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TEACHING METHODS OF JESUS CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

THE MAKING OF A MASTER TEACHER

In this study, it is attempted to indicate the simple methods the Lord Jesus used, to transport His thoughts to His followers. He impressed upon their minds the supreme truth, with the help of incidents, stories, gleanings and sayings of common to his hearers.

His goal of education was "To create in man the image of His Maker and to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created." ¹ He always strove to attain this goal in all his doings (Miracles) and sayings (parables, preachings).

In this paper we will discuss how Christ became the most successful educator of all times, and how we could be successful if we follow His model and achieve his goal. The secret lay in the fact that He never for a moment forgot his goal of education.

He had the best preparatory education at the feet of the heavenly Father. "Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and THERE PRAYED."

"Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and PRAYED."

1

Ellen G White Education, PPPA, Mountain View, California, 1952) Page 104.

2

Luke 5:15, 16

"And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." ³

"In the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trials".⁵

He was able to impart what he learnt at the feet of Heavenly Father in PRAYER and MEDITATION. Jesus prepared for His "MASTER TEACHER" training in those rocky wilderness in Prayer. Ellen G White, tells us in Desire of Ages Page 114 that He went into the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work.

He completed the comprehensive examinations in those three temptations. He graduated at the end of the 40 days of fasting and PRAYER for a teaching ministry for the next three and half years ahead of Him.

I. JESUS: THE MASTER OF HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Jesus strove to inculcate in the minds of his students, heavenly things, through events and things very common to hearers. He gave the love of the unseen father through the things the students noticed around them. We shall discuss the following three aspects of His total teaching ministry religious, Legal, and social.

A) RELIGIOUS:

Jesus as a teacher was with his prospective students participating in the feast of tabernacle for "activity method" teaching.

³ Mark 6:12

⁴ Ellen G White, Desire of Ages, PPPA, Mountain View, California, Page 363.

About the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying:

"How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them and said, my doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself".⁶

"In the temple he did not take the place of the Rabbis, but moved with the people. He was one among the crowd for "activity method". "For the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, where is He?"

He was busy with the pupil, learning together the science of salvation. The Clergy and Laity were both in crowd as the Master Teacher was moving among them, creating in man the image of His Maker. He taught in parables to make the common people to understand well.

B) LEGAL:

Jesus, surely enjoyed a commendable status in the society for he was a man of good moral and repute. Many came to him to sort out their disputes. Some took him for a magistrate.

The city crowd brought a convicted young lady caught in prostitution. It was left to the Lord Jesus, at the temple court yard to accuse and punish her for her offense.

The Master Teacher strove here to teach the crowd and convicted lady, the divine law of love. He sought to lift te them up from mediocre mosaical code. He taught to educate the accused and accusers the saving law, love.

⁶ John 7:14-18

⁷ The Holy Bible, KJV, (The World Publishing Company, Cleveland, Ohio 1968) John 7:11

He did his best "to bring them back to the perfection in which they were created," through activity method. He corrected wrong thinking through his deliberate silence.

"Correction" does not mean punishment or rebuke; nor that it is the negative side of discipline. There is a place for that, but often a pupil can be shown where he is wrong and will correct his own error. In such a case the teacher-pupil relationship has been effective and no other action is necessary.

Corporal punishment is the best instrument in the hands of the weakest teacher. The Master used "correction" method rather than "punishment". Jesus helped the erring by reprove.

In the teachings of Jesus we find many examples of this type of correction. He showed His disciples where they stood in their thinking, and he led his hearers to a better understanding, challenging them to make right decision, even when it meant going against their own inclinations. Freedom of choice did not alter the fact that He was their Guide.

The fact that Jesus continued to enjoy prestigious social status even after scourging the Clergy and their associates in the temple for making it a house of merchandise shows Jesus distinctly as an effective disciplinarian and teacher. They recognized and accepted His authority as a teacher. His influence on their thinking brought them to the place of acknowledging His authority. They allowed their erroneous thinking to be corrected.

The foresaid, situation is a perfect example of effective class discipline. It moulded and enlarged their thinking by the Master Teacher; so much so they even refrained from questioning his action. It was authoritative

and it is relevant to modern teaching, in that it reminds us that the time comes when authority should be won but not forced.

C) SOCIAL:

Jesus as model teacher taught a new social order and trends. It was common for slaves to live at the total mercy of the owner. Slaves ate the crumbs left over rather spilled down. In the parable of "rich man and Lazarus" Jesus drew lessons from social order of the day. Here he educates to both change social stigma and draws spiritual lessons.

This educator changed the social thinking and social barriers of the day. In his meeting with Zacheus Jesus exposed the wrong thinking of society, which was looking down upon this tax collector.

By proposing publicly to sup with him at his home; Jesus corrected wrong social thinking, the method is most sublime, simple, easily comprehensible and practical.

II JESUS: THE MASTER OF NATURE

The Master Teacher was suning laws in the forces of nature to drive the hearers to the truth. The student - disciples were common folks acquainted with the laws of nature. The hearers surely knew what Jesus was talking about. The fig tree withered at the word. This miracle demonstrated other teachings also, for the fig tree is a symbol of the national life of Isreal.

In the miracle of fig tree withering, Christ first makes the nation of farming peasants, to understand that the judgement to this nation was imminent. Cursing was in setting with other pronounced judgements which Jesus made against the nation. The Master educator here inculcates in their minds the eternal truth through confrontations with nature.

