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COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Luke

by Matthew Henry

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AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

LUKE

We are now entering into the labours of another evangelist; his name *Luke*, which some take to be a contraction of *Lucilius*; born at Antioch, so St. Jerome. Some think that he was the only one of all the penmen of the scripture that was not of the seed of Israel. He was a Jewish proselyte, and, as some conjecture, converted to Christianity by the ministry of St. Paul at Antioch; and after his coming into Macedonia (^{<4160>}Acts 16:10) he was his constant companion. He had employed himself in the study and practice of physic; hence, Paul calls him *Luke the beloved Physician*, ^{<5014>}Colossians 4:14. Some of the pretended ancients tell you that he was a painter, and drew a picture of the virgin Mary. But Dr. Whitby thinks that there is nothing certain to the contrary, and that therefore it is probable that he was one of the seventy disciples, and a follower of Christ when he was here upon earth; and, if so, he was a native Israelite. I see not what can be objected against this, except some uncertain traditions of the ancients, which we can build nothing upon, and against which may be opposed the testimonies of Origen and Epiphanius, who both say that he was one of the seventy disciples. He is supposed to have written this gospel when he was associated with St. Paul in his travels, and by direction from him: and some think that this is *the brother* whom Paul speaks of (^{<4088>}2 Corinthians 8:18), *whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches of Christ*; as if the meaning of it were, that he was celebrated *in all the churches* for writing *this gospel*; and that St. Paul means this when he speaks sometimes of *his gospel*, as ^{<4126>}Romans 2:16. But there is no ground at all for this. Dr. Cave observes that his way and manner of writing are accurate and exact, his style polite and elegant, sublime and lofty, yet perspicuous; and that he expresses himself in a vein of purer Greek than is to be found in the other writers of the holy story. Thus he relates divers things more copiously than the other evangelists; and thus he especially treats of those things which relate to the priestly office of Christ. It is uncertain when, or about what time, this gospel was written. Some think that it was written in

Achaia, during his travels with Paul, seventeen years (twenty-two years, say others) after Christ's ascension; others, that it was written at Rome, a little before he wrote his history of the *Acts of the Apostles* (which is a continuation of this), when he was there with Paul, while he was a prisoner, and preaching in his own hired house, with which the history of the Acts concludes; and then Paul saith that *only Luke was with him*, ^{SCALD-2} Timothy 4:11. When he was under that voluntary confinement with Paul, he had leisure to compile these two histories (and many excellent writings the church has been indebted to a prison for): if so, it was written about twenty-seven years after Christ's ascension, and about the fourth year of Nero. Jerome says, He died when he was eighty-four years of age, and was never married. Some write that he suffered martyrdom; but, if he did, where and when is uncertain. Nor indeed is there much more credit to be given to the Christian traditions concerning the writers of the New Testament than to the Jewish traditions concerning those of the Old Testament.