

overturning some of their false but cherished paradigms.

Conclusions

In this brief survey of the parables of Jesus, it appears that most of the parables are designed to alter the perspective of Jesus' listeners. Only a few appear to be purely illustrative. A few others seem to be designed as antidotes to future problems or, equivalently, to alter the perspective principally of future readers. The existence of this last category should not be unexpected for those who believe in the God of the Bible, who knows the end from the beginning.

Jesus accomplishes this alteration of perspective by grasping our attention through vividness, involvement, surprise and mystery; by showing up our own perspectives as false and foolish; and by presenting the true perspectives in a memorable way.

Since Jesus first spoke these parables, nearly two thousand years have passed. Our culture today is largely industrial rather than agricultural, and far more specialized and (we suppose) sophisticated. Yet his parables have not lost their power to expose our own pretensions as being as insubstantial as the Emperor's new clothes.

NOTES

^{^1} See, e.g., Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1967).

^{^2} Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

^{^3} Andrew Lang, ed., *The Yellow Fairy Book* (New York: Dover, 1966) 25.

^{^4} Some reviews of recent parable research are J. C. Little, "Parable Research in the Twentieth Century," *Exp Tim* 87 (1976) 356-60; 88 (1976) 40-43, 71-75; W. Wink, "Letting Parables Live", *Christian Century* 97 (1980) 1062-64; B. B. Scott, "Parables of Growth Revisited: Notes on the Current State of Parable Research," *BTB* 11 (1981) 3-9; M. Boucher, *The Mysterious Parable: A Literary Study*, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1977), chap. 1.

^{^5} W. A. Beardslee, "Parable, Proverb, and Koan", *Semeia* 12 (1978) 151-77.

^{^6} P. Linnemann. *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1966) 19-21.

^{^7} A. N. Wilder. *The Language of the Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1971); R. W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic and the Word of God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); P. Ricoeur. "The 'Kingdom' in the Parables of Jesus," *ATR* 63 (1981) 165-69; J. D. Crossan, *In Parables* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

^{^8} Numbers in parentheses will indicate parable numbers in the Appendix, where also the relevant Scripture references may be found.

^{^9} J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories," in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine, 1966) 58.

^{^10} W. J. Moulton, "Parables", *Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (1906) 2:314.

^{^11} A. Jülicher, "Parables," *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (1899) 3:3566.

^{^12} Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, 22.

^{^13} G. V. Jones, *The Art and Truth of the Parables* (London: SPCK, 1964) 114.

^{^14} Linnemann, *Parables*, 20.