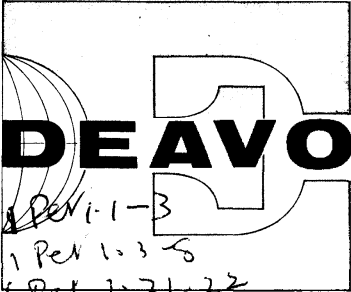


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ENDEAVOUR

magazine

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SUCCESS IN LIFE

How do we define success? A definition of success in life by an unknown author reads:

"He has achieved success who has lived long, laughed often, and loved much, who has gained the respect of intelligent men, and the affection of little children, who has filled his niche and accomplished his task, who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul, who has never lacked appreciation of the beauty of the earth nor failed to express it; who always looked for the best in others and gave the best that he had; whose life was an inspiration, whose memory a benediction."

How much of this passage appeals to your mind and experience as a definition that rings true? One feels sure there is something in all of us that responds to it, and if we measure this against the teaching of Jesus about life, it seems that he was saying very much the same thing.

In other words the sentiment means that at heart we all believe that this extraordinary business we call 'life' is all for one thing - the making of character. A man may have made a great deal of money and built a huge business, but in the process he has been selfish to his employees, has neglected the needs of others and has left few happy memories in those who knew him best.

(cont'd on back page)

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CHURCH IN THE LETTERS OF PAUL

by Jeremy Craddock

A Hebrew of the Hebrews

Paul's indebtedness to the Old Testament needs no emphasis. "A Hebrew of the Hebrews" he called himself; and meant not merely that he was a Jew but that he was - and such men were becoming rare - a Hebrew speaking Jew. Despite his intent to set forth a better way than that of Judaism, his letters and his speeches make it clear that his roots were in Judaism. Had he not told us explicitly that he was a Pharisee, we should have inferred it nonetheless.

Paul was no renegade Jew. He determined to take the gospel to the Gentiles, but could - like Moses - have wished himself an excommunicate were it possible for his compatriots to be saved in his place. His conversion did not change his loyalty to the scriptures of his fathers. His handling of the scriptures was not devoid of the manner of the rabbis, and it appears that he was acquainted with Jewish literature outside what has become our canon, for he quotes from the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, a work which is extant.

A Debtor to the Greeks

The mercy which God had shown him moved Paul to take that mercy to gentiles; he was a debtor to the Greeks. He was indebted to them in another sense too. His early years were spent in no mean city. Tarsus was a trading centre, a city "so cosmopolitan that none could walk the streets without coming into contact with the ends of the earth". Tarsus was a university town whose school of philosophy was famous. When Paul found himself addressing Stoics in Athens, he did not argue in ignorance of their beliefs. He was even equipped to quote Stoic poetry to them; and his knowledge of the pagan literature was extensive enough for him to refer, when he wished, to Cleanthes, Aratus, Menander and Epimenides.

It may seem odd that Paul was acquainted with the pagan literature at all. The reason was that his tutor Gamaliel was a particularly liberal Pharisee. (It would be unjust to the pharisaic movement as a whole to suggest that all its members were bigots. They could certainly be more humane than the

Saducees, who interpreted "an eye for an eye" literally, while the Pharisees deemed it better to impose a monetary penalty). Gamaliel was the grandson of the Rabbi, Hillel, whose gentleness became proverbial. Gamaliel's single appearance in Acts shows him to have been a man of the same character, and his son is reported to have said that half the young men who studied in the House of Interpretation in his father's day had learned about the Greek thinkers.

Paul was able to see in the activities of the pagan world images of higher things. As men boxed and wrestled in the Games, so the Christian ran towards the Kingdom and fought his own baser instincts. As men were adopted into Roman families, so the pagan words - such as "mystery" - were pressed into service and invested with new meaning. The Graeco-Roman world was a world into which Paul had been born free.

A Great Light Round About Me

The new light in which Paul saw the Old Testament, and the light which he shed upon the pagan world, was the light which shone upon him on the Damascus Road. That experience provides the key to much of Paul's thinking. His apostolic authority depended upon it; and the grace of God was shown by it. It proved him a sinner vis-a-vis the righteousness which had been his in the Law. It was the foundation of the peculiarly Pauline doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ: "Why do you persecute the Church. It set before him the Cross, not now as the place of God's curse, but as the revelation of God's love. "God made him a cursed one for us". Where did this shocking expression come from if not from his pre-conversion days when "Jesus is accursed" (cf I Cor 12) was his watchword? After the risen Christ had appeared to him, he still went on saying it: only now he added the two pregnant words, "for us".

