

A REVIEW

Way back in 1969, Mr.M.V.Aseervatham, a well-known teacher who was also a Printer and Publisher in Jaffna town authored a book in Tamil 'Revelation of Jesus'. His ambition at that time was to publish it in the English Language too. Mr. Aseervatham had left a dutiful son Aloysius (Jeya), who has now been able to fulfill his ambition. The latter has published book by the title of 'Reflections on the works of Jesus Christ', which is essentially a translation of his father's book with some meaningful additions and explanations.

In his 'Epilogue' at the end of his book, the author says that if the life changing messages in his book have an impact on the lives of people, he would have truly succeeded in facilitating his father's vision when the latter wrote the original book.

Well, this book will certainly have an impact on all those who choose to read it and reflect on its contents as it has had on mine. I first read the book just as I would read the daily newspaper or a magazine article but on finishing it, I felt that this book needs a deeper, in fact, an intellectual study and proceeded to read and read again.

The book is remarkable for its presentation. The main book has been classified under four major titles, 'The Childhood of Jesus, The Works of Jesus, The Trials of Jesus and the Triumph of Jesus. There are 35 chapters and at the end of each chapter, there are three sub paragraphs, 'Focus Questions', 'Editor's Note' and 'Reflections'. The first one 'Focus Questions' obviously helps focus the reader's mind on the essential ingredients of the contents of the chapter, while the 'Editor's Note' seeks to emphasize and explain them, while the 'Reflections, do help reflect on the messages conveyed. These apply particularly to the Parables.

The book also has a Table of the Miracles performed by Jesus as well as a Table of Parables preached by Him. In addition there are welcome additions: - an explanatory chapter on 'The People of Judea', an Appendix of Notes on some names and places in the book and The Family Tree which shows the genealogy of Jesus.

Jesus' public life commenced with the miracle at Cana, soon after John the Baptist baptized him in the desert. He went on to perform several more miracles as told in the Four Gospels but not all had apparently been documented. The author has detailed and described 35 of Jesus' miracles and ends up with the following comments:-

*'The miracles of Jesus were not random acts, but they carried a specific message to the nation of Israel, the Jews, and to all people. Jesus used his power to perform miraculous acts for humanity, showing that God is a compassionate being, and that His Will could overcome earthly constraints. The miracles provide a window into faith-if the impossible can happen, does this not mean the world as we see it is only a fraction of what can be seen if we truly open our eyes.'*

*Moving on to parables, the author has listed 33 of them and given explanatory notes and cogent comments on each of them. Jesus taught by way of parables which are essentially brief stories illustrating some lesson or moral in each case. When the disciples asked Jesus why he used parables when he talked to the people, Jesus' response was "the reason I use parables in talking to them is that they look but do not see, and they listen, but do not hear or understand."*

*As the author clearly explains, parables usually have a straightforward meaning and a hidden message. While there are straightforward ones like the parable of The Good Samaritan and the parable of The Prodigal son, there are others like the parable of The Shrewd Steward and the parable of The Three Servants, the underlying teachings of which are difficult to comprehend.*

*The author proceeds to explain as follows:-*

*The parables of Jesus will enlighten us only if we approach them with an open mind and heart, ready to let them challenge us. If we approach them with the conviction that we already know the answer, then we too may look but not see, listen but not hear or understand. When reading the parables it is important to not get bogged down to the details of the story. The main learning is in the concept.*

*Besides the miracles and parables, the book exhaustively covers Jesus' teachings and sayings during His public life. A whole chapter is devoted to the Beatitudes.*

*I would love to quote more of the author's notes and comments but brevity demands that I cut short. I would commend this book to one and all, growing children, students and adults, intellectuals as well laymen, Christians and Non-Christians who would like to know about Jesus Christ's teachings.*

*Translation is a very dexterous task. It involves not merely translating the language of the original text but also communicating its heart and soul. In this respect, it is clear that Mr. Aseervatham has done full justice to the original book.*

*Mr. Aseervatham's effort is indeed praiseworthy, all the more, for making the book available free of cost.*

*Lastly, a reprint of the original in the Tamil Language would be welcome to cater to those who prefer to read it in that language.*

*Benedict Thomas*