SOME REFLECTIONS
ON
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Division

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
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August 1959
SOME REFLECTIONS
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the moral life. People of faith other than Christians have found it magnetic, provocative and inspirational, and have been greatly influenced by its teachings; especially was this true of the outstanding leader of the Hindu people, Mahatma Gandhi. The Sermon is part of their sacred scriptures and is regarded by many Christians as the most important document on the subject of the good life. The writer of this thesis, as an active member of the church, early entered into an appreciation of the Sermon. Many factors, but especially recent formal sources in the language, the literature, and the history of the Bible have encouraged her to attempt the study of this important piece of literature that appears in this thesis.

How did the Sermon originate, what factors influenced the shaping of it, the writing of it? What are the teachings in the Sermon, what message does it carry, and how do we account for a dynamic which has kept it fresh and meaningful for some nineteen centuries?
CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Sermon on the Mount has continued, for some nineteen hundred years, to be one of the most searching and powerful utterances mankind possesses on what concerns the moral life. People of faiths other than Christianity have found it magnetic, provocative and inspirational, and have been greatly influenced by its teachings; especially was this true of the outstanding leader of the Hindu people, Mahatma Gandhi. The Sermon is part of their sacred scriptures and is regarded by many Christians as the most important document on the subject of the good life. The writer of this thesis, as an active member of the church, early entered into an appreciation of the Sermon. Many factors, but especially recent formal courses in the language, the literature, and the history of the Bible have encouraged her to attempt the study of this important piece of literature that appears in this thesis.

How did the Sermon originate, what factors influenced the shaping of it, the writing of it? What are the teachings in the Sermon, what message does it carry, and how do we account for a dynamic which has kept it fresh and meaningful for some nineteen centuries?
These are a few of the questions which face many thinking Christians today in regard to the Sermon on the Mount. To answer some of these is the purpose of this thesis. The New Testament in Greek and English, standard commentaries on the Bible, some basic works dealing with New Testament interpretation have been most gratefully used in the preparation of this discourse.

I. THE RISE OF GOSPEL LITERATURE

Oral Tradition

The message which Jesus brought, proclaiming the dominion of the kingdom of God, and the character of his person as he went about doing good laid such a claim on insensitive souls who met him that they responded by... becoming his devoted followers. After those who opposed his teachings stilled his voice on a cross, the significance of his life and message was verified in greater dimension by an empty tomb and the resurrection.

When he appeared after his death to his followers...  

1 Matthew 28:19. All quotations in English from the Revised Standard Version are from The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1952.)
CHAPTER II

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In the early part of the first century A.D. there was born among the Hebrew people of Palestine a person who led a life of such a nature that his friends had to tell others about it. Some of the literary developments attendant to this desire will be examined in the following pages.

I. THE RISE OF GOSPEL LITERATURE

Oral Tradition

The message which Jesus brought, proclaiming the imminence of the kingdom of God, and the character of his person as he went about doing good laid such a claim on sensitive souls who met him that they responded by becoming his devoted followers.

After those who opposed his teachings stilled his voice on a cross, the significance of his life and message was carved in greater dimension by an empty tomb and the resurrection.

When he appeared after his death to his followers

1Matthew 28:19. All quotations in English from the Bible are from The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1952).
with the charge that they carry his message to all nations they were gripped by the conviction that somehow God was involved in this Event, and they set forth to announce to the world this dynamic revelation: that God had spoken to humanity through this Life. The Greek word translated preach in the New Testament is Κηνοσειν which means to announce news. In the wake of this preaching of the good news or gospel, creating a new spirit in people, congregations of believers, churches, emerged which continued to preach the gospel. In the early years of the church's history the gospel was transmitted orally "...in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end..." of the Mediterranean world. The primary craftsmen who shaped the oral tradition were those who had lived with Jesus, learned his teachings first hand, witnessed his crucifixion, and experienced his resurrection.

As these early Christian leaders moved from one community to another details preserved in the memory of one community would find entrance into the story of

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1II Corinthians 5:19

2 All quotations in Greek from the New Testament are from D. Eberhard Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece (Stuttgart, Germany: Privileg, Wurtt, Bibelanstalt, 1952).

3 Acts 5:42, 15:35, etc. 4 Acts 1:8

5Cf Acts 8:1, 14, 25; 10:32.
another community, and within about a decade the Gospel tradition came to be mainly a collection of isolated stories, sayings and sayings-groups.

The Passion Story which existed in the form of short accounts of the Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus current at different centers of primitive Christianity was molded at the beginning by the earliest preaching and by repetition during the meetings of the communities to break bread.

Besides the death and resurrection of Jesus, his words held vital interest and importance for the first Christians and as they rubbed shoulders with the Judaism of the day, the teaching tradition took on color by this and the many varied experiences of daily life.

As Pronouncement-Stories and sayings were repeated and taught to young Christians and in Christian assemblies "the material was arranged in topical rather than chronological succession for purposes of Christian instruction

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2 Ibid.

3 Vincent Taylor calls a short narrative which culminates in a saying of Jesus expressing some ethical or religious precept a Pronouncement Story.
and defense." The cohesion of Mark 2:1-3:6 might be cited as an example of careful and deliberate compilation. It is possible that Mark himself did not compile the section but that it was the work of an earlier compiler which Mark took over either from a document or from oral tradition. Other examples, similar in kind are Mark 11:15-17, 2


Like the early Passion Stories, these groups illustrate the first stages in the process of gospel compilation; we see that for all its originality, Mark was not a work begun de novo, but a composition which gathered into itself earlier attempts to serve religious and apologetic needs.

Another development in compilation was the formation of sayings collections, commonly referred to as Q in source criticism. Though Q may have begun as purely a sayings source, as a source it undoubtedly grew by stages just as single stories and small groups grew by stages, foreshadowing a development ultimately completed in the

\[^1\text{Ibid., p. 176}\]
\[^2\text{Suggested by M. Albertz, a German scholar of the early part of the twentieth century.}\]
\[^3\text{Taylor, op. cit., p. 180.}\]
\[^4\text{A symbol for the German word Quelle meaning "source".}\]
Gospels. By comparing similar verses in Matthew and Luke one can roughly reconstruct Q, finding that it was comprised mainly of sayings of Jesus, and was probably used in the moral instruction of converts. Much of Q can be recovered from the great Sermon which both Matthew and Luke attribute to Jesus. According to Streeter Q is a document comparable to an Old Testament prophetic book like Jeremiah, consisting principally of discourse, but with an occasional narrative to explain some piece of teaching.

Efforts at Writing

No definite line can be drawn between the written tradition and the oral tradition out of which it grew, for there was a vital continuity from the one to the other, and criticism has shown us that the Evangelists took up a work already in process.

The death of important eyewitnesses must have emphasized the urgency for preserving oral testimony in written form. It is surely significant that the earliest ecclesiastical tradition connects the writing of the

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1Taylor, op. cit., p. 185.

first Gospel (Mark) with the death of Peter. It is quite plausible that there existed in writing parts of the tradition in various segments of the church before the death of Peter. Hunter thinks that the Q document may be dated as early as 50 A.D.  

Although the tradition was no doubt modified in the course of transmission, its basic trustworthiness is beyond doubt; for it rests, not upon one man's recollections—say Peter's—or those of two or three persons, but upon the whole group of earliest disciples, whose numbers are reflected in the hundreds referred to by Paul (1 Cor. 15:6) and the thousands described in Acts (2:41, 4:4).  

Emergence of the Gospels  

According to Mark, Mark's task is thus illuminated by our earlier studies. Writing at Rome between 65-70 A.D. he had unique advantages. Not only did he accompany Paul on his first missionary tour (Acts 13:5, 13) but he had a close relationship with Peter (1 Peter 5:13). The tradition of the Church is that Mark acted as Peter's interpreter when he preached, as we have seen, and later  

1According to Papias, a Christian writer who lived in the first half of the second century, and transmitted to us through Eusebius, "Mark wrote down what he remembered of Peter's testimony."  


used the materials so gathered in the composition of his Gospel. No doubt there were other stories current in the Church which he used in writing his Gospel, for as a native of Jerusalem he knew the popular tradition of Palestine, and as a resident at Rome, he had access to the local tradition.

Besides the reminiscences of Peter and perhaps some of Jesus' teaching from other sources, Mark appears to have had before him an extended account of the Passion. Almost half of his Gospel is occupied with the closing episodes of the life of Jesus, and perhaps the new thing which he set himself to do was to combine the Passion Story, which had hitherto existed by itself, with a brief record of the ministry which had led up to it.

The Gospel makes no pretensions to be a full biography and Mark sets forth his definite view of Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of God" in the opening verse of his story. He confines himself to those aspects of Jesus' activity which had to do with his public work for the kingdom of God and only such incidents are recorded as

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1Hunter, op. cit., p. 35.

in some way bear out the claim of Jesus to be the destined Messiah.

The Gospel of Mark which we now possess was that which circulated in the Church around 80 A.D. with the exception of the ending of the Gospel. The last twelve verses (16:9-20) are found in no early manuscript, and even in later manuscripts they appear in several different forms. Probably an accident happened to the last sheet of the Gospel, which would be that exterior part of the roll most exposed to wear and tear. This is sufficient to account for the fact that the Gospel comes to an abrupt end in the middle of a sentence.

As a creative achievement, in the history of literature and in the history of the Christian Church, it is impossible to rate too highly this severely limited and incomplete writing of the first Evangelist, put together in the strenuous days of the later sixties.

According to Matthew. Both Tradition and the contents of his book make it plain that "Matthew" was a Jewish-Christian writing for his fellow countrymen, and his Gospel is as surely the Gospel for the Jews as Luke's is the Gospel for the Gentiles. The very phrase "Kingdom

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2Hunter, op. cit., p. 44.
of Heaven" which he uses in preference to "Kingdom of God" reveals the good Jew's avoidance of the divine name.

Since he used Mark (606 of Mark's 661 verses are found in Matthew) and if Matthew 22:7 suggests that Jerusalem had already fallen, he must have written after 70 A.D. But he must have written before 96 A.D. for 1 Clement of Rome apparently knew his Gospel. Perhaps sometime in the eighties is the best date for his work. A plausible guess would make Antioch the place of origin. The Church at Antioch was a meeting ground of both Jewish and Gentile influence; it was also one of the earliest and greatest of churches and a Gospel which issued from it would have a standing such as Matthew possessed from the first. 2

Matthew used Mark, added narrative matter at the beginning and end of the story (the Birth stories, incidents added to Passion Story), incorporated five great discourses, 3 and inserted eleven Old Testament proof texts. An excellent example of his method is to be seen in Matthew, chapter twelve, where verse after verse he weaves Mark (chapter 3) and Q together in an artistic

1Hunter, op. cit., p. 45.  2Scott, op. cit., p. 67.

3Sermon on the Mount, 5-7; Charge to the Twelve, 10; Parables of the Kingdom, 13; On True Greatness and Forgiveness, 18; On Last Things, 24-25.
whole, inserting Old Testament proof texts along the way. Into this combination of Mark and Q he inserts other material which Streeter has endeavored to isolate and to identify as a document (M) of Jerusalem provenance.