Faithful Is The Saying

"The Gospel you heard me preach is no human invention. I did not take it over from any man; no man taught it me; I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ". Paul's gospel was indeed his own; nevertheless, though a leader of the Church, he was a man in it. The gospel he preached was the gospel others preached too: "What matter, I or they? This is what we all proclaim, and this is what you believed". If, then, he used language common to the Church we shall not be surprised.

We have seen that he used the language of his people's literature, borrowed images from the pagans and drew upon the experience of his conversion. We shall see that there are expressions in the letters of Paul - and of others - which are used in such a way as to suggest that they were sayings in regular use among Christians at large. The religious language of any community suffers the danger of becoming jargon; that of the early Church became Scripture.

The God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Authorised Version rather obscures the fact that this form of words occurs on several occasions, three times in Paul and once in Peter:

"And may God grant that you may agree with one another after the manner of Christ Jesus, so that with one mind and one voice you may praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".

Rom 15:5-6 NEB.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the all-merciful Father, the God whose consolation never fails us".

2 Cor 1-3 NEB.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms".

Eph 1-3 NEB.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his mercy gave us new birth into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".

1 Peter 1-3 NEB.

It may be of course that this was a form of words of which Paul was particularly fond and that it was his own invention; and that Peter borrowed it or used it independently. But it does seem more likely that it was a description of God which was in common use and which would therefore be recognised - particularly in view of the fact that each time it occurs it is connected with praise. Perhaps it was a line from a hymn. Somewhat similar phraseology occurs in Eph 1-17 and 2 Cor 11-31 where the AV is in error, and in the Apocalypse:

"To him who loves us and freed us from our sins with his life's blood, who made of us a royal house, to serve as the priests of his God and Father - to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! "

Rev 1:5-6 NEB.

Many short passages in Paul appear to be references to sayings of Jesus. This one might be a reference to the words spoken to Mary on the morning of His resurrection: 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God'.

Jesus Christ is Lord

There are four occurrences of this in Paul:

"If on your lips is the confession, 'Jesus Christ is Lord', and in your heart the faith that God raised him from the dead, then you will find salvation".

Rom 10⁹ NEB.

"No man can say, 'Jesus is Lord! ' except under the influence of the Holy Spirit".

1 Cor 12³ NEB.

"We proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as servants, for Jesus' sake".

2 Cor 4⁵ NEB.

"Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow - in heaven, on earth, and in the depths - and every tongue confess, 'Jesus Christ is Lord', to the glory of God the Father".

Phil 2:9-11 NEB.

We saw previously that our quotations contained words which Paul was apparently quoting, and in those instances the words were associated with praise. Here again we have words which look as though they have a common source; on two occasions they are expressly associated with confession, and confession is implied in another. The Romans passage has a distinctly credal ring and one can readily imagine something like it being the formal profession of faith required of a disciple at his baptism.

In 1 Peter 3 there occurs a quotation from Isaiah, in which Peter changes the phrase, "the Lord of Hosts" to "the Lord Christ". It may also be significant that he adds the words "in your hearts" (cf Rom 10) although this must not be pressed since, in the Romans passage, "lips" and "heart" both derive from Deut 30¹²⁻¹⁴ which Paul had just quoted. Here are the Isaiah and Peter passages in parallel, in the Revised Version:

"Neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof. The Lord of Hosts, him shall ye sanctify".

Is 8-13 RV.

"And fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord".

1 Peter 3-14 RV.

It looks here as if Peter deliberately modified the Isaiah passage in the light of familiar phraseology; and we may have found - being the text, as it were - words which were often on the lips of Christians in the first century, although the writers have not told us so directly. And if the Romans passage has the ring of the baptismal confession, the Philippians passage has all the hallmarks of a hymn. In the next - and last - example there is another instance of an Old Testament text being changed: again

apparently in the light of a regularly used phrase.

