

**AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF ST.
LUKE: CONSISTING OF AN ANALYSIS OF
EACH CHAPTER AND OF A
COMMENTARY, CRITICAL, EXEGETICAL,
DOCTRINAL, AND MORAL**

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An exposition of the Gospel of St. Luke: consisting of an analysis of each chapter and of a commentary, critical, exegetical, doctrinal, and moral by John MacEvilly

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LETTER FROM HIS HOLINESS LEO XIII.

“LEO P.P. XIII.

“VENERABILIS FRATER,—Salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem—Excepimus tuas litteras et commentaria in sacras Scripturas Novi Testamenti a te elucubrata, quæ ad Nos dono mittere voluisti. Tua quidem volumina, venerabilis frater, utpote Anglico idiomate conscripta delibare non potuimus, at delectati tamen sumus testimonio obsequii erga Nos et hanc Apostolicam Sedem, quod in hoc munere offerendo, nobis, exhibendum censuisti. Dum, itaque, Tibi gratum nostrum animum profitemur commendamus simul pium studium quod in sacris libris perscrutandis impendis, in quibus salutares et inexhausti thesauri veritatis et vitæ reconduntur, et ad virtutem ac fructum pastoralis ministerii adjumenta maxima suppeditantur. Omnia autem quæ nobis obtulisti benevolo excipientes animo, Tibi ex corde adprecamur a Domino, ut ad certandum bonum certamen spiritum sapientiæ et fortitudinis abunde largiatur, ac in auspiciis divinæ benignitatis, et in pignus sinceræ dilectionis Nostram Apostolicam Benedictionem peramanter impertimus.

“Datum Romæ apud S. Petrum die 30 Aprilis, An 1879, Pontificatus Nostri anno secundo.

“LEO P.P. XIII.

“Venerabili Fratri, Johanni Episcopo Galviensi,
Coadjutori Tuamensi, Galviam.”

The following is the translation:—

“LEO XIII., POPE.

“VENERABLE BROTHER,—Health and Apostolic Benediction—We have received your letter and the presentation copy of your Commentaries on the Sacred Books of the New Testament, which you were kind enough to send Us. We could not, indeed, do Ourselves the pleasure of perusing your volumes, venerable brother, as they are written in the English language; but We have, nevertheless, been gratified by the evidence of your homage to Us and to this Apostolic See, as conveyed to Us through your present. Whilst, therefore, expressing Our thanks to you, We, at the same time commend your pious and laborious researches in the investigation of the Sacred Scriptures, wherein are hidden the salutary and inexhaustible treasures of truth and life, and which furnish the greatest helps to the fruitful discharge of the duties of the pastoral office. But, in graciously accepting the solemn assurances you have given Us, We heartily pray the Lord to abundantly bestow on you the spirit of wisdom and fortitude to fight the good fight, and as a token of Divine favour, and as a pledge of Our sincere affection, We lovingly impart to you the Apostolic Benediction.

“Given at Rome, at St. Peter’s, on 30th April, 1879, in the second year of our Pontificate.

“LEO XIII., POPE.

“To our Venerable Brother, John Bishop of Galway,
Coadjutor of Tuam, Galway.”

THE
HOLY GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST,
ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

ACCORDING to Eusebius (Hist. Lib. iii. c. 4), St. Jerome (de Viris Illus.), and indeed nearly all ancient writers, St. Luke, the Evangelist, was a native of Antioch, the capital of Syria. It is almost universally admitted, on the same authority, that he was also the author of the Acts of the Apostles. From the statement made by him in this latter work, wherein he speaks of the language of Palestine—the Syro-Chaldaic—as different from his own, which from his style is acknowledged to be Greek, it is clear that he was not a native of Palestine. St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome (Quæst. in Gen. xlvi. 26), relying on the words of St. Paul (Coloss. iv. 11-14), maintain that he was of Jewish extraction. The knowledge he displays of Jewish customs and manners, would warrant the general opinion, that he was a proselyte. This, however, might apply to a convert from Paganism. If he were such a convert, St. Luke might have acquired all this knowledge in his intercourse with the Apostle of the Gentiles.

That he was not one of the seventy-two disciples, as is asserted by St. Epiphanius, nor one of the two disciples at Emmaus (chap. xxiv.), as St. Gregory conjectures (Lib. i., Moral. c. 1), is clearly seen, not only from what has been stated above; but more clearly still, from his own words (chap. i. v. 4) which are hardly consistent with the supposition that he had been at any time an eye-witness of the sacred actions of our Lord. Tertullian (contra Marcion, Lib. iv. c. 2) tells us, that he learned the Gospel from St. Paul, never having been one of our Lord's disciples, or attendant on Him. Hence, St. Jerome (in cap. lxx. Isaïæ) calls him, the spiritual son of St. Paul; and St. Iræneus (Lib. i. c. 20) calls him, the disciple of the Apostles. St. Jerome (de Viris Illust., &c.), and Eusebius (Hist. Lib. iii. c. 4), assure us, on the authority of the old Ecclesiastical writers, that the Evangelist was versed in the healing art. St. Paul (Coloss. iv. 24) terms him, "*his most dear physician*," from which it is inferred that he practised at the medical profession even then. And if we look to the occasions on which St. Luke joins St. Paul for a time — they were separated at intervals—we shall find that this took place in connexion with the bodily illness of the Apostle. We may, therefore, conclude, that it was his attendance on the Apostle, and care of him in his illness, that merited for him the endearing epithet of "*beloved*." It is remarked by critics, that the precision with which St. Luke employs technical medical terms, when speaking of bodily ailments and their cure, while St. Matthew and St. Mark employ popular terms, when speaking of the same, is owing to the advantage he had over them, in respect to his medical education and practice. (Luke vi. 40—Matthew viii. 16)‡ (Luke v. 31—Matthew