In Matthew it is noticeably evident that the Old Testament has exercised a creative influence on the tradition, especially in the Nativity and Passion narratives. The form and arrangement of his material give a strong indication that the author was a teacher, a Christian scribe, or perhaps a converted rabbi. He was obviously concerned with the practical interests and empirical problems of the actual community in which he lived and taught, its worship, its discipline, its relations both with the orthodox Jewish authorities and with the heathen outside, its faith, its missionary efforts—above all with its exalted hopes of the coming End. The Gospel of Matthew has been the most frequently quoted of the Gospels, from the days of the church fathers to the present.

According to Luke. In Luke's Gospel we have the first half of an extended work which is continued in the book of Acts. We do not know when the Gospel first

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1The Four Gospels, Chapter 9.
2Grant, op. cit., p. 195.
appeared in its completed form, but it must have been after 70 A.D. for Luke's language in 21:20 suggests that the siege of Jerusalem was already a past event. It must have been written before the Fourth Gospel which seems to imply a knowledge of it. A date somewhere in the eighties is likely. Unanimous tradition of the Church in the second century names Luke as the author, a Gentile by birth, a physician by profession, a Christian by conversion, and a friend of Paul's by choice. His purpose in writing is stated in 1:1-4.

He addressed himself to a Christian public but he probably also had in view readers outside the Church. People who had known nothing of Jesus or had been prejudiced against him must have the story so told as to attract them and compel them to follow it to the end.

The Jesus of this Gospel is not primarily the Messiah of the Jews but the universal Christ as Luke traces Jesus' ancestry back beyond Abraham to Adam (3:38). In Luke, we find an emphasis on: Jesus as the friend of sinner and outcast, tenderness to women, bias against the rich, and an emphasis on prayer.

\[1\] Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 40

\[3\] Luke 7:11f, 10:38.  
It appears to be an assured result of recent study of the Gospel of Luke that it is not a new edition of Mark but an independent work, with which has been incorporated the substance of Mark, and that in its process of growth it passed through the following stages: the beginning was the basic document Q with which has been combined the material from L, either a document or a firmly fixed body of tradition. The bulk of Luke's Q and L material is found in the central section 9:51-18:14. Next came the endeavor of combining Mark with Q and L. That neither was entirely rewritten and that both sources were used en bloc is clear from the analysis of the Gospel; it was a method very different from Matthew's distribution of Q material over the Markan framework. Then finally the Nativity and Resurrection narratives were added, though some scholars have argued that these narratives already belonged to L.

It seems evident as we study this Gospel that everywhere Luke lays stress on two things: (a) The message is from God and (b) it was intended for all men alike.

According to John. The last of the four, the Gospel of John, was probably written by the end of the

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1Grant, op. cit., p. 129-132. See also Streeter, op. cit., Ch. 9.
first century at Ephesus. Exactly who the Evangelist was cannot be said with certainty, but scholarship that is in harmony with tradition looks upon the Apostle John as the principal 'witness' on whose testimony the Evangelist rests.

Clement of Alexandria, who died about 215 A.D. sensed a basic difference between the Synoptics and this Gospel: "John, having observed that the bodily things had been adequately set forth by the earlier Gospels... produced a spiritual Gospel".

More clearly than ever before, it is obvious that the gospels—and indeed all the writings contained in the New Testament—were "church books" from the very start. They were written by members of the church, for reading within the church, to meet the needs of the church; they both presupposed and also made use of the traditions, the ideas, the language, and the doctrines of the church.3

The Gospels Become Scripture

When the four Gospels were first written, each, like a letter written by Paul (whose writings come prior to the Gospels), would be circulated locally, and afterwards lent to sister churches and copies made of them.

2 Ibid., p. 109.
3 Grant, op. cit., p. 3.

In the second century the Gospels were brought together into one work with four parts and were copied and circulated in this fashion in some sections of the church. In the later part of the fourth century various church councils ratified decisions already reached by the good sense of the Church at large as to what should be included in the New Testament as a whole, and the New Testament Canon as we have it today corresponds with the New Testament Canon of that century. The two criteria in making the decision as to what should be included were:

(a) the fact that the book was regularly read in church;
(b) the belief that what it says really originates from the circle to whom the revelation in Jesus Christ was given, the first disciples.

The original language of the New Testament was the common vernacular Greek of the Roman world in the first century A.D. (the language in which the numerous papyrus letters and documents, recently dug up in Egypt, are written), and the story of how it was translated into various languages down through the ages until we have it in its present form is an exciting historical adventure which is beyond the immediate scope of this presentation.

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II. SOME CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The 'Synoptic' Problem

The first three Gospels are commonly called the Synoptic Gospels (from Greek Συνοπτικός which means "view together") because they view the life of Jesus in a common way. Though the four Gospels are independent works, Matthew, Mark and Luke bear a kinship to each other. They cover much the same ground; record many of the same sayings; select many of the same incidents. They not only agree in facts, but frequently use the same language.

But no sooner has this striking observation been made than one is faced with the fact that there are also many differences. Incidents and sayings are arranged in different sequences or versions of the same incident are at variance. Throughout the Synoptic Gospels one finds these two phenomena of agreement and difference together. How does one account for this?

It can be assumed that each of these Gospels, though independently written, must have drawn much of its materials from a source, or sources, available to one or

\[1\text{Cf Matthew 9:6, Mark 2:10, Luke 5:24.}\]
both of the others.

The problem is to frame a theory which shall account for the relations between the first three Gospels, setting them in their chronological order, tracing the sources from which they have been compiled, and explaining both the coincidences and differences which they present.\(^2\)

The first attempt at a solution was the oral tradition theory which held that, behind the three Gospels there lay a common oral tradition about Jesus more or less fixed. But because this theory failed to account adequately for the minute linguistic similarities among the Synoptics, critics and scholars moved on to the document theory: that written sources were used in common in the compilation of the Gospels. A two document theory was formulated which maintained that two basic documents, Mark and Q, undergird the Synoptics. However, after assuming that what Luke, Matthew and Mark have in common is from Mark (Mark being the earliest account) and what Luke and Matthew have in common is from Q, we still are faced with the problem of accounting for what Matthew has included independent of the other two and what Luke has included independent of the other

\(^1\)Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 29

two. This is the way Streeter analyzed the problem and
in 1924 he put forth a four document hypothesis in which
he claimed that L and M were written documents. He
further proposed that the Judaistic character of much
of the material in M suggests a Jerusalem origin; L
be assigned to Caesarea; Q be connected with Antioch.

Finally, after the isolation of Q and the hypo-
thetical identification of M and L, there are left:
editorial additions, revisions, transitions, etc., made
by Matthew and Luke in working their story into a well
knit whole. The resulting conception is not that of two,
three, or four sources only but of many sources which
trace back, for the most part, to the original "eye-
witnesses" and which were handed down by many "ministers
3 of the word" during the first two or three Christian
generations.

If the Gospels or their sources had been the work
of only one or two men, or even of four, we should
doubtless have far more consistency of narrative,
far greater unity of impression; but we should miss
"the many splendored thing", the variety and vitality,
the freshness and charm of this manifold human
testimony to the great deeds and events, the sayings
and teachings which they record. 4

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1Streeter, op. cit., p. 223. 2Ibid. 3Luke 1:1-4. 4Grant, The Gospels: Their Origin and Their
Growth, p. 50.
Form Criticism

Of primary importance in the study of Gospel origins were certain investigations carried on in Germany in the early part of the twentieth century known as Form Criticism (from the German 'formgeschichte' meaning form history). What it undertakes to do is to recover the traditions underlying the Gospels, in the form in which they circulated during the oral period. It takes us back to the creative stage in the early church when the gospel traditions were beginning to be formulated into writing, at first in brief compilations or "sources", and then in the written Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John.

Their basic assumption that the earliest tradition was largely a mass of fragments may be justified (Mark2-3), but they make their case look weak when they fail to give sufficient credit to eyewitnesses in the formative period of the tradition. The assumption by some Form Critics that much of the material is the creation of the Christian community is weak, for a community is likely only to transmit and preserve a saying, not create it. True, there might be modifications in the light of life as these Christians knew it, but a saying must come initially from an individual, "and in the main, the
teaching of Jesus was well and carefully preserved."

There are certainly contributions of Form Criticism worth mentioning. By its quest of the life situation, it depicts the Church as a living, active organism, and strengthens the argument of Literary Criticism that the Gospels took shape under the power of a living Church.

It has also proved that in the preliterary phase of the tradition many narratives of Jesus circulated as self-contained and independent pericopae, and that the Passion Narrative was the first to be written down and was based on historic fact.

It has stimulated the study of gospel origins, and its method of research and investigation may lead to wider scientific study in the future. Vincent Taylor feels that in spite of its weaknesses the value of Form Criticism is considerable. Though it is not an instrument by which we can solve the problems of Gospel origins, it can play its part in that task.

Principle of Compilation

The so-called Sermon on the Mount, where Matthew

1E. Basil Redlich, Form Criticism (London: Duckworth, 1939), p. 58.

2Ibid., p. 79.

(chapters 5-7) has taken a short discourse, preserved also in Luke (chapter 6:20-49), and filled it out with many other sayings so as to present a connected statement of Jesus' main teachings, is a clear example of the compilation process used in the writing of the Gospels. Matthew 13 is another illustration of compilation, where parable after parable has been gathered together and presented in this one section.

If one deducts from the Sermon on the Mount just those passages which on account of their close resemblance to parallels in Luke can with maximum of probability be assigned to Q, what remains (more than two-thirds of the whole) reads like a continuous and coherent discourse. ^1 Most of it is peculiar to Matthew, but some passages, for example "Love your enemies" and the Lord's Prayer, have parallels in Luke--sometimes within, sometimes outside the Sermon on the Plain. ^2

All the phenomena, however, can be satisfactorily explained by the hypothesis that Matthew is conflating two separate discourses, one from Q practically identical with Luke's Sermon on the Plain, and the other from M, containing a much longer Sermon. Then Matthew proceeds

^1 Streeter, op. cit., pp. 251-254.
^2 Luke 6:20-49
to add to them certain other passages of Q which Luke
gives later in his Gospel in what is more likely to be
their original context in that source.

The conclusion is that the sayings of Jesus in
the Sermon on the Mount represent fragments of his
teaching given over a period of many months, and
owe their present position to Matthew, who drew
them from his two sayings-sources and fused them
into one magnificent whole.¹

III. LIMITS OF THE SERMON

It is one of the popular misconceptions of our
time that the Sermon is the sum of the gospel but when
the first followers of Christ went forth to captivate
the world with a message, it was a message of good news
they brought, not a sermon of good advice. It was the
astounding fact that God had entered into human life in
Christ bringing new life to all who believed (cf I Cor.
15:13).

To be sure, this proclamation involved a summons
to those who accepted it to behave in a new way, and the
teachings of Jesus gave guidance in this direction.

After noting the fact that this great proclamation
is not included, one notices other absences in the Sermon
of certain themes which appear elsewhere in the Gospels.

¹A. M. Hunter, Design for Life (London: SCM Press
One has to look outside the Sermon to find the double great commandment as the summary of the Law and the prophets (22:37-40), and for the formulation of Jesus' great principle of service (23:11). Neither does one find in the Sermon Jesus speaking of his death and its significance (16:21f), nor of the church (16:18), the new covenant (26:28), baptism (28:19), the Lord's supper (26:26-29), nor the Holy Spirit (12:32).

