

SACRED LEGENDS.

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THE EVANGELISTS.

The evangelists are the authors of the four gospels. Gospel is an old English form of two words—good and spell, and means, good word, good tidings; these are the same as the Greek word *evangelion*. The gospels are the most excellent part of the sacred writings. In them our Lord teaches by his own divine mouth the great lessons of faith and of eternal life. No charge appears to have been given by Him that His history or doctrine should be committed to writing. St. Matthew wrote for the Hebrews, St. Mark for the Italians, St. Luke for the Greeks; for all, the great herald, St. John. So says St. Gregory Naziarzen; Butler cites authority substantially in accord with this as to the first two gospels. St. Luke wrote to oppose false histories, he says, and St. John at the request of the Bishops of Asia, to leave an authentic testimony against certain heresies.

From the second century at latest, the living creatures mentioned in Ezekiel and in the Apocalypse were believed to typify the evangelists. The *man* is assigned to Matthew, who recounts the temporal or human origin of our Lord, the *lion* is given to Mark on account of the words at the opening of his gospel, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," the *ox* or *bull* is given to Luke, who begins with the priesthood, and the *eagle* to the sublime evangelist who wings his flight at once beyond all created things to the contemplation of the Eternal Word. These symbols are not always interpreted in the same way or given to the same persons. The lion is sometimes the symbol of Matthew, the holy writer who explains the royal dignity of Christ, and again assigned to Mark, who is the historian of the Resurrection. The living creatures are regarded by some as shadowing forth the incarnation, passion, resurrection and ascension of our Lord. His fourfold character of man, king, high priest, and God. The Jewish doctors interpreted them as figuring the four Archangels, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel, and afterwards applied them to the four great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Associated with the evangelists, the witnesses of truth, are the four doctors of the Church, the interpreters of the truth, these are (the Latin fathers) St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory. The Greek fathers are St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Athanasius and St. Gregory Naziarzen. There are some other symbols of the evangelists in the collective character, noticeably the four rivers of paradise, of salvation flowing from on high to fertilize the whole earth.

MATTHEW, says Father Faber, "is the pattern of obedience to divine vocation, the model of prompt submission to holy inspirations, the teacher and the example of corresponding grace, who left all for God." This evangelist before his call was a tax gatherer, a publican, and named Levi. He was sitting by the lake of Gennesareth when our Lord said to him, "Follow me," and he left all and followed Him. He is named first among the evangelists because his gospel was written first, as an apostle he ranks seventh or eighth. It was at his house that our Lord sat down to a great feast in company with publicans and sinners, whereat the Jews were scandalized. He travelled into Egypt and Ethiopia, and led an austere life, so greatly in contrast to the magnificence and luxury of his life while sitting in receipt of customs. He overcame the magicians of Ethiopia, baptizing the people whom he freed from the influence of these enchanter. It is related that he raised the son of the king of Egypt from the dead, and cured his daughter Iphigenia from leprosy. This princess formed a community of holy virgins dedicated to the service of God, and experienced the divine protection in a wonderful way. The symbol of St. Matthew is a book and ink horn, his martyrdom was by the sword or a spear. This name signifies him that is given, and it occurs only once in his own gospel, and in the other gospels with reference to two events. It was the gospel of St. Matthew that the apostle St. Bartholomew carried into India. It was written about six years after the ascension, in Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, the language spoken by the Jews in Palestine, and translated into Greek in the time of the apostles.

ST. MARK is the second evangelist, and wrote his gospel, it is said, from what he heard from St. Peter. Some say he was one of the seventy two disciples, and others that he was converted

by the chief of the apostles. He was the champion and assistant of Paul and Barnabas, as well as the favorite disciple of Peter. He laboured in Egypt, and founded the Church at Alexandria. He was put to death by the votaries of the Egyptian god Serapis, and dragged along the streets and highways till he died. A dreadful tempest of hail and lightning fell on his murderers and destroyed them. Some merchants from Venice many centuries afterwards took his relics to their city, and the stately Church of St. Mark was built over them. He is the patron and protector of their city, and there is a beautiful legend of its miraculous deliverance from the tempest of the waters, by the intercession of the Saint. There are also legends connected with his life at Alexandria.

His gospel was written, as is generally believed, in Greek, and about ten years after the ascension. Some attribute it to St. Peter himself, but it is only certain that the chief of the apostles approved of it, and published it to the Church to be read. The gospel omits the commendation given by our Lord to Peter on that occasion when He confessed He was the Son of God; while it narrates with particularity the denial of his master, and for these evidences St. Chrysostom admires the humility of St. Peter. It is the shortest of the gospels, and written with simplicity and elegance.

ST. LUKE is the third evangelist, a native of Antioch, the constant friend and companion of St. Paul. He stands towards the great apostle of the Gentiles much as St. Mark stands towards the chief. His gospel is sometimes ascribed to St. Paul, and without doubt the latter assisted him in his task, and approved and recommended the work. As Mark wrote his gospel at Rome under the eye of St. Peter, Luke wrote his when St. Paul was preaching at Achaia. St. Paul calls him the beloved physician, and it appears that he united that with the sacred duties of a fellow labourer with that apostle. He is also, but not on the like authority, said to have been a painter, and to have carried around with him two portraits, one of our Lord, and one of the blessed Virgin, and with the sight of these made many converts. "One of seven painted portraits by Luca," as deciphered in the Catacombs, gives rise to the tradition that the evangelist was a painter. He is the patron saint of artists.

His gospel is in point of time after those of the evangelists already named. He subsequently wrote the *Acts of the Apostles*, which is a sort of appendix to it. His gospel was written in Greek about twenty-four years after the ascension, and is written with great elegance and dignity. He was crucified at Patras as is generally believed, at the same time as St. Andrew, but the Greek traditions in this, and in many other instances, assign him a peaceful death. Like St. Mark he was not one of the twelve, and possibly had never seen our Lord. The last and greatest of the evangelists, the glorious St. John, is the next to be considered.

FIRESIDE.

THE DUTY OF THE IRISH IN CANADA.

From the moment Mr. Gladstone sustained a defeat at the polls, and the Tories attained to power, it required no great gift of vaticination to foretell that inhuman Coercion would be applied to Ireland, without stint, and without mercy. This is the precise kind of diabolism to be expected from the Party of Retrogression, in dealing with what has been called, often it is true with unintentional irony, "the sister island." Had the Tories proven false to their odious political record, and for once conducted themselves like humane beings and honest men, whole thousands of the Irish would have been so astonished that they probably would have died of sheer surprise. It must have been a friendly dispensation that created the Tories too inordinately stupid to hit upon this Machiavelian plan for destroying a detested foe, and at the same time winning applause by the apparent philanthropy of their statesmanship. The Tories, however, were true to their political instincts, and an Egyptian blight of Coercion has fallen upon Ireland; evictions are in full swing; the chosen leaders of the people are being hounded as were the priests in the penal days; while the most trusted and beloved of the nation are confined and tortured in loathsome Bastilles.

The afflicted Irish people know what is before them; an heroic crisis must be endured, some harrowing experience undergone. They are ready to dare, to do, and if necessary