

## " Jesus the Teacher", by Dr. Clifford Watson

In this text, the author examines the person, the style, the practices that Jesus Christ used when teaching or talking with the people of His day.

As a measure of the honesty of the author, he admits at the beginning of the book that there is a paradox here; many people agree that "Jesus was the greatest teacher of all time", but will totally reject His message and the claims he made.

This book focuses not on his message and his claims, but on His unique way of teaching.

The book starts with the early education of Jesus and looks at the social influences, such as parental and home influences, as well as the general environment and the kind of education He might have experienced and received. In this beginning, the claims He made are acknowledged, as part of how Jesus saw Himself.

Having set the scene, the book moves on to examine the special conditions that informed the way Jesus taught. These special conditions are identified by the author as:-

- Not a paid "professional" teacher
- He chose his own pupils (the disciples)
- Did not have a set classroom
- Developed His own curriculum
- Claimed unique authority for His message

From here, the book moves on to look at the wider role as a teacher that Jesus had, beyond that of teaching his disciples and at the "teacher -pupil" relationships that He established with His wider audience. These relationships demonstrate His understanding of his "pupils" because:-

- (1) He knew their capacities'
- (2) He used repetition effectively
- (3) He encouraged earnest students
- (4) He ensured a right attitude to Himself
- (5) He established and maintained right relationships

In this next part of the book the focus shifts to the personal qualities exhibited by Jesus, relating to the control of His pupils ; amongst these qualities were :-

- ◆ The ability to maintain interest
- ◆ Patience, self-control and self- discipline
- ◆ Dignity
- ◆ The ability to lead
- ◆ According appropriate recognition to each pupil

In the area of discipline, the techniques used by Jesus included :-

- ❖ Correcting wrong thinking
- ❖ Deliberate silence
- ❖ An effective look
- ❖ A stern rebuke
- ❖ Warning of consequences
- ❖ Action as necessary

The book concludes that the best examples of the mastery of Jesus as a teacher are found in his profound simplicity, his teaching aids and his range / selection of stories and parables to match His message to the circumstances of the particular situation involved.

This talent as a teller of stories is seen by the author as having a number of key elements, including :-

- His use of current events, commonplace things
- His simple, direct, concise terms and language
- Interesting and vivid beginnings
- Parts follow logically
- Stories lead to a satisfying conclusion
- Stories were brief and memorable
- Symbolism used was easily understood