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# Studies in Discipleship

By MARTIN H. FRANZMANN

## II

### THE MESSIANIC MOLDING OF THE DISCIPLE'S WILL

(Matt. 4:17—7:29)

#### *The Discourses of Jesus in the Structure of the Gospel According to Matthew*

WHEN Jesus said, "Follow Me," He was confiscating man for Himself. For that word applied to man with personal and inescapable urgency His call to repentance and His annunciation of the Kingdom come; it brought the gift and the claim of the Kingdom to bear on man. The whole Gospel of Matthew is simply the record of this process of progressive Messianic confiscation, the record of how Jesus shaped men in the mold of repentance (the Kingdom-imperative), of how the Christ created men in His image, Christian men. Matthew's record, with its rich reproduction of the words of Jesus, is anything but a record of the pedagogy of Jesus. It is the record of Messianic action, both in its recounting of Jesus' deeds and in its recounting of His words. The structure of Matthew's Gospel already makes this clear. Matthew's Gospel is articulated by five major discourses, each set off by the concluding formula "When Jesus finished these sayings" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). These five discourses as a whole are preceded by the story of the beginnings of Jesus' Messianic ministry and are followed by the narrative of His death and resurrection. They are set in a framework which is indubitably Messianic. Moreover, each of the discourses

is preceded by a narrative of the deeds of Jesus, deeds which are organically connected with the words which follow. The deeds prepare for the words, and the words illumine and interpret the deeds which precede them. We have to do with a prophetically interpreted record which presents Jesus the Christ laying claim to men in Messianic authority and with Messianic grace.

#### *The Sermon on the Mount: A Messianic Molding of the Disciple's Will*

The first discourse of Jesus recorded by Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5—7), cannot therefore be detached from what has preceded it. It builds upon the narrative of the beginnings (1:1—4:16), the genealogy, and the seven fulfillments. It is, furthermore, prepared for by the narrative of 4:17-25 and is organically connected with it. The Sermon on the Mount in this framework is to be understood and appreciated as the record of how the call of Jesus, issued by Him with Messianic authority, summoning men into the eschatological reality of the kingdom of heaven, is made to determine the whole existence of the disciple. Jesus is, in the Sermon on the Mount, Messianically molding the will of His disciple, so that the disciple is led to will a life wholly drawn from God the King, as He is revealed in these last days by His Son and Anointed One, and a life wholly lived for God the King in virtue of the disciple's communion with Jesus, God's Son and Anointed One.

When Jesus "opened His mouth and taught" His disciples, He was not, in Mat-

threw's eyes, a master teacher enunciating a higher system of ethics; He was the Messianic Master molding the wills of those whom He had claimed by His call. This is the Jesus who began His ministry by saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (4:17). That proclamation is in Matthew's Gospel verbally identical with the earlier proclamation of John the Baptist (3:2). Jesus was indeed renewing the message of the Baptist and was crowning and completing the ministry which John's imprisonment had terminated. But there is an unmistakable difference nevertheless. Matthew had interpreted John's cry with the words of Is. 40:3:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
Prepare the way of the Lord.

John's cry was the preparation for the coming of the Kingdom. Jesus' proclamation Matthew interpreted with Is. 9:2:

The people who sat in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
and for those who sat in the region  
and shadow of death  
light has dawned.

When Jesus proclaimed the advent of the Kingdom, the light of God's new creation was dawning. Jesus Himself was that new Light, the Dawn of that new creation. The Kingdom was at hand, in Jesus' words and works, in His Messianic presence.

We have already seen how the calling of the four disciples was a Messianic act, conferring the gift and imposing the claim of God's gracious royal reign (4:18-22). The brief summary description of Jesus' activity which follows (4:23-25) is also Messianic in tone. He taught with that authority which the men of Israel had missed in their teachers during the prophetic centuries since Malachi (4:23; 7:28,

29). He "preached"; the word which we are forced to translate with "preach" (4:23) has in it more of power and authority than lies in the stirring sermon or persuasive homily; it suggested the King's messenger upon the King's business. Jesus' deeds had about them the same aura of Messianic authority (4:24). He healed the sick, the epileptics, and the paralytics. The light of the new creation brought life to men and restored God's ravaged creation. More, He invaded the satanic domain and plundered the "strong man's" house when He healed the demoniacs. These were the spoils of the victory won in the Temptation (4:1-10; cf. 12:28,29).

His fame spread throughout all Syria, and crowds followed Him from all Palestine (4:24,25). He had the raw materials of a vigorous, and perhaps violent, Messianic movement in His hands. But this Messiah sought no Messianic movement; He sought men. "Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them" (5:1,2). The sought-after Messiah sifted those who followed and by withdrawing made a division between those who sought Him earnestly and those who sought Him curiously. Only the former were permitted to witness how His Word molded His disciples, what gifts He gave them, what claim He laid upon them.

#### *The Messianic Giver Molds His Disciple's Will: The Beatitudes*

He stands before His disciples as the Giver. He is the Messianic Giver. Nine times He calls His disciples "blessed" (5:3-11). That word occurs five times in Matthew outside the Beatitudes, and in

all cases it describes man in his relationship to the Messiah—blessed is the man who is not offended at the lowliness of the ministering Messiah (11:6); blessed are the eyes which see in Jesus of Nazareth, in the Sower who goes out to sow, the coming of the reign of God (13:16,17); blessed is Simon because the Father has revealed the Messiah to him (16:17); blessed is the servant whom the returning Messiah finds faithful at his post (24:46). As Messianic Giver He gives absolutely, into emptiness. He gives to the poor in spirit, to those whose outer state is such that they must look to God for everything and whose inner disposition is such that they do look to God for everything, and He gives these beggars no less than the kingdom of heaven itself (5:3). He gives them the reign of God, whose grace is as wide as mankind's need of it, and all that goes before and all that follows after in the Gospel shows that that reign is present in Jesus Himself, that Jesus is the gracious reign of God in person.

