

# THE GOOD NEWS.

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## THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

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*Luke I. 1-4.*

The historical record of the New Testament is contained in the Four gospels and Acts of the Apostles. The gospels may be regarded simply as Biographies, of the Lord Jesus. And with great propriety, they have been termed gospels, or repositories of good news; since they contain the full development of those glad tidings of great joy to all people, which were first darkly announced to prophets, and afterwards explained by the Saviour Himself, and illustrated by His death and resurrection, and ascension.

The authors of the first and fourth of the gospels,—Matthew and John,—were Apostles of the Lord, and consequently, eye and ear witnesses of the scenes which they describe, and the discourses which they record. The authors of the two intermediate gospels,—Mark and Luke,—though not apostles themselves, were the intimate friends of, and constant attendants upon apostles. From the account in the history of the Acts of the Apostles, it appears that Mark accompanied Paul, on one of his missionary expeditions, but returning home to Jerusalem, contrary to the Apostle's sense of duty, an estrangement between them was the consequence. It is pleasing, however, to find that afterwards, these servants of God were cordially reconciled to each other. Towards the close of the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul mentions Mark, along with some others, as his fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God, and as having been a comfort unto him. Again, in the second Epistle to Timothy, we find Paul speaking of Mark

in the following terms, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry." Thus it is evident that Mark had the unspeakable privilege of enjoying much, and intimate communion with Paul. It would appear, however, that, after that unseasonable return to Jerusalem, with which the apostle was offended, Mark attached himself to the Apostle Peter, on whom, from this period, he chiefly attended; and it is the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, that the gospel of Mark was published under the auspices, and with the full sanction and approbation of Peter. And it is this only which can account for the universal acknowledgement of its canonical authority, on the part of the church, from the very first.

With regard to Luke, the author of the gospel which bears his name, it has been alleged by some, that he was one of the seventy disciples; but this report rests upon no solid authority; and I am inclined to treat it as altogether groundless. From a comparison of Col. iv, 11, with verse 14, it appears pretty clear that Luke was a heathen by birth. In the 11th verse, you will observe, the apostle speaks of Justus, and those mentioned in the preceding verses, as being of the circumcision; from which we infer that those mentioned in the following verses were Gentiles.—Moreover, the name Lucas, an abridgement for Lucanus, indicates that he was of Gentile origin. Instead of being one of the 70 disciples, the likelihood is, that he was not converted, till some years after the ascension, when the gospel was fully preached, and a church formed at Antioch. It is certain that he was a physician by profession, and probably a native of Antioch. Thus he must have been a man of superior education, a fact, which is plain enough, from the purity and classic elegance of his composition, both in his biography