

**THE MINISTRY OF
JESUS: A HARMONY OF
THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

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The Ministry of Jesus: A Harmony of the Synoptic Gospels by Anita Saltonstall Ward

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ANITA SALTONSTALL WARD

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SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

ARRANGED BY
ANITA SALTONSTALL WARD



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PREFACE

To many of us who earnestly desire to know the events of the life of Jesus and his teaching, the four Gospels together present a confused account, not easy to straighten out by one's own effort. Controversies many and long, continued over the centuries, obscure the central facts of our Master's life among men, and are somewhat baffling to those who have not time to study all the questions involved. So perhaps we become discouraged in our hope to understand his life, and fail to touch the living personality, transcendent over all controversies.

While the opening and closing chapters of Matthew and Luke and the whole of the fourth Gospel will always be given their full value when studying the life of Christ, it seems to me that we need to learn over and over again, and more and more deeply, what Jesus in his lifetime taught, in distinction to what has since been taught about him; or, to express it differently, should we not make our knowledge of the work which his Father gave him to do, and the way in which he accomplished it, the chief source of our inspiration for our own life-work?

A few words in explanation of the plan herein followed. The American Standard Revision is the text used. With two or three exceptions, which seem to carry their own justification, the Gospel according to Mark is used in its own order as far as to the end of the original document, which ends in a broken sentence. On the left margin a light line and references to chapter and verse show the use of Mark; on the right margin references to parallel passages in Matthew or Luke are parenthesized. The material collected by Matthew and Luke and not contained in Mark is all inserted in its probable, or possible, chronological order, references being noted on the right margin while the corresponding passage in the other Gospel, if there is one, is noted in parentheses underneath it. A glance at the first page will explain this. A Table of Contents has purposely been omitted that the ministry of Jesus may be read as a whole, unfettered by any conventional description of its well-known incidents. It will be easy to compile one should the reader deem it desirable. There are two complete Tables of References at the back of the book.

Inconsistencies and mistakes will of course be found, but in a book of this kind they are to be expected and welcomed rather than deplored, for their discovery may inspire others to study to improve the work.

This is not the place to discuss the synoptic problem. There are many valuable textbooks on this fascinating and absorbing theme; but for a brief statement of the questions of authorships and dates, with some accounts of the reasons for the written Gospels, see the Introduction to "Life and Teachings of Jesus," by Charles Foster Kent, or "The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus," by F. Crawford Burkitt. Each of these books contains a bibliography on the subject.

May I express my gratitude to those friends who have shown interest and given encouragement in the progress of the work, especially to Dr. Vernon, who in its later stages has very greatly helped me by his sympathy, thought, and illuminating suggestions.

This chronology is the result of such reading and thought as lie in the power of anyone to give to the subject; but because many Sunday School teachers and general readers of the Gospels are not able to spend many hours on Bible study, it is published in the hope that some may come to a clearer understanding of the mind and heart of our Lord and Master, and through knowing him, discover the ways that lead to a revealing of God's great and loving purposes for the world and for each individual soul.

A. S. W.

INTRODUCTION

This book fills a most important gap in our material for the study of the life of Jesus. For a long time we have had harmonies of the Gospels. Recently we have had a harmony of the first three Gospels done in a masterly manner, but in Greek. But these harmonies have been intended for the student rather than for the reader, and have led to fixing the attention on unimportant distinctions of verbiage between two or three similar narratives of the same event. Recently also we have had what has been called a Gospel History in which a running narrative of all four Gospels has been composed and published. But the Fourth Gospel presents so utterly different a picture of Jesus and has so diverse a chronology that the narrative has seemed artificially put together. Here after careful study Miss Ward has given us for the first time a consecutive narrative of the life of Jesus as told in the synoptic Gospels. She has refrained from any editing of them; she has let them speak for themselves and let them say their whole story, but their story is not confused by John's valuable but quite different story. For the first time therefore the layman is able to have