

THE GREAT COMMENTARY
OF
CORNELIUS A LAPIDE

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE

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INTRODUCTION

“Mark,” says S. Jerome in his *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*, “was a disciple and interpreter of S. Peter. At the request of the brethren at Rome, he wrote a short gospel, based upon what he had heard S. Peter relate. When Peter had heard this, he approved and gave it to them to be read by his authority.” Shortly afterward, S. Jerome proceeds to say, “Mark took his gospel, which he had compiled, and went to Egypt. He first preached Christ at Alexandria, and founded a church there, which possessed such great purity of doctrine and life that it influenced all followers of Christ by its example. In short, Philo, the most eloquent of the Jews, beholding the primitive church of Alexandria, as yet Judaizing, wrote a book upon its peculiarities, as it were in praise of his own people. And just as S. Luke records that at Jerusalem those who believed had all things in common, so has Philo preserved the memory of the customs that he saw at Alexandria under S. Mark as the teacher of the Christians. He died in the eighth year of Nero, and was buried at Alexandria. Anianus succeeded him.”

Clement of Alexandria (*lib. 6 Stromata*) and Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, attest the same things; so does Eusebius citing them (*lib. 2 histor. cap. 15*), who adds that S. Peter confirmed Mark’s Gospel, and delivered it to be read for all time in the churches. S. Athanasius (*Synops. sub finem*), S. Epiphanius (*Haeres. 51*), and Euthymius, in his commentary, say the same. That is why Tertullian (*lib. 4 contra Marcion.*) attributes the gospel of S. Mark to S. Peter, because, as S. Jerome says (*ep. 150 ad Hedibiam quaest. 11*), “it was compiled from what Peter related, Mark being the writer.” The same S. Jerome, or whoever is the author of the preface to his *Commentary on S. Mark*,* says, “After Matthew, Mark soweth Him, who roareth as a lion, who flieth as an eagle, who learneth as a man, who sacrificeth as a priest, who watereth as a river, who flourisheth as a field, who fermenteth as wine. For Christ who is spoken of is Man by being born, is a Calf by dying, a Lion by rising again, an Eagle by ascending into heaven.”

* In his preface to Volume II of the English translation of the *Catena Aurea* by S. Thomas Aquinas, Ven. John Henry Newman notes that the *Commentary* found among the works of S. Jerome is “universally pronounced to be spurious. It has been ascribed to Pelagius, but with more probability to Philippus Presbyter, a friend and disciple of S. Jerome. It is entirely mystical, and is in many places hopelessly obscure.”

For this reason the cherubim of Ezechial and the Apocalypse, which have four faces, signify the four Evangelists, so that the face of a Man denotes Matthew, who relates the works of Christ's humanity; the face of an Eagle, John, who sings of Christ's divinity, saying: *In the beginning was the Word*, etc.; the face of an Ox denotes Luke, who begins with the priesthood and sacrifices of Zacharias; and the face of a Lion designates Mark, because he begins his gospel from the loud and terrible roaring of John the Baptist, as it were of a lion (thus S. Jerome, S. Gregory and others *passim* in commenting on chapter 1 of Ezechial). For these four draw the chariot of God's glory, the *quadriga* [chariot drawn by a team of four horses] of the gospel, through the whole world, and subdue all nations to Him as a triumphant victor.

The name "Mark" happily agrees with this symbolism, whether we derive it from the Hebrew or from Latin. For "Mark" in Hebrew, says Pagninus (*in Interpret. nom. Hebr.*), means the same as smoothed, polished, cleansed from rust. It is derived from the root מרק *marak*, i.e., "to wipe, to clean, to polish". As Jeremias 46:4 says, *stand forth with helmets, furbish the spears*, so that you, O Egyptians, may prepare for the impending battle against Nabuchodonosor; for *furbish* in this verse the Hebrew has מרקו *mircu*. Thus S. Mark polished the lance of his gospel and preaching, that it, like a Lion, might subdue the Egyptians and other nations to Christ. But S. Isidore (*lib. 7 Origen. c. 9*) says, "Mark means high in commandment (but I know not from what root), that is to say, on account of the gospel of the most high which he preached." Again, "Mark" in Hebrew may be interpreted מר כוס *mar cos*, or the "Lord of the Chalice", that is to say, of suffering and martyrdom, for he endured cruel sufferings and by his noble martyrdom triumphed over death and over unbelief as well.

