of) the Seventy interpreters, but from where (were) they (supposed) to say these things which are not in the Seventy? Christ our God, author of both Testaments, says in the Gospel according to John, "He who believes in me, as Scripture has said, Rivers of living water will flow from his belly. Certainly, whatever is witnessed by the Savior to be written, is written. Where is it written? The Seventy don't have it; the Church ignores the apocrypha; thus the turning back to the Hebrew (books), from which the Lord spoke and and the disciples took forth texts. In peace I will say these things of the ancients, and I respond only to my detractors, who bite me with dogs' teeth, slandering me in public, speaking at corners, the same (being) both accusers and defenders, when approving for others what they reprove me for, as though virtue and error were not in conflict, but change with the author. I have recalled another edition of the Seventy translators corrected from the Greek to have been distributed by us, and me not to need to be considered their enemy, which things I always explain in the gatherings of the brothers. And what is now Dabreiamin, that is, Words of the Days, I have translated.

I have therefore made the foreignness of the meanings clearer, and have separated lines into members, so that the inextribcable spaces and forest of names, which are confused through the error of the scribes, are, as Hismenius says, "themselves singing to me and mine," even if the ears of others are deaf.

END OF THE PROLOGUE

Source. English translation: an out-of-copyright translation as transcribed, or commissioned and given to the public domain, by Roger Pearse for his collection ***Early Church Fathers – Additional Texts*** (tertullian.org/fathers). SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes are left out, and Greek or Latin words, square brackets and any transcription error are as the source prints them. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.

Licence. translated for the site and dedicated to the public domain (2006).