He gives to those who mourn (5:4). The mourners are "those who mourn in Zion" (Is. 61:3), the afflicted, the broken-hearted, the captive who long for the advent of the King who shall set them free and make them whole and glad. These mourners are the men whose night of weeping shall be the morn of song when their King takes up His power and reigns. He promises them comfort, and again the gift is Jesus Himself; ears attuned to the Old Testament would catch in Jesus' words the allusion to the Anointed Servant of the Lord God who is sent "to comfort all who mourn" (Is. 61:2). For the men of Israel contemporary with Jesus "looking for the *Consolation* of Israel" and awaiting "the

Lord's *Christ*" were two ways of saying the same thing (Luke 2:25,26).

He gives to the meek (15:5). His words here are practically a quotation from Ps. 37:11. That psalm describes the meek in such a way as to exclude from the word those milk-and-mush connotations which the word "meek" has acquired in a secularized English usage. The meek are they who trust in the Lord, who commit their way to the Lord and trust in Him, confident that He will bring forth their vindication as the light and their right as the noonday; they are still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him, knowing that the steps of a man are from the Lord, knowing that

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;

He is their Refuge in the time of trouble.

The Lord helps them and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in Him. (Ps. 37:39,40)

Jesus goes as the Messiah this meek way of serene and confident dependence on God Himself; He will invite men to Himself as to One who is meek and lowly in heart (11:29); He will make His Messianic entry into Jerusalem with no means of power, no trappings of royalty, on a borrowed beast, with nothing and no one but God to depend on; He will come as the *meek* King (21:5), the meek Messiah. The Lord delivers the meek; and He of whom even His enemies said that He "trusted in the Lord" will be vindicated by the Lord, and the meek Messiah will say, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" (28:18). And He who went the way of poverty and meekness, with God for His riches and God

for his Might, shall be the Messiah foretold by Isaiah:

With righteousness He shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. (Is. 11:4)

He therefore promises the meek who follow in His train the earth as their inheritance. The earth they stand upon so precariously now, threatened and pushed by powers too strong for them, is their earth still, the heritage they shall surely enter upon.

He promises those who hunger and thirst for righteousness that they shall be fed full. Here, too, the Messiah is conferring the gift of which He speaks. Jeremiah had spoken of a descendant of David whose reign was to give the people of God all that her earthly kings had failed to give her, and His name was to be "The Lord is our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:5,6). Jesus is that given Righteousness in person, a fact which He expresses once more in the last beatitude, where He parallels "for righteousness' sake" with "on My account"—to be persecuted for righteousness' sake and for Jesus' sake is one and the same thing (5:10,11).

The first four beatitudes are a unit. The persons are the same throughout. The poor, the mourners, the meek, the hungerers and thirsters, are all the disciples who have heeded the call to repentance and have believed the promise of the Kingdom. And the promises are really one promise throughout. The comfort for the mourners, the inheriting of the world, the righteousness as Messianic gift are all descriptions of what the royal reign of God means for repentant man. Jesus is not delineating certain "virtues" and assigning to them condign rewards; He is promising

and giving to those who have nothing and need everything that which answers their every need. He is pointing men to the present fact and the future hope of God acting for men and for their salvation. The Kingdom is there for the poor. The universal and absolute future reign of God projects into the present and beatifies the beggar even now. It is a present reality in the person of Jesus, who is not a substitute for God but is the Revelation of God. The Anointed King mediates the reign of God for man. It is God's own act which comforts the mourner, for the Lord Himself anoints His Servant and endues Him with His Spirit in order that He may "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" and "comfort all who mourn" (Is. 61:1,2). The meek, through the meek Messiah, shall obtain the earth as their inheritance. This means that the earth becomes man's Promised Land by God's own disposing and giving and is therefore certainly and assuredly His. It means also that this future heritage is man's assured possession even now; again the future projects into the present in these last days of God's last motion toward His final goal. It means also that since nothing less than the earth is involved God's reign embraces and will transfigure all creation. Man and man's world shall be redeemed together by a Christ who came to earth and walked and worked in the world, who was born as a descendant of a Jewish king and was crucified under a Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate. The hungerers and thirsters shall be fed full by God Himself. It is the Lord who raises up for David the Messiah, and His coming signifies that the Lord will make all right between Himself and His people (Jer. 23:5,6).

The last four beatitudes, too, are a unit. In their promises they bring into view the last Judgment and the new world of God created by God's royal action. And they make their promises to men who by repentance and faith, by union and communion with the Christ, have manifested that new world of God in their lives here and now. To the men who have been made actively merciful by God's great deed of mercy in His Anointed One, who have turned and followed Him who reveals God as desiring mercy and not sacrifice (9:13; 12:7), there is promised mercy in the last Judgment (5:7). They shall hear, to their astonishment, the recital of their mercies from the lips of the Christ in whom they have believed, who shall bury their sins in forgiving silence and remember only their loving-kindnesses and bid them come to Him and inherit the kingdom prepared for them (25:34-40).

The pure in heart, who have learned of the Son that sonship means obedience; the pure in heart who have in communion with the Son learned that singleness of devotion which is minded to live of every word which proceeds from the mouth of God; the pure in heart who are minded to give God an unbroken and unquestioning obedience of faith and to adore Him in an uncompromised, pure, and total worship (4:1-10) — the pure in heart shall see God face to face at the end of days (4:8). The vision of God is for Biblical thought no mystical experience but an eschatological one. In this age men hear God's Word; in the world to come they shall see His face.

The peacemakers, men who have learned their art from the Messianic Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6), from that meek King who

speaks peace to the nations (Zech. 9:10), shall be acknowledged and proclaimed by God as sons, that is, as men who have drawn their life from Him and have in their willing and doing been determined by their origin in God (5:9). The God who proclaimed *Him* Son who became Prince of Peace by ministering to sinners and atoning for their guilt (3:17) will call them sons who are this Son's followers and witnesses in word and deed. The Kingdom is here described in terms of fatherhood. God the King and God the Father are but two faces of one golden and imperishable coin. Whether the King blesses the beggars (5:3) or the Father receives sons, (5:9), one act of God is thus described, one pure and perfect grace of God is being proclaimed.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (5:10). The ways of God are mysterious ways and an offense to human thinking and desiring. By defeat and dying His kingdom comes and His will is done. The Son and Servant goes the way through the contempt and rejection of men to glory; all sons and servants of God are called upon to follow Him upon that way. If He bows His meek head to mortal pain and then takes up His power and reigns, that sets the pattern for all who follow Him. To the persecuted belongs the kingdom of heaven. "We suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" is Paul's version of the last beatitude (Rom. 8:17). Here, where the "blessedness" of the disciple is most sharply paradoxical and goes most against the human grain, Jesus calls upon the disciple to speak a resolute and glad yea to it (5:11,12). He is not only to accept it, he is to exult in it; for just in

this way, by his assent to suffering, is he brought into full communion with the Christ and has his life centered wholly in God. Thus, by suffering for the Christ's sake, he stands in the succession of the prophets and is sure of his heavenly, eschatological reward.