When the disciples were rendering fearful cries in the swelling sea, Christ awakened from sleep and stood on the deck and calmed the sea. This was to make his hearers know and acknowledge the supreme authority of God over nature. The nature worshippers now knew the Master Teacher's intentions to educate their mind that nature cannot take the place of the supreme God.

This is the best example for Christian educators to ponder and practice. In teaching the same lesson of His deity, and divine ability to provide, was demonstrated in the first miraculous catch of fish and again after the resurrection when the disciples had been doubting and had gone back to their fishing.

In both cases the fish was important visual aid from nature in lessons that demonstrated the deity of Jesus Christ who could even control the movements of fish and provide a challenge of faith. As he walked on the water the sea had its place in a demonstration of His control over the forces of nature.

III JESUS: THE MASTER OF DAILY EVENTS

The Master Teacher was using day-to-day common events to educate his hearers. Examples were:

"Look at the ants,"

"Look at the lilies of the fields"

"Look at the sparrows,"

"Don't stop the children coming unto Me"

In all these sayings Jesus taught eternal lesson through fleeting momentous events of day to day.

A Man came and asked about the family inheritance (Luke 12:13) Jesus immediately saw the problem, and used the occasion to give teaching on the danger of covetousness.

It became a practical issue in the minds of His hearers. The man who asked about his inheritance was the living visual aid. The Master Teacher in this event was not too slow to utilize the every day happening as a visual aid to help teach a spiritual truth.

Leading educational thinkers of today are emphasizing education as being vital and that it must grow out of a situation, must satisfy a felt need and must solve a real problem. All this means that education must be in immediate contact with actual living, and so not formal, not academic, not for its own sake. Jesus is the originator of this idea. Christ taught lessons of life through parables. So much so the disciples questioned, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"

Jesus even made use of this opportune moment and taught them the lesson concerning the mysteries of the kingdom.

IV JESUS: THE MASTER OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The Master Teacher Jesus applied individualistic approach to transport his thinking. At Simon's feast every pair of eyes was looking indifferently at Mary, wiping Jesus feet with her attractive hair.

It came out loudly from one's mouth. A reply the teacher-Christ said, "The poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always"⁸ Here he was surely teaching a sublime truth to Simon and associates, but the individualistic approach to many and Simon can't be over looked.

He often dealt with his pupil individually,
E.g. : Fed the 5000 and taught.

To Nicodemus who came to him
he taught birth from above.

To the Samaritan woman at Jacob well
he taught lessons of transforming life.

To the leper who came to him
he taught lesson of cleansing physical life.

To the man he saw lying in the pool of Bethesda
he taught physical healing.

To His mother and brotheren who came to him,
he taught the lesson of the supremacy of
spiritual leadership.

To complain ing Martha at Bethany
he taught "The one thing which is needful"
sitting at the feet of Jesus to seek eternal life first.

Even the poorest and common people followed him and grasped His teachings. The foresaid Biblical examples of Christ's methodology of individualistic approach should help the christian teacher - attract and instruct the intellectually and academicaly poor students by person to person contact.

"He passed to human being as worthless, but sought to apply the saving remedy to every soul"⁹

To the malady of learning process and teaching methodology Jesus, individual approach and finding the solution right in the problem is the supernal remedy.

⁸ Holy Bible, KJV, (Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee, 1976) John 12:7

⁹ E G White, Desire of Ages, (PPPA, Nashville, California 1898) Page 91.

He never measured two different individuals by one fixed scale. He dealt even with his twelve disciples individually. "Jesus cared more for individuals than for crowds, though he would often minister to crowds, perhaps with a view to reaching individuals."

"His disciples he trained as witnesses of his, mainly by the processes of personal association, individualizing them, and meeting the needs of each, especially Peter."

Jesus began with individuals, continued with crowds, and ended with individuals, during the three successive main periods of his ministry. In fact he did not trust crowds, nor himself of them, as he trusted individuals which means that He was more conscious about individuals who came to him.

V JESUS: THE MASTER OF MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Imparting knowledge and inculcating in one's mind is not a simple system. Basically the system can be integrated into the following constituents such as teacher, pupil lesson, aim of teacher, method of teaching and environment.

In all the encounters Jesus had with varied human characters, he won undivided attention by motivating interest. Then he concretely concisely and precisely established some point of contact with his hearers on the physical or spiritual plane.

"As a teacher he was not only a tactician with methods, but a stratagist with objectives. His greatest objective was to share with men that sense of union with the father which he enjoyed." ¹⁰

¹⁰ Herman Harrell Horne, (Teaching techniques of Jesus, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI 49501, 1973) Page 204.

Jesus based his teaching on the vital problems in the lives of his pupils. He was conversant with the problems of his students. He asked and answered questions to stimulate self-expression, desiring conviction rather than persuasion on the part of his followers. He conducted discourse at many different times before diverse groups on varied themes, but always in a more or less informal way. He told stories with a point. The parables, which his audience did not always understand, but stimulated their thinking and leading the spiritually minded to inquire to their meaning.

He used every occasion to clarify thought and to guide life. He explained truth, brought in concrete examples to bring the abstract near. He used symbols to make difficult meanings plain. He used imagery to appeal to the imagination and the powers of conviction.

Jesus probed the depths of human nature, and secured most of the native reactions of man. He embodies those qualities of the teacher commonly set up as IDEAL.

Though there are no coded history of education to support Jesus, as the architect of modern educational system. By common consent he is regarded as the greatest teacher of the human race. As we have seen in this paper, the situation and problems of teaching are similar today to that of Jesus times. The solution the architect of teaching found may help us. Jesus is our MASTER TEACHER.

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