Faith, Hope and Love

These words are most familiar to us in 1 Cor 13, but they do occur elsewhere. Indeed, the group occurs eleven times in the New Testament, although the words are not always in the same order; and occurs also in two non-canonical writers, Polycarp and Barnabas. Polycarp was bishop in Smyrna in the first part of the second century and a letter from him to Philippi is extant; so too is a letter to him from Ignatious. He was martyred in AD 155. Nothing is known of the author of the letter of Barnabas which seems to have been written about AD 100.

The triad occurs with the words in an order different from that in 1 Cor 13 in the following places: Eph 4:2-5; Col 1:4-5; 1 Thess 1-3 and 5-8; Heb 6:10-12; 1 Peter 1:3-8, and Barnabas 1-4 and 11-8. The occurrences of the words in the order "faith, hope, love" are given below.

"Now that we have been justified through faith ... Let us exult in the hope of the divine splendour that is to be ours ... Such a hope is no mockery, because God's love has flooded our inmost heart ... "

Rom 5:1-5 NEB.

"In a word, there are three things that last for ever: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of them all is love".

1 Cor 13-13 NEB.

"Our hope of attaining that righteousness which we eagerly await is the work of the Spirit through faith ... the only thing that counts is faith active in love".

Heb 10:22-24 NEB.

"Your faith and hope are fixed on God ... Love one another whole-heartedly, with all your strength".

1 Peter 1:21-22 NEB.

"Faith is the mother of us all, with Hope following in her train, and Love of God and Christ and neighbour leading the way".

Polycarp ad Phil 3:2-3

The fact that this group of words occurs several times in Paul proves no more than that Paul liked it. That it was also used by Peter and the Writer to the Hebrews, and by two non-canonical writers, suggests that it was in common use even though Paul himself might have originated it. Paul's own use in two places in the New Testament leads one to suppose that he did not.

1 Cor 13 is about love. It is true that the verbs corresponding to faith and hope occur in verse 7, but they occur among numerous other subsidiary virtues of love and they do not really prepare us for the triad in verse 13. Paul brings it in as if it were familiar: "Now abideth these three ... "

In 1 Thess 5 Paul quotes from Isaiah 59 marrying it with the triad "faith, love and hope". Here are the passages in parallel with Paul's underlined:

"He put on righteousness as a breastplate ... "

"Putting on the breastplate of faith and love ..."

" ... and an helmet of salvation upon his head".

" ... and for an helmet, the hope of salvation".

Paul has had to sacrifice literary balance in order to fit the triad to the Isaiah quotation; for he has had to attach "faith" and "love" to a single partner. This again suggests that "these three" existed as a familiar group - else why not leave one out and have two balanced pairs? The case is strengthened by the fact that Paul could have achieved mere literary balance had he been willing to quote instead from the apocryphal, Wisdom of Solomon.

Wisdom 5 18-19 reads: "He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgement instead of an helmet. He shall take holiness for an invincible shield". Here are three pieces of armour to each of which might be attached one word of the triad. However, none of the possible combinations is as appropriate as that which Paul chose. Love seems more naturally

part of a breastplate than of either a helmet or a shield; and if our hope was of true judgment - instead of salvation - none of us should stand.

Those In Christ Before Me

So, in preaching his gospel, Paul used language familiar to the Church of which he was a part. But if we are indebted to the Church of the first century for some of the language of Paul's letters, we are indebted to it for more; we are indebted to it for Paul himself. He had kinsmen who had been in Christ before him, although we cannot be certain what he meant by "kinsmen". Paul's sister and nephew were apparently Christian, and may have become so before he did. At the very least, there were those close to him whose devotion to Christ might have caused him pangs of conscience when he set about persecuting others of the same persuasion. Perhaps it was they who constituted the goads against which - on the Grace of God and for the proclamation of it - it became hard for him to kick.

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THE WORDS OF JESUS

"Who sinned?"

The "words" which we wish to consider here are those given by Jesus in answer to the above question and are recorded in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John.

There are many among the leading Jewish rabbis who taught that all human suffering was the result of human sin, and was sent by God as a direct and personal retribution for specific sins. This view is cogently and clearly presented by the three "friends" of Job, when they charged him directly with gross personal sin on the basis of the fatal disease which afflicted him. In the words of Eliphaz:

"Do not think that he reproves you because you are pious,
That on this count he brings you to trial.
No: it is because you are a very wicked man,
And your depravity passes all bounds.

If you come back to the Almighty in true sincerity,
If you banish wrong doing from your home,

He will deliver the innocent,
And you will be delivered, because your hands are clean".

