

APRIL XXV.

ST. MARK, EVANGELIST.

From Eusebius, St. Jerom, &c., collected by Tillemont, t. 2, p. 89. Calmet, t. 7, &c.

ST. MARK was of Jewish extraction. The style of his gospel abounding with Hebraisms, shows that he was by birth a Jew, and that the Hebrew language was more natural to him than the Greek. His acts say he was of Cyrenaica, and Bede from them adds, of the race of Aaron. Papias, quoted by Eusebius, (1) St. Austin, (2) Theodoret, and Bede say, he was converted by the apostles after Christ's resurrection.* St. Irenæus (3) calls him the disciple and interpreter of St. Peter; and, according to Origen and St. Jerom, he is the same Mark whom St. Peter calls his son. (4) By his office of interpreter to St. Peter, some understood that St. Mark was the author of the style of his epistles; others that he was employed as a translator into Greek or Latin, of what the apostle had written in his own tongue, as occasion might require it. St. Jerom and some others take him to be the same with that John, surnamed Mark, son to the sister of St. Barnabas: but it is generally believed that they were different persons: and that the latter was with St. Paul in the East, at the same time that the Evangelist was at Rome, or at Alexandria. According to Papias, and St. Clement of Alex-

(1) Hist. b. 3, c. 39.

(2) L. 1, de cons. evang. c. 1, and in Faust. l. 17, c. 3.

(3) B. 3, c. 1.

(4) I Pet. v. 13.

* Tillemont and others, upon the authority of these fathers, say he never was a disciple of Christ, but only of the apostles. Yet St. Epiphanius tells us, he was one of the seventy-two disciples, and forsook Christ, after hearing his discourse on the eucharist, John vi. but was converted by St. Peter after the resurrection. (Hær. 51, c. 5, p. 528.) Tillemont (Note 2, sur. S. Jean Marc. t. 2, p. 556,) maintains, that the evangelist was not John Mark, (who seems to have been the cousin of St. Barnabas,) because the latter desired to follow SS. Paul and Barnabas, as an attendant, in 51; whereas the Evangelist seems to have arrived in Egypt in 49, and to have written his gospel at Rome before that time. On the contrary, F. Combefis thinks that the Evangelist and John Mark are the same person. And Stilling, the Bollandist, in the life of St. John Mark, shows this to be the most probable opinion, as nothing occurs in the sacred writings which proves them to have been different persons. See Stilling, t. 7, Sept. ad diem 27, p. 387.

andria, he wrote his gospel at the request of the Romans ; who, as they relate,(1) desired to have that committed to writing which St. Peter had taught them by word of mouth. Mark, to whom this request was made, did accordingly set himself to recollect what he had by long conversation learned from St. Peter ; for it is affirmed by some, that he had never seen our Saviour in the flesh. St. Peter rejoiced at the affection of the faithful ; and having revised the work, approved of it, and authorized it to be read in the religious assemblies of the faithful. Hence it might be that, as we learn from Tertullian,(2) some attributed this gospel to St. Peter himself.* Many judge, by comparing the two gospels, that St. Mark abridged that of St. Matthew ; for he relates the same things, and often uses the same words ; but he adds several particular circumstances, and changes the order of the narration, in which he agrees with St. Luke and St. John. He relates two histories not mentioned by St. Matthew, namely, that of the widow giving two mites,(3) and that of Christ's appearing to the two disciples going to

(1) Eus. Hist. b. 2, c. 16.

(2) Tert. cont. Marcion. b. 4, c. 5.