### *Discipleship and Good Works*

The call of Jesus had been a call to ministry: "I will make you fishers of men" (4:19). The Beatitudes picture the disciple both as receiving from God in pure passivity and as caught up into the motion of the God who acts and the Messiah who gives. The beggar can only receive, but he does receive, and the mercy which he receives makes him merciful. The peace which God gives him makes him a peacemaker. Men molded by the Messiah so vigorously and so decisively *act* in the world that the world persecutes them for it.

In the metaphors of salt and light Jesus makes plain to His disciples how inseparable discipleship and activity are, how impossible any thought of a quietistic and contemplative discipleship is (5:13-16). The disciples *are* salt and light by virtue of what the call of Jesus has given them and what the Word of Jesus is giving them. They need not trouble themselves about how they may become salt or light, any more than a city set on a hilltop need concern itself about becoming conspicuous. Where they are and what they are, the fact that they are with Jesus and in communion with the Messiah, gives them inevitably a function which is as universal as the authority of the Messiah. They are the salt of the whole earth and the light of the whole world.

Both salt and light are, of course, thought of as having a salutary effect upon their surroundings. Salt seasons and preserves, and light dispels darkness and makes a man's goings and comings certain and secure. But what Jesus is stressing in the metaphors is the fact that in salt and light nature and functions are one; salt salts because it is salt, and light illumines because it is light. Salt which no longer salts has ceased to be salt. The disciple who ceases to minister has forfeited his existence as disciple and has destroyed himself. He has by forgoing activity disrupted his communion with the Christ; and there is no second way to saltiness. A man can be light only by his communion with the Christ, and he can remain light only by shining.

The disciple is salt and light by faith; and faith is no chemical process but a personal relationship and therefore involves responsibility and obedience. The disciple cannot make himself light, but he can obscure his light. He cannot make himself salt, but he can in irresponsible disobedience frustrate his saltiness. Jesus therefore implants with faith that holy fear which makes a man work in awe and trembling lest he should have received the grace of God to no purpose. Again Jesus centers the disciple's life squarely in God and puts it under the tension of the approaching end of days. The disciples live and work as sons of God, and they so live and work that God may at the last, when all false works are judged and all false glories have been erased, be glorified by all — be known as God, acknowledged as God, adored as God, by His redeemed creation (5:16; cf. Phil. 2:11).

*The Righteousness of the Disciple:  
The Disciple and the Law*

Jesus had portrayed the blessedness of His disciple, his nature and destiny, and his worldwide ministry as successor to the prophets in asserting the glory of God, all without so much as mentioning the Law. In a land and at a time when the Torah, and the Tradition which had grown up around it, were the sole and all-comprehensive basis of the rabbi-disciple relationship this was a startling omission. What did it signify? Not only scribe and Pharisee, who soon come to eye Jesus with suspicion, but Jesus' disciples themselves needed to be told what the Law, God's revelation of His will for Israel, means for Jesus. "Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them" (5:17). What Jesus had done by implication in the temptation, in the solitary hour of His decision for God and against Satan (4:1-10), He now did publicly and explicitly. He had there overcome Satan with three texts from Deuteronomy; He now explicitly spoke His whole assent to the Bible of His people, to the entire Word which God had given Israel ("Law and Prophets" describes the Old Testament). More than that, He marked His whole Messianic mission as determined by that Scripture. All that is new and wondrous in the Messiah, far from being the abolishing of the ancient Word of God, is rather the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. All that the ancient Word had spoken concerning communion between God and man, concerning a people of God privileged to live under God's promise and called upon to live under His command, reaches its goal and

finds its fulfillment in Him. There never could be, and there never was, among Jesus' disciples any proclamation of Jesus the Messiah which did not witness to Him as having lived, worked, died, and risen again "according to the Scriptures."

Jesus gave a full assent to the ancient Word of God, an assent which involved His whole life and mission and so committed him totally. He thereby committed Himself to the Law. No rabbi before Jesus and no moralist or legalist after Jesus ever took the Law with such absolute seriousness as Jesus did. "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" (5:18). The Law, the whole Law, without subtraction or compromise, determined His existence. And He solemnly declared that every man's place in the kingdom of heaven would depend on how seriously he took the Law, on how he obeyed it and how he taught it (5:19).

How does a man take it seriously? The full and explicit answer to that question could be given only on the far side of the cross and the resurrection, as Paul was to give it. "God has done what the Law, weakened by the flesh, could not do; sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin [that is, as a sin-offering] He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:3,4). But the answer is already germinally present in the Sermon on the Mount. A man takes the Law seriously by taking seriously the fact that the Messiah, who fulfills the Law, has come. That is, man must recognize that the Law's intention is fulfilled not by the way of scribe and Pharisee,

not by way of a legalism which thinks man as man capable of confronting and fulfilling the uncompromising claim of God in the Law; that way, as the sequel shows (5:21 ff.), never takes the Law in its full seriousness but haggles with God and by casuistry and compromise creates room and scope under the Law for man's sin. Only in the new situation created by the coming of the Messiah, only under the creative Word of the Messiah, is a man enabled to confront the Law as the bare will of God for him, for now the Messiah is speaking. He is not merely uttering the inscribed will of God; he is writing the Law in man's heart. That writing is made possible by His whole course of complete self-devotion which leads Him to stand where the sinner must stand in order to fulfill all righteousness for a mankind under the wrath of God (3:15; cf. 3:7-12). The impotence of the Law is now being done away with by the Messiah; now man, in this new situation, is being called upon to face the bare but no longer terrible imperative of the will of God and to obey it.