(Job. ch.22).

In the case of Job, this was a point which could be argued, because his life, previously happy and prosperous, was suddenly turned into a grim journey of suffering towards a certain grave. It could be argued by the theorist that some secret sin of Job was the direct cause of a visitation from God. But there were cases where such a charge could not be made. A man who had been born blind was such an one. There were rabbis, such as those cited by Lightfoot in "Hove Hebraice" vol.3, who were as stubbornly committed to this theory as was Eliphaz, and they quoted Scripture to defend a thesis that a man could be so afflicted, as a divinely sent retribution for the sins of his parents.

On the other hand there was an explicit statement in the prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 18 that the Israelitish proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" was an abomination to God. "A son shall not share a father's guilt, nor a father his son's. The righteous man shall reap the fruit of his own righteousness, and the wicked man the fruit of his own wickedness". This passage, alongside of the fiercely held idea that all personal suffering was a personal retribution direct from God on account of a specific personal sin, provided the grounds for a prolonged discussion in Jewish theological schools to which no solution could be found.

The disciples were seeking the solution to this enigma when they took advantage of the presence of such an example to ask "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents? Why was he born blind?" They thought that they were asking but one question. Assuming that the affliction was the result of a specific sin, they intended to ask whether it resulted from sin in the parents or in the child. In reality, because their assumption was wrong, they had asked two questions, and they received two answers:-

- (a) Neither in parents or child had a specific sin been the cause of this particular blindness.
- (b) The end which this affliction was destined to serve was the display of God's power.

Before considering the answer of Jesus, and noting its positive teaching, let us note some errors, similar to that of the disciples, to which our own preconceived assumptions give rise, and which can present us with unanswerable problems in our own day. Jesus did not say that human suffering, either this, or any other, was not a result of general human sin. The same problem seems to have been behind the discussion recorded by Luke in the first nine verses of the thirteenth chapter of his Gospel. There Jesus answers the enquiry with a parable, that of the barren fig tree. The clear teaching here is in exact accord both with the passage in Ezekiel and with that in John.

The zealous and acceptable worship of certain Galileans had led to their murder by Pilate. Men had been killed for obeying God's command to worship, while others had not been afflicted in the same way. What great sin was the cause? The answer is clear. Neither in this case, nor in that of some who had been killed by

the collapse of a tower in Siloam, were they greater sinners than thousands on whom no such sudden retribution had been visited.

Sin was general in all mankind, as Paul was later to remind those at Rome, "all have sinned", and unless repentance intervened, such as that exhorted by Ezekiel, then the end of sin would be destruction for all. "Unless you repent, you will all of you come to the same end". We are similar to a fruit tree in a cultivated garden. The owner will wait patiently for a while, to see whether fruit will eventually come. In the end however, if it continues to bear no fruit, it will be rooted out that the ground may be used to better advantage. This seems to be the intended sense behind the very difficult passage in Psalm 76:10 (see Briggs "In International Critical Commentary") the "wrath" of man will eventually contribute to the praise of God, either through repentance or subjugation, which path is followed depends upon our own response to the call of God in Christ.

When the disciples asked "Why was he born blind?" they were seeking an answer to the difficult problem of evil. Had Jesus attempted to give them a full answer, they would no more have been able to comprehend it then than we are able to now. It is still necessary to "walk by faith". What he did do was to reply in their idiom that this particular manifestation of evil was to contribute to God's praise by forming a display of God's power in curing him.

It is instructive to face the reality of the narrative which follows, and dismiss our normal presupposition that this manifestation of God's power was effective to those who witnessed the miracle. This was not so, they were blind as were others whom Peter later described as "willingly ignorant". They were so certain that their own theories were correct that they refused to consider and learn, so that Jesus said "because you say 'We see' your guilt remains".

The manifestation was effective in the life of the sufferer, who was prepared to be expelled from the synagogue as one whom they judged to be "born and bred in sin", because he would not close his eyes to the witness of God when it pointed to an error in the accepted teaching of his Church. In this incident we see the offer and warning of Ezekiel exemplified. In the man who was healed, we see an acceptance of God which could wipe out all which had gone before. In those who said of Jesus "as for this fellow, we do not know where he comes from" the terrible events of AD.70 were to be the inevitable results in obduracy.

THE JESUS REVOLUTION.

by J.Hemingray.