(3) Mark xii

* St. Epiphanius, (Hær. 51,) St. Gregory Nazianzen, (Or. 25, and *carm.* 34,) St. Jerom, (Cat.) &c., affirm the same. Baronius (ad an. 45,) and Selden think his gospel was first written in Latin, because it was compiled for the benefit of the Romans ; but the Greek language was commonly understood among them. St. Austin, St. Jerom, and most of the ancients, suppose the Greek certainly to be the original ; indeed the style itself shows it, and the learned are now commonly agreed in this point. An old manuscript of this gospel is kept in St. Mark's treasury in Venice, and is there said to be the original copy, written by the evangelist himself. It is written not on Egyptian papyrus, as Mabillon and Montfaucon too lightly imagined ; but on a paper made of cotton, as Scipio Maffei, a complete judge, who narrowly examined it, assures us. (See his *Istoria Diplomatica*, printed at Mantua, in 4to. in 1727.) Miason thought it written in Greek, and that he read the word *Kara*. But Montfaucon shows that he mistook Bata in Ibat autem for Kara ; and that MS. is in Latin, as Ciacconi had well informed us. It was conveyed from Aquileia to Venice in the fifteenth century. The Emperor Charles IV. in 1355, obtained, from Aquileia, the last eight leaves, which are kept at Prague. The twenty leaves at Venice, with the last eight leaves at Prague, make the whole gospel of St. Mark, which belongs to the other three gospels in the Forojulian MS. This MS. was written in the sixth century, and contains the oldest copy of St. Jerom's version of the gospels. See Montfaucon, *Diar. Italic.* Calmet, *Diss. sur l'Evang. de St. Marc.* and principally Laur. a Turre's excellent letter to Bianchini, in this latter's *Evangel.* *Quadrup.* t. 4, p. 543.

Emmaus. St. Austin(1) calls him the abridger of St. Matthew. But Ceillier and some others think nothing clearly proves that he made use of St. Matthew's gospel. This evangelist is concise in his narrations, and writes with a most pleasing simplicity and elegance. St. Chrysostom(2) admires the humility of St. Peter, (we may add also of his disciple St. Mark,) when he observes, that his evangelist makes no mention of the high commendations which Christ gave that apostle on his making that explicit confession of his being the Son of God; neither does he mention his walking on the water; but gives at full length the history of St. Peter's denying his Master, with all its circumstances. He wrote his gospel in Italy; and, in all appearance, before the year of Christ, 49.

St. Peter sent his disciples from Rome to found other churches. Some moderns say St. Mark founded that of Aquileia. It is certain at least that he was sent by St. Peter into Egypt, and was by him appointed bishop of Alexandria, (which, after Rome, was accounted the second city of the world,) as Eusebius, St. Epiphanius, St. Jerom, and others assure us. Pope Gelasius, in his Roman council, Palladius, and the Greeks, universally add, that he finished his course at Alexandria, by a glorious martyrdom. St. Peter left Rome, and returned into the East in the ninth year of Claudius, and forty-ninth of Christ. About that time St. Mark went first into Egypt, according to the Greeks. The Oriental Chronicle, published by Abraham Eckellensis, places his arrival at Alexandria only in the seventh year of Nero, and sixtieth of Christ. Both which accounts agree with the relation of his martyrdom, contained in the ancient acts published by the Bollandists, which were made use of by Bede and the Oriental Chronicle, and seem to have been extant in Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries. By them we are told that St. Mark landed at Cyrene, in Pentapolis, a part of Lybia bordering on Egypt, and, by innumerable miracles, brought many over to the faith, and demolished several temples of the idols. He likewise carried the gospel into other provinces of Lybia, into Thebais, and other parts of Egypt. This country was heretofore of all others the most superstitious: but the benediction of God, promised to it by the prophets, was plentifully showered down upon it during the

(1) L. 1, de consens. evang. c. 2.
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(2) Hom. 58 and 85, in Mat.
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ministry of this apostle. He employed twelve years in preaching in these parts, before he, by a particular call of God, entered Alexandria, where he soon assembled a very numerous church,(1) of which it is thought says Fleury, that the Jewish converts then made up the greater part. And it is the opinion of St. Jerom and Eusebius, that these were the Therapeutes described by Philo,(2) and the first founders of the ascetic life in Egypt.*