"The sayings of Jesus gathered together in the Sermon on the Mount represent not Jesus' 'Gospel' but his 'Commandment'."

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1 Hunter, op. cit., p. 103.
CHAPTER III

SOME IMPORTANT COMPARISONS

A brief comparison of the Sermon on the Mount with other literature in use during those times will be helpful.

I. WITH THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN IN LUKE


In both Matthew and Luke the Sermon commences with a series of beatitudes:
Matthew: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. \(^3\)
Luke: Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. \(^4\)

\(^1\)See Appendix A.
\(^2\)Luke 6:24-26, 34, 35.
\(^3\)Matthew 5:3. \(^4\)Luke 6:20
Matthew: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Luke: Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.

It should be noticed that while beatitudes in their Lukan form describe the outward circumstances: poverty, and hunger; those from Matthew's source are concerned with spiritual characteristics. The woes balancing the blessings in Luke are not found in Matthew.

None of the passages in Matthew's discourse which deals with the Law occurs in Luke except Matthew 5:18, which appears in Luke 16:17. "Luke presents the principles of the kingdom seekers 'in contrast to those of the ungodly world'. Matthew presents them in contrast with 'the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees'."

There are basic differences in these two versions which have been explained in various ways. According to Streeter, Matthew is conflating two separate discourses, one from Q practically identical with Luke's Sermon on the Plain, the other from M containing a much longer Sermon.

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4Streeter, op. cit., p. 251.
Cohon explains some of the divergencies in terms of the Evangelist's interests:

Matthew is more concerned with the Jewish backgrounds than is Luke. He was striving at every point to make the life and teachings of Jesus consistent with Hebrew prophecy on the one hand and at variance from the Pharisaic teaching on the other.¹

Luke, a physician, was plainly a man of tender and generous sentiment with a warm sympathy for the poor. There is no reason to doubt that Jesus himself had all the compassion for the poor which Luke ascribes to him and Luke was drawn to it by his own humane temper.

Without much doubt it can be observed that the personality of the Evangelist, his environment and the particular needs of his readers, colored to some extent the message he put down in writing.

II. WITH THE WRITINGS OF PAUL

When we turn to the writings of Paul, dated in the fifties and early sixties A.D., there are, first of all, certain passages where Paul expressly quotes sayings of Jesus. In addition to these direct citations, there are numerous passages in Paul where indirect reminiscences

of Jesus' teachings are very apparent. When Paul, in the course of a summary of the Christian's ethical duties, writes, "Bless those who persecute you. Repay no one evil for evil. If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink;"\(^1\), we are at once reminded of the words in the Sermon on the Mount, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

The Apostle's repeated warning against the critical attitude point to the passage in the Sermon, "Judge not, that you be not judged."\(^3\) To the Philippians he writes, "Have no anxiety about anything..." using the same Greek word (μεριμνάτε) which occurs in Jesus' injunction, "...do not be anxious (μεριμνάτε) about your life..."\(^4\). The strong statement, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons", points back to, "No one can serve two masters;...You cannot serve God and mammon."\(^5\)

These sections indicate that Paul is familiar with the words of his Lord. There is also clear evidence that there was a collection of sayings of the Lord to which Paul appealed: "For I received from the Lord what I also

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\(^1\)Romans 12:14, 17, 20.  \(^2\)Matthew 5:44.

\(^3\)Romans 14:4, 10, 13 cf Matthew 7:1.


delivered to you...", "...remembering the words of the Lord Jesus."

W. D. Davies assumes that "in addition to any traditional material that Paul used he had also the words of Jesus to which he turned for guidance...it is surely from the words of his Lord that he had made the shattering discovery of the supreme importance of the motive behind any act and of a thought even without any act".

But whether the Apostle had a written source to draw upon or not, the fact is abundantly clear that stored within his mind was a great multitude of the memorable and decisive words which his Lord, in the days of his flesh, had spoken.

III. WITH NON-CHRISTIAN JEWISH LITERATURE

"The Sermon on the Mount is rooted in the soil of Judaism. The Old Testament and Rabbinic parallels to the

\[\text{1}^\text{I Corinthians 11:23f.}\]

\[\text{2}^\text{Acts 20:35. The contents of this passage is not in the Gospels.}\]

\[\text{3}^\text{W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (Cambridge: University Press, 1948), p. 141. In corresponding with W. D. Davies, he made it clear that he was referring, in this quotation, to the tradition of the sayings handed down by the community either orally or in written form.}\]

\[\text{4}^\text{James Stewart, A Man in Christ (New York: Harper and Brothers, \[n. \text{3}\], p. 291.}\]
sayings of Jesus are striking." Many of Jesus' convictions and beliefs were drawn from the great religious teachers of Israel's past. He took over from the great succession of Jewish teachers many of the permanently valid answers to the problems of life.

Jewish scholars have been studying the Gospels and have declared that Jesus' sayings contain little that cannot be paralleled from those of the scribes and rabbis. Christian scholars likewise have found much which resembles and illustrates the Gospel accounts. As a result of such studies the connection between Jesus' teachings and that of the scribes has been clearly established.²

With Old Testament and Apocrypha

Some of the similarities between the sayings in the Sermon on the Mount and those in the Old Testament and Apocrypha can be observed in the following examples:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit..." Matthew 5:3.

"But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit..." Isaiah 66:2.

"Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5.

"But the meek shall possess the land and delight themselves in abundant prosperity." Psalms 37:10.

¹Cohon, op. cit., p. 9.

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God." Matthew 5:9.

"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it." Psalms 34:11-14.

"You are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14.

"I have given you as a covenant to the people; a light to the nations..." Isaiah 42:6f.

"To him who strikes you on the cheek offer the other..." Matthew 5:38.

"...let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults." Lamentations 3:25f.

"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:48.

"...you shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." Leviticus 11:45.

"For your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Matthew 6:5f.

"...for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought." I Chronicles 28:9.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but treasures in heaven..." Matthew 6:19.

"The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Psalms 119:72.

"For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Matthew 7:13f.

"This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it." Psalms 118:20.

"...for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the
good..." Matthew 5:45f.

"The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made." Psalms 145:9.

"Forgive us our debts..." Matthew 6:12.

"Forgive thy neighbor the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins be forgiven when thou prayest." Ecclesiasticus 28:2.

"So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them..." Matthew 7:12.

"And what thou thyself hatest, do to no man." Tobit 4:15.

"Do not swear at all..." Matthew 5:34.

"Do not accustom your mouth to an oath..." Ecclesiasticus 23:9.

1 With Rabbinic Literature

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Matthew 5:7.

"He who has mercy on his fellow-creature obtains mercy from God." Sabbath 151b.

"Judge not, that you be not judged." Matthew 7:1-5.

"Judge not thy neighbor until thou art come into his place." Aboth 2:5.

"But I say unto you that every one who looks at a woman

lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matthew 5:27-30.

"One can commit adultery with the eye as well as with the body". Midrash Rabbah Leviticus.

"...everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment..." Matthew 5:21f.

"He who profanes things sacred...and puts his fellow-man to shame in public...has no share in the world to come." Aboth 3:15.

"...first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." Matthew 7:5.

"If one says to his fellow, cast the mote out of thine eye, he will answer, Cast the beam out of thine own eye." Arachin 16b.

"For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." Matthew 7:2.

"With the measure with which a man measures, so will it be measured to him." Sotah 1:7.

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14-15.

"So long as thou art merciful, God hath mercy on thee; if thou art not merciful God hath not mercy on thee." Yerushalmi Baba Kamma.

After noting some of the similarities, other observations need to be made. The parallels found between
Rabbinic literature and individual passages in the Sermon have to be dug from Jewish materials and lifted out of context. The Jewish scholar, Montefiore, remarks:

Jewish apologists have a habit of breaking up the Gospel into fragments, they are somewhat inclined to do the same with their own literature. This piece-meal way of looking at a book, a teaching, a person, is, perhaps one of the evil results of Jewish legalism. When Talmud and Gospels are compared, the originality is almost always on the side of the Gospels.\(^1\)

When Jesus says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,"\(^2\), Cohon says, "Judaism has never taught that we should rejoice in being persecuted for the sake of any prophet or leader."\(^3\)

While Jesus considers the desire as culpable as the act, the rabbis held generally that a man's good intentions are reckoned to him as good deeds, while his evil intentions are counted only if he succumbs to them.\(^4\)

The teachings in Matthew concerning murder,\(^5\) divorce, and non-resistance have no parallels in

\(^2\)Matthew 5:10.
\(^3\)Cohon, op. cit., p. 34. \(^4\)Matthew 5:27f
\(^5\)Cohon, op. cit., p. 50. \(^6\)Matthew 5:21-22.
\(^7\)Matthew 5:31-32. \(^8\)Matthew 5:39-41.
Biblical or Talmudic Judaism.

Though perhaps Protestant theologians have exaggerated this business of reward in Rabbinic theology, Montefiore points out:

"...it is true both that there is too much of measure for measure and of merit in the Rabbinic literature and that there are some noble utterances against measure for measure, and against human goodness or the service of God meriting reward in the teaching of Jesus!"

For nearly every one of the sayings in the Sermon an analogy has been discovered in Hebrew and Jewish literature. Jesus was nurtured on the wisdom of the rabbis and used their form for some of his teaching. Many of his convictions and beliefs were drawn from the great religious leaders of Israel's past and he stepped right into the stream of their prophetic-ethical teaching. He went beyond the Judaism of his day in the emphasis he laid on the value of the individual soul; each man could call God "Father". His ethic was positive and aggressive in its demand; the rabbinic teachings were more a system of checks for the bridling of action. By obeying the Law

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to the letter the pious Jew of the day had confused the less with the greater. Jesus' teaching concerned men rather than ritual. His great emphasis was on the motive behind the act; the right inward quality of righteousness must claim men before the outward manifestation of it could be expressed. "The sayings in the Sermon on the Mount spring from a conception of character which imparts to the sayings themselves both unity and originality."¹ Montefiore is quoted as saying, "Jesus was original... original in his character as also in his way of life: a new phenomenon among the Jews, which has scarcely been repeated."²

¹Branscomb, op. cit., p. 363. ²Ibid., p. 364.
CHAPTER IV

CONTENTS OF THE SERMON: A COMMENTARY

The introduction to the Sermon as Matthew has edited it (4:23-25) leads one to expect that Jesus was to deliver a speech to the assembled people. The conclusion (7:28f) speaks of the effect of the Sermon on the crowds, not disciples. Jesus is first described as seeing the crowd and going to the top of the hill; perhaps to have a better survey. Then when he is seated it is his disciples who come unto him, and he teaches them. The disciples or the crowd or both—they are the hearers of his preaching.

Both Matthew and Luke begin their Sermon after a summary of the healings. The Sermon should be read in close connection with its context in the Gospel story.