That is the significance of Jesus' "But I say to you" (5:22, 28, etc.). He is confronting the disciple whom he has drawn into the communion of His self-giving love with the bare imperative of the will of God. The law presupposes both: the sanctity of human life as the gift of the Creator and the wrath of fallen man, the fact that man's settled determination is to assert himself and to destroy whatever impedes him in his self-assertion, or at any rate to hurt and degrade what he cannot destroy. Therefore the Law can say only, "You shall not kill." Jesus not only lifts the will of God expressed in the Law

above the casuistry which concentrates on the ascertainable physical act and prescribes accordingly; he radicalizes the demand of the Law by making it cover the inner man and therefore the whole man. The motions of his heart and the mere breath of his syllables are as much involved as his fist. The whole man is to be wholly intent upon the will of God, the Creator and Protector of life (5:21, 22).

This stringent and inescapable demand which Jesus makes of His disciples is treated as something which is, for them, merely self-evident. It is plain: Jesus is not urging upon His disciples a more strenuous moralism; He is bidding them spell out in their lives the implications of their new existence. There is no escaping this demand, there is no evading it. They can no longer veil their lovelessness with cultic performances, such as sacrifice. In Jesus they are confronted with the God who desires mercy and not sacrifice (9:13; Hos. 6:6). As the Christ is more than the temple (12:6), so the least of His brothers is of greater import than any sacrifice offered in the temple. "First be reconciled to your brother" (5:23, 24). As there can be no evasion, there can also be no delay. Love is not dilatory, and these are the last days. The fires of God's Judgment upon lovelessness await the man who degrades his brother with a word (5:22). In all man's dealings with his fellow man he never has to do with the present alone or with man alone; he is on the way to the last Judgment with his fellow man, and he has to do with God the Judge. Therefore the command is: "Make friends *quickly* with your accuser, while you are going with him to court" (5:25). The God who has in reckless, self-imparting

love filled the empty hands of the beggar and created comfort for all who mourn will deal severely with all who take from the beggar and create mourners (5:25,26). The coming of the Messiah "makes full" the measure of God's love; it therefore "makes full" also the measure of His judgment. His coming is fulfillment in every sense.

The Law presupposes both: the sanctity of marriage, on the one hand, as the pure and loving communion of the sexes established by the Creator (19:4), and on the other hand, it presupposes the lust of fallen man which makes him look in hot concupiscence upon the woman whom God has not given him (5:28) and the hardheartedness of fallen man which makes him put away in cold aversion the woman whom God has given him (19:8). The Law therefore has to say, "You shall not commit adultery" (5:27), and Moses permitted men to divorce their wives because the Law could not overcome the hardness of man's heart. In Jesus God's original creation intent breaks through into the fallen world. He makes the bond between man and woman absolute, established in the heart and kept or broken there. Man is called upon to renounce all that impedes his assent to the will of God for his marriage: the eye that looks and lusts must be plucked out; the hand that reaches for what the evil heart desires must be cut off. Jesus is not, of course, suggesting self-mutilation. The Bible thinks of the body and its members as the expressive instruments of the will of man (as Hamlet can call his hands "these pickers and stealers"), and the demand to cut off the hand and to pluck out the eye is a drastic expression of the imperative to quell the evil will

which becomes incarnate in the look of the eye and the reach of the hand. Jesus is demanding something more persistent and therefore more agonizing than physical mutilation, and the alternative is eternal judgment (5:29,30).

Where marriage is so conceived of, divorce is eliminated. No willful act of man dare destroy what God has created, whether that act be adultery or divorce. Jesus' exception to His prohibition of divorce, "except on the ground of unchastity" (5:32), is therefore not a new kind of casuistry. He is not, after all, making the marriage bond less than absolute. Jesus championed the woman whom Jewish divorce law and practice made the helpless victim of her husband's whim, and He sought to make pure and wholesome the relationship between man and woman; but He could not and did not champion and protect those who defiled God's pure gift and defied God's will.

Jesus creates the new situation in which man's speech, too, can be as pure and as godly as his will toward his fellow man and fellow woman (5:33-37). The Law presupposes the fact that man is created in the image of God, for converse with God, and is therefore set before God and is responsible to God for his words. It presupposes also the prevailing secularity of fallen man's speaking. The Law recognizes the fact that fallen man is in flight from God and will not be responsible to God for his words. When a man says, "This is my right to howl," he is declaring that he wants to be a wolf and not a man. A wolf may stand upon a hill and howl without violating the sovereignty of God; when a man howls, he is in revolt against the God who made him man. The

Law therefore requires the oath, in order to invade the normal secularity of man's speaking, in order that man may be brought to speak responsibly before God, for this once at least, by way of exception if nothing more. Jesus removes not only the casuistry of oaths but also the oath itself (5:34-36). The disciple, in the new situation created by the Christ, says yes and no, and that is oath enough; for his every word is spoken in responsibility to God, is spoken in the presence of God, who has drawn near to him in his Son; his every word *is* an oath.

The disciple knows that everything beyond that simple yes and no comes from the Evil One (5:37) who casts the gray veil of secularity over man's words and conceals from men the fact that words have on them the accent of accountability, so that men come to think they can "say things" and ignore the fact that there is a God who will judge every idle word of man (12:36,37). The repentant disciple has spoken a whole assent to God, and with that assent he has renounced the devil and all his works and all his delusions. "Against such there is no Law" (Gal. 5:23), for in them the will of the Law (that men speak before God) is affirmed, while what made the Law impotent has been removed.

It is worth noting in this connection that when Jesus reproaches scribe and Pharisee for their infidelity to the Word of God entrusted to them, He does *not* bid them "swear not at all" (23:16-22); He calls them blind guides of the people of God not because they required the oath but because they in their teaching dealt frivolously with the oath. Here again it becomes clear that what Jesus is asking of

the disciple has its motive and basis in the new Messianic situation created by Jesus Himself. He demands of scribe and Pharisee only that they take seriously the word given them; He asks more of the disciple because He has given the disciple more than the elder revelation of God had given Israel.