But in Latin, Carolus Signonius (*de Nomin. Roman.*) says, citing Valerius, "He is called *Marcus* who is born in the month of March." But Isidore says (*lib. 19 Origen. cap. 7*), "*Marcus* is another name for a hammer; a large one that strikes a heavy blow is called *marcus*; one of moderate size is called *marcellus*, and a little hammer, *marculus*." Thus S. Mark was a mighty and strong hammer, breaking rocks into pieces, that is, bruising with compunction the stony hearts of the gentiles, and moving them to repentance and a Christian life. "Mark", then, and "Marcellus" are the same as "Martellus", "a hammer." So Charles, the grandfather of Charlemagne, was called "Charles Martel", because of his warlike prowess, by which he crushed like a hammer a host of 300,000 Saracens. Or "Marcus" may be

taken to be the same as “Martius”, a sort of heavenly Mars. The Marcian gens at Rome, an ancient patrician family, was so-called from Ancus Marcius, the mighty fourth king of Rome. Cæsar says, “The Marcian kings are descendants of Ancus Marius” (*orat. in Funere Juliae Amitae in Suetonium*). Ovid, too, writes (lib. 6 *Fastor.*), “The Marcian family derives its name from sacrificial Anco.”

King Ancus was called sacrificial, because, as Livy notes (*lib. 2*), he restored religious ceremonies which had fallen into decay, or had been improperly performed. For the virtue of religion is the parent of fortitude. Hence the emblem of the Marcian gens was Lady Victory set upon a column. Thus Antonius Augustus (*in Familiis Romanis*). Moreover, they are called “Marcians” from “Marcus” or “Mamercus,” says Plutarch (*in Numa*). For the Oscan people called Mars “Mamercus,” according to Festus. Now Pythagoras was the first to call his son “Mamercus”; following his example Numa, the second king of the Romans, named his son “Mamercus”, as Plutarch relates (Sigonius cites him). Marcus, therefore, is an elided form of “Mamercus” or ‘Mamers’, i.e., Mars, says Sigonius. The Scholiast on Mark (found in the works of S. Jerome) says, “What deed requires greater fortitude than saving souls, which might have perished in their vices and errors?” As it says in Psalm 67:12, *The Lord shall give the word to them that preach good tidings with great power.*

How religious and brave S. Mark was appears from the institution of the Essenes, who were the first religious, and the prototypes of all monks and nuns, of whose wondrous sanctity more in a moment. Joannes Major and some others believe that this Mark was that maimed man who out of pious humility cut off his thumb, so that he would not be made a priest. But this was Mark the Hermit, not Mark the Evangelist, as is clear from the *Lives of the Fathers*.

Lastly, the Romans used to give the forename “Marcus” to firstborn sons. Hence Marcus Tullius Cicero was so-called because he was a first born son, as Aldus Manutius notes at the beginning of the *Commentaries on the Liber Ciceronis ad Herennium*. Thus Mark was a first born son, and singularly beloved of S. Peter. Thus he speaks of him alone as “my son, Mark,” when conveying greetings from the Church (1 Pet. 5:13). For he as a son had drunk of S. Peter’s spirit, fervor and zeal, and was an express image of the wisdom and holiness of S. Peter; for S. Peter had imprinted it upon him as a father might.

You will ask, “Of what country, who, and what sort of man was S. Mark?” I answer:

1. That he was of the Hebrew nation, of the tribe of Levi. Bede and the author of the *Commentary on Mark* in the works of S. Jerome add that he was a priest, of the family of Aaron.

2. Theophylact, Victor of Antioch, and Euthymius (all of whom are cited by Sixtus of Sienna, in *Biblioth. Sacra in Marco*) think that this Mark was the same as John Mark, who was the nephew of Barnabas, and who journeyed with him and Paul to preach to the gentiles (Acts 12-13), the same Mark referred to by Paul in his *Epistles to Philemon* (v. 24) and *Colossians* 4:10, and *2 Timothy* 4:11. But I say that this Mark was a different person from John Mark, for at the same time that John Mark was accompanying Paul and Barnabas in Greece, this Mark was with S. Peter at Rome, and was sent by him to preach first at Aquileia, and afterward at Alexandria, as Baronius correctly demonstrates from Eusebius and other sources.