Both Matthew's Sermon and Luke's Sermon begin with the Beatitudes:

5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Blessed comes from the Hebrew, *ashre* meaning "how happy" in the sight of God. In the Greek it is rendered *μακαρία* and describes "that joy which is serene and self contained, independent of the changes of life." Poor in the Old Testament came to be synonymous with saintly or pious (Psalms 9:18; 37:14; Isaiah 66:2). "...the poor are the faithful worshippers of God—without wealth, often maltreated and humiliated, and yet looking steadily to God for help. In Jesus' day, the word could still bear this meaning."  

The phrase *in spirit* may have been added by Matthew to point the way to right interpretation. It emphasizes the spiritual rather than the material aspect of life. Luke's version does not have "in spirit." *Their* is: though tense of the verb is present, "...in prophecy, present and future are never clearly distinguished." *Kingdom of heaven* and kingdom of God are synonymous; both mean the realm in which God rules or reigns.

5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

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"The mourners are those 'to whom the evil that is in the world is a continual grief', those who mourn the apparent eclipse of God's people and cause and long for a Saviour to arise upon the earth." Those who mourn could refer also to those who are intensely sorry for their own sins. For they shall be comforted: it was one element of the Messianic hope that with the advent of the kingdom complete comfort and consolation for the world's sorrows would be given to God's faithful (Isaiah 61:2; Luke 2:25, 4:18; Revelation 21:4).

5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

The Greek word for meek is \(\pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\sigma\), referring to a horse that was once wild but which has been tamed, obedient to the bit; one which has learned to accept control, to obey the word of command. "The supreme characteristic of a man who is \(\pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\sigma\) is that he is a man who is under perfect control...He is perfectly God-controlled, for only God can give him that perfect mastery." Inherit the earth: a popular phrase of the Hebrew covenant conception (Psalms 37:11) then in use among the deeply religious as symbolic expression to denote all those good things which

1 A. M. Hunter, Design for Life, op. cit., p. 32.

were to come with the Messianic Kingdom.

5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Hunger and thirst were used of old symbolically to denote intense spiritual longing.

Righteousness to a Jew meant more than conformity to a divine standard. "It is the fulfilment by man of God's will and the fulfilment by God of his own purposes' (T. W. Manson), in a word, "salvation". This experience of God active in history is the fundamental need of the human soul, as food and drink are for the body; cf Psalms 42:1-3."

They shall be satisfied: they shall see the victory of God and good.

5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

The Hebrew word for mercy is Chesedh and contains the deep meaning of empathy: to put oneself in another's shoes and feel the same feelings as he does. One of the most frequent Old Testament ideas is that God is merciful towards men, and one of its most frequent injunctions is that men must be likewise merciful toward one another. The mercy of God precedes the mercy of men and is its prototype (Micah 6:8). They shall obtain mercy: from God's hand on Judgment Day.

5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Pure in the Greek is *καθάρος* and means unmixed, unadulterated, unalloyed. Heart in Semitic speech includes the mind as well as the emotions (Psalms 24:4). The pure in heart, then, "are those whose motives are absolutely unmixed, whose minds are utterly sincere." The phrase to see God arose in ancient Hebrew usage out of the fact that men counted it a supreme privilege to come into the presence of an earthly king (I Kings 10:8; Esther 1:14); how much more would it mean to come into the presence of the King of Kings! The hope of such a vision of God grew with the development of the Hebrew religious conceptions, and became the aspiration of the Old Testament saints (Psalms 11:7, 17:15).

5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

In Hebrew, peace is *shalom* and is never only a negative state; it means everything which makes for a man's highest good. "The Jewish Rabbis held that the highest task which a man can perform is to establish right relationships between man and man." Sons of God: partaking of God's character in this respect. This idea of sonship as consisting in moral resemblance is of

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1Barclay, op. cit., p. 70.

Hebrew origin and is found in both testaments.

5:10-12 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The corresponding Luke beatitude, 6:22-23, is parallel not to Matthew 5:10 but to 5:11-12. Matthew 5:10 and 5:11-12 may be duplicated; 5:10 closely parallels in form the preceding seven verses. In Luke, the last beatitude is long, and maybe Matthew and Luke here are varying words from one historical saying. It is possible that 5:11 and 5:12 are expansions of 5:10 by Jesus himself, or some subsequent Christian teacher.

Righteousness probably means here the triumph of God's good cause. Falsely: "the word is wanting in some MSS. and should probably be omitted." In verses 11 and 12, a doublet of 10, the persecution is on my account.

"Jesus, the Servant Messiah, knows that suffering will be the lot of the Servant's disciples, but bids them

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'count it all joy' for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake."

Reward is great in heaven: "neither Jesus nor the rabbis hesitated to speak of reward, since God had promised it." The principal difference is that for Jesus the ultimate reward was the kingdom of God and was given alike to all who served God. In rabbinical teaching both toil and reward were quantitative.

5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.

In the time of Jesus salt was connected in people's minds with three special qualities: purity, preservative use, and as seasoning to give flavor and zest. The Old Testament and ancient secular writers employ the metaphor of salt to refer to what is most useful. The connection of this verse with 5:3-12 is clear. Men of such character and conduct (3-9) will meet with opposition (10-12) but are to uphold the Gospel standard in the world (13-16). If salt has lost its taste: if salt becomes insipid through being mixed with other

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1 Hunter, op. cit., p. 36.
2 Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 288.
3 Ibid., p. 492
4 Barclay, op. cit., p. 115.
things, it is useless.

5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The rabbis frequently call God, Israel, the Torah the light of the world. David is the lamp of Israel (II Samuel 21:17) and his descendents are called lights... I Kings 11:36; Psalms 132:17; Luke 2:32. In Proverbs 20: 27, "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord." The word bushel refers to a dry measure holding about a peck: "in the confined space of a Galilean cottage it would be used to cover up things not in use." Lamp refers to the clay lamp of Palestine which lights the whole one-room house.

The Christian's citizenship is in heaven but his work is in the world. Like salt he acts as seasoning and a preservative in human society which will otherwise corrupt. His witness, like light, must be seen to be effective, but its motive, to be pure, must be the glory of God.2

5:17-20 "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.

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1Ibid.

2Cox, op. cit., p. 48.
Law and the prophets refers to the Old Testament as a whole. *Fulfil* means to bring out the underlying purpose, to express it in its full significance. Jesus' constant warfare was not so much against the Old Testament standard of life in itself as against the interpretation of it which was held and taught in his day.

5:18 For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Till heaven and earth pass away is a popular way of saying 'never'. An *iota* is the smallest Greek letter and is equivalent to the *yodh*, smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

5:19 Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever relaxes refers to rabbinical prerogative of declaring certain actions permitted or forbidden.

One of the least of these commandments: the rabbis drew distinctions between "light" and "heavy" precepts, but in general, they held that all were to be observed. Least in the kingdom means least in their privileges in the kingdom. Great: greatness was based on lowly service, in Jesus' teaching.

\[\text{\footnotesize{1Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 292.}}\]
5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Pharisees were men who exerted every effort to keep the Law in its minutest details; the scribes were the scholars of the party and made it their life's work to interpret the Law. These two classes were esteemed to be the epitome of religious goodness in the eyes of their people. Jesus demands that his disciples must exceed this goodness.  

1 "It may be questioned whether this section (5:17-20) does not reflect the attitude of some Jewish-Christian communities rather than that of our Lord himself."

5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.'

But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire.

1 The interpretation of the O.T. standard of life by the scribes and Pharisees had corrupted the teachings in the following ways: (1) It largely ignored the Prophetic portion of the O.T. which was the very soul of Hebrew history and Bible; (2) Exalted legalism till few could know or obey its precepts; (3) Externalized the Law till the genuinely spiritual elements were neglected or ignored.

2 Dibelius, Sermon on the Mount, p. 23.
You have heard that it was said to men of old: this is the tradition you have received. But I say to you: in the spirit of the Old Testament prophets with their "thus says Yahweh." Liable to judgment probably means divine judgment. Verse 22 is difficult and all these gradations of punishment are not to be taken too literally but they underscore the point that murder can be committed by the attitude of the heart as surely as by an overt act.

5:23-26 So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.

Gift is probably a special sacrifice. Altar:
This is the traditional way by which the Hebrew expected to obtain reconciliation—with a gift at the altar. The original hearers might interpret brother to mean fellow Jew, though Jesus probably did not restrict it so.
Verses 23-24 indicate that God desires peace among brethren more than sacrifice (gift). We must be right with our fellow man before we can be right with God. Verses 25-26
seem to mean the time to get right with God is now; tomorrow may be too late. "One should not attempt to find allegorical meanings for the accuser, judge, and guard, which are simply details of the figure, though Aboth 4:22 says that God is judge, witness, and plaintiff." 

5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

In Jewish law, adultery meant sexual intercourse with the wife or the betrothed of a Jew. "The rabbis, however, held generally that a man's good intentions are reckoned to him as good deeds, while his evil intentions are counted only if he succumbs to them."

Jesus considers that the desire is as immoral as the act and, as in 5:22, would prevent the act by reforming the desires.

5:29-30 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

These sayings show how vivid and severe Oriental hyperbole could be. Jesus is speaking in exaggerated

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1 Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 297. 2 Ibid.
language to emphasize the rigor that might be involved in self-discipline. The hell to the first century Jew was a place where sinners were punished in the future. A valley southwest of Jerusalem, called Gehenna, was the dumping ground for the refuse of the city; it became the symbol for the place of future punishment. Hell to the Christian is life apart from God.

5:31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

32 But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The certificate of divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1) had the effect of clarifying the woman's status; the husband had no further claim on her. "The phrase except on the ground of unchastity is regarded by most modern critics as Matthew's (or perhaps M's) addition to the original tradition." ¹ "I assume that it is as certain as anything can be in New Testament criticism that the qualifications (in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9) are not part of the genuine teaching of Jesus on this point." ²

¹Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 299.

5:33-37 "Again you have heard that it was said to
the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely,
but shall perform to the Lord what you have
sworn.'

34 But I say to you, Do not swear at all,
either by heaven, for it is the throne
of God,

35 or by earth, for it is his footstool, or
by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the
great King.

36 And do not swear by your head, for you
cannot make one hair white or black.

37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or
'No'; anything more than this comes
from evil.

Verse 33 is not an exact citation of any Old Testament
passage but is a reflection of the teachings seen in
Exodus 20:7 and Deuteronomy 7:11. The Jews divided oaths
into two classes, those which were absolutely binding and
those which were not. If God's name was used, the oath
was binding because God was considered a partner in the
transaction. **Heaven, earth, Jerusalem**: to swear by these
is an evasive way of swearing by God. In verse 37 Jesus
lays down the principle of our truthfulness which is a
matter of good character. A plain 'yes' or a plain 'no'
is enough. Good conduct is not dependent upon binding
oneself by an oath.

5:38-42 "You have heard that it was said, 'An
eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

But I say to you, Do not resist one who
is evil, But if any one strikes you on the
right cheek, turn to him the other also;

40 and if any one would sue you and take
your coat, let him have your cloak as
well;

41 and if any one forces you to go one mile,
go with him two miles.