The Law recognizes the inviolability of man as the creature of God. But the Law must also reckon with man's settled impulse of vengeance. The Law can therefore only set limits to man's vengeance: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (5:38); legal justice is a set of limited and regulated revenges. Jesus does what the Law could not do; He eradicates the settled impulse of vengeance from man's heart and tells the disciple, "Do not resist one who is evil" (5:39). He is fully conscious of the fact that He is thereby removing from the disciple's life a whole battery of guarantees which secure the life of man in this fallen world and is bidding him live more dangerously than ever man lived in this world. But it is the Servant Messiah who demands this; He is demanding only what He is doing once for all and for all men, centering His life wholly in God and recklessly exposing His love to the lovelessness of man:

The Lord God has opened My ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I turned not backward.  
I gave My back to the smiters  
and My cheeks to those who pulled out  
the beard;  
I hid not My face  
from shame and spitting (Is. 50:5,6).

Jesus is asking of the disciple only what His whole life and death is giving him.

It was not the Law itself which added

to "You shall love your neighbor" the words "and hate your enemy" (5:43). The scribe did that, and even he never did it in so many words. But he haggled with the Law, as man under the Law invariably does. By asking, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29), he sought and found areas in a man's life where a man did not have to love and thus gave scope to man's lovelessness. In saying, "Love your enemies" (5:44), Jesus is removing every limitation from love; love is no longer inspired by its object, no longer dependent upon the other man's response to it—love does not alter where it alteration finds nor bend with the remover to remove. In his beatitude upon the poor in spirit (5:3) Jesus had removed every limitation from God's royal grace; in his "Love your enemies" He removes every restriction from the disciple's love. The beggar is expected to be as prodigal in his giving and loving as was the King who enriched, ennobled, and adopted him. The love of the disciple has its root and source in the adoptive love of the Father: "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven" (5:44,45). The Father's love is love to the loveless shown, love to the evil and the unjust. Now, sonship cannot be claimed by man or won by him; it is always the gift of the Father. But sonship is not merely a thing given to man; it is a life to be lived by man in communion with his Father. Therefore the disciple both is and is called upon to be the son of his Father in heaven.

The pattern and the power for this lived sonship is Jesus Himself. The demand for the fuller righteousness culminates and is summed up in the demand for absolute

love, love for one's enemies. Jesus defined righteousness as love not only by His teaching but also, and primarily and basically, by His action as the Son of God. When He stood in the Jordan and asked to be baptized by John with the baptism of sinners, he was "fulfilling all righteousness" (3:15). He was doing the will of the God who sent Him; He was doing the will of God fully, completely, with eschatological once-for-allness by His supreme act of love, by loving His enemies; for He was identifying Himself with the mankind over whom John had pronounced the doom of the wrath of God. That is righteousness; therein the Son was being "perfect" as His Father in heaven was "perfect", in a love without curvature or distortion, a love round and whole and the same to all, an overflowing and reckless lost love, as Luther called it. To this love the disciple is being summoned, and for this love the Christ is enabling him.

It is thus Messianically that the disciple's will is being molded for righteousness. As part of an ethical system Jesus' demand for righteousness can only drive men mad; man does not have it in him to confront God's will thus absolutely, much less do it. And Jesus never credited man with such power. Those who assign to Jesus a more optimistic view of man's potentialities and capabilities than Paul's, for instance, are hardly taking the words of Jesus at face value. "Out of the heart," Jesus says, "come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander" (15:19); our "heart" is as old as we are; we are born with it. Man as man has in him what defiles him in God's eyes; the gap between Jesus' view of man and Paul's teaching of original sin grows very narrow indeed.

And so a man can become a good tree bearing good fruit only by God's planting. "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up" (15:13). Man not planted by the Father, man in his own "righteousness" (Jesus was speaking of Pharisees), is under the judgment of God. The parable of the unforgiving servant (18:23-35) pictures normal man as hopelessly indebted to his King, without hope of release from his doomed existence save by the never-to-be-expected, overwhelming grace of the King, who forgives the servant his debt. The Sermon on the Mount itself testifies to the lost estate of man. The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer assert the universality of the kingdom of heaven; it spans heaven and earth. But if it is there for all mankind, it is because it is there as God's gift to the hungerers and thirsters, to the beggars, to those who lack everything and have nothing but their need to commend them to God's royal favor. Perhaps the most damning indictment of man in the Sermon on the Mount, all the more damning because it is spoken incidentally (as something which Jesus is assuming, not asserting): "If you, then, *who are evil*, know how to give good gifts to your children" (7:11). Jesus is here taking man at his best, in his fatherhood, where the very structure imposed upon his life by the Creator forces a certain selflessness upon him—Jesus is taking man as the giver of good gifts to his children and is *there* calling him evil. Man's incapacity for real righteousness, for a real actualization of the will of God, could hardly be more strongly stated. And, of course, the whole way of Jesus on earth is eloquent testimony to His view of man. That way takes Him to the cross, and the

cross, as Jesus Himself saw it, proclaims the utter bankruptcy of man (20:28).

Jesus did not come to abolish but to fulfill. He upholds the Law, makes it stand, and makes it count as it never stood and counted before. But the Law was, significantly, not the first word He spoke in the molding of the disciple's will. He spoke first the clear Gospel of the Beatitudes, the words on the salt and light of discipleship, the words concerning the Messianic fulfillment of all Scripture, and then He spoke of the Law. Fulfillment of the Law comes not by way of the Law but by way of the Christ. It is the Gospel, not the Law, that makes men children of God and thus makes them capable of the good works by which they glorify their Father in heaven.

#### *The Piety of the Disciple*

Jesus gives the piety of His disciples, too, a new heart and a new face (6:1-18). His potent word has removed from the mind and will of His disciple the Judaic conception of a piecemeal and patchwork morality, with its self-consciousness and its calculation, and has turned them to a righteousness inseparable from the kingdom of God and inseparable from the Messianic event. The righteousness which is therefore beyond analysis and computation, since it is a complete turning to God and a drawing upon His gifts and consequently a living for God without reserve, without calculation, and without self-consciousness (5:1-48). He has made them pure in heart (5:8). This purity in heart, this unalloyed singleness of devotion, is to evince itself in their piety too. As they are to be "perfect" in righteousness by virtue of the life bestowed by their Father in heaven (5:49), so the singleness and

purity of their piety also has its origin in God, whom Jesus has revealed to them as their Father. The phrase "your Father" occurs no less than 9 times in the 18 verses in which Jesus illustrates the nature of their piety by means of the common Judaic triad of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting (6:1-18).