3. Origen (*lib. de Recta in Deum fide*), S. Epiphanius (*Haeresi 51*), and Dorotheus (*in Synopsi*) think that Mark was one of Christ's seventy-two disciples. But the contrary, namely, that he was converted and baptized by S. Peter after Christ's death, is more probable. For he calls him his (spiritual) son (1 Pet. 5:13), saying, *The church that is in Babylon [Rome], elected together with you, saluteth you: and so doth my son, Mark.* Thus S. Jerome, Eusebius (*lib. 7 Hist. cap. 14*), S. Epiphanius (*Haeresi 51*), Theodoret (*praef. in Hist. S. Patrum, lib. 3 cap. 1*), Baronius, and others, *passim*, who relate that S. Mark was a disciple and companion of S. Peter.

4. S. Augustine (*lib. 1 de Consensu Evang. cap. 2*) calls Mark the "abbreviator" of Matthew, not because he made a compendium of his gospel, as some claim, but because he narrates more briefly, as he had received them from S. Peter, the things which Matthew often records at greater length. I said "often," for occasionally Mark recounts events in the life of Christ more fully than Matthew does, as is plain from the account of Peter's three-fold denial of Christ. Some things also he unfolds with greater clarity than Matthew. Mark is fuller in narrating stories about Christ than Matthew, but has less of Christ's doctrine. Mark, therefore, was truly an Evangelist, as well as a patriarch [father of the local church] and apostle. Hence the Arabic prefixes the following title to the gospel of Mark: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, One God, the gospel of the Father, patriarch, Apostle, S. Mar (*i.e.*, Lord) Mark the Evangelist."

5. Mark, at the request of the Christians at Rome who had been converted by S. Peter, that he write down a summary of the things that they had heard Peter preach, wrote this gospel in the year of our Lord 45,

in the third year of the reign of Claudius, as Eusebius says (*in Chron.*), shortly before he went to Alexandria, where he governed in a most holy manner for nineteen years the Christian church which he founded there. His disciples were so excellent that they were called *Essaei*, that is, "holy and pious." For they, as the first religious, lived in such purity, piety, and holiness as to become the wonder of the whole world, and afforded an example and mirror of perfection to all other churches, so much so that they receive extraordinary praise from Josephus and Philo (*lib. de Therapeutis*). Hence S. Jerome and Cassian call S. Mark the chief and founder of the cenobites. See what I have said concerning the Essenes at Acts 5:2. This was also the reason why the Essenes spread from Alexandria through all of Egypt and Thebes. So it came about in that region that there were many throngs of monks and anchorites, who led an angelic life on earth, and this phenomena lasted for several centuries, as is evident from S. Jerome, the *Lives of the Fathers*, Evagrius, Palladius, Cassian and others.

Moreover, S. Mark founded the first Christian school at Alexandria, from which so many holy doctors, bishops, and martyrs proceeded. This school of Alexandria flourished wonderfully under Emperor Commodus, A.D. 180, when Pantænus presided over it. He was succeeded by Clement of Alexandria, Clement by Origen, whose disciples were S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Athenagoras, and later S. Athanasius, S. Basil, S. Gregory Nazianzen, etc. All of these men, therefore, were followers and disciples of S. Mark.

Finally, to the laurels of being an Apostle, doctor, and Evangelist, S. Mark added the crown of martyrdom. In the *Roman Martyrology* for the 25th of April we read concerning him thus, "At Alexandria, the natal day of Bl. Mark the Evangelist. . . . He, for the faith of Christ, being stretched and bound with cords, was dragged over the rocks, and grievously tormented. Afterward, being shut up in prison, he was comforted first by an angelic vision, and finally by the appearance of the Lord Himself, by whom he was called to the heavenly kingdom in the eighth year of Nero." Pope Gelasius, too, at the Council of Rome (*de Libris Authenticis et Apoc.*) says, "Mark the Evangelist, sent by Bl. Peter to Egypt, preached the true Faith and ended his life gloriously as a martyr." Nicephorus, Metaphrastes, Procopius and others say the same. The body of S. Mark was translated by merchants from Alexandria to Venice in A.D. 827 There it is venerated with the utmost devotion, so much so that the senate has adopted as its insignia a lion, the emblem of S. Mark; and when they issue any command, they call it the mandate of S. Mark.

