

known to the other two evangelists, many of their similarities to Mark will be accounted for.

**THE AUTHOR**—The material seems to come from an eye-witness. Read the story of the feeding of the five thousand (6:35-44), or the storm (4:36-51), or Bartimaeus (10:46-52), and see how life-like the descriptions are. The author seems to have been a Jew of Palestine, for he understands the Aramaic language and the customs of the Jews (3:7; 5:41; 7:2, 3, 4; 15:42). He is much interested in the apostles, especially Peter. All this just fits to the widespread early tradition that the author of the gospel was John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, and that he wrote it after the death of Peter in Rome, using as his material memoirs of the gospel which he had heard the apostle preach.

**PETER'S GOSPEL**—So the gospel would be really Peter's gospel. Mark may have been a witness of some of some of the incidents he relates, for example in 14:51, 52, which would be "the artist's autograph in an obscure corner of the painting."

**CHARACTERISTICS, READERS, PURPOSE AND DATE**—Jesus is vividly pictured in Mark as the strong Son of God. It is the gospel of action, has few discourses and only four parables, but it has many miracles and the energy is expressed by frequent use of such a word as "straightway." We see Jesus at work, full of sympathy, divine in His majesty, His suffering, His compassion. The readers were Gentiles, for Jewish times and customs are explained, 5:41; 7:3, 4, 34; 15:34. Mark describes Jesus as one whose life will bring power for godliness to the Gentile world of the western Roman Empire. Jerusalem seems to have been still standing (13:14); so the date of the composition was before 70 A.D.

#### LESSON IV.

##### PLAN AND CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

The gospel falls into two great sections: I. The active ministry of Jesus in Galilee, chs. 1:14 to 9:50; II. The last week in Jerusalem and the Resurrection, chs. 11:1 to 16:8. The theme of the gospel is what Jesus the strong Son of God did and suffered as Messiah.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL**, ch. 1:1-13. The work of the Baptist; the baptism and temptation of Jesus as the inauguration of His public ministry.

**I. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY**, 1:14 to 9:50. (a) Jesus begins preaching in the synagogue, healing diseases and driving out demons. His disciples always accompanying Him. Capernaum is His headquarters, but He makes circuits into Galilee. Crowds gather. The Pharisees are scandalized when He touches a leper (1:40-45), when He for-

gives sins (2:1-12), when He calls a publican to be His disciple (2:13-17), when He disregards regulations as to fasting and the Sabbath 2:18 to 3:6.

(b) The next important step is the call of the twelve, 3:13-19. These are to be the pillars in the new Israel, the kingdom of God. The enthusiasm of the multitude is at its height, but His enemies say that He is in league with Beelzebub, and His own family cannot comprehend Him, 13:20-35. Now, Jesus begins to speak in parables, in order to sift out those who will receive the word of God in good hearts. This method of teaching makes demands on the hearers and so tests them. Those who receive the seed in good soil, wish to know the mysteries of the kingdom, and attracted by the beauty of the parables, search for their hidden truth. Others go away self-condemned, 4:1-34. Mark has only four parables.

(c) The mission of the twelve. The chief work of Jesus was His training of the twelve who were to be entrusted with the fullest knowledge of His kingdom. So they are sent forth into Galilee to get experience for their future work. Perhaps through them Herod Antipas heard of Jesus. The murder of John the Baptist here comes in, 4:35 to 6:30.

(d) Close of ministry in Galilee. Increase of His popularity and power (6:31-56), accompanied by growing hatred of the Pharisees, whetted by Christ's exposure of their immorality and His disregard of their laws as to cleanness, 7:1-23. To escape both the undiscerning enthusiasm of the multitude and the embittered attacks of the Pharisees, Jesus goes to the region of Tyre and Sidon, returns to North-eastern Galilee, and continues north to Caesarea Philippi, 7:24 to 8:27. Peter's confession (8:29), rewarded by a sight of the Transfiguration, but followed by repeated warnings that the Messiah must go to Jerusalem and die. The law of sacrifice and humility as a cardinal principle in the kingdom of God is emphasized in 8:34; 9:35, 45.

**CONNECTING LINK**—Between the two sections of the Gospel, chapter 10. A few details of what happened in Judea or Perea, but nothing of the progress of the journey from Galilee to Judea, nor of the gathering crisis in Jerusalem that resulted in His death. Luke, and especially John, give this.

**II. THE LAST WEEK IN JERUSALEM**—11:1 to 16:8. Final conflicts with the authorities in Jerusalem, trial, passion and resurrection. The closing verses of the gospel, 16:9-29. (See Revised Version, with marginal note.) As they stand, they were not written by the author of the rest of the gospel. Probably the original ending was lost. This seems to have been written by an early witness and attached afterwards to this gospel.