ix. 12); (Luke ix. 11—Matthew xiv. 14, &c.) It is also observed that his intercourse with St. Luke the physician, affected the style of the Apostle himself, as to the use of like technical terms, as in 1 Tim. i. 10; vi. 3; vii. 6; iv. 2, &c., &c. (Patrizzi de Evang. Lucæ. Ep. iii.)

Nicephorus, who died in 1450, speaks of him Hist. Eccles.), and so do other modern Greeks, as excelling in the art of painting, and of having painted pictures of our Lord, and of the Blessed Virgin. This statement of Nicephorus, however, is rejected by many learned critics (Kitto, Cyclopædia).

St. Luke was St. Paul's fellow-labourer in the Gospel Ministry, and the companion of his travels. The first occasion of his association with the Apostle is described (Acts xvi. 10), where he speaks of himself in the *first* person, "*immediately we sought to go into Macedonia.*" After that—as may be seen from his using the *third* person, when speaking of the Apostle's travels and labours—he was, at intervals, living apart from him, until having travelled together from Philippi to Troas (Acts xx. 6), where, likely, St. Luke lived for some time with the Apostle, they remained inseparable up to the second year of the Apostle's imprisonment at Rome, with which the History of the Acts closes (chap. xxviii.), so that during that time, the history of St. Paul is the history of St. Luke. And to mark the humility of St. Luke, far from becoming his own panegyrist, he never mentioned his own name in connexion with the labours and trials of the Apostle, in which, doubtless, he must have largely shared, save so far as may be inferred from his having employed the *first* person, "*we,*" when speaking of the latter.

The common opinion of the Fathers is, that whenever the Apostle speaks of Luke, in his Epistles, it is to the Evangelist he refers (2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24; Coloss. iv. 14). Some of the Fathers, Augustine, Jerome, Ignatius (Ep. ad Ephesios) and others, understand the Apostle to refer to him (2 Cor. viii. 19), when speaking of the brother, "*whose praise is in the Gospel,*" &c. This is, however, denied by others, as the word "*Gospel*" might mean, not writing a Gospel, but preaching it, through every part of the Church.

After the death of St. Paul, there is nothing known for certain of St. Luke's labours, of the places where he preached the Gospel, or of the manner of his death. He is reckoned among the martyrs by St. Gregory Nazianzen. Eusebius tells us nothing about his martyrdom. Neither is there any notice of it in the Martyrologies. It is stated by others, that he preached the Gospel in Bithynia and died there, and that his remains were transferred to Constantinople by Constantius (Isidore of Seville, c. 82).

HIS GOSPEL.—

Its Integrity. The integrity of this Gospel was universally admitted by ancient writers, the heretic Marcion alone excepted, who would have expunged the first two chapters, and would commence the Gospel narrative with chapter third, "*Now in the fifteenth year,*" &c. Of late years, the spirit of Infidelity that has come forth from the Rationalistic Schools of Germany, following in the train of Marcion, who never doubted the *authenticity* of the Gospel, has called in question the first two chapters, on the ground, that St. Luke had not sufficient testimony, from a human point of view, for the statements he there puts forward. But, abstracting altogether from inspiration, as we know the Blessed Virgin remained on earth after our Lord's Ascension, she was, surely, competent to give testimony respecting the events recorded in these chapters, and it is from eye-witnesses of the events narrated in the Gospel St. Luke tells us he derived his information.

The 43rd and 44th verses of chap. xxii., relating to our Lord's bloody sweat, and the appearance of the angel to strengthen Him in His sacred Passion, were, at one time, questioned, on grounds which, if admitted, would militate against the entire economy of Redemption, against all our Lord's humiliations and sufferings in His Incarnation, and entire life on earth. They are now no longer gainsayed. Indeed, St. Luke, himself a physician, could be quoted as a competent authority on the subject of our Lord's bloody sweat, which has never been proved to be impossible.