42 Give to him who begs from you; and do not
refuse him who would borrow from you.

In verses 39-40 there is a striking parallelism, especially
in Greek, with Isaiah 50:6-8, one of the passages which
outlines the life and character of the Servant of the
Lord. **An eye for an eye:** this is the tit for tat, **lex
talionis** which limited revenge by fixing an exact
compensation for an injury. To strike a person on the
right cheek one must ordinarily use the back of the right
hand: such a blow was considered among the Jews a real
insult. **Coat** is a long undergarment made with sleeve;
the **cloak** was worn over it, and the poor used it as a
coverlet at night. The Greek word for **force**, ἄγγαρέω,
goes back to Persian Royal mail and meant to commandeer
or conscript other people in the King's service. The
verb came to signify forced labour. The principle that
Jesus is laying down in this section is that of non-
retaliation in cases of personal wrong. Love of re-
taliation, the zeal for executing vengeance, and the passion
for seeing strict justice done without delay held the field
in both Old Testament and New Testament times. And conse-
quently when Jesus came he found little of the true spirit and service of brotherhood.

5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"

44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Leviticus 19:16-18, quoted here, speaks of neighbor in the sense of fellow Israelite. In Semitic idiom, hate may mean no more than "love less" or "not to love". In verse 44, love implies acts of kindness, not mere sentiment, to be extended to enemies and persecutors.

Sons of your Father: in a moral sense.

5:46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others: Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

The tax collectors of the Gospels are probably the Jewish employees of chief collectors and were concerned with poll and land taxes. Salute: The Jewish greeting was shalom, "Peace be to you." In Matthew 10:14-13 the disciples use a similar salutation. Brethren refers to fellow-Jew or kinsmen.

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1 Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 302.
5:48 You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Compare Deuteronomy 18:13, 'Thou shall be perfect (Hebrew tamin) with the Lord thy God. "Tamin means whole, complete." The Greek word for perfect is ἔκθεσις meaning full-grown, complete. A man who has reached his full-grown stature is ἔκθεσις as contrasted to an adolescent. "A thing is perfect if it fully realizes the purpose for which it was planned, and designed, and made...a man is perfect if he realizes the purpose for which he was created and sent into the world."

6:1 "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2 "Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.

3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

4 So that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting were, in the estimation of the Jews, three of the chief elements of

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1This verse is quoted from The Holy Bible. King James Version. Oxford: Oxford University Press, [n.d.]
2Hunter, op. cit., p. 58. 3Barclay, op. cit., p.176.
religion and received a disproportionate attention..." Jesus teaches that these must be genuinely religious acts free from all ostentatious and selfish motives. Sound no trumpet: "...probably figurative, for no such custom seems to be known." The rams horn was blown after each of the six benedictions that ended in prayers for rain. The giving of alms was expected to accompany these devotions during the autumn droughts. They have received their reward: from Greek ἀπέλυμ, which means to receive a receipt as in a business transaction. In other words, their piety is a commercial transaction, the account is closed, God owes them nothing. They wanted the praise of men, they have got it, the deal is completed.

6:5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.

6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you pray, go into your room, or inner chamber: a phrase from Isaiah 26:20, meaning any place apart.

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1Votaw, op. cit., p. 31.

"Jesus did not of course forbid public prayer, but practised it himself in synagogue and Temple. But its performance must be directed to God alone."

6:7 "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

In its anxiety to make itself heard, the pagan world practised much incantation of the gods, invoking them by their innumerable titles; see I Kings 18:26-28.

God cannot be compelled to hearken, by force of lengthy supplications and verbal bombardments. He knows our needs before we open our mouth. Some of the best Rabbinic sayings are in full accord with this teaching.²

3 6:9-13 The Lord's Prayer.

9 Pray then like this:
   Our Father who art in heaven,
   Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come,
   Thy will be done,
   On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread;

12 And forgive us our debts,
   As we also have forgiven our debtors;

13 And lead us not into temptation,
   But deliver us from evil.

Our Father suggests a Father common to many. Father is used more in the sense of father of the nation in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 32:6) but later Father of the individual (Ecclesiasticus 23:1). Which art in heaven is a Jewish phrase stressing separateness, holiness. Hallowed be thy name: to 'hallow' is to revere; in the Bible the 'name' means 'the nature', the character (Psalms 9:10). Thy kingdom come: kingdom means reign.

For the Jew, the Kingdom was the great hope of the future; God's consummated plan to which the whole of history moved. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven:

But what is God's will?...It is health, not disease; purity, not lust; service, not selfishness; giving, not grabbing; love and not hate; the Golden Rule and not the rule of the jungle. In heaven, it is always so; and we pray that earth may become, in this regard, like heaven.\(^1\)

Give us this day our daily bread: the word translated "daily" in the Greek is \(\varepsilon\pi\varphi\sigma\varsigma\)os which appears nowhere else in Greek literature. Luce thinks the most probable derivation of the Greek word is from \(\varepsilon\pi\iota\) and \(\iota\omicron\sigma\alpha\) on the analogy of \(\varepsilon\pi\iota\sigma\upsilon\omicron\alpha\) (\(\varepsilon\mu\epsilon\alpha\)) 'the coming day',

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\(^1\) Hunter, op. cit., p. 70.

'tomorrow.' And forgive us our debts: debt was a Jewish metaphor for sin of which Jesus made use several times. It views sin as an obligation placed on us by God which we have failed to meet. As we also have forgiven our debtors: Luke's version here, "for we ourselves forgive everyone" eliminates any sense of measure for measure forgiveness on the part of God which would be contrary to Jesus' teaching on the gracious forgiveness of God. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: the solution to understanding this petition lies in a proper understanding of the Greek word πείρασμος, translated 'temptation'. In the New Testament it can carry two senses, trial and enticement to evil. Only the former sense can be suitable here. The second half of the petition may be rendered either evil or evil one, the latter in the sense of a personal prince of evil in keeping with Jesus' belief.

6:14-15 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you;

But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

These verses are an explanation of verse 12. A

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similar saying is recorded in Mark 11:25 and especially Matthew 18:23-35.

6:16-18 "And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.

6:17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

18 that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Fasting was a sign of penitence, and specially pious Jews used to fast on Mondays and Thursdays (Luke 18:12)." Long before, Isaiah (58:5) had deplored insincere fasting. Not to anoint the head and not to wash the face were the usual outward accompaniments of mourning and fasting. "Christ nowhere blames the Pharisees for fasting; it is fasting ostentatiously that is condemned."

6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal,

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

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1 Hunter, op. cit., p. 75.
2 Flummer, op. cit., p. 105.
In Jesus' day, wealth was hidden in the house or field. The Greek word translated rust is \(\beta\rho\omega\sigma\iota\s\), meaning 'eating' and is often taken to mean 'the worm'. Thieves break through by digging through the mud or plaster wall of a Palestinian house. Jesus is forbidding entanglement in worldly affairs.

6:22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light;

23 but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

If your eye is sound: from the Greek \(\alpha\iota\pi\lambda\nu\delta\\) meaning directed towards one object. Therefore, keep your spirit's eye clear—no double vision through trying to focus on both heavenly and earthly goods; the end will be spiritual blindness. No man can serve two masters: perhaps this verse has been put here in reference to 6:19-21. The Greek word, to serve, is \(\sigma\omega\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\) and means to be a slave to. Mammon is a Hebrew word referring to material possessions. "The incompatibility between the service of God and the pursuit of riches is absolute."

6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

The three imperatives "do not be anxious" in 6:25, 31, 34 do not forbid foresight and provision but the anxiety Μéριμνα in the Greek which means over anxious, which distracts and distresses. Dibelius remarks that this section is crucial for the understanding of Jesus' teaching. This idea has a parallel in Psalms 55:22, "Cast your burden (Τήν Μéριμναν σου) on the Lord and he will sustain you." As in Job (especially 38-41) man is bidden to look at nature to find an answer to his questions and problems.

6:27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?

28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin;

29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?

1Dibelius, op. cit., p. 52.
31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or What shall we drink?" or 'What shall we wear?'

32 For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

_Over cubit_ is about eighteen inches in length.

The lavishness of Solomon and his robes was well known by the Jew. _Today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven:_ this is a common rabbinical phrase. Dry grass and flowers were thrown into the oven and burned after the baking of bread.

6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

Righteousness may have the same meaning here as in 5:6 which is 'victory'. "In this verse we may suspect that both 'first' and 'righteousness' are additions made by Matthew. Neither is found in Luke 12:31; and throughout the Sermon 'righteousness' is emphasized in Matthew (5:6, 5:10, 20; 6:1)." _Do not be anxious about tomorrow:_ compare with Deuteronomy 33:25, "as your days so shall your strength be."

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1Plummer, _op. cit._, p. 109
7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged.

For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

"When Jesus spoke like this...he was using words and ideas which were quite familiar to the highest thoughts of the Jews." But when he used the parable of the speck and the log he stated the supreme reason why we should not judge others. No man is good enough to judge any other man--judgment belongs to God. "Nothing is more absurd than for a man to try to improve others when he does not improve himself. Such a man is a hypocrite."  

7:6 "Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

If Jesus said these words, perhaps it was to warn his disciples to bring the gospel to those who were re-

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2Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 326.
ceptive and where their work would bear the best fruitage rather than to their opponents who would despise, reject it: see 10:13-14; 22:8-10. "In the Didache it is interpreted to mean 'Do not admit the unbaptized to the Eucharist."

7:7 "Ask, and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

8 For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

9 Or what man of you, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone?

10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?

11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?

"The threefold expression gives emphasis to the command, and was evidently in the source used by both Evangelists." Perhaps the context in Luke (11:9-13) seems better: it is there set after the Lord's Prayer and the parable of the friend at midnight. The Jews were fond of arguing from a lesser example to a greater.

7:12 So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

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1Montefiore, op. cit., p. 117.

2Plummer, op. cit., p. 113.
Parallels to the Golden Rule can be found in Jewish and Gentile sources in the negative form. Jesus' form is positive placing the emphasis on outgoing action (as in Matthew 25:21-46 and Luke 10:25-37). For this is the law and the prophets: this may refer back to Matthew 5:17.

7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

The gate signifies one's entrance into the kingdom as present, and the way signifies his earnest life thereafter. Destruction means separation from God; life is being in the presence of God. Montefiore comments that "the horrible doctrine that many go to 'destruction' and few to 'life eternal' was not invented by Jesus, but it was accepted by him."

7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

16 You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?

17 So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit.

18 A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

1Montefiore, op. cit., p. 121.
19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 Thus you will know them by their fruits.

"Wolves for the enemies of God's flock is an Old Testament metaphor (Ezekiel 22:27; Zephaniah 3:3), and they are called 'ravening' (ἀρπαγέω), because they are greedy of gain and power." Tree and fruit: Jews, Greeks, and Romans all used the idea that a tree is to be judged by its fruits. Jesus expresses this idea in Matthew 12:33, "first make the tree good."

7:21 "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, you evildoers.'

The point here is that it is ridiculous to address a person as "my teacher" if you ignore his teachings.

On that day "is almost a technical term for the messianic age or the world to come (Isaiah 2:11, 17; Zechariah 14:6). Matthew had added the phrase and has also connected this teaching with the work of Christian prophets, exorcists, and miracle workers." ² I never knew you seems to mean

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¹Plummer, op. cit., p. 116.

²Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 333.
"I don't want any dealings with you" in rabbinical idiom. The final phrase, *depart from me, you evildoers* is from Psalms 6:8.

7:24 "Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock;

25 and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

26 And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand;

27 and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

In Matthew's form, the builders are Palestinian, one building on a rock; the other building in a wadi or dry torrent bed, which is smooth and inviting but a death trap in time of flood. In Luke's version, the wise man digs deep to build a foundation which is perhaps more natural in a Greco-Roman city.

"The rock-built house stands for hearing and doing Christ's words; the house built on sand for hearing them only; and the storm is any time of severe testing or tribulation in the life of the individual or the church."¹

7:28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching,

¹Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
29 for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Here we have a forceful account of the impression which the teaching of Jesus made upon many of those who heard it. And as a Jewish scholar points out, his teaching is more instinct with power and genius than other Rabbis. It is more inspired, it is grander, it is more prophetic. "Moreover, it seems to claim 'authority', just as the prophets claimed it, because they were convinced that their words were from God."


2 Ibid.

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Matthew 5:1-12.

See commentary in the preceding section.
CHAPTER V

SOME GREAT THEMES OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

It is possible in a verse by verse analysis to miss some of the great themes contained in groups of verses in the Sermon on the Mount. An investigation of some of these great themes will follow.

1

I. THE BLESSED LIFE

The Sermon opens with the theme of the blessed life, a life of true well-being, which Jesus indicates is a many-faceted one. The phrases: the "mourners", "pure in heart", the "meek", and the ideas of the "Kingdom of Heaven", "seeing God", "entering into the possession of the earth", used by Jesus to depict this life are familiar terms to the Jews of the time, for they are conceptions found in the Old Testament. When Jesus expressed himself thus, he was linking himself with his hearers and with the Hebrew prophets preceding him. "These phrases in their highest meaning were rooted in fundamental spiritual needs, realities, and aspirations such as Jesus came to 1

Matthew 5:1-12.

2See commentary in the preceding section.
satisfy, to proclaim, and to fulfill."¹

In describing the blessed life Jesus surpasses the superficial tests of righteousness prescribed by the Judaism of his day, and speaks of the intended nature of man. That which the old Law and Prophets had always pointed forward to as the goal of all God's discipline is to be completed in this inward manner; in spiritual striving, compassion, disciplined enthusiasm, mercy, singleness of purpose, peacemaking, loyalty to ideals, bringing in its wake the reward of God's "Bless you, my son", and a sense of serenity.

This life which receives God's benediction is to be expressed in meeting the demands of everyday living, for in his teaching Jesus constantly kept the present life clearly and strongly to the front. The blessed life as Jesus presented it stands out in its uniqueness when it is contrasted with the concept of the blessed life in several other religions:

In the teaching of the Upanishads of Hinduism, the blissful life is an escape from the temporal through the mystical trance whereby the soul of the individual is united with the attributeless soul of the universe, Brahman. This condition of life transcends all feeling

¹Votaw, op. cit., p. 17.
of pain, joy, and cognition.

The teaching of Lao-tzu is that a man may attain the blessed life by meditating upon the Tao, the passive, impersonal Absolute, and by adopting passivity as the key to happiness. "Doing by doing nothing" is the principle basic to the good life in this religion.

Both of these concepts of the ideal life are a far cry from the blessed life taught by Jesus, who went about actively seeking the lost, healing the sick, and teaching the people.

II. AGGRESSIVE GOODNESS

The life of many-sided goodness described in the preceding theme must be active and must do for others those services which empathy prompts it to do.

As salt penetrates things and draws out and enhances the natural flavor of that which it touches, so must this life unite with mankind and by its action draw out and enhance the ultimate nature of those lives it reaches.

Like a light, uncovered, it must illumine for all the dark surroundings, pushing back the shadows of sin.

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1 Founder of Taoism in China in sixth century.

2 Matthew 5:13-16, 7:12.
and ignorance, and making plain the path that leads to God's truth.

The blessed life, like a city set on a hill, arrests attention by its contrast to its surroundings and speaks plainly of God to those nearby. The aggressiveness of this life, made plain in the terms salt and light, is to be a reflection of that benevolence which Jesus' followers have learned and experienced in their own relations to God.

The active, reaching-out quality of this life rings out clearly when Jesus commands his followers, "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them;". Confucius has said it this way, "What I would not have others do to me, I do not do unto them." The great first century rabbi, Hillel, expressed it still another way: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor;". The rule is recorded in the Apocrypha as, "Do not do to anyone else what you hate." This maxim phrased in the negative form is surrounded with an aura of passiveness and lacks the aggressive significance that the demand of Jesus carried with it.

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2Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 329. 3Tobit 4:15.
III. EXCEEDING RIGHTEOUSNESS

When Jesus said, "I have come not to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them.", he made it clear to his opponents, the religious leaders of his day, and to those who heard him gladly that he did not intend to break with the best which the past had produced but to develop it to its fullest—to fill up to the full. The scribes and Pharisees who had made it their life's work to keep the Law in its smallest detail and were esteemed by their own generation as having attained the very summit of goodness had really fallen short of true righteousness. Jesus proceeded to illustrate in specific ways how the righteousness of true sons of God must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

"You Shall Not Kill"

The first instance concerns murder, anger and contempt. The Old Testament prohibited murder, and righteousness was measured in terms of carrying out the letter of the Law as it stood. But Jesus says that even angry passion and bitterness is liable to judgment. The inward thoughts of the heart have to be checked, not just the outward manifestation, for the worst forms of murder

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are hatred and malice. "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer." Jesus goes further: not only must you curb the feelings of contempt and anger, but you are to put forth active effort in establishing right relations with your brother.

"You shall Not Commit Adultery"

The Old Testament prohibited adultery, but Jesus' exposition of the righteous life exceeds the forbidding of the overt act, and prohibits the desire and intention in the heart. Here the inwardsness of his teaching is most bold. The stringency of the required discipline is made plain when, in extravagant language, he claims that one must at all costs remove from his life anything which will lead to sin, even if it means plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand.

"You Shall Not Swear Falsely"

The Law permitted oaths but warned against false swearing. Jesus' demand exceeds the whole system of swearing as he lays down the principle of pure truthfulness—truth on the lips and in the heart. A son of God should not find it necessary to strengthen his word with

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1 John 3:15. 2 Matthew 5:27-31. 3 Matthew 5:33-37. 4 Leviticus 19:12, 20:7, etc.
an oath. A simple "yes" or "no" is all that is necessary from him who serves the God of truth.

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Lex Talionis

The old Law said eye for eye, but the lex talionis, the law of measure for measure, was the basis of Greek and Roman laws also. Jesus surpasses this measure for measure attitude by saying, "Do not resist one who is evil." 3 The principle he is laying down is that of non-retaliation when one is personally wronged. In colorful language he tells his followers to go to the extreme in generosity toward the persecutor whether it be a personal injury, a lawsuit, an official demand, a request for help. The sons of the Kingdom are to show good will to others under all circumstances and thus overcome evil.

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"You Shall Love Your Neighbor"

The old Law had demanded that the Jew love his fellow Jew, but Jesus commands a love far in excess; you are to love your enemies, and thus prove yourselves sons of the Father whose grace in nature does not distinguish between good and bad. You are not only to love your

1Matthew 5:38-42. 2Exodus 21:25, Leviticus 24:20, etc. 3Matthew 5:39. 4Matthew 5:43-47. 5Leviticus 19:18.
enemies but also to pray for them, do good to them and lend to them.

The theme of exceeding righteousness lifted up at the beginning of this section..."...unless your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees..." is now summed up at the end of the section with the words, "...what more are you doing than others?". In the Greek it is even sharper: Τί περισσόν ποιεῖτε, what do you in excess?

IV. THE UNPRETENTIOUS LIFE

The theme of this section is set forth in the first verse when Jesus demands that worship be sincere before God rather than pretentious before men. He illustrates his principle by using three common practices of the religious man of his day. The consequences of ostentation and the rewards of sincerity in each example are framed in the same formulae. When you give alms in order to obtain acclaim from men, that's all you will receive. Therefore, when you give charity let it be unobtrusively in the spirit of love for God, and he will reward you. When you pray with display so that men will applaud you, that's all that will come to you. Therefore,

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when you pray let it be in quietness in the spirit of devotion for your Father and he will reward you. If you put on a show when you fast in order to gain attention from those around you, that is all the benefit that will come of your fasting. Therefore, when you fast let it be with humility in the spirit of sincerity to God and he will reward you.

V. THE CARE-FREE LIFE

Jesus is making it plain to those about him that if they make trust and devotion to God the center of their lives they will be free from anxiety. When he says, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," he is demanding that man's heart be set on the lasting values such as kindness, mercy, purity, love,"...for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions".

"Be rich in good works", says Paul. The treasures on earth which are the material goods can claim a man's heart and devotion, dividing his loyalty to God and eventually he will cling to his earthly treasures and neglect the spiritual treasures; you cannot serve God and mammon. Your eye must be single with one focal point--God. There

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3I Timothy 6:18.
must be singleness of purpose in your life, to be a true son of your Father. If your vision is double, trying to focus on both heavenly goods and earthly goods, you will have a blurred, distorted vision and be in spiritual darkness.

Jesus points to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field for examples of the serenity in daily living which can be theirs if they will trust in their Father who is able to provide for all his children's needs. The futility of anxiety is carved out in stark reality when Jesus asks them if they think they can add anything to the length of their lives by being anxious. As long as men are primarily concerned about their own lives and their own interests, they will be anxious. But when they are supremely concerned about God's reign in the hearts of men and God's rule over the lives of men, there will be no cause for anxiety.

VI. THE BENEVOLENT SPIRIT

With exaggerated language Jesus forbids the censorious spirit, saying, "Judge not...". He is condemning the critical, petty attitude of fault-finding and asking for the benevolent spirit which comes from the wisdom of

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1Matthew 7:1-5.
rational insight into the good of another, and which seeks to help him help himself. The Pharisee who was critical with regard to others and hypocritical with regard to himself, "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men...", was the antithesis of this graciousness of spirit. Before you are qualified to judge your brother you must yourself be free of fault. The fault you find in others may be minute compared to your own faulty character. First remove the plank from your own eye and then your righteousness will give you clear vision as to how to help your brother. There is an echo here of "...first make the tree good before it can bear good fruit."

Jesus is not condemning the necessity of making evaluations in life. His followers have a responsibility to God to discriminate for truth, "...to test all things, and hold fast that which is right." They are obligated to maintain the law of right and wrong. What Jesus is asking for is a higher justice which, by its aid, inspires in the recipient a new sense of his own responsibility in attaining to the good life.

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VII. THE TRUSTFUL ATTITUDE IN PRAYER

This is another facet of the carefree life based on trust in God. If you ask in prayer, "Thy will be done...", and seek "his Kingdom and his righteousness", the door will be opened"...and all these things shall be yours as well". To illustrate the goodness of God and the validity of supreme trust in him Jesus speaks of the earthly father and his children. The love of a father for his children, an experience Jesus' followers witness in their day to day living, is human love in its highest, widest, deepest dimension. In it is all the mercy, aspiration, unselfishness, tireless devotion and anguish a sinful soul can express. "If this is true of an earthly father", says Jesus, "how much more is it true of your heavenly Father who gives good gifts to those who ask him."

