

**A COMMENTARY
ON THE GOSPEL OF
S. MARK**

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A Commentary on the Gospel of S. Mark by Harvey Goodwin

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HARVEY GOODWIN

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BY THE VERY REVEREND

HARVEY GOODWIN, D.D.,

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Commentary upon the Gospel according to S. Mark, contained in this volume, is a sequel to the Commentary upon S. Matthew published about two years ago. It is composed upon the same principles, and intended for the same class of readers; that is to say, it is intended for the use of those whose only familiar language is English, and it is constructed with the view of bringing out the distinguishing features of S. Mark, so far as they can be recognized and understood by an English reader.

I endeavoured to make my design comprehended when I published my Commentary upon S. Matthew's Gospel, by stating in the opening of the Introduction the class for whom it was written; but it seems to have been held by some of the critics who have noticed that work, that I had precluded them from treating it as a volume intended for plain folks unacquainted with Greek, because I had expressed my hope "that my labours might be made useful to *fellow-students* of God's Holy Word." Fellow-students, these critics appear to hold, must mean those who study the Scriptures in the original; and although I had expressly confined my class of readers to "those whose only familiar tongue is English," this term *fellow-students* has been regarded as undoing the restriction, and forbidding the volume to be treated in the way which the author himself prescribed.

It may be that there was some ambiguity in the mode of expression adopted by me; and I should not have thought it worth

while to find fault with my critics, had it not been that in reality this term *fellow-students*, at which some of them have stumbled, expresses, when taken in conjunction with the assertion that I wrote for English readers, the spirit and intention of my former Commentary and of that now published also. It appeared to me, that, although much interesting matter which has been brought to light by learned men must always be inaccessible to those who cannot examine the Gospels in the original, and cannot use learned commentaries upon them, yet there were many things which might be rendered intelligible, and some help given towards the solution of questions which must rise up in the minds of all thoughtful readers. This view was probably strengthened by the circumstance, that while in Cambridge I had during two years a Bible Class in connection with the "Working Men's College." In this class we determined to study the Gospels; and before I resigned it we had completed an examination of the first two. In preparing materials for the lectures, which were given on Sunday evening, I carefully abstained from dwelling upon those topics which belonged more properly to the pulpit, and I rather selected those which were likely to open up to my students new lines of thought concerning passages with which they were all familiar. I found it very possible to interest the working men by this mode of dealing, and I had their own testimony that on many points connected with the Gospels they had gained new light from the lectures. These working men I have no hesitation in acknowledging as "fellow-students of God's Holy Word;" and possibly it might have been the remembrance of the evenings spent in the lecture-room, that suggested the phrase to my mind when I wrote the Introduction to the Commentary on S. Matthew's Gospel.

But it is not amongst working men only that readers are to be found, who, in studying the Scriptures, may use with advantage a Commentary such as I have endeavoured to supply. There is

in England a large class of highly intelligent persons, who have not had a learned education, and to whom nevertheless many questions, which require for their full discussion an apparatus of learning not possessed by them, may be rendered interesting and instructive. I do not say that I have succeeded in meeting the wants of this class, but I have endeavoured in some measure to do so; and, whether I have succeeded or not, I am sure that the wants are real and such as ought to be met and supplied.

Having thus attempted to make more apparent the design both of the former Commentary on S. Matthew and of the present Commentary on S. Mark, I will crave the reader's attention while I make some observations, by way of introduction, upon certain points connected with S. Mark's Gospel. In doing so I shall bear carefully in mind the class of readers for whom the Commentary is intended, and shall therefore abstain from the discussion of many points which would find place in a more complete introduction to S. Mark.

I.—*The authorship of the Gospel.*

In the introduction to the Commentary on S. Matthew I stated that all discussion concerning the claim of that Apostle to be regarded as the author of the Gospel bearing his name was beside my purpose; and in like manner I shall here assume, and not prove, that the Gospel bearing the name of S. Mark was really written by him. In truth there seems to be as little reason for doubting concerning the authorship as concerning any fact in ancient history. The tradition which assigns the second Gospel to S. Mark is universal, unvarying, uncontradicted; and the Mark to whom tradition points is he who comes under our notice several times in the Acts of the Apostles and incidentally in the Epistles.¹

¹ As to the identity of the Mark of Acts xii. 12, and the Marcus of 1 Pet. v. 13, see below, page xv.