

**THE MIGHTY WORKER;
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL
COMMENTARY; VOLUME FOUR:
LESSONS IN MARK, JULY 1874, TO
JANUARY, 1875**

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GEO. W. CLARK

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THE MIGHTY WORKER.
INTERNATIONAL
SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMENTARY.

VOLUME FOUR.

Lessons in Mark.

JULY 1874, TO JANUARY, 1875.

TEXT OF THE LESSONS

BOTH IN THE COMMON VERSION AND IN THE REVISED VERSION OF THE
AMERICAN BIBLE UNION.

WITH NOTES PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE USE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL
TEACHERS AND BIBLE CLASSES.

BY

GEO. W. CLARK, D. D.,

Author of "English Harmony of the Gospels," "Notes on Matthew," etc.

"If any one desires to know an evangelical fact, not only in its main features and grand results, but also in its most minute and more graphic delineation, he must betake himself to Mark."—DA COSTA.

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THE NEXT BOOK OF THE SERIES.

HEROES AND JUDGES,

FROM THE LAWGIVER TO THE KING.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL COMMENTARY, VOLUME 5,
JANUARY TO JULY, 1875.

Sacred Text of the Lessons Revised by
REV. H. B. HACKETT, D. D., and REV. GEO. W. BLISS, D. D.

WITH NOTES PREPARED EXPRESSLY TO MEET THE WANTS OF THE SUNDAY
SCHOOL TEACHER, EMBRACING COMMENTARY, BIBLE DICTIONARY,
AND SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION.

BY REV. FRANKLIN JOHNSON, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF NOTES IN VOLUMES SECOND AND THIRD, LESSONS IN MATTHEW, AND MOSES AND
ISRAEL.

(To be issued by December first, 1874).

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INTRODUCTORY.

THIS VOLUME, like those that have preceded it, has been prepared with special reference to the wants of teachers and advanced scholars in Sunday-schools. Its notes are intended to furnish the latest results of exegetical and textual criticism and recent discovery; to explain the meaning of words, idioms, and phrases of the original; to exhibit the drift and object of the discourse or narrative in each particular place; to describe the places, persons, and customs as they occur in the text; and to enforce the whole with practical lessons on the way of salvation and the duties of the Christian life. The aim has also been to strike a mean between brevity and prolixity, and at the same time give the aid needed by teachers of ordinary intelligence.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES OF LESSONS, which is given and commented upon in this volume, embraces about one-third of the Gospel of Mark, and presents a very good view of the mighty deeds of Jesus, as recorded by this Evangelist. The historical links between the lessons are also briefly noted. It is to be hoped that this will be preparatory to a fuller study of this most important Gospel which has been most sadly neglected by both popular and critical students of the Bible.

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT has been given in both the Common and the Revised Versions. Many who use the former wish to consult the latter, and those who prefer the latter often desire to compare with it the former. The paragraph form is used in both, as best adapted to give the connection of thought and a quick and intelligent view of a passage. The whole of Mark in the Revised Version is, however, given at the end of the volume, which will facilitate reference to the connection and context of the Lessons, and to the incidents narrated between them. The comments are upon the Revised Version; those upon the Common Version have already been given to the public in the author's "Notes on Mark." A certain similarity and sameness of exposition necessarily exist in the two volumes; yet there will be found in the two a certain diversity and independence. The Revised Version of the whole Gospel by Mark, is printed at the close of the book.

THE HARMONY OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS should receive special attention, since the Gospel of Mark is eminently suited as a basis of Gospel harmony and as an introduction to the regular and systematic study of the New Testament. There is a certain simplicity and naturalness about its structure, a regularity without seeming effort in its narrative, a vividness and detail in its descriptions, and wherever it narrates the same events as other Gospels, a gratifying fullness in giving the deeds of Christ. The study of Gospel harmony would lose a great portion of its interest if the Gospel of Mark were blotted out of existence. Frequent reference has therefore been made to the "English Harmony of the Four Gospels" by the author. A little additional effort and study may be necessary, but no one who undertakes the task will regret it, in view of the pleasure and profit obtained therefrom.

With these introductory remarks, the volume is sent on its mission, with the prayer that it may accomplish something for Christ's cause and glory. It is fitting, however, to add a few things respecting the writer of this Gospel and the Gospel itself.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE SECOND GOSPEL has been universally ascribed to MARK, as its author, whom ancient Christian writers with one consent declare to have been "the interpreter of Peter." He was probably the "John whose surname was Mark," mentioned in Acts 12: 12, 25, the former being his Jewish, and the latter his Roman name; the son of Mary, a Christian matron and Jewish proprietress, residing at Jerusalem, Acts 12: 12; and "a cousin of Barnabas," for so Col. 4: 10 should be translated. Some without sufficient reasons have supposed two Marks, one the companion of Paul, the other of Peter; while Da Costa even thought to indentify the Evangelist with the "devout soldier" sent by Cornelius to Peter, Acts 10: 7.