"The Jesus movement as such began in America, but is already a world-wide phenomenon. There are various groupings of young people - Christians - in their teens and twenties (of whom the Jesus people and the Children of God are but two) who have dedicated themselves to a wholehearted, world-renouncing Christianity, and live in communes marked by deep mutual fellowship and love, together with a burning evangelistic zeal. Many though by no means all of them, have been on drugs, and have tried everything from the Maharishi to free love, from crime to twenty-four hour television viewing, in a restless search for reality. And now they are convinced they have found it in Christ".

"But not the Christ of the churches. The churches have tamed him and domesticated him. The churches seem afraid to talk about him: they do not live as he lived and taught. Therefore the Jesus people have taken the tremendous step of taking him at his word".

They do share all their goods. They do regard one coat as enough. They do love one another. They do go out onto the streets and witness for Jesus. In each others company they have found an accepting Christian community, a Lord who can break every fetter that bound them and a joy that is greater than anything they have ever experienced before. They have found treasure, and are determined to share it. The movement is spreading widely, in the States particularly. It may well be that the revival for which Christians have been praying has come, and has come outside the churches.

The above extract was taken from the Preface of "The Jesus Kids" by Roger C. Palms, and it gives a little insight into the contents of this (to me) exciting book.

I find the whole picture presented by the book to be fascinatingly attractive, particularly as I have come into contact with quite a number of similar "turned-on" (born again) Christians.

For the Jesus kids, witnessing is not a tyrannical "should" that it is for many Christian adults who feel guilty until they get up enough courage to talk to someone about trusting Christ (could this be you or me perhaps?). They feel no pressure to win people just because it is the thing to do. They witness because they love people enough to want them to have the same peace and deliverance that they have. They go out with a sense of "God is with me". As a result, they return to their family in the commune rejoicing not that "I have won someone to Christ", but that "Wow, God has just brought a new one into his forever family".

The weakness though in the Jesus communes is not, as some adults imagine, in the concept of guys and dolls, blacks and whites, living together - morality is generally well practiced and well proven - but that they are not true to life: the commune is a family of choice.

The kids live together because they want to and they obey their elders because they want to. Jesus is the head of the house because they all want him to be. If there are tensions or conflicts, they can leave anytime they want to.

However the communes are an experience in real Christian fellowship. The kids, coming from all types of backgrounds are finding a family many for the first time.

Some church people are surprised by the Jesus kids' literal interpretation of Scripture. They believe that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God. The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are to be followed without compromise. Satan is very real, and hell certain for any who do not accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour. They preach strongly against the sin of the world - drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, pride and laziness. The great commission given by Jesus to go into all the world to preach the gospel, means for the Jesus kids, the world where they are - the streets.

However, not all of the Jesus kids live in communes. Some never join but follow the revivals which have raged across the nation in dozens of places and in dozens of forms ranging from charismatic conferences to Jesus festivals featuring Christian rock

music, where feelings and emotions run high, as witness one scene:-

He sat on the edge of the stage barefoot, jeans and mod shirt, long hair. His face looked heavenward and tears rolled off his cheeks. He laughed. He cried. He was crammed with emotion he couldn't explain or control. It whirlwinded him - erupted from him. The girl beside him understood. Her arm lightly over his shoulders, she comforted him. "I'm so happy for you," she cried, "I've been praying for you for two months". He turned to her overwhelmed, awed, blitzed by intense feelings and joy. He shook his head, laughing the words tumbled out: "It's so wild ... so wild ... praise the Lord! "

You can feel it - the strength, intensity, power of it all. Reach out and grab it and squeeze it and watch it slide between your fingers to reform before you. It is a religious phenomenon, striking suddenly with a mysterious, charismatic simplicity. And it scares you because you can't understand it or explain it away.

They're washed clean and pure. Jesus has washed away their sins. And they glow, face aglow in the joy and rapture of the moment they've wonderfully embraced. Dripping wet, clothes clinging to their bodies, salt water beading on their flushed faces, they emerge from the sea at Long Beach - to be swallowed up again by the loving arms of friends. It is an engulfing moment capturing much of the heavy air of the phenomenon itself - bright, dizzying, invigorating. It is unorganised, free-wheeling, unstructured dynamite.

" "Who started it?" you ask innocently. And they answer seriously: "The Holy Spirit". "Well who leads it now?" "Jesus Christ".