VIII. THE TWO WAYS

"The gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction. The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life."

Jesus sets before men a choice that has faced humanity from the beginning of time--the easy way of self-indulgence or the hard way of self denial. Others

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also have spoken of this choice:

"See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil...choose life."  

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord...in all that he does, he prospers."

"The wicked are not so, but are like chaff which the wind drives away...the way of the wicked will perish." These opening verses of the Psalter have an introductory function in which the didactic quality of the book, teaching about the good life, is set forth. The Psalmist sharply contrasts the two ways of life, interpreting them both with his eyes upon the ultimate fate of righteous and sinful men.

"And walk in the paths of righteousness, and walk not in the paths of violence."

"Two Ways there are, one of Life and one of Death, and there is a great difference between the Two Ways. Now the Way of Life is this: first, love the God who

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made you; secondly, your neighbor as yourself: do not do to another what you do not wish to be done to yourself...The Way of Death is this. It is the way of the persecutors of the good, haters of the truth, of men ignorant of the reward for right living.  

Jesus then uses this common teaching of both the Old Testament and Judaism with a view to challenging them to the life-giving way of the new prophetic movement he is inaugurating, saying, "Enter by the narrow gate and have life".

IX. THE TWO TREES

The test of a tree is the quality of the fruit it bears: so it is with men. The inner attitude of a man will be expressed in his outward behavior, his temper, his deeds, his disposition. Jesus is talking about good deeds which are the fruits of a good tree, and the life which does not express itself in good deeds will perish. That the inner attitude of a man be righteous beyond the righteousness of the Pharisee he made plain in a section looked at earlier. In Matthew 12:33 he ties the two

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1 Didache 1:1f. The Didache is a Christian document from the second century A.D. purporting to be the teaching of the twelve apostles.

2 Matthew 7:15-20.
demands together into an ultimatum..."make the tree good, and its fruit good;" Jesus is interested not in good deeds as such, nor good motives, but good men who will have good motives and do good deeds. "The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil".  

Paul echoes his Lord with the words, "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."  

Jesus meets his hearers with the solemn affirmation that the duty of actually doing what he teaches is imperative. His words, put into action, will build a house so lasting that all the storms of life cannot destroy it. To hear his words and ignore them is like building casually, without anchoring firm footings in a lasting foundation, and the easy way leads to destruction. When the tribulations of life come, the house will not be sturdy enough to withstand them, and great will be the fall of that house.  

"And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds

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1Matthew 12:33f.  2Galatians 6:7-8.  
3Matthew 7:24-47.
were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority...". There was about his teaching a distinctive quality, original and pulsing with power. "No man ever spoke like this man", said officers sent to arrest him. Luke remarks, "All spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth". The Jewish people of Jesus' time were deeply impressed by the implication of the authority behind the words he used, "I say unto you", rather than the traditional "Thus says the Lord" used by the scribes and the prophets. He laid men under obligation as one who had the right to command.

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4Sherman Johnson, op. cit., p. 335.
CHAPTER VI

THE IDEAL OF PERFECTION

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus confronted his followers with the demand, "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." The meaning contained in this teaching transcends all other themes found in the Sermon.

I. ETHICAL IDEAL OF UNCONDITIONED LOVE IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS

"You must be perfect—(Τέλειος) refers only to perfection in love, not to the whole series of attributes which constitute the perfection of God in a theological sense. This love views men not as they are but as they may be or should be. It is thus that God has dealt with men and they are to do likewise.

This unconditioned love that Jesus demanded was made specific at certain points:

(1) "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." When Jesus asked them to pray for their enemies this would make them the intercessor instead of

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1 Matthew 5:48.
2 Another meaning of Τέλειος is complete. 3 Matthew 5:44.
the judge of their foe. This kind of love is love of the unlovable, in spite of the unloving and unlovable character of the other. It is love unmerited and undeserved yet given.

(2) "If you salute only your brethren..." Jesus was asking them to be friendly and concerned toward those who are not of their own kin. Here indeed is unconditioned love.

In the parallel passage found in the Sermon on the Plain, Luke records the command as, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful". This is pictured in three ways:

(1) Lend without hope of return. True love has eliminated thought of self in the overall concern in the other's self.

(2) Do good to others than those who do good to you. This is overflowing love in action.

(3) Be kind to the ungrateful and selfish. Love in Jesus' teaching was the commitment of all one's personality (thought, feeling, and above all, will) in favor of the other's good, in spite of that other's attitude toward the one loving.

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Jesus has given his hearers vivid pictures of what it means to be perfect (or merciful) as is their heavenly Father. This is perfection at the point of unmerited, persistent, overflowing, unlimited and immeasurable love freely given.

II. UNCONDITIONED LOVE OF GOD

IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS

The kind of love that Jesus pictured to his hearers in the preceding section has its origin in and perfect manifestation in God who cares for all men however they treat him.

Jesus told his followers to be perfect as their Father, who makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust, is perfect. This love of God, then, is universal as the sun and rain, and it takes all men without distinction into its universal embrace. Man's love must be no less universal.

One of the most meaningful presentations of God's character in the realm of love for the undeserving, is in the parable Jesus told of the Prodigal son, found in the Gospel of Luke. In this story, when the son who had

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squared his wealth in the far country came to his good senses and returned to his father, his father ran with compassion to meet him before he arrived, and kissed the wayward son even before he found out in what spirit the son had returned. He lavished upon him fine clothes and abundant good food, and rejoiced at his return.

This story reveals the significance of Father as God deals with his children, bestowing upon them undeserved, unlimited, unconditional love.

III. THE TEACHING EMBODIED

When Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God and the meaning of true sonship in terms of forgiving, outgoing love, he was figuratively standing knee-deep in that activity himself. As he urged his followers to do good to others his relentless giving of self gave reality to the demand. The words, "Love your enemies", pulsed with life when Jesus said to Zacchaeus, a despised tax-collector and scoundrel, "I must stay at your house today." His urgent charge to do good without thought of recompense burst into actuality when he rebuked the crowd around him to stand aside so the little ones could get through, saying, "Let the children come to me and do not hinder

1Luke 19:5.
them..." When he told his followers to be merciful he spelled it out in pity for the blind men and compassion on the crowds.

Always he spoke with authority, for his words issued from the scene of personal involvement. And because he taught men that they must be like their Father in unlimited love and mercy, because they could see what he meant by looking at his life, they began to sense something great in this man, something of God. They wondered at his gracious words, and with amazement exclaimed, "...we have seen strange things today." These expressions of wonder at his teaching and works of compassion were followed by greater declarations as the meaning of his ministry began to dawn in the hearts of his followers. "God has visited his people today", put the thoughts of the many into words.

The writer of the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John captured the meaning of Jesus' ministry when he said, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

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The perfect love of God, and the perfect love of his children was here, right before their very eyes, embodied in a person. The λόγος became a Ἰησοῦς. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."

Nowhere did Jesus make more clear the meaning of the completeness of the unconditioned love than he did at the cross. It was his love for the sinners that brought him there. He gave of his life day by day in unlimited love in order to bring into their lives the good news of God's love for them; he gave of his life on the cross in the same measureless love.

The early church was convinced of the validity of Jesus' teaching that God loved sacrificially and that it was his love as well as Jesus' that led to the Crucifixion: "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." There was a remarkable identification of the love of Jesus which led him to the cross and the love of God which gave him. The death of Jesus was confidently traced to the working of the love of God.

\[1\text{I John 4:9.}\]
\[2\text{Romans 5:8}\]
Moreover, this is conceived as a sacrificial love. It is not a case merely of a gracious action or a gracious gift; it is something infinitely costly, a giving up by God of His only Son in the process of dealing with our sins, so great is His love toward us.¹

John expressed the perfect love of God and the perfect love of Jesus in this way: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..."² and, "Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."³ Paul put the two truths together and proclaimed the fundamental Christian message, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."⁴ The power and the eternal quality of this perfect love of God for man, of man for God and of man for man which came to be recognized by the early Christians was convincingly expressed by Paul:

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁵

IV. THE WAY OF ἀγάπη

Three words in Greek which meant 'love' were:

¹Donald M. Baillie, God was in Christ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 187.
⁵Romans 8:37.
ἐράω, φιλέω, ἀγαπάω. Ἐράω was associated with the sexual passion; φιλέω was used of warm, domestic, affection (parents and children, husband and wife); ἀγαπάω expressed great esteem. When these words were adopted into Hellenistic Greek, a gradual change was made in their use. Ἐράω was very rarely used, and in ecclesiastical and biblical Greek a decided preference was shown for the use of ἀγαπάω. This was due to the use of the Hebrew word to express the love of God to man, and of man to God. It was felt that the greater severity implied in ἀγαπάω fitted in better than φιλέω for this purpose. Not only was it elevated in meaning but broadened to include love of father and son, husband and wife, and also to include love such as Samson’s love for Delilah and Hosea’s love for his adulterous wife. To Hebrew writers there was in a pure love of God or of righteousness something of the intensity which is the highest characteristic of human passion (Isaiah 62:5). Ἀγαπάω in the Septuagint corresponds in all its characteristics to the English ‘love’.

Along with modifying the meaning of ἀγαπάω the Septuagint created a new word, ἀγάπη. Though it was used only occasionally in the Septuagint, in early

Christian writers its use became habitual and general. Nothing could show more clearly that a new principle had been created than this emergence of a new word.

The great reason why Christian thought fastened on ἀγάπη is that ἀγάπη demands the exercise of the whole man. Christian love must not only extend to our nearest and dearest, our kith and kin, our friends and those who love us; Christian love must extend to the Christian fellowship, to the neighbour, to the enemy, to all the world. Ἀγάπη had to do with the mind, it was not simply an emotion. The revelation of God in Christ was presented as an inspiration to knowledge as well as to adoring love. To the Roman who often felt that the gods cared to avenge rather than save, and to the Greek who thought of divine love as either a cosmic impersonal force or as an expression of divine favouritism, belief in a God who was loving in the sense that the early Church taught this was indeed a revelation. "The interesting thing is to observe how amid all their idiosyncrasies, the New Testament writers are conscious that the heart of the revelation lies in what they commonly call 'love'".

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The paramount passage for the interpretation of the meaning of ἀγάπη is in Matthew 5:43-48 where the follower of Christ is bidden to love his enemies in order to be like God who sends his rain on the just and unjust, seeking nothing but his highest good. Thus ἀγάπη is unconquerable benevolence, invincible good will.

When Jesus said, "I came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it", he meant that he came to fill it to the full with ἀγάπη. The Law said to love your neighbors, but Jesus took the ideal of love and service taught in Judaism and intensified it till it overflowed the specific requirements of the Mosaic Law. It was in the depth and power of the conviction of sacrificial love and service that Jesus surpassed Judaism. He declared with his life that a life of ἀγάπη was worth all the sacrifice...