DATE OF—

It is not easy to determine anything for certain on this subject. There are two points, however, in connexion with it that may be regarded as certain. First, it has been uniformly held by all ancient writers, that St. Luke wrote his Gospel after those of Matthew and Mark. No ancient writer has questioned the order in which our Gospels are arranged, save Clement of Alexandria (apud Euseb. Hist. Lib. vi. c. 14), who holds that Luke wrote his Gospel before Mark had written his. What his reasons for this strange opinion may have been, as Patrizzi remarks, are utterly unknown to us; secondly, it has been the uniform testimony of antiquity, that St. Luke wrote his Gospel before the Acts of the Apostles. That St. Luke, the Evangelist, was the author of both, hardly admits of any doubt; for, St. Luke himself expressly states this in his preface to the Acts (chap. i. 1-4). If we could ascertain the date of the Acts, it would help, to some extent, in fixing the date of the Gospel, at least in regard to the time after which the Gospel could not have been written. The Acts must have been written after the second year of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome (A.D. 58), (Patrizzi), as this circumstance is mentioned in the Acts (chap. xxviii. 30, 31); whether immediately after the expiration of that time, or only after the Apostle's martyrdom, cannot be determined for certain. It is likely the History of the Acts was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. This is inferred from St. Luke's silence regarding this great event, so remarkable in connexion with the literal fulfilment of our Lord's prophecies on the subject. Surely, St. Luke would not have been silent regarding this remarkable event, if it occurred at the time he wrote his history. Hence, his Gospel, written before the Acts, must have been written before the year 70, the date of the destruction of Jerusalem. And as St. Mark's Gospel is generally referred to the year 57, before leaving Rome for Egypt, the Gospel of St. Luke must have been written after that; but at what precise period between 57 and 70, cannot be accurately determined.

WHERE WRITTEN—

This, like the preceding point, is involved in uncertainty. The probabilities, greater or lesser, as to the place where it was written, will depend very much on its date. Some hold, it was written in Bœotia and Achaia; others, in Rome, of which Theophylus is supposed to have been a native.

ITS LANGUAGE—

It is universally admitted that it was written in Greek. Its style is more polished than that of the other Gospels. From its contents, it would seem to have been written chiefly for the use of the Gentile converts; so that, as St. Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles, his disciple, St. Luke, might be justly regarded as the special Evangelist of the same. Hence, we find certain peculiar words and phrases in his Gospel more intelligible to the Gentiles, than the corresponding words employed by the other Evangelists. Thus we have, "*Master*," for *Rabbi*; "*truly*," for *Amen*, &c.

Some among the Fathers hold, that whenever the Apostle in his Epistles uses the words, "*my Gospel*," he refers to that written by St. Luke, whence, it is inferred, that it was dictated by the Apostle. This, however, is hardly consistent with St. Luke's own account of his sources of information (chap. i. 1-3), viz., eye-witnesses, among whom St. Paul could not be numbered; nor would St. Luke omit stating that he wrote his Gospel at the dictation of St. Paul, if such were the case. Considering, however, the wonderful identity of expression employed by both (Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23), in describing the institution of the adorable Eucharist, it is likely that St. Luke takes, at least, this part *verbatim* from St. Paul, as this latter states that he received his account of the institution of the Eucharist from our Lord Himself.

Among the emblematic figures of the four Evangelists referred to in the prophetic vision of Ezechiel (i. 10), also in the Apocalypse (iv. 6, 7), the ox is said to represent St. Luke, as his Gospel commences with the Priesthood of Zachary, the principal function of which was the offering of sacrifice, the ox being one of the chief victims of the altar.

The Gospel is addressed to "*Theophilus*" (see chap. i. 3, Commentary).

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE steady sale of the Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, published only a few years ago, calls for this Second Edition, in every respect the same as the preceding, with the exception of a few unimportant verbal corrections.

May we hope that this Second Edition will meet with the same consideration and support that have been accorded to the preceding Edition.

It must be left to others to pronounce how far it may have proved useful to the pious reader of SS. Scripture:

✠ JOHN MACEVILLY,

Archbishop of Tuam.

ST. JABLETH'S, TUAM, *January, 1887.*

PREFACE.

ABOUT three years ago, I undertook the publication of a Commentary, in one volume, of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, a work which has been received with unexpected favour, as the Second Edition is now nearly exhausted. A second volume containing a Commentary on the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John, together with the Acts of the Apostles, was promised at the time. Those who may have been expecting its appearance, will hardly be surprised that its issue has been so long deferred, if they take into account the arduous and numerous duties of my office, which I could neither neglect nor overlook, and the vast amount of time and labour required for Scriptural researches, particularly with a view to publication. I am now partly redeeming my promise by giving to the public, as a companion volume to the Commentary on the two other Synoptical Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, an Exposition of the Gospel of St. Luke, which may, if so desired, be conveniently bound with the former.

Neither time nor pains has been spared in its composition, according to my humble ability. How far I may have succeeded in my design to produce a useful work, I must leave to others to determine. I purpose publishing, at a future day, should Providence so will it, my notes on the Gospel of St. John and on the Acts.

In the meantime, in the hope that the present work may be received with the same favour that has been accorded to its predecessors, I confidently submit it to the indulgence of the pious Student of Holy Scripture.

✠ JOHN MACEVILLY.

GALWAY, Feast of our Lady, Help of Christians, 1879.