Whilst this type of ocean baptism is a more spectacular outbreaking of the movement, other aspects of it occur more often, although with less overt success.

Coffee houses and youth centres are used in various places for the teaching of Bible, Greek and communication. Programmes include rock groups, testimonies, preaching and altar calls.

The two major ministries largely resulting from the revolution are in Los Angeles. The First Baptist Church of Beverley Hills located two blocks from Sunset Strip, supports a summer ministry of weekly rock concerts. The emphasis is to young people on the Strip of whom some are high school runaways, some are college transients, and some are hard-core drug pushers. Rock groups play Christian music and share testimonies, and Pastor Barry Wood, who himself grew up on the streets, preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The other major ministry is on Sunset Strip and is known as "His Place". It is run by Arthur Blessitt and his staff. They have preaching services every night at midnight and usually a good crowd shows up. As well as this they also visit other cities to preach Jesus, on the streets.

That is, of course, the American scene, although I could fill many pages with further reports of real Christian revolution. But you may well be asking by this time "What of this country?".

Well, for anyone who has watched the ebb and flow of youth culture in this country over the past two or three years it will come as no surprise for me to point out that, whilst at one stage there was a great deal of publicity given to open air pop festivals, the accent is now off such happenings which, though far from extinguished, have given a good deal of ground to the lively activities of the Festival of Light.

The Festival of Light emerged about 1970 from the combined resources of eminent Christian people including Malcolm Muggeridge, Cliff Richard, Mary Whitehouse, Lord Longford and Trevor Huddleston.

After a long and hard fight the festival was held in Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park in Central London on September 25th 1971, with the support of around 100,000 people up and down the country, who lit beacons in and around the major towns and cities to represent a countrywide Festival of Light. The purpose being to exhibit Jesus as the Light of the World.

The aims and enthusiasm engendered by the festival have since been carried forward and maintained by a series of festivals and Jesus rallies in various places, with young people particularly, along with many other Christians, showing their true colours.

Personally, I find the whole scene intensely stimulating and exciting and I feel that all Christian communities have a great deal to learn from the outright zeal and open minded enthusiasm exhibited by those who are "getting back to Jesus".

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1973 SUMMER SCHOOL

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The Summer School will follow the usual pattern which has been enjoyed in previous years. This year the Old Testament subject will be Genesis chapters 1-11, and from the New Testament some of the short letters.

The cost this year will be £15 (scholars half price). Further details and deposit (£1) - Ian McHaffie, Moray Lodge, 176, Granton Road, Edinburgh 5.

BEWARE THE PHARISEES

by J. Crawley.

It is tempting to compare ourselves favourably with the Pharisees, gratifying, perhaps, to presume that we are not like that, that Christians can never be so foolish as to fall into such a pattern of self-satisfaction. It seems obvious, from Our Lord's denunciation, that they had strayed far from the spirit of the very law they invoked, that they were blind to their own faults, unable and unwilling to lead those who also were blind but through ignorance or accident of birth. They had, as Josephus writes, built a hedge around themselves and all outside that hedge were inferior. This is racism, apartheid in its most virulent form, the form that equates superior knowledge with higher morality. This is the kind of intolerance that is rife in our world and should be as repugnant to Christians as the colour bar.

The origin of the Pharisees appears to be after the return from Babylonian exile and the motives for the formation of the sect were altogether laudable. Certain devout Jews, looking back with dismay at their dismal record of rebellion and idolatry resolved that this kind of defection from The Law should not recur and they resolved to restore worship of the true God of Israel and return to The Law. They realised that their misfortunes had come upon them because they had turned their backs on the God of their fathers and they resolved to restore Him in their affections. Unfortunately, as so often happens, their good intentions deteriorated and they became over-zealous and new customs, new restrictions were added to The Law which became the symbol of their self-imposed religious authority.

We may find the moral essence of the Pharisee ideology lying very close to us. We too have a strong sense of respectability, tending to conform to the moral code of the majority. We may take pride in being respectable, having a code of conduct that we rigidly observe and presume to regard as exemplary to those "without". Our conscience requires us to maintain certain standards of outward respectability but we may become limited to it, resenting the claim of a progressive morality. We can prefer to live to a set of rules rather than to a principle: it is easier to refer everything to a list of "The Commandments of Christ" than to subject our lives to a constant and fundamental revision in the light of the Sermon on the Mount. But this rigid and narrow-minded adherence to a limited and well-established area of respectability is to act exactly as did the Pharisees.