You will ask, secondly, in what language Mark composed his gospel—in Latin or Greek? Many think he wrote it in Latin. And the reason seems plain. For Mark wrote at Rome for the Romans, based on what S. Peter preached there; therefore, they say, he must have written in the Roman tongue, that is, in Latin. For the Romans did not understand Greek (as Baronius abundantly proves) in A.D. 45. For although S. Chrysostom (in *Marcum*) asserts that he wrote his gospel in Egypt, nevertheless S. Jerome, Eusebius, S. Clement, S. Epiphanius, and other fathers declare, *passim*, that he wrote it at Rome. And the author of that commentary upon S. Mark was not S. Chrysostom, as I will prove later. So the Syriac version, which at the end of S. Mark's gospel adds expressly, "Here endeth the holy gospel, the gospel of Mark, which he spake and preached at Rome, in the Roman language." Pope S. Damasus (or whoever is the author) teaches the same thing at the beginning of the *Book of the Roman pontiffs* in the *Life* of S. Peter, which is placed at the beginning of the first volume of the *Councils*. S. Gregory Nazianzen suggests the same clearly enough in the poem in which he gives a catalogue of holy scripture, when he assigns the Evangelists to languages and nations thus:

The wonders of Christ for the Hebrews S. Matthew did write;
 S. Mark for Westerns; learned S. Luke for the Greeks;
 For all S. John, who soared aloft with heavenly sight.

On the other hand, S. Jerome affirms expressly (*praefat. in Evangelium*), that Mark wrote in Greek. "I am speaking," he says, "of the New Testament, which, without doubt, was written in Greek, with the exception of the Apostle Matthew, who first in Judea published the gospel of Christ in Hebrew." And he adds that for this reason, at the command of Pope Damasus, he corrected the ancient Latin Vulgate version of the New Testament, and, therefore, of S. Mark's Gospel, in accordance with the Greek original.

S. Augustine expressly teaches us the same thing in Book 1 of *On the Agreement of the Gospels*: "Matthew is said to have written in Hebrew, all the rest in Greek." The same was the common opinion of ancient and modern writers, such as Christian Druthmar (who wrote about A.D. 800), Jacob Chrysopolitanus, Maldonatus (*praefat. in Matthaeum*), Franz Lucas, (*in loco*), and Genebrardus (*in Chronolog.*). Listen to the entry for the year A.D. 44 in the latter: "Mark the Evangelist, at the request of the Romans, composed his gospel in Greek at Aquileia (which used to

be called the second Rome), or perhaps also in Latin, as Rodulphus and Armacanus claim.”

Reason favors the same view. For S. Mark wrote his gospel when he was about to travel to Alexandria, that he might preach it there. But the inhabitants of Alexandria at that time spoke the Greek language. For Alexandria was founded, and its name given, by Alexander the Great, who was a Greek-speaking Macedonian. Apropos, SS. Athanasius and Cyril, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, and other Alexandrians wrote their works in Greek. Therefore, Mark wrote in the Greek language. Again, Mark was more skilled in Greek than he was in Latin. Hence, too, the Greek text of his gospel is more polished and elegant than the Latin. For the Jews, who were neighbors of Greek-speaking countries, and subjects of Alexander the Great and the Greeks [his successors], learned the Greek language thoroughly, but not so the Latin, since they were far distant from Latin-speaking countries. Moreover, the Greek language was then very widely diffused, as Cicero says. For this reason the Romans, especially the patricians and the wealthier sort of people, were skilled in Greek. Indeed, they sent their sons to Athens that they might be thoroughly grounded in Grecian wisdom and eloquence. Mark, moreover, wrote this gospel not for the Roman plebeians, but for patricians and nobles, for such persons as S. Clement, S. Pudens, S. Torpes. Listen to Clement of Alexandria, commenting on the *First Epistle of S. Peter* (preserved in *tom. 6, Biblioth. S. Patrum* in the Parisian Edition), “Mark, the follower of Peter, when Peter was preaching the gospel publicly at Rome, in the presence of certain knights of Cæsar’s household, and was advancing many testimonies about Christ, being requested by them (so that they might commit to memory the things that he was saying), wrote from the things which were spoken by Peter a gospel, which is called that according to Mark, etc.” In like manner S. Paul wrote his *Epistle to the Romans* in Greek, as I have shown in my preface to that epistle.

