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# 'THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST BY ST. MARK'\*

H. BELL

In the *second* section (chapters 5 to 9), the Lord's wonderful *sympathy* shines forth. In ch. 5 it is displayed in the power of *His word* to the poor demoniac: in the case of the woman it is displayed in the power of *His person*: in the case of the raising to life the daughter of Jairus, it is displayed in the power of *His hand*.

Chapter 6 gives us an understanding of His sympathy, in this instance directed to His tired disciples (vs. 30-33); the hungry crowds (vs. 35-44); and the affrighted (vs. 45-52).

Just here we should note the two miracles which are *not* mentioned in the other Gospels; namely, the healing of the deaf and dumb man (ch. 7); and the giving of sight to the blind man (ch. 8). In both of these narratives the Lord's tender sympathy shines out in a very special manner. In the former He sighs in deep pity for the man's condition; He took the man aside privately, put His fingers into his ears, and spat and touched his tongue . . . (see vs. 33, 34). With both sufferers He shewed very special and intimate concern in love and mercy.

Incidentally, after these miracles of healing, and then the opening of the eyes of the blind man in chap. 8:22-26, we are told of Peter's great confession: '*Thou art the Christ*' (v. 29); which was followed immediately by the announcement of His approaching death on the cross, 'for us men and our salvation'; but also of His triumphant Resurrection: 'He spake the saying *openly*' (vs. 31, 32). When we thus have our eyes opened to behold HIM we are compelled to confess His grace, greatness and glory!

The *third* section of the book (chapters 10-15) tells of the Lord's journeying from Galilee into Judea; and here begins the *third* phase of the Servant's mission, viz. *His Suffering*. First we are told of the *place* where He was to suffer, and the *manner* of His sufferings (vs. 32-34). And the same chapter 10:45 tells us concerning the *object* of this suffering, which was to provide 'a ransom for many'. The 11th chapter records the incidents of cursing the

\* This concludes the study begun in last issue (page 145).

barren fig tree; the cleansing of the Temple; and the Jewish rulers being utterly confounded by the words of the perfect Servant, Who in the midst of all the varied demands made upon Him finds time to instruct His followers in the exercise of their faith and forgiveness (see vs. 20:26).

Chapter 12 gives the picture of God's Son as the Servant sent into the vineyard but cast out and slain (vs. 1-12). In vs. 13-44 He is seen as the *instructed* Servant, who alone can teach men the nature of God, the character of the life to come, and make clear to the learned of earth the ways of God and the duty of men towards Him. Chapter 13 gives us the picture of the Servant as Teacher, instructing us concerning the future when God will have put down all opposition in the world and take the government into His own hands in final triumph. 'Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the Master cometh . . . lest coming suddenly He findeth you sleeping' (vs. 35-37).

Turning now to chapter 15, we see the divine Servant on the cross, fulfilling to the utmost the mission for which He was sent to accomplish 'for us men and our salvation'. 'They led Him away to Golgotha . . . And it was the third hour when they crucified Him' (vs. 22 ff) 'Thus was the Scripture fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors. . . .' These closing chapters need to be read in quietness, with prayer, in order to realise their full meaning as they bring before us 'The Service of the Servant'—*on our behalf*.

The concluding chapter 16 sets forth the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The tireless Servant was given no resting place in this world save in the grave. But now, 'at the rising of the sun', as Mark declares, He is risen from the grave to introduce a 'New Era' of the world's history, which still continues and will continue till He returns to take out of the world for ever His redeemed of all time.

Note the final commission the risen Lord gives His disciples: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation' (vs. 15, R.V.). 'And after He had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God' (v. 19). The Servant's Service on earth was accomplished;

and yet 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us' (Heb. 8:23). Moreover, this Servant is as active today—in and with all who serve Him by making Him known to their fellow-men and women, in whatever nation and sphere, who 'go forth to preach, *the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs following*', i.e., in the conversion of souls (see chap. 16:20). Let the prophet's words re-echo in our hearts: '*Behold My Servant*'.

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### THE POWER OF PRAYER

There are wonderful examples in Scripture of the power of prayer. Nothing seems to be too great, too hard, or too difficult for the power of prayer to do. It has obtained things that seemed impossible and out of reach. It has won victories over fire, air, earth, and water. Prayer opened the Red Sea. Prayer brought water from the rock and bread from heaven. Prayer made the sun stand still. Prayer brought fire from the sky on Elijah's sacrifice. Prayer turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. Prayer overthrew the army of Sennacherib. Well might Mary Queen of Scots say "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men." Prayer has healed the sick. Prayer has raised the dead. Prayer has procured the conversion of souls. Nothing seems impossible when a man has the Spirit of adoption. So long as Abraham asked mercy for Sodom, the Lord went on giving. He never ceased to give till Abraham ceased to pray. Think of this. Is not this encouragement?

DR. J. C. RYLE