THE ENGLISH VERSIONS.

CHAPTER I.

ANGLO-SAXON VERSIONS.

The statement, very frequently repeated, that the Anglo-Saxons were provided with a complete vernacular translation of the Bible, if not purely fictitious, is certainly unhistorical, for thus far no such volume, although eagerly sought for, has been discovered, and it is very doubtful whether any will be discovered, because the existence of an entire Anglo-Saxon version is highly improbable. This applies only to an entire version—i.e., a translation of the whole Bible into Anglo-Saxon; it does not apply to portions of the Word of God which have been translated at different times and by different men. The Bible among the Anglo-Saxons was for all practical purposes a Latin book; it was quoted in Latin, and then, by way of explanation, turned into the native idiom. This is unquestionably the origin of those portions of the Scriptures in Anglo-Saxon which have come down to us. While there is abundant testimony that the Anglo-Saxon clergy were really anxious to spread a knowledge of the Bible, we have testimony equally clear showing that they were averse to its indiscriminate publication—e.g., in this extract from Ælfric to Æthelwold, alderman (Præfatio Genesis Anglice, Ed. Thwaites, p. 1): "Now it thinketh me, love, that that work (the translation of Genesis) is very dangerous for me or any men to undertake; because I dread lest
some foolish man read this book, or hear it read, who should
seen that he may live now under the new law, even as the
old fathers lived then in that time, ere that the old law was
established, or even as men lived under Moyses' law." He
then goes on to narrate how an illiterate instructor of his own
dwelt upon Jacob's matrimonial connections with two sisters
and their two maids.

The absence of an Anglo-Saxon version of the whole Bible
being thus partly accounted for, an explanatory word as to
the term "Anglo-Saxon" appears to be in place prior to ex-
amining the venerable monuments in our possession. Raske,
in the preface to his grammar, commenting upon the state-
mement of the Venerable Bede, that from "Germany came the
old Saxons, the Angles, and the Jutes," reaches the conclu-
sion that the Anglo-Saxon language was gradually formed by
the intermingling of their dialects running parallel with the
union of the tribes into one nation. The stages of its devel-
opment are: Anglo-Saxon proper, from the arrival of the
Saxons to the irruption of the Danes; Dano-Saxon, from the
Danish to the Norman invasion; and Norman-Saxon (en-
croaching upon the English), down to the time of Henry II.
The printed documents do not exhibit a marked variation of
dialect, although they show the development of the language.

One of the oldest and most interesting monuments of
Anglo-Saxon Christianity is a runic inscription on a cross at
Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, which was for the first time de-
ciphered in 1838 by Mr. John Kemble as part of a poem on
the Crucifixion. The discovery, at Vercelli, of a MS. volume
of Anglo-Saxon homilies containing a more complete copy
of the same poem, has triumphantly confirmed Mr. Kemble's
interpretation.

The Ruthwell Cross (about A. D. 680), with the inscription,
"CADMON MOE FAUÆTHO," contains some thirty lines of runes,
which read as follows:—
ANGLO-SAXON VERSIONS.

Anglo-Saxon Original.*
Geredæ hinae
God almeyottig
tha he walde
on galgu gi-stiga
modig fore
(ale) men
(ahof) ic riicæ cuningc
heafunaes hifanum
hælda ic(þ)i darstæ
bismaerdu ungcamen ta ætgad(r)e
ic (waes) mith blodæbistemid
Krist waes on rodi
hwethrae ther fusæ
fearan kwomu
æsthilæ ther hnamum
ic thæt al bi(h)eal(d)
s(eoc) ic waes
mi(þh) sorgu(m) gi(d)ræc(f)e)d
mith strelum giwundæd
alegdun hize hine limwæc rignæ
gistoddun him (æt) h(is l)i æcs(h) eal
(du)m.

Verbatim Version.
Girded him
God Almighty
when he would
on gallows mount
proud for
all men
I heared the rich King
heaven’s lord
heel (over) I not durst
mocked us men both together
I was with blood besmeared
Christ was on rood
whither there confusedly
afar they came
the Prince to aid
I that all beheld
sick I was
with sorrow grieved
with arrows wounded
laid down they him limb weary
they stood (near) him (at) his corpse’s head.