Lastly, S. Mark was present with S. Peter at Antioch, where the disciples of Christ were first called Christians. And at Antioch Greek was spoken. (Hence S. Chrysostom, who was from Antioch, preached and wrote in Greek.) That is why Greek was more familiar to Mark than Latin, and it is possible that Greek was his mother tongue. For although the Apostles and the faithful in the early Church received the gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit, yet they received it for sufficiency, not for elegance, and so they spoke each their own vernacular, for example Hebrew or Greek, better and more elegantly than a foreign language such as Latin, Illyrian or German.

You will reconcile both opinions if you say that S. Mark wrote his gospel both in Greek and Latin, as Genebrard thinks (*anno Domini 44*), and our Barradi (*tom. 1 lib. 1 cap. 19*) and Possevin (*in Biblioth. in Marco*). Hear Pietro di Natale, bishop of Aquileia (in *Catalogo Sanctorum lib. 4 cap. 86*): “Peter sent Mark to Aquileia as its first bishop. There he reworked his gospel in Greek, which he had previously written in Latin at Rome, which gospel, together with the ivory chair in which he sat to write it, is still shown in the church of Aquileia.” Hadrian Finus (*lib. 6 Flagelli Jud. cap. 80*) and Bellarmine (*lib. de Verb. Dei, cap. 7*) are of the same opinion.

Further, some think that the Latin original of Mark has perished through the injuries of time, as the Hebrew Gospel of S. Matthew has perished. But this is difficult to believe. For how would the Roman Church, so faithful to her trust, and so careful a guardian of the sacred writings, and especially in those early ages from Mark to Constantine, when it was so ardent and constant in zeal for religion, have allowed so great a treasure committed to her to be lost? Surely she who kept so faithfully what pertained to others did not lose or betray what was her own. Why, did so many manuscripts of the gospel of S. Mark, which noble Romans and other Italians, converted to Christ by SS. Peter and Paul, would vie to have transcribed for themselves, perish down the last copy, so that not even one has survived? Wherefore we shall say, with greater probability, that Mark wrote originally in Greek, for the reasons already mentioned, but immediately afterward, either by himself or by some other translator, rendered the Greek into Latin, and delivered both to the Romans, just as S. Paul wrote his *Epistle to the Romans* in Greek, but sent the same to them translated into Latin by Tertius, his scribe and interpreter [cf. Romans 16:22]. The reasons are: 1. Because S. Jerome and S. Augustine affirm that Mark wrote in Greek, not in Latin. Hence S. Jerome corrected the Latin version according to the Greek at the behest of Damasus. 2. Because, as Bellarmine has rightly noted (*de Script. Eccles. in Marco*), it is evident, from a collation of the Greek and Latin texts, that the Old Latin and the Vulgate editions of both Matthew and Mark have been translated from the Greek. Franz Lucas proves this by many examples. To these you may add that the Latin translator of Mark (Grecized), as when he says (2:2), *Et convenerunt multi, ita ut non caperet neque ad januam*, words which are obscurely translated into Latin from the Greek, which reads clearly and elegantly, “ὥστε μηκέτι χωρεῖν μηδὲ τὰ πρὸς τὴν θύραν” i.e., “so that not even the places about the door could contain [the crowd that was gathering].” Again, in 4:10 the Vulgate has, *Et cum esset singularis*, whereas the Greek plainly says, καταμόνας,

i.e., alone. Also at chapter 7, verses 17, 18, and 20, *Quae de homine exeunt, illa communicant hominem*, the Greek has κοινοῖ, i.e., “make common,” that is, make a man common or unclean. For the Hebrews call unclean things common, that is, things which all, even the impure, use promiscuously and in common. So, again, in chap. 1:47, διαφημίζειν is translated literally, *diffamare*, to make known abroad. Thus at 15:47 προσάββατον is rendered literally as ante sabbatum, i.e., the vigil of the Sabbath or the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath.

The original of the gospel of S. Mark is religiously preserved at Venice, but the letters are so corroded and worn away by age that they cannot be deciphered. When I was inquiring about the matter at Rome, several reliable persons, who had carefully investigated the subject, wrote to me from Venice stating that the following is the tradition among the Venetians. They say that this gospel was written by S. Mark at Aquileia, and left by him there, and that it was brought from thence to Venice. For when Attila, king of the Huns, took Aquileia after a three years' siege, and destroyed it, many of the inhabitants fled to the marshes bordering on the Adriatic Sea, and there, in a marvellous manner, laid the foundations of Venice in the year A.D. 452. Moreover, a trustworthy man, a canon of S. Mark's at Venice, who has the custody of this relic, and is, therefore, an eyewitness, wrote to me in answer to my inquiries, within the last few days, that this autograph of S. Mark is written in Greek, and was brought from Aquileia to Venice A.D. 1472. Therefore, it seems that S. Mark published it first in Greek.