By their tradition they made the word of God ineffective. They regarded respectability as of more value than the "love of God". "How can ye believe which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not". An ecclesiastical tradition had replaced the will of God. It was rigid and stern in respect of the tradition of the elders, and its followers refused to revise their code in the new light revealed in the gospel of Christ. The Law which they revered so much became their stumbling block. They had no idea that God could require of them anything more or deeper. They had lost personal touch with Him. "Seeking to establish their own righteousness" they failed to submit themselves to the newly revealed "righteousness of God" in Jesus Christ.

This refusal to move from a tradition, this inability to see that The Law was only a schoolmaster leading to a fuller revelation became their undoing. It made void the word of God because of tradition. Judgement, mercy and faith the basis of all The Law, had been lost in tithes, the straining out of gnats, the sewing of phylacteries. The sin of self-satisfaction, (We have Abraham to our father". I thank Thee Lord that I am not as other men are".) was characteristic of the Pharisees and the humble, penitent cry of the convicted sinner which Our Lord welcomes was far from them. In addition they despised all the ignorant uneducated mass of mankind and condemned them utterly for not knowing the Law. A salutary lesson for all who equate salvation with doctrine alone.

How often have we been blind in our self-satisfied assurance that only we have "The Truth"? How often has that conviction put an end to spiritual growth and our conviction of sin? Many Christians today, like the Pharisees of Christ's day, have had their beliefs handed on to them, they have not had to struggle to sift the wheat from the chaff, they rely almost solely on the merits of the fathers and view with suspicion any new venture or sacrifice. Those who laid the basis of our 'present position were pioneers who constantly sought fresh methods of shewing Christ to the world. Some of those methods are now almost useless, but we cling to them rather than disturb our tradition in examination of their current lack of success. Thus to ignore the uncomfortable requirements of today by an appeal to the achievements of the past is to expose ourselves to condemnation.

The Pharisees were so inward looking that they were quite unaware of the needs of those around them. They regarded themselves as the elect, the seed of Abraham, and all outside of that election

were hopelessly outlawed. They completely missed the responsibility that attends election, namely that in Abraham's seed were all families of the earth to be blessed. The richest ministry ever offered to a nation was offered to the Jews, but they turned privilege into an occasion for pride and prejudice. Christians, an election of grace, must not fall into the same error.

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

by John H. Weaving.

In our last article (1) reviewing the fresh approach of Jeremias (2) to the parables we made an excursion and looked at the parables of the second coming and noted Jeremias' conclusion that these parables were originally "Crisis Parables" to warn the disciples that a great crisis would shortly come in their lives when a vital decision had to be made - for Christ or against him. In preparation for this time Jesus spoke many more parables and to continue the grouping made by Jeremias we follow His first two groups namely "Now is the day of Salvation" and "God's mercy for Sinners," with his third grouping:

The Great Assurance

To this group belong the parables, the Mustard Seed, Matthew 13:31. Luke 13:18.

'How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we describe it? It is like the mustard-seed, which is smaller than any seed in the ground at its sowing. But once grown, it springs up and grows taller than any other plant, and forms branches so large that the birds can settle in its shade.'

Mark 4:30-32 N.E.B.

and the Leaven, Luke 13:20.

'The kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and mixed with a hundredweight of flour till it was all leavened.'

Matthew 13:33 N.E.B.

These parables are so short and simple in themselves that it is only too easy to read into them what we like, making the interpretation fit our theology rather than Christ's. What is the focus or striking thing about these two similar parables? Two possibilities may well be considered, one that of growth and secondly the contrast. The smallest seed - a large tree. A little leaven - a large lump of dough.