Among the few remaining specimens of Anglo-Saxon of the earliest period is that subjoined "On the Origin of Things," given in two versions, by Cædmon, a monk of Whitby, who died in A. D. 680. The narrative of Bede (Hist. iv. 24) specifies that his origin was very humble, that he did not even know poetry by heart, and that when, at the customary hall-gatherings, the harp came to his turn, he had to leave the table to hide his shame. On one occasion, after such a humiliating scene, it was his duty to keep watch in the stable,

* In the examples given the Anglo-Saxon letters are represented by their English equivalents, on the principle that th has the power of th in thin and thing, dh that of th in rhyme and smooth. G, gh, gg are used to give the power of g in give, great, and big; where the power of that letter comes nearest to y in year or day it is expressed y or yy; sometimes they are used interchangeably.
but he fell asleep. In his slumber he heard a stranger call him by his name, saying, "Cædmon, sing me something." He pleaded inability, but the stranger continued, "Nay, but thou hast something to sing." "What must I sing?" asked Cædmon. "Sing the Creation," ran the reply, and then he began to sing verses "he had never heard before," and they are said to have been those which follow. When he awoke he not only was able to repeat them, but to continue in a similar strain. He was taken to the Abbess Hilda, who, as well as the learned men with her, listened to his story, and held that he had received the gift by inspiration. They expounded to him a portion of Holy Scripture, bidding him repeat it in verse; the next day he came with a poetic version of great beauty. This induced Hilda to invite him to enter her house as a monk; and it is said that, at her instance, he composed many Bible histories in verse. They were, of course, not properly translations, but poetical paraphrases. Poems of this description under the name of Cædmon were published by Junius at Amsterdam in 1655. Bede says that "He sang of the creation of the world, of the origin of man, of the whole history of Genesis, from the exodus of Israel to the possession of the promised land, and of most of the histories of the Holy Scriptures."

CÆDMON.


MS. by King Alfred, A.D. 885, at Oxford.*

"Nu we sceolana herian, heoson-rices weard.
metodes mihte.

"Now ought we to praise heaven-kingdom's Warden (guardian)
the Creator's might,

* King Alfred probably composed these verses himself.
and his mod-gethona.  
weru wuldor-faeder.  
swa he wundra gehwaes.  
ece dryhten.  
oord onstealde.  
he aerest gesceop.  
eordhan bearnm.  
heofon to hrofe.  
halig scyppend.  
tha middangeard.  
mon-cynnnes weard.  
ece dryhten.  
aefter teode.  
firum foldan.  
frea ælmihtig.”

and his mind’s thought,  
glory-Father of men!  
how he of every wonder,  
eternal Lord,  
the beginning formed.  
He first framed  
for earth’s bairns (children)  
heaven as a roof;  
holy Creator!  
Then mid-earth,  
mankind’s guardian,  
Eternal Lord,  
afterward did (-produced)  
for men the earth  
Lord almighty!”

To the beginning of the eighth century belongs the Psalter of Aldhelm and Guthlac, which contains the Latin with an exceedingly minute interlinear Anglo-Saxon version. The text is the Roman psalter in use at Canterbury, whereas the Gallican text was used in other parts of England. It is said to be the identical copy sent by Pope Gregory to Augustine, A. D. 596. The translation is of much later date. It is among the Cotton MSS., marked Vespasian, A 1.

Next in order of time (A. D. 735) comes the Venerable Bede, who undertook the translation of the Gospel of St. John “for the advantage of the Church” (see page 4).

King Alfred’s name is also mentioned in lists of scholars who at an early period translated the Bible into the vernacular. His labors seem to have been confined to the translation of isolated portions of Scripture. In his laws he translated many passages from Exodus xx., xxii., xxiii., and he is said to have been employed upon a regular translation of the Book of Psalms when he died (A. D. 901). His version of the Decalogue is here presented:
EXTRACT FROM KING ALFRED'S ANGLO-SAXON CODE IN WILKIN'S
Leges Anglo-Saxonica.