Pagnini Gaudentius, a professor at the University of Pisa, has written a dissertation on this question, dedicated to the grand duke of Tuscany, in which he maintains that S. Mark in the first instance wrote his gospel in Latin at Rome, and afterward in Greek at Aquileia, but that the Latin has been lost, since the extant Latin version of S. Mark is a translation from the Greek. He cites many passages which go to prove the great prevalence of Greek at Rome in those times, both because many senators and others learned it, and also because many Greek-speaking people came to Rome. This is evident from the serious complaint in the third *Satire of Juvenal*, where he says that he hates Rome because it is a Greek city:

O Quirites, I cannot endure

A Greek city, however great a portion of the dregs of Achaea it
may hold.

Long ago the Syrian river Orontes flowed into the Tiber.

Which is to say that many Syrians thronged to Rome. He also cites Damasus (*Lib. de Vitis Pontificum*) as saying in the *Life of S. Peter*, that the Evangelists wrote in Latin (mentioning Mark), in Greek, and in Hebrew. But it is well known that this work is not by Damasus, but by Anastasius, the librarian, as Bellarmine says (*lib. de Script. Eccles. in Damaso*). What Pagnini adds, that S. Peter preached to the Romans in Greek, and that S. Mark, as his interpreter, translated his words into Latin, seems paradoxical and cannot be considered worthy of credit, as Baronius has noted. Besides, the duty of an interpreter was different from this, as I have said at 1 Corinthians 12:10.

The Syrians, as Guido Fabricius tells us in the preface to his Syriac New Testament, assert that Mark wrote in Latin, and they say that the Latin gospel is preserved in Venice. Furthermore they say that the same Mark translated not only his own gospel into his Galilean or Syriac mother tongue, but also all the other books of the New Testament.

But it is difficult to believe this. For there is no mention of such a translation by Clement of Alexandria, or Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Cyril, Theodoret, S. Jerome, or other fathers, who either were Syrians, or who lived in Syria and Egypt, and treated carefully the subject of the various editions and translations of the sacred scriptures. Therefore, this Syriac translation of the New Testament seems to have been made later than S. Mark's time. Thus Bellarmine (*lib. 2 de Verbo Dei cap. 4*).

Lastly, S. Mark's Gospel has always been reckoned amongst the canonical scriptures, with the exception of the last chapter, doubts about which were formerly entertained by some, as S. Jerome testifies (*ep. 50 ad Hedibiam q. 3*), because certain things had been interpolated which savored of Manichaeism, which S. Jerome recites (*lib. 2 Contra Pelag., ante medium*). The words were these, "And they were satisfied, saying, Substance is that world of iniquity and unbelief, which suffereth not through wicked spirits the true power of God to be apprehended: therefore, now call back thy righteousness." But these words have been since removed. Hence, by the decree of the Council of Trent, session 4, it is not permissible to doubt its authenticity. See Bellarmine (*lib. 1 de Verbo Dei cap. 16*).

Note: Mark is wholly intent on telling about his subject, and does not care for the order in which things were done. Hence he narrates first some things which happened later, and vice versa. Hear S. Jerome (*Praefat. in Matth.*). "Second, Mark, the interpreter of the Apostle Peter, and the first bishop of the Church of Alexandria, who indeed had not himself seen the Lord, the Savior, but had heard his Master's preaching,

related according to the truth of the things which were done, rather than the order in which they were done.”

There is extant a second volume of S. Chrysostom's commentary upon S. Mark, which, although not devoid of genius, learning, and piety, nevertheless seems to be wanting in the style, subtlety, and good judgment of S. Chrysostom. Hence Bellarmine (*de Script. Eccles. in Chrysost. Commentaria*) says that the commentary on Mark is undoubtedly not the work of Chrysostom, but of a certain simple monk, who expounded the gospel to his brethren, as is certain from homilies 34, 89 and others.

Victor of Antioch, an ancient author, wrote especially upon S. Mark based on older commentaries; our Theodore Peltanus has translated him out of Greek into Latin.