Mark appears to have been converted to Christianity through the instrumentality of Peter, who styles him "My son" (1 Pet. 5: 18); but whether this occurred before or after the resurrection of Jesus, is wholly unknown. A tradition reports Mark as one of the seventy, who took offense at our Lord's hard saying (John 6: 60-66), but this is unsupported and contrary to another tradition, that he was neither a hearer nor a follower of our Lord. More probable is the opinion that he was the young man who followed, and then fled from the betrayed Master, and who is alone mentioned by Mark, and with great minuteness (Mark 14: 51). But however this may be, he became an assistant and companion of Paul and Barnabas in their first missionary journey (Acts 13: 5), but left them at Pamphylia and returned to Jerusalem. He thus became a cause of variance and separation, on their second journey, Acts 15: 38-40. Barnabas accordingly took Mark with him to Cyprus. Mark, however, recovered the confidence of Paul, and was with him in his first imprisonment at Rome, Col. 4: 10; Philem. 24. After this he was with Peter at Babylon, 2 Pet. 5: 18. Still later he seems to have been with Timothy at Ephesus, 2 Tim. 4: 11. Beyond this point the scriptures are silent concerning him.

Tradition, however, brings Mark with Peter to Rome; but this apparently rests upon a misunderstanding of 1 Pet. 5: 13, Babylon being wrongly taken as the typical name of Rome (*Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. ii. 15; vi. 14*). Thence he is said to have gone to Alexandria, where he became pastor of the church, and where he is said to have suffered martyrdom. Much better supported, however, and much more probable, is that tradition which affirms that Mark wrote his Gospel under the direction of Peter. There is much evidence of this in the Gospel itself, which relates events with the details and vividness of an eye-witness.

THE TIME when Mark wrote his Gospel can not be positively determined. Ecclesiastical tradition is contradictory and untrustworthy. Irenaeus says it was written after the death of Peter and Paul; but according to Papias, and Clement of Alexandria, it was written during Peter's lifetime. Later ancient authorities put its date much earlier, as early as A. D. 40 or 43, but without evidence or probability. There is nothing in the New Testament to decide the question. It must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, otherwise so remarkable a fulfillment of our Lord's prediction in the thirteenth chapter would have been noticed. On the other hand, the mention of Mark in Col. 4: 10, as a cousin of Barnabas, as if that were his highest distinction, would indicate that his Gospel was not then published, about A. D. 62, the time when that epistle was written. Mark at this time was with Paul at Rome, Col. 4: 10; Philemon 24. Somewhat later he was with Peter at Babylon, 1 Pet. 5: 13. There he may have composed his Gospel, or having written it previously, he may have submitted it to Peter for his inspection and approval. When Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, during his second imprisonment at Rome, about A. D. 67 or 68, Mark appears to have been in Asia Minor, 2 Tim. 4: 11. From all this, we may conclude

INTRODUCTORY.

that the most probable time of the writing of this Gospel, or at least of its publication, was between A. D. 62 and 68.

THE PLACE is even more uncertain than the time. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate it. The mention of Mark with Peter at Babylon (1 Pet. 5: 13) gives but the slightest foundation for suggesting that it might have been composed there. Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, etc., mention Rome as the place; but earlier writers, such as Papias and Irenæus, do not speak of it. As for Peter, it is not probable that he was at Rome before the last year of his life. Chrysostom mentions Alexandria, but this is not confirmed by other testimony. Some would combine these views, supposing it published in both cities. Its Latinisms show that Mark understood something of Latin, but prove nothing regarding the place of composition. At most they only strengthen the very common opinion, that the Gospel was written for Gentile, including Roman, readers. The place of writing we must leave where we found it, uncertain.

MARK WROTE SPECIALLY FOR GENTILE CHRISTIANS. His design was principally to narrate the official life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Hence the beginning and the end of the Gospel are brief and summary. He omits the genealogy and all accounts of the early years of both John and Jesus to which Gentiles would attach less importance than would the Jews. He quotes little from the Old Testament, and makes but few references to the Prophets, because of less interest to Gentiles. He does not even use the word Law, and makes no effort, like Matthew in the "Sermon on the Mount," to show the relation of Jesus to the old dispensation.