Since the life of the disciple is the life of a child with his father, the piety of the disciple has as its characteristic token the un-selfconsciousness of the child. Pose and pomp are banished from his piety. Where almsgiving (6:2-4) ceases to be a calculated means of access to God and has become instead the inevitable product of a freely vouchsafed access to God, it becomes as natural as a child's laughter. The sweet uses of publicity no longer vitiates it; no trumpets blare to announce it, no left hand points to the right hand of mercy as it does its gracious work. Man's converse with his God (6:5-15) ceases to be an advertisement for man's pre-eminence in piety; the disciple prays behind shut doors in the quiet secrecy of his room, alone with his Father (Jesus' words are aimed, of course, at parade in prayer, not at common public prayer, as is obvious from the fact that the prayer which He Himself gives His disciples is a "we" prayer; where all pray, none is conspicuous). Fasting, which is the expression of sorrow over sin and the index of urgency in petition, ceases to be a piece of ugly religious theatricality (6:16-18). What fasting says, it says to God; it need not and should not be manifested to men. The fasters who disfigure their faces in order to cut a figure before men have no place among the followers of Jesus. The disciple goes his way as Jesus went His, in

the complete naturalness of the pure in heart, in the unposed winsomeness of the child of God. The camera-conscious church which strives for photogenic goodness is put to the blush by Jesus' words.

The disciple is good and does good "in secret" (6:4, 6, 18). But this "secrecy" is not the secrecy of the proud or oversensitive or embittered recluse; it is the secrecy of the Servant-Messiah Jesus, of whom the prophet has said:

He will not cry or lift up His voice,  
or make it heard on the street

(Is. 42:2; cf. Matt. 12:19).

This pious secrecy is no turning away from the need and agony of one's fellow man but is born of the will that God be glorified in the piety of man. Jesus' injunction of secrecy is therefore not in contradiction to His command, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works" (5:16), but the necessary complement to that command, necessary to prevent the resurgence of Pharisaism within the new people of God. Only in deeds done in purity of heart, done by a man who stands whole and alone before his divine Father, is the Father in heaven glorified. The publicity will take care of itself.

The whole conception of reward which Jesus uses so freely in this section (e.g., 6:4, 6, 18) is dominated by the twin ideas of the Fatherhood of God and the pure heart of the child. Jesus here speaks of reward only in connection with God the Father. Jesus in speaking of reward is thus employing the Judaic terminology of reward in order to destroy the Judaic idea of merit and reward. The truth which lives in the reward idea, namely, that man is set before God in all his actions and is

responsible to God for them, is thus retained; but the man whom the Messiah has called, whose will the Messiah moulds, is set before God as his Father. He can look to God for reward only as the child looks to his father for reward, not because he has deserved or earned a reward but because he knows the illimitable condescension of the love which has made and called him "child." The hypocrite, the man who divides his heart between God and man, cannot ever quite trust God for the ultimate reward, and so settles for a penultimate one. He seeks his reward here and now in the approval and praise of men. A deed done for the approval of men is never a piece of the life drawn from God the Father and can therefore not hope for the Father's reward. God rewards only His sons, for all His rewards are rewards of grace put into little beggars' hands. The unbelief of the hypocrite gets what it expects and seeks. "They have their reward," paid in full; the faith of the child gets what it hopes for. No autonomous reach for reward can attain it; no believing trust in the Father's reward is ever put to shame. The pure in heart shall see God.

The prayer which Jesus taught His disciples is the prayer of the pure in heart (6:9-13). It is therefore at the farthest removed from the magical prayer which seeks to manipulate God by the descanting of "empty phrases" or to get control of Him by the heaping up of "many words" (6:7). It is personal petition; it is not the attempt to capture a Force for man's use but prayer to the Father who knows the needs of the petitioner (6:8). And since it is personal in the sense of the child-father relationship, there is nothing in it of the mystical prayer either, that prayer

which seeks to erase the line which divides God from man and desires impersonal absorption into the Godhead. The piety of the pure in heart prays that God be God and All in all for man, who remains man, in absolute subjection to God, even as His child (6:9,10). The piety of the pure in heart prays that God may act, may so act in might and mercy that He become King, be manifested as King, and rule forever as King. It prays that God may so act in redemption and judgment that He will clear His name (the manifested presence of His Godhead) of all that beclouds it and burst forth full in His glory. It prays that God may make His will be done, in man and through man, so that He is All in all. This piety asks for nothing less than all when it prays for the world to come. It prays that all the blessings of the Beatitudes may become man's—at God's season, in His way, by His action. The pure in heart seeks to articulate his will in the divine will and thus to be made partaker of all that man can hope for and God can give.

The complete subjection of the disciple's will to the will of God, his complete turn to God the King in repentance and faith, his purity of heart, in other words, is manifested with peculiar concreteness in the Fourth Petition (6:11). His prayer for the Kingdom knows no limits; it luxuriates. His prayer for the present asks no more than subsistence: "Give us this day our daily bread." Caught up in God's royal progress toward God's royal goal, he asks only that God keep him on each step of that way as each step is taken. He does not despise this life, for he knows what value his King and Father sets upon it; but he asks no external guar-

antees and no palpable securities for it. He lays it in his Father's hand, confident that the Father who has revealed His will of love in His Son will keep it safe until that day when he shall see his Father face to face.

Purity in heart is something other than saintly perfection. The fullness of God's reign, which shall transfigure the disciple's whole life, is not here and is not yet. The disciple's life is still agonized by failure and beset by sin. And so the disciple prays daily for forgiveness (6:12); the fuller righteousness which Jesus asks of the disciple is not his as a possession permanently at his disposal, as a something which he can *have*; it is his only as God's perpetually renewed gift. That gift is given to the pure in heart, to men who take God's forgiving Word with such radical seriousness that their own life is filled with forgiveness. They bring the sacrifice of prayer only after first being reconciled with their brothers.