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake..." The ideal of perfection—man must love as God loves—was lived by one man. To love as Christ is to love as God, and man can be Godlike because he is Christ-like at the point of unconditioned love. This is the great ideal presented in Matthew 5:48. It is the key to

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1Barclay, op. cit., p. 15. 2Matthew 5:17. 3Matthew 5:10.
a fuller understanding of some of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, especially in the following verses:

Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful..." for mercy springs from loving concern for others regardless of cost to self, the quality of God's love which Jesus' followers could see as Jesus ministered to the demoniac, the blind, the leper.

Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God". God's love must be that which his children manifest as they, without thought for their own safety, seek to cast out injustice and establish peace because love seeks the highest good for all. This means actively bridging gulfs, healing breaches, and sweetening bitterness between man and man through untiring love for one's fellowman.

Matthew 5:13-15 "You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world." Unconditioned love goes out seeking the welfare of others, not content to do only what is at hand but to search out those in need of God's love. Jesus said to his followers, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also; for that is why I came out", and he went about all Galilee teaching and preaching and healing, bringing the love of

\(^1\)Mark 1:38
God, by his own love, into the lives of those around him.

Matthew 5:23-24 "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift." Men are to take the initiative in their kindness to others. The love that led Jesus to the cross was love that sought right relationship of man with man, and man with God. The anguish he expressed as he wept over Jerusalem's blindness to love was the same kind of anguish his follower should feel as he comes before God realizing that there is disharmony in his relationship with an erring brother, and he is restless and discontent till he make all effort for reconciliation.

Matthew 5:28, 32 "...everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.....everyone who divorces his wife...makes her an adulteress." Christlike love is the love that seeks the highest and best for another person. The lustful look springs from an attitude that seeks to gratify self, and violates the sanctity of God's creation, cutting to the quick the other person's dignity. This is a definite contradiction to loving concern for another. The act of divorce stems from a self-centered
love, and is a retreat from sacrificial love which demands not only that a person give up his comfort, but perhaps his life. Jesus loved as God loves—at great cost to himself. Thus must the sons of God love. Jesus spoke to woman as he spoke to man: with a demand for a life lived in unconditioned love, and as a person of infinite worth. Man, too, must love woman as a person with the same great value as he has.

Matthew 5:38-42 "Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you." This is one of the clearest revelations of the meaning of the love which bears no resentment, no desire for retaliation, but puts forth all effort to win another to the way of love. Here Jesus proclaims his confidence in the power of love. A wrong is never cancelled by avenging it, but only magnified and perpetuated. Sacrificial love is a positive, active power for bringing about righteous living in the true sense. The depth of this love is measureless, and overflows into unlimited forgiveness, seen in the following:

Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men their
trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Everywhere Jesus taught, the forgiving quality of this unconditioned love was evident: "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." "I came not to call the righteous, but the sinners." "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much;". The unlimited love of Jesus saw beyond the imperfection of the love in the people he met into the perfection that it could become. So must his followers love. The comprehensiveness of this forgiving love that God willed for all his sons to manifest seared into the souls of Jesus' followers at the cross when, in spite of the agony and shame that the unloving had heaped upon him, he could cry, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The range of this unconditioned love extends from its greatness in the big event—the cross—to its greatness in little events—everyday living. "Judge not, that you be not judged" points to an invincible good will that yields not to critical fault finding but lovingly seeks the best in a brother, stimulating him to

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respond in the positive direction of fulfilling his true nature.

CONCLUSION

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine various observations that were made in the preceding chapters so that the meaning of some of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount may be seen in fuller perspective.

In Chapter Two some aspects of Gospel criticism and their bearing on the Sermon were investigated and the following conclusions drawn:

The actual life and death of Jesus are the focus from which spring the oral tradition about him. The oral account was originally formulated by eyewitnesses of his ministry, who went about the countryside telling over and over the story of Jesus, through whom God had spoken. This preaching of the good news created communities of believers who continued to spread the oral tradition.

The value of the story plus the death of eyewitness emphasized the need for putting the oral into the written. Various stories and sayings of such community, flavored to some extent by its experiences and needs, were put down in writing. Eventually there emerged our first canonical Gospel, a written record of the oral good
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

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In Chapter Two some aspects of Gospel criticism and their bearing on the Sermon were investigated and the following conclusions drawn:

The actual life and death of Jesus was the fount from which sprang the oral tradition about him. The oral account was originally formulated by eyewitnesses of his ministry, who went about the countryside telling over and over the story of Jesus, through whom God had spoken. This preaching of the good news created communities of believers who continued to spread the oral tradition.

The value of the story plus the death of eyewitnesses emphasized the need for putting the oral into the written. Various stories and sayings of each community, flavored to some extent by its experiences and needs, were put down in writing. Eventually there emerged our first canonical Gospel, a written form of the oral good
news preached by the first Christians to win converts and to sustain the believers, put together by the Evangelist, Mark. A little later appeared the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, each leaning heavily on Mark and adding to it other forms of the tradition peculiar to his community. Still later came the Gospel according to John. The locale of the evangelist, the readers for whom he was writing, and the inherent needs of the church at the time of the writing left some marks on the completed Gospel in each case.

Form Criticism maintained that the early Church played a major role in the transition from oral to written tradition, actually creating much of the material, according to extreme Form Critics. Though Form Criticism has failed to give sufficient credit to eyewitnesses in the formative period of the tradition, they had given strength to the proposal that the early Christian community was important in the process of transmitting the tradition; and they have also stimulated the study of gospel origins.

A critical examination of Matthew has led many scholars to the conclusion that the Sermon on the Mount is a compilation of sayings of Jesus given over a period of his ministry, rather than a single discourse at one sitting. That the Sermon, in all its greatness, does not contain the whole of Jesus' teaching is evident from a
careful study of the Gospels.

In Chapter Three, a comparison of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount with some other New Testament literature revealed a close parallelism of content and interpretation with minor fluctuations due, perhaps, to the needs of the community hearing the message. In comparing the Sermon with Old Testament and Rabbinic literature remarkable similarities were observed in the ethical teaching of each, indicating the Jewishness of Jesus and the historical continuity of religious truths through the ages as experienced by the Hebrews. Jesus' ethics differed from the teachings contained in Jewish literature in significant ways, certainly at the point of the extravagance of his demands of right conduct stemming from right motive.

Chapter Three gave a commentary on the text of the Sermon in order to clarify word meanings and current idioms of the times, and to give a more lucid basis for further interpretation of the teachings in the Sermon.

Chapter Four went beyond the verse by verse analysis in the preceding chapter to point up the great themes in the Sermon on the Mount. In this section, the ethical teachings of Jesus in the Sermon that were lifted up were:

1. The blessed life expressed by such inner
qualities as mercy, compassion, humility, forgiveness, peacemaking, sincerity; putting God first, others second and self last.

(2) Aggressive concern for others which issues in service exceeding the letter of the Law.

(3) Recognition of the supreme worth of each individual, including self, which prohibits not only any action but any thought which contradicts that worth.

(4) A life lived in complete trust in God and his good purposes.

(5) A benevolent spirit which actively seeks, through informed intelligence, the good of another.

The chapter concluded with the observation that those who heard these teachings were convinced that Jesus spoke with unique authority.

In Chapter Five, it was proposed that the theme which surpassed all others was that of the ideal of perfection. In the context of both Matthew and Luke this ideal was seen to be that quality of unconditioned love which God expressed to good and evil alike and which he willed for his children to express. Jesus told men what the Father's love was like and urged them to attain to this likeness. There was a concord between word and life that made the teacher of righteousness an example of righteousness, especially at the point of the love which
was the core of his ethic. The statements about the ideal of the good life in the Gospels, including the Sermon on the Mount, may be thought of as a description of one particular life. His absolute obedience to the first and second commandments, love to God and love to man, led him eventually to Golgotha, and the cross is regarded by Christians as a dramatic symbol of the love and sacrifice which were present in him throughout his ministry. The cross therefore speaks God's demand of men through Christ that they walk the way of love and sacrifice.

But the cross also speaks of God's grace for men, for the love incarnate in Christ is not only the standard by which men should live; it is a revelation of the character of God. The logical processes in the thinking of the early disciples cannot definitely be determined, but the New Testament makes it clear that they arrived at the conclusion that Jesus went to his crucifixion because of, not only his loving and sacrificial spirit, but also because of the outgoing, unlimited love of God. "God so loved the world that he gave his only son." \(^1\) "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." \(^2\)

Matthew 5:43-48, with its theme of unlimited love, points the reader beyond the Sermon on the Mount

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\(^1\)John 3:16. \(^2\)II Corinthians 5:19.
to the meaning of the public career of Jesus. It goes beyond ethics to theology, for it refers to God and makes a judgment about his nature. Not only in the Sermon on the Mount, but also in his total ministry the central figure of the New Testament seems to be saying to men, "You shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, namely, in his quality of unconditioned love." And in his own life he demonstrated this quality of God and translated the ethical ideal for men into a reality.

Note: Eschatology and its relation to ethics is a pertinent area of study which this thesis did not attempt to cover, though the writer is vitally interested in every method of scholarly study of the Bible which can help to penetrate beyond the printed page to the realities of which it bears witness. However, Jesus came with a real message from God, "not to convince men of their inability to fulfill them; on the contrary these demands are meant to be fulfilled."

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


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C. ARTICLES IN COLLECTIONS


APPENDIX A

PASSAGES IN THE GOSPEL OF THE HUMAN FOUND IN MATTHEW AND LUKE

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APPENDIXES

1. In preparation of these tables the writers have been helped especially by E. B. Rolfe's work in the ARN, pp. 30-121.


APPENDIX A

PASSAGES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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* In preparation of this table the writer has been helped especially by C. G. Montefiore, op. cit., pp 29-127.

APPENDIX B

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B. With regard to the current teachings: six
   topics (Matt. 5:21-48)

C. With regard to the current piety (Matt. 6:1-18)

   1. Alms (Matt. 6:2-4)

   2. Prayer (including the Lord's prayer)
      (Matt. 6:5-15)

   3. Fasting (Matt. 6:16-18)

III. Singlehearted devotion to God (Matt. 6:19-34)

A. With regard to possessions (Matt. 6:19-24)

B. With regard to anxiety (Matt. 6:25-32)

C. Conclusion (Matt. 6:33,34)

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1 This outline on this page and the following page is from Amos Wilder, "The Sermon on the Mount", The Interpreter's Bible, George Buttrick (ed.), et al., 12 volumes (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), VII, p. 157.
IV. Various injunctions (Matt. 7:1-25)

A. Judge not, yet discriminate (Matt. 7:1-6)

B. Encouragement to prayer: God's bounty and our consequent obligation: The Golden Rule
(Matt. 7:7-12)

C. The narrow gate (Matt. 7:13-13)

D. False prophets and false disciples (Matt. 7:15-23)

V. The concluding parable (Matt 7:24-27)
APPENDIX C

THE LORD'S PRAYER:
MATTHEW COMPARED WITH LUKE

Matthew
(6:9-13)

9 Pray then like this:
   Our Father which art in heaven
   Hallowed be thy name:

10 Thy kingdom come:
   Thy will be done,
   On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread;

12 And forgive us our debts,
   As we also have forgiven our debtors;

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Luke
(11:2-4)

2 When you pray, say:
   Father
   Hallowed be thy name.
   Thy kingdom come.

3 Give us each day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins,
   For we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us;
   And lead us not into temptation.