Mark also makes geographical and personal explanations, describes Jewish customs, and translates Hebrew or Aramean expressions, all of which would be necessary for a Gentile but not for a Jew.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF MARK is natural and easy, giving graphic sketches of Christ's mighty deeds, conflicts, and victories. The principal divisions are as follows:

1. The ministry of John the Baptist; the baptism and temptation of Jesus, ch. 1: 1-13.
2. Christ's early Galilean ministry, from the imprisonment of John to the appointment of the Twelve. A time of growing popularity, and also of growing opposition, culminating in an organized movement, ch. 1: 14; to 3: 12.
3. Galilean ministry, from the appointment of the Apostles to Christ's departure for the country of Tyre and Sidon. A period of great Pharisaic malignity, marked on the part of Jesus by a change to parabolic instruction; also of great miracles, and great activity of Christ and the Apostles. The relation of Jesus to his relatives, to malignant and blasphemous Pharisees, to unbelieving countrymen, and to Herod Antipas, is brought to view, ch. 3: 13; to 7: 22.
4. Christ's visit to the Gentile world, ch. 7: 24-30.
5. Christ's ministry in Decapolis and northern Galilee. The transfiguration, ch. 7: 31; to 9: 29.
6. Later ministry in Galilee, ch. 9: 30-50.
7. Last journey from Galilee through Perea to Jerusalem, ch. 10: 1-52.
8. Closing scenes of Christ's public ministry at Jerusalem, chs. 11, 12, 13.
9. The sufferings and death of Jesus, chs. 14, 15.
10. Resurrection and ascension, ch. 16.

SOMERVILLE, N. J., May, 1874.

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GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

LESSON I, JULY 5, 1874.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL. CHAP. I: 1-11.

THE COMMON VERSION.

THE beginning of the gospel
of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

THE REVISED VERSION.

THE beginning of the good
news of Jesus Christ, Son of God,

The ministry of John the Baptist; the baptism of Jesus.—Parallel passages: Matt. I: 1-17; Luke 3: 1-23. See Author's "English Harmony of the Gospels; §§ 19, 20. Whenever a Harmony is referred to in this volume the one just named is meant.

We begin to-day a six months' study of the Gospel, according to Mark. No Gospel is better suited for beginning the study of the life of Christ. The events are related in their natural and, with two or three exceptions, in their chronological order. The leading facts of Christ's history are brought vividly to view. Mark exceeds all the other Evangelists in his minute and life-like delineations, giving the deeds of Christ, presenting him as the MIGHTY WORKER. His Gospel consists of a series of *life sketches*; and although we cannot accomplish the whole in six months, we hope to get a good and clear view of Jesus as presented in his Gospel.

1. **The beginning**; introduces the ministry of John as the forerunner of Christ. To separate this verse from the two following, with which it is closely connected, and make it the title of the whole book, is unnatural and arbitrary.

The good news, for so the word *Gospel* means; the glad tidings of a Savior and of his salvation. Compare Rom. 1: 3. This began to be proclaimed by John. Compare Luke 16: 16.

Jesus. The personal name of our Lord, the Greek form of Joshua, meaning *Jehovah his help or Savior*, and given him by command of the angel, because he should "save his people from their sins." Matt. 1: 21.

Christ. His official name, meaning *anointed*, corresponding to the Hebrew Messiah. Ps. 2: 2; Dan. 9: 24, 25; John 1: 41; 4: 26. He was the Anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of Spiritual Israel, of the kingdom of God.

Son of God; or *God's Son*, the article being omitted in the original. Brevity was often studied in titles. Matthew (ch. 1: 1), who wrote for Jewish Christians, introduces Christ as Son of David in his relation to Israel; but Mark, who wrote for Gentile believers, presents him at once as Son of God, in the highest sense, divine, partaker of the Godhead, and hence possessed of divine power. The Jew needed to be convinced that Jesus was the Messiah foretold by the prophets; the Gentile that he was possessed of divinity, an Almighty Savior, before whom all the pretended divinities of heathendom were evidently spurious. Hence, while Matthew especially gives the fulfillment of prophecies and the words of Jesus, Mark dwells particularly on the acts and power of Jesus.

"Jesus Christ is not the only person who is called the Son of God in the Scriptures. Angels (Job 1: 6; 38: 7) kings and rulers (2 Sam. 7: 14; Ps. 82: 6), the righteous and their families (Gen. 6: 2, 4) and especially believers in Jesus (1 John, 4: 2), are all so called to express their high rank or relation and resemblance to the Most High. But Christ calls himself and is called by the sacred writers not a son of God, but *the Son of God*, (John 1: 34; 11: 4), and what is, if possible, still more distinctive and complete **THE SON**. (The absence of the article in some cases can be easily explained grammatically. *s. w. c.*) In most of the passages in which the title is applied to others it occurs in the plural number, or, if in the singular number, without the article, as when God says to Solomon, 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son,' 2 Sam. 7: 14. The passages in which magistrates and angels are called sons of God, are not only plural and indefinite, but they are found only in such poetical books as Job and the Psalms, and are manifestly the language of poetry. Moreover these, and also those in which the title is applied to Adam (Luke 3: 38) and Solomon are solitary passages, not only peculiar