The author of the commentary or Scholiast upon S. Mark in the works of S. Jerome arranges many things elegantly and piously, but is not S. Jerome himself, for he neither imitates nor approximates his style, doctrine or gravity; he shows himself to be skilled in neither Greek nor Hebrew, and in explaining chapters 14 and 15 he writes much that is inept and false, as Bellarmine has observed.

Only a few things here require comment, because most have been spoken of in the commentary on Matthew. There the reader will find them at the verses noted in the margin throughout the gospel [*i. e.*, at the parallel passages that are cross-referenced in most editions of the New Testament]. Here, therefore, I shall be brief.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK

CHAPTER ONE

First, the preaching and austerity of John the Baptist are described. Second (v. 9), the baptism, fast and temptations of Christ. Third (v. 14), the preaching of Christ and the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Fourth (v. 23), the cure of the demoniac and (v. 30) the healing of Peter's feverish mother-in-law and of many others. Fifth (v. 40), the cleansing of a leper.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in Isaias the prophet: *Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee.*

³ *A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*

⁴ John was in the desert baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance, unto remission of sins.

⁵ And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁶ And John was clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and he ate locusts and wild honey.

⁷ And he preached, saying: There cometh after me one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.

⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

⁹ And it came to pass, in those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰ And forthwith coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit as a dove descending, and remaining on him.

¹¹ And there came a voice from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

¹² And immediately the Spirit drove him out into the desert.

¹³ And he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan; and he was with beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

¹⁴ And after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

¹⁵ And saying: The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel.

¹⁶ And passing by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea (for they were fishermen).

¹⁷ And Jesus said to them: Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

¹⁸ And immediately leaving their nets, they followed him.

¹⁹ And going on from thence a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship:

²⁰ And forthwith he called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed him.

²¹ And they entered into Capharnaum, and forthwith upon the Sabbath days going into the synagogue, he taught them.

²² And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes.

²³ And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

²⁴ Saying: What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy One of God.

²⁵ And Jesus threatened him, saying: Speak no more, and go out of the man.

²⁶ And the unclean spirit tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice, went out of him.

²⁷ And they were all amazed, inso-much that they questioned among themselves, saying: What thing is this? What is this new doctrine? For with power he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.

²⁸ And the fame of him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee.

²⁹ And immediately going out of the synagogue they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

³⁰ And Simon's wife's mother lay in a fit of a fever: and forthwith they tell him of her.

³¹ And coming to her, he lifted her up, taking her by the hand; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

³² And when it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all that were ill and that were possessed with devils.

³³ And all the city was gathered together at the door.

³⁴ And he healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and he cast out many devils, and he suffered them not to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵ And rising very early, going out, he went into a desert place: and there he prayed.

³⁶ And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

³⁷ And when they had found him, they said to him: All seek for thee.

³⁸ And he saith to them: Let us go into the neighboring towns and cities, that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come.

³⁹ And he was preaching in their synagogues, and in all Galilee, and casting out devils.

⁴⁰ And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down said to him: If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

⁴¹ And Jesus having compassion on him, stretched forth his hand; and touching him, saith to him: I will. Be thou made clean.

⁴² And when he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean.

⁴³ And he strictly charged him, and forthwith sent him away.

⁴⁴ And he saith to him: See thou tell no one; but go, show thyself to the high priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.

⁴⁵ But he being gone out, began to publish and to blaze abroad the word: so that he could not openly go into the city, but was without in desert places: and they flocked to him from all sides.

Verse 1. *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaias, etc.* Many place a full stop before *as*, thinking that *the beginning of the gospel, etc.*, is the title of the book. But that these words are not the title, but the preface of the book, is plain from the word *beginning*, and because they are really dependent upon the clause *as it is written, etc.* Therefore, a comma, not a period, must be placed before *as*. The word *gospel*, then, in this place does not denote the book of the gospel which Mark wrote, as when we say, "the Gospel of Mark," but the gospel preaching of *Jesus Christ* as it follows. The meaning, therefore, is, "The gospel preaching of Christ had such a beginning as Isaias and Malachias foretold, that is to say, the preaching of John the Baptist and his testimony concerning Christ." For John began to preach the kingdom of heaven, which would be opened by Christ's preaching and death. Hence he urged them to repentance, that they might be capable of receiving the grace of Christ and entering the kingdom of heaven, saying, *Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This preaching of his, then, was the *beginning of the*

gospel, i.e., of the gospel preaching initiated by John and to be perfected by Christ. For Moses and the old law preached and promised a land flowing with milk and honey, if the Jews would obey God's commandments. But Christ and the evangelical law preach and promise the kingdom of heaven, if men will repent of their sins, and keep the commandments of Christ. John's preaching of repentance, therefore, was the preparation for, and the beginning of, Christ's preaching the good news about the kingdom of heaven.

