with the writings of the ancients. Eusebius, too, quotes the Commentaries of Aristobulus. But, continues the learned dean, “ Clemens Alexandrinus is the first author that mentions them. Now, had any such commentaries existed in the time of Philo and Josephus, they would surely have mentioned them.” But is the circumstance of its not being quoted by every succeeding author a sufficient rea­son to disprove the authenticity of any book ? Neither Philo nor Josephus undertook to give a list of preceding authors, and it was by no means the uniform practice of these times always to name the authors from whom they derived their information.

Prideaux further contends, that the sum which Ptolemy is said to have given to the interpreters is too great to be credible. If his computation were just, it certainly would be so. He makes it L.2,000,000 sterling ; but other writers@@1 reduce it to L.85,42l, and some to L.56,947, neither of which is a sum so very extraordinary in so great and mag­nificent a prince as Philadelphus, who spent, according to Athenaeus, not less than ten thousand talents on the furni­ture of one tent, which is six times more than what was spent in the whole of the embassy and translation, which amounted only to 1552 talents.

Prideaux says, “ that what convicts the whole story of Aristæas of falsity is, that he makes Demetrius Phalereus to be the chief actor in it, and a great favourite of the king ; whereas Philadelphus, as soon as his father was dead, cast him into prison, where he soon after died.” But it may be replied, that Philadelphus reigned two years jointly with his father Lagus, and it is not said by Hermippus that De­metrius was out of favour with Philadelphus during his fa­ther’s life. Now, if the Septuagint was translated in the beginning of the reign of Philadelphus, as Eusebius and Jerome think, the difficulty will be removed. Demetrius might have been librarian during the reign of Philadelphus, and yet imprisoned on the death of Lagus. Indeed, as the cause of Philadelphus’s displeasure was the advice which Demetrius gave to his father, to prefer the sons of Arsinoë to the son of Bernice, he could scarcely show it till his father’s death. The Septuagint translation might therefore be begun while Philadelphus reigned jointly with his father, but not be finished till after his father's death.

Besides the objections which have been considered, there is only one that deserves notice. The ancient Christians not only differ from one another concerning the time in which Aristobulus lived, but even contradict themselves in different parts of their works. Sometimes they tell us he dedicated his book to Ptolemy Philometer ; at other times they say it was addressed to Philadelphus and his father. Sometimes they make him the same person who is mention­ed in second Maccabees, and sometimes one of the seven­ty-two interpreters a hundred and fifty-two years before. It is difficult to explain how authors fall into such incon­sistencies, but it is probably occasioned by their quoting from memory. This was certainly the practice of almost all the early Christian writers, and soractimes of the apostles themselves. Mistakes were therefore inevitable. Jose­phus has varied in the circumstances of the same event, in his Antiquities and Wars of the Jews, probably from the same cause ; but we do not hence conclude, that every cir­cumstance of such a relation is entirely false. In the ac­count of the Marquis of Argyll’s death in the reign of Charles II. we have a very remarkable contradiction. Lord Clarendon relates that he was condemned to be hanged, which was performed the same day. On the contrary, Bur­net, Wodrow, Heath, and Echard, concur in stating that he was beheaded ; and that he was condemned upon the Satur­day, and executed upon the Monday.@@2 But was any reader of English history ever sceptical enough to raise from hence a

question, whether the Marquis of Argyll was executed or not ? Yet this ought to be left in uncertainty, according to the way of reasoning in which the facts respecting the trans­lation of the Septuagint are attempted to be disproved.

Such are the objections which Prideaux has raised against the common account of the Septuagint translation, and such are the answers which may be given to them. We have chosen to support that opinion which is sanctioned by his­torical evidence, in preference to the conjectures of modern critics, however ingenious ; being persuaded that there are many things recorded in history, which, though perfectly true, yet, from our imperfect knowledge of the concomitant circumstances, may, at a distant period, seem liable to ob­jections. To those who require positive evidence, it may be stated thus. Aristæas, Aristobulus, Philo, and Josephus, assure us that the law was translated. Taking the law in the more restricted sense, we have at least sufficient autho­rity to assert that the Pentateuch was rendered into Greek under Ptolemy Philadelphus. Aristobulus affirms, that the whole Scriptures were translated by the seventy-two. Jo­sephus confines their labours to the books of Moses. He therefore who cannot determine to which of the two the greater respect is due, may suspend his opinion. It is certain, however, that many of the other books were trans­lated before the age of our Saviour ; for they are quoted both by him and by his apostles ; and, perhaps, by a minute examination of ancient authors, in the same way that Dr Lardner has examined the Christian fathers to prove the antiquity of the New Testament, the precise period in which the whole books of the Septuagint were composed might, with considerable accuracy, be ascertained.

For four hundred years this translation was in high esti­mation with the Jews. It was read in their synagogues in preference to the Hebrew, not only in those places where Greek was the common language, but in many synagogues of Jerusalem and Judæa. But when they saw that it was equally valued by the Christians, they became jealous of it ; and at length, in the second century, Aquila, an apostate Christian, attempted to substitute another Greek transla­tion in its place. In this work he was careful to give the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah a different turn from the Septuagint, that they might not be applicable to Christ. In the same design he was followed by Symmachus and Theodotion, who also, as St Jerome informs us, wrote out of hatred to Christianity.

In the mean time, the Septuagint, from the ignorance, boldness, and carelessness of transcribers, became full of errors. To correct these, Origen published a new edition in the beginning of the third century, in which he placed the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. This edition was called *Tetrapla,* the translations being ar­ranged opposite to one another in four columns. He also added one column, containing the Hebrew text in Hebrew letters, and another exhibiting it in Greek. In a second he published two additional Greek versions, one of which was found at Nicopolis, and the other at Jericho. This was called the *Hexapla.* By comparing so many translations, Origen endeavoured to form a correct copy of the Scrip­tures. Where they all agreed, he considered them as right. The passages which he found in the Septuagint, but not in the Hebrew text, he marked with an obelisk ; what he found in the Hebrew, but not in the Septuagint, he marked with an asterisk. St Jerome says, that the additions which Ori­gen made to the Septuagint, and marked with an asterisk, were taken from Theodotion. From this valuable work of Origen the version of the Septuagint was transcribed in a separate volume, with the asterisks and obelisks for the use of the churches ; and from this circumstance the great work itself was neglected and lost.

@@@, Blair’s Lectures on the Canon.

*@@@\* Biogrαphia Britannica.*