The pure in heart live of the hope of the beatific vision of God. That hope fills their present life too, and they taste even now the powers of the world to come. The glad confidence which this grace gives them has in it, however, a holy fear; they know that the Son on whom God's good pleasure rested was tempted because He was so favored. They know that all sons must likewise be put to the test—and they trust only in God's help to see them through their encounters with the Evil One. "Lead us not into temptation" (6:13).

The disciple who is pure in heart knows that he is a plant planted by the Father; but he sees clearly also that he is set on a field where wheat and weeds ripen together toward judgment (13:24-30;

37-43). He knows that he lives under constant attack and that he is vulnerable, that he is thrown entirely upon God for deliverance. And so his prayer ends as it began, with the petition that his God break forth in majesty and put an end to all that opposes God and endangers God's sons: "Deliver us from evil" (6:13).

Of all the Beatitudes Jesus had selected the beatitude on the persecuted for comment, for that beatitude went most against the grain of man, who naturally seeks his own and asserts himself. Of all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer Jesus accents the fifth, and he accents its second half, "As we also have forgiven our debtors." For here discipleship is tested in a very down-to-earth way, in a very disagreeable, unheroic, and not-to-be-evaded way, and is, moreover, tested again and again. Here the disciple is asked again and again whether he is minded to live before God by God's forgiveness so wholly, in such singleness of devotion, in such purity of heart, that the will of the Father who daily forgives becomes his will also. Only so can we pray for the coming of God's reign; only so can we hope to see God.

### *The Disciple in His Creaturely Existence*

Under the Messianic molding of Jesus' words the disciple has learned that he cannot in his righteousness divide his heart between God and self; he must love as God loves, "perfectly." He must love his enemies (5:43-48). He has learned, too, that he cannot, in his piety, divide his heart between God and men; he must show mercy, pray, and fast in secret and look for no reward but the undeserved reward which his Father in heaven will give him (6:1-18). He is now to learn that in

his creaturely existence, as a man who must be fed and clothed, he cannot divide his heart between God and things (6:19-34). Neither love of things nor care for things has a place in the disciple's life, in the life of the pure in heart; to both Jesus opposes His stringent word "No one can serve two masters. . . . You cannot serve God and mammon" (6:24).

If a man loves things; if he commits himself to laying up treasures on earth, to the pursuit and attainment of a "decent standard of living" or "the good life," he has committed his heart to that which perishes, and his heart will perish with the things that fill it. He has exposed, not only his clothing and his metals but his very life to the eating of the moth, the canker of the rust, and the subtle hands of thievery. When a man wholeheartedly takes things, he cannot any longer take or leave them; he is taken by them, and his eternal destiny is determined by them. The unsound eye which cannot see plunges the whole body into darkness; the unsound heart, which is bewitched by things so that it cannot see realities and has no eye for the treasures of God, commits the whole man to that greater darkness where men will weep and gnash their teeth in agony and despair—"How great is the darkness!" (6:19-22)

"No man can serve two masters." Things can master not only the man who is intent upon living well but also the man desperately concerned about living at all; things can sunder from God not only the man who loves luxury but also the man who is willing to settle for security. *"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"* (6:25).

It is ultimately not a question of how much a man seeks to have—Jesus is not imposing a "rule of poverty" upon His disciples—but of how deeply a man is concerned about having. And a man can be as deeply and fatally involved in a few things as in many. Jesus not only opens the eyes of His disciples to the hard reality of the temptation confronting them; He gives them also the way of escape. He points His disciples to the Creator God, who gave them life and gave them bodies and bids them trust the God who provides for the birds and makes the lily's growth its splendid garment and bids them look to Him for food and drink and clothing to sustain that life and protect that body. But the God of the First Article is seen in the warm light of the Second Article; the disciples know the Creator and Preserver as the God who is a God at hand, the God drawn near in the Son, who has made the disciples sons; they are told to trust in God, whom they know as their heavenly Father, the Father who knows their needs. What the disciples heard from the Son, they saw in the life of the Son, the Messiah, who would not misuse His power to make Himself bread from stones but trusted the Father for bread, who sought no guarantees or securities but went through life without them; who made His Messianic entry into Jerusalem upon a borrowed ass and at His death could give His disciples nothing but His body and His blood.

He sought always the kingdom of God; He lived a life intent upon God's reigning, intent upon the assertion of the righteousness of God. And He set His disciples

upon the same path: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" (6:33). He thereby makes the blessing bestowed in the first beatitude the imperative force in their lives. The kingdom is given to the poor in spirit, to men who stand before God unhindered and undeceived by the security of things, in the need of their bare humanity. The gift of the beatitude has become the dynamic of their existence; they seek first the first gift. Likewise the blessing of the fourth beatitude has become the imperative that shapes their lives. God gives His righteousness to men who hunger and thirst for it, who see in their need for righteousness the supreme need, the need which must be met if they are to live, a need before which the need for things recedes into insignificance, so that it becomes a footnote on the page whereon is written: "The Lord is our Righteousness." The disciple is to seek this given gift; that is the primary impulse and impetus of his whole life. All other goals and all other seekings are subordinated to this.

"And all these things shall be yours as well" (6:33). The angels came and ministered to the Son who sought the kingdom of God wholesouledly and would not abridge His assertion of God's royalty by a concern for bread (4:11). Jesus does not ignore, nor does He ask His disciples to despise, the creaturely life of man, man's need for food and clothes. The disciple will still pray the petition for his daily bread, and with the strength of heart given him through that prayer will work for his daily bread. But he has shed the delusion that he can by his own anxious and agonized exertion secure and guarantee his life; he lays his tomorrow with its troubles, its

work, and its needs into the hand of God (6:34).