The prodigious progress of the faith in Alexandria stirred up the heathens against this Galilean. The apostle therefore left the city, having ordained St. Anianus bishop, in the eighth year of Nero, of Christ the sixty-second, and returned to Pentapolis, where he preached two years, and then visited his church of Alexandria, which he found increased in faith and grace, as well as in numbers. He encouraged the faithful and again withdrew: the Oriental Chronicle says to Rome. On his return to Alexandria, the heathens called him a magician, on account of his miracles, and resolved upon his death. God, however, concealed him long from them. At last, on the pagan feast of the idol Serapis, some who were employed to discover the holy man, found him offering to God the prayer of the oblation, or the mass. Overjoyed to find him in their power, they seized him, tied his feet with cords, and dragged him about the streets, crying out, that the ox must be led to Bucoles, a place near the sea, full of rocks and precipices, where probably oxen were fed. This happened on Sunday, the 24th of April, in the year of Christ 68, of Nero the fourteenth, about three years

(1) B. 2, c. 16.

(2) De vita contempl.

* This opinion, Helyot, Montfaucon, and many others, have defended in ample dissertations; though others think these Therapeutes were originally a rigid sect of the Essenes among the Jews. Philo says, they were spread over all Egypt, that they lived retired from the world, disposed of their fortunes among their relations, read holy books, were much given to pious meditation, neither eat nor drank before sunset, and practised other austerities; and that some of their women observed perpetual virginity out of motives of religion. But whether they were the disciples of St. Mark or not, it is however certain, that from his time there were several Christians whom a desire of living after a more perfect manner than ordinary induced to withdraw into the country about Alexandria, and to live retired, praying and meditating on the holy scriptures, working with their hands, and taking no sustenance before sunset, &c.

after the death of SS. Peter and Paul. The saint was thus dragged the whole day, staining the stones with his blood, and leaving the ground strewed with pieces of his flesh; all the while he ceased not to praise and thank God for his sufferings. At night he was thrown into prison, in which God comforted him by two visions, which Bede has also mentioned in his true martyrology. The next day the infidels dragged him, as before, till he happily expired on the 25th of April, on which day the Oriental and Western churches keep his festival. The Christians gathered up the remains of his mangled body, and buried them at Bucoles, where they afterwards usually assembled for prayer. His body was honourably kept there, in a church built on the spot, in 310; and towards the end of the fourth age, the holy priest Philoromus made a pilgrimage thither from Galatia to visit this saint's tomb, as Palladius recounts. His body was still honoured at Alexandria, under the Mahometans, in the eighth age, in a marble tomb.(1) It is said to have been conveyed by stealth to Venice, in 815. Bernard, a French monk, who travelled over the East in 870, writes, that the body of St. Mark was not then at Alexandria, because the Venetians had carried it to their isles.(2) It is said to be deposited in the Doge's stately rich chapel of St. Mark, in a secret place, that it may not be stolen, under one of the great pillars. This saint is honoured by that republic with extraordinary devotion as principal patron.

The great litany is sung on this day to beg that God would be pleased to avert from us the scourges which our sins deserve. The origin of this custom is usually ascribed to St. Gregory the Great, who, by a public supplication, or litany with a procession of the whole city of Rome, divided into seven bands, or companies, obtained of God the extinction of a dreadful pestilence.*

(1) See Bolland, p. 352.

(2) See Mabillon, Act. Bened. p. 502.

* The Greek word litany, which signifies supplication, is mentioned by St. Basil, (ep. 63, p. 97, t. 3,) as used in his time for a public supplication to implore the divine mercy. The Greeks repeated the form *Kyrie eleison*: the Latins retained the very words. St. Gregory the Great added *Christe eleison* to answer the former. The invocation of the saints was added soon after St. Gregory's time, as appears from some martyrologies of that age, which falsely bear the name of St. Jerom. See Florentin, *Admonit.* 8 præv. p. 32, 40. Thomassin, *Hist. des Fêtes Mob.* part 2, p. 173, &c.