Details may help us to resolve the alternatives. Jeremias points out that the translation "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed" is misleading and should read "It is the case with the Kingdom of God as with a grain of mustard seed" or 'as with a morsel of leaven'. This indicates that the Kingdom is not in itself like a grain of mustard seed but in some aspect the kingdom is characterized by this phenomenon. The emphasis is on the contrast. A small seed - a tree, actually the mustard seed grows only into a tall shrub but enough to afford shelter for the birds. Both Ezekiel 17:23 - 31:6 and Daniel 4:12 use the metaphor of trees providing shelter for birds to indicate a mighty kingdom providing shelter for nations. This would give the parables an eschatological significance. But some would think that a shrub of some 6-8 feet is hardly a mighty cedar as in Ezekiel. Both Matthew and Luke may have interpreted it thus as they make Mark's 'shrub' into a 'tree'. To the writer of this article this seems an unnecessary expansion, the contrast is sufficient and is paralleled by the leaven. A tiny morsel - three measures of meal, an enormous amount, 50 pounds is enough daily bread for a hundred people. However Dodd and Jeremias part company here. Both agree that it is told to explain to the people the apparent difference of the Kingdom that Jesus preaches, as against the Messianic age that was commonly expected. Dodd sees confirmation of his realized eschatology; plays down the contrast and classes it as a parable of growth and emphasizes the end - a tree, birds of the air flocking in. (3) "The Kingdom of God for which the prophets until John made preparation, has now come". Jeremias interprets (4) "Their meaning is that out of the most insignificant beginnings, invisible to the human eye, God creates his mighty Kingdom, which embraces all the people of the World". Though the author prefers Jeremias here nevertheless he feels that 'embracing all the people of the earth' is reading into the parable more than is there. The simple message - Although you cannot recognize a "Kingdom" in me and my simple band of followers - Beware a small beginning - but a mighty ending.

This interpretation is re-enforced by the parable of the Seed growing secretly Mark 4:26. The advent of the Kingdom of God is compared to a harvest. Again a sharp contrast. To quote Jeremias:

The inactivity of the farmer after sewing is vividly depicted: his life follows its ordered round of sleeping and waking, night and day; without his taking anxious thought or any active steps the seed grows from stalk to ear, and from ear to ripened corn - the naming of each stage of the process describes the unceasing process of growth. Then, suddenly, the moment arrives which rewards the patient waiting. The corn is ripe, the sickle is thrust in, the joyful cry rings out, 'the harvest has come'. Thus it is with the Kingdom of God; thus with the same certainty as the harvest comes for the husbandman after his long waiting does God when his hour has come, when the exchatological term (v.29:cf. Joel 3.13), is complete, bring in the Last Judgement and the Kingdom. Man can do nothing with regard to it; he can only wait with the patience of the husbandman (James 5.7).

Yes God has made a small beginning, tough decisive, he has planted the seed. His beginning will ripen without mans' aid, and until its fulfilment it behoves man to wait in patience till the time of harvest - The Last Judgement and the Kingdom in its fulness.

The Great Assurance Gods' work with his Kingdom has started. The seed is planted - nothing will stop it, the end a glorious harvest.

Jesus was saying dramatically though not overtly obvious - My Good News of the Kingdom is real - Take my message seriously and repent.

- (1) The Endeavour Magazine. Autumn 1972 p.5
- (2) Joachim Jeremias - The Parables of Jesus. SCM Press Ltd.
- (3) C.H. Dodd - Parables of the Kingdom. Fontana Books. p.143.
- (4) Above (2) p.149.

Editorial continued.

Could we honestly call such a man a 'success'? Certainly not, if we believe with Jesus that a man's life does not consist of the things he possesses.

An increasing number of people are beginning to see that the future of mankind depends on character. Many young people today can see this more clearly than their elders. Some of those songs in 'rock operas' for example are their way of expressing a need to base our lives upon Christ's scale of values, upon His emphasis that love matters most.

Though we may have become a bit cynical about human nature, because of wars and unfair competition in the world around us, don't we still believe deep down that it is character that counts? Do we really ever believe sincerely that 'getting on' is only a matter of salary and position?

When we read the Gospel of Luke and we get an idea of the impression that Jesus made upon his close followers, we see that it was the character of Christ which first laid a spell on the hearts of men. Think of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee - The good Samaritan - The Prodigal Son. They had to give up a great deal to become his disciples, but were drawn to Christ and became his friends long before they had come to understand his teaching.

One of the noteworthy things about Christ's character was his acute sense of what were the 'big' and the 'little' things in life. He was very serious at times, but never priggish and not unresponsive to gaiety. He would never have exaggerated some virtues at the expense of others. He gave himself to people unstintingly. That was the biggest thing of all.

And if we have 'loved much' it doesn't matter if we can't be counted a success in the material sense, as the world judges it.

R.B.

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