Note: Matthew and John commence their gospels from Christ Himself—John from the divine, Matthew from the human generation of Christ. Mark and Luke, however, begin with John the Baptist—Luke from His nativity, Mark from His preaching.

Verses 2-3. *As it is written in Isaias the prophet: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee. A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*

The former citation in verse 2 is from Malachias 3:1. The latter is from Isaias 40:3. Hence the Greek manuscripts of verse 2 have, *it is written in the prophets*, meaning Malachias and Isaias. But the Vulgate and some Greek copies, also the Syriac and Arabic, have "As it is written in Isaias the prophet," and S. Jerome says that this was formerly the reading of the Greek (*lib. de Optimo Genere Interpret. Script.*).

You will ask, "Why does Mark only cite Isaias and not Malachias?" I answer, because the prophecy of Isaias is of greatest importance in this place, for the voice of John crying in the desert, *Do penance*, was *the beginning of the gospel*, that is, of Christ's preaching of the good news. But inasmuch as Malachias shows that John was not sent by man, but by God, to utter these words, therefore Mark prefixes the words of Malachias to arouse the attention of the reader to receive and venerate the voice of John, foretold by Isaias. Besides, Malachias in reality says the same as Isaias. For the angel sent by God to prepare the way of Christ was none other than John himself, crying out with his voice and preaching repentance, which would prepare the hearts of men for the preaching and grace of Christ. This is, therefore, as it were, one and the same oracle of two prophets, uttered in the same sense concerning one and the same John, although in different words in each case, so that they mutually confirm and explain one another. The prophecy of Malachias is actually contained, therefore, in the prophecy of Isaias; for what Malachias predicted, Isaias predicted as well, more clearly and precisely, using other words. This, then, is the reason why Mark in this passage, and the other Evangelists and Apostles, when they

cite two prophets, or two or more sentences of the same or different books of the Old Testament, quote them as one and the same testimony. This is plain from 1 Peter 2:7, compared with Psalm 117:22 and Isaias 8:14. Also 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, compared with Isaias 25:8 and Osee 13:14. The reason, I say, is, because one sentence confirms and explains the other, so much so that each in fact says the same thing as the other; which is why they seem to be not two, but one and the same sentence.

The remaining things that are said about John at the passage I have explained at Matthew 3:3 and 11:10, and at Malachias 3:1 and Isaias 40:3. That is why I shall not repeat them here, lest I hear that common reproach, “warmed-over cabbage.”

Verse 4. *John was in the desert, baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance*, (that is, urging men to repent so as to be well disposed) *unto* (for the) *remission of sins*. This remission was to be received from Christ and His baptism, which was the perfection and consummation of John’s baptism. For Christ, being the king of heaven, preached that the kingdom must be received by His grace, of which the first part is remission of sins, which is afforded by the baptism of Christ, inasmuch as it is furnished and, as it were, animated by the spirit and grace of Christ, according to those words of John, *I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but he that shall come after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire* (Matthew 3:11, which Mark repeats here at verse 8).

Verse 12. *And immediately the Spirit drove* (Greek ἐκβάλλει, *i.e.*, sends or leads out, expels) *him out into the desert*. *The Spirit, i.e.*, the Holy Spirit, who a little while before had descended upon Him at His baptism in the form of a dove. *Drove*, that is, impelled Christ with great power of spirit and ardor, that He might, of His own accord, go *into the desert* and there, as though in a *palestra* [wrestling school], match Himself in single combat with the devil. In that place, then, Christ and Antichrist (namely, the devil, or Lucifer) did battle.

Verse 13. *And he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted* (Greek πειραζόμενος, *i.e.*, “being tempted”) *by Satan*. Many conclude from this that Christ was frequently tempted by Satan during the forty days, by means of various specters and horrible monsters, such as the demon presented to S. Anthony, to terrify him and distract his mind from prayer and solitude. So Franz Lucas. But it seems that Mark, by this single word πειραζόμενος, which means “being tempted,” intended to refer to and briefly sum up the three well known temptations of Christ mentioned in