This St. Gregory of Tours learned from a deacon, who had assisted at this ceremony at Rome.(1) The station was at St. Mary Major's, and this procession and litany were made in the year 590. St. Gregory the Great speaks of a like procession and litany which he made thirteen years after, on the 29th of August, in the year 603, in which the station was at St. Sabina's.(2) Whence it is inferred that St. Gregory performed this ceremony every year, though not on the 25th of April, on which day we find it settled, in the close of the seventh century, long before the same was appointed for the feast of St. Mark.(3) The great litany was received in France, and commanded in the council of Aix-la-Chapelle in 836, and in the Capitulars of Charles the Bald.(4) St. Gregory the Great observed the great litany with a strict fast. On account of the Paschal time, on the 25th of April, it is kept in several dioceses only with abstinence; in some with a fast of the Stations, or till None.(5)

Nothing is more tender and more moving than the instructions which several councils, fathers, and holy pastors, have given on the manner of performing public supplications and processions. The first council of Orleans orders masters to excuse their servants from work and attendance, that all the faithful may be assembled together to unite their prayers and sighs. A council of Mentz(6) commanded that all should assist barefoot, and covered with sackcloth: which was for some time observed in that church. St. Charles Borromæo endeavoured, by pathetic instructions and pastoral letters, to revive the ancient piety of the faithful, on the great litany and the rogation days. According to the regulations which he made, the supplications and processions began before break of day, and continued till three or four o'clock in the afternoon. On them he fasted himself on bread and water, and preached several times, exhorting the people to sincere penance. A neglect to assist at the public supplications of the church, is a grievous disorder, and

(1) St. Greg. Turon. l. 10, Hist. Franc. c. 1. See also John the Deacon. Vitâ S. Greg. l. 1. n. 42.

(2) St. Greg. M. l. 11, ep. 2, Indict. 6.

(3) Belet. c. 122; Fronto in Calend. p. 71, &c.

(4) Capitular. l. 5, c. 158, and l. 6, c. 74.

(5) See Thomassin du Jeune, part. 2, c. 21; Henschen. Apr. t. 3, p. 345.

(6) Can. 33.

perhaps one of the principal causes of the little piety and sanctity which are left, and of the scandals which reign amongst Christians. They cannot seek the kingdom of God as they ought, who deprive themselves of so powerful a means of drawing down his graces upon their souls. We must join this procession with hearts penetrated with humility, and spend some time in prayer, pious reading, and the exercises of compunction. What we are chiefly to ask of God on these days is the remission of our sins, which are the only true evil, and the cause of all the chastisements which we suffer, or have reason to fear. We must secondly beg that God avert from us all scourges and calamities which our crimes deserve, and that he bestow his blessing on the fruits of the earth.

ST. MACULL. IN LATIN, MACALLIUS, C.

CALLED BY THE COMMON PEOPLE MAUGHOLD.

HE was an Irish prince, and captain of robbers, or freebooters, whom St. Patrick converted to the faith. By baptism he was so changed into a new man, as to appear at once to have put on perfectly the spirit of Christ. To cut off all dangerous occasions and commerce, he renounced the world, and retired into the Isle of Man, about thirty English miles long, and nine broad, situated towards the coast of Lancashire, in England. In the acts of this saint, and in Gildas, it is called Eubonia, by Ptolemy Monoëda, from the British Moneitha, *i. e.* the further or more northern Mona, to distinguish it from the Isle of Anglesey, on the coast of Wales, called by the ancients Mona. St. Patrick had before sent to this island St. Germanus, whom he had ordained bishop, that he might plant a church there. He is honoured as the apostle of this island, and in his name is the cathedral church in Peel-castle dedicated. Upon the death of St. Germanus, St. Patrick sent thither two other preachers, named Conindrius and Romulus. In their time, St. Macull arrived there in an open boat, and, after their death, he is said to have been chosen bishop in 498, by the unanimous consent of the Manks nation. He had till then led an austere penitential life, in the mountainous tract, which, from him, is called St. Maughold, and where a city was afterwards built, which