Articles by James Ross

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Christ’s Mighty Victory (Apr 1967)

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The facts of our Lord’s mighty victory over Satan, death and the forces of evil are related for us in the final chapters of the four Gospels. Here, also, are His parting words, His last loving messages to His own ere He leaves them. When looked at in their canonical order, it may be noticed that there is expansion, a progression in the inspired presentations of truth. Each succeeding writer adds to the truth already revealed. It is hoped that the following observations will be both interesting and edifying in this connection.

Matthew

In Matthew’s brief account the great word is “He is risen.” Every statement is noticeably brief, and terse. The angel’s message is quickly spoken, “Fear not — ye seek Jesus which was crucified — He is risen as He said — come, see — go quickly and tell —.” As they go to obey, Jesus meets them and says, “All hail” (rejoice), then follow the words, “Go tell My disciples,” and they are on their way, His heartening message of cheer ringing in their ears and hearts. Of course, much is found in little here; these six words, “Come see — go quickly and tell,” may be said to contain sufficient guidance for an entire life for Him.

Mark

Mark’s record is also characterized by brevity. Twenty verses only are devoted to the theme. He notices, however, the unbelief of the disciples and the

consequent upbraiding by the Master. The command to go and preach the Gospel and the assurance of results are given. But there is something more. “After He had spoken — He was received up into Heaven and sat on the right hand of God.” And so we learn that the Perfect Servant has been given the place of honour above. Rejected below, He was enthroned in glory. And further, the Lord was with His workers on earth even as Matthew says, but also “working with them and confirming the Word” according to Mark. Thus, He is seen as the Enthroned One, still concerned with His faithful though imperfect servants who are in the world.

Luke

A more detailed account is given by Luke. He delights to present the risen and victorious Man seeking out the Emmaus travellers and then meeting with His own in the evening of that resurrection day. What a soul-thrilling exercise it is to go with Him in spirit through those wonderful hours, beholding His undying love, His patient grace, listening to His marvellous expositions! Certainly there were openings of the understanding as He opened unto them the Scriptures, and their very eyes were opened. Hearts burned within them. We may accompany them and experience the same spiritual ecstacy listening to the gracious words from His blessed lips. Then as He is to leave them, He promises to send the gift of the Father, the Holy Spirit to them. They are to wait for this enduement from on high. What tremendous changes this great experience was to make in their future service for Him! “They worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” Pentecost is the fulfilment of the promise.

John

John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, begins the narrative earlier in the day than the other writers, “When it was yet dark.” What a commentary on our adorable Master that He chose to appear first, to Mary Magdalene, to a weak (as we might think) and weeping woman! His compassion went out to a heart that was broken but that still loved. “He healeth the broken heart and bindeth up their wounds; He telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names” (Psa. 147:3-4). Blessed Lord, in whom are blended all virtues, greatness and grace, power and pity, might and mercy. The Great Shepherd is busy gathering His scattered flock: Mary, Peter, Thomas and all the rest. What wonderful days these were, but shadowed always by the soon departure He had predicted. But look again! It is reserved for John to drop a hint calculated to dry tears and to lift drooping spirits. Notice in the conversation with Peter and with John (ch. 21) the two words twice spoken, “ I come.” Much more will follow regarding the Second Advent. But here, for hearts sad indeed that He is going away, is the promise that He will return. He will not fail to keep the tryst. May we be kept true to Him until that glad moment.