Anglo-Saxon.

"Drihten weæ sprecedne thæs word
to Moyse, and thus cwæth:
"Ic eam Drihten thin God. Ic the
ut geleædde of Aegypta londe and
of heora theowdome. Ne lufa
thu othre fremde godas ofer me.

"Ne minne naman ne cig thu on
idelnesse; forthon the thu ne bist
unscyldig with me; gif thu on
idelnesse cigst minne naman.

"Gemine that thu gehalgie thone
feste (reste) dæg. Wyrceath eow
syx dagas, and on tham seofothan
restath eow, thu and thin sunu
and thine dohter; and thine
theore, and thin wynne, and thin
weorcnytet; and se cuma the bith
binnan thinan durum. Fortham
on syx dagum Christ geworhte
heofenas and eorthan, sæs, and
ealle gesceaftha the on him synd,
and hine gereste on thone seofo-
than dægæ; and forthon Drihten
hine gehalgode.

'Ara thinum fæder and thinre me-
der; tha the Drihten sealde the,
that thu sy thy leng libbende on
eorthan.

'Ne slea thu.
Ne stala thu.

'Ne lige thu dearnunga.
Ne sæge thu lease gewihtesse with
thinum nehstan.

"Ne wilna thu thines nehstan yrfe
mid unriht.

"Ne wyrc thu the gyldene godas,
oththe seolfrene."

English.

Lord was speaking these words to
Moses, and said thus:

I am the Lord thy God; I led thee
out of the land of Egypt and its
thraldom. Not love thou other
strange gods over me.

Not my name utter thou in vain;
because thou art not guiltless with
me, if thou in vain utterest my
name.

Mind that thou hallow the festal
(sabbath) day. Work ye six
days, and on the seventh rest
ye, thou and thy son, and thy
daughter, and thy man-servant,
and thy maid-servant, and thy
cattle, and those who come with-
in thy doors; because in six days
Christ created heaven and earth,
seas, and all creatures that in
them are, and rested on the sev-
enth day, and therefore the Lord
hallowed that day.

Honor thy father and thy mother,
whom the Lord gave thee, that
thou be long living on earth.

Not slay thou.
Not steal thou.
Not commit thou adultery.
Not say thou false witness against
thy neighbor.
Not desire thou thy neighbor's in-
heritance with unright (wrong-
fully).
Not work thou thee golden gods,
or silvern
Examination of the subjoined versions of the Lord's Prayer in Anglo-Saxon, will show the changes in the language. Respecting some literal differences, it is difficult without the manuscripts at hand to verify them. This applies especially to the letters R and S, which are very similar in Anglo-Saxon, and on that account frequently confounded by transcribers. The interlinear translation added to No. 3 will suffice to explain the rest.

**THE LORD'S PRAYER.**

I. Anglo-Saxon version, by Eadfrid, eighth bishop of Lindisfarne, about A. D. 700.

"Fader uren thu in Heofnas,
Sie gehalgud Nama thin,
To Cymeth ric thin;
Sie fillo thin suæ is in Heofne and in Eorhta.
Hlaf userne oferwirtlic sel us to dæg;
And forgef us scyltha urna suæ we forgefon scylgum urum.
And ne inlead writh in Cosnunge.
Al gefrigurich from evil."

II. Anglo-Saxon version, from the Gospels of Mareschall and Junius, about A. D. 890.

"Fæder ure thu the eart on heofenum,
Si thin nama gehalgod;
To become thin rice.
Gewurthe thin willa on eorthan swa swa on heofenum.
Urne dæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg;
And forgfyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgifadhl urum gyltendum;
And ne galæd thu us on costnunge.
Ac alys us of yfele.
Sothlice."

III. Anglo-Saxon Lord's Prayer, by Alfred, bishop of Durham, A. D. 900.

"Uren fader... dhic ardh in heofnas, sic gehalged... dhin nomal, to cymedh
Our father which art in heavens, be... hallowed thine name, come..."