### *The Disciple in His Conflict*

Jesus' Messianic molding of the disciples' will prepares the disciples for conflict (7:1-23). The last beatitude had already prepared them for the thought of conflict and persecution (5:10,11); and in His training Jesus had removed them more and more drastically from Judaic conceptions of religion, of righteousness, of worship, and of man's relation to the things of this world. The care with which Jesus had distinguished all their conceiving and willing under the reign of God from the conceptions and norms of Judaism showed that Jesus had no intention of removing them bodily from Judaism. They were to be salt and light and a city set on a hill among the Jews first; their good works are to call upon their own countrymen first to give God the glory due Him. What is their role in Judaism to be? Are they to be a new elite in Judaism? Are they, as the finest flowers of Judaism to be an intensified Judaism? Are they, as the men whose righteousness exceeds that of scribe and Pharisee, to out-scribe the scribe and out-Pharisee the Pharisee? The first twelve verses of the seventh chapter, at first glance so obscure and apparently so disconnected, are to be understood as Jesus' answer to this question. These sayings are not detached generalizations but are tied to history. Judaism judged. The synagog separated sinner from saint and executed justice with scrupulous severity. We get a glimpse of the synagogal discipline in the words of Paul: "Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews 40 lashes less one" (2 Cor. 11:24). Are the disciples, the new Messianic community, possessed

as they are of higher standards and better norms than Judaism, to show forth their new righteousness in superior and perhaps severer judgment? Jesus confronts the disciples with God the Judge and tells them, "Judge not that you be not judged" (7:1). The disciple lives under the Beatitudes; he derives his existence from God the Giver and has become the instrument and vehicle of divine giving. If he assumes the role of God the Judge, he forfeits God the Giver and must face the Judge: "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get" (7:2). God has given the sword to the state, not to the church.

But the disciples, as the light of the world, cannot but expose the sins of men; they cannot ignore men's sins; they are the light of the world in virtue of their communion with one who deals with men's sins as their physician (9:12). They must call men to repentance, and every call to repentance involves a judgment upon sin. But the call upon the lips of the disciple comes not from one who has ascended God's judgment throne and sits there a judge of men but from one who has stood before that throne and heard himself condemned by God's verdict and then has, in his condemnation and beggary, heard God's "nevertheless" of acquittal: "Nevertheless I will be thy gracious King." The disciple's characteristic act is that of the repentant man calling his fellow-sinner to repentance, and the accent is on forgiveness. The goal of the disciple's activity is the removal of the speck from his brother's eye—after he has removed the log from his own (7:3-5).

The disciple proffers God's forgiveness,

and forgiveness is not easily salable ware. It is defenseless and rejectible; it cannot be forced upon the hardness of man who will not repent or upon the fury of man who resents the very idea of forgiveness. And so the disciple will have to do what His Lord did before him: withdraw before opposition; refuse the sign from heaven that will overcome unbelief; be silent where men will not be divinely spoken to; endure the refusal of men with nothing more severe by way of response than a "you would not" (23:37). The disciple is no more capable of autonomously conferring salvation than he is of autonomously judging. He cannot take man's fate into his hands either for their weal or for their woe. Therefore Jesus tells His disciples: "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" (7:6). The disciple can proffer salvation and announce judgment as the cast shadow of that proffer of salvation; Jesus will not permit him to degrade the Gospel entrusted to him or to endanger himself to no purpose by attempting more.

But this does not leave the disciple weak and resourceless; he can pray. He can ask in the assurance that his Father will hear him; knock in the assurance that his Father will open doors for him; and seek in the assurance that he shall find (7:7-11). "So," Jesus tells His disciples—"so," since you cannot judge and cannot coerce men into salvation but can pray to a Father whose love surpasses all fathers' love and can therefore clothe yourselves in all the potency of that Father's love, "so whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them, for this is the Law and

the Prophets" (7:12). Let love, which is the beating heart of all that the Law commands and the prophets proclaim, let love be your sole resource and your whole strength. With the going forth of the disciple the whole love of God, all that God in His search for rebellious man has revealed Himself to be, breaks into history to do its definitive work there in the last days. It is a love that is vulnerable and rejectible, but it is also a love that is victorious.

The disciples have no assurance that they will be acclaimed as the climactic development of Judaism or that they will be a triumphant majority even, anywhere. The disciples will be a minority always, everywhere. Jesus' picture of the disciples' course is universal, for He portrays that course eschatologically, in terms of its ultimate end. Purged of pride and arrogance, men who in prayer ever and again regain the power to work by love alone, they become men who can go through the narrow gate, down the hard road into eternal life, breasting the terrifying current of the majority, unmoved by the pressure of a hundred-to-one public opinion against them. For the one disciple knows what the hundred do not or will not know: that the easy way through the wide gate leads to destruction (7:13,14).

The silent and unending suasion of the masses who take the other road is perilous for the disciple. More perilous still will be the voice of men who purport to speak as the oracles of God, the false prophets who are fatally similar to the true. The satanic counterthrust to the Kingdom will always be the imitative counterthrust. Wolves will appear as sheep of the flock, to destroy God's flock. It is another mark

of the Messianic authority of Jesus that He deals so briefly and with such serene self-confidence with these false prophets. "You will know them by their fruits" (7:18). He gives no detailed direction for the detection of false prophets; one metaphor suffices. Jesus is so completely sure of God, so immediately aware of the divine force of genuine revelation, that there can be in His judgment no such thing as the successful lie. As the tree cannot lie but must become manifest in its fruits, so with men. They can utter only what is in them. We today, who find it agonizingly difficult to determine the truth, find this casual confidence of Jesus amazing, and His confidence in His disciples' judgment seems almost reckless. The unspoken presupposition of Jesus' saying here seems to be the thought expressed by Paul in 2 Thess. 2:9-12: only those who desire the lie are deceived by it. Perhaps our agonized inability to find the truth is only a subtle way of evading the truth. Jesus equips His disciples against false prophecy, not by making them subtle but by making them pure in heart. And he plants a holy fear in their hearts: the bad tree is destined for the fire, and the false prophets are destined for judgment (7:19). The earlier generations of the church which were still capable of horror at heresies would seem to have been closer to Jesus' idea of discipleship than our generation, which predominantly views them all with studious calm and assesses them historically.

The disciple in conflict must be capable of resisting the pressure of the majority, of detecting and rejecting false prophecy; for the judgment of God will sunder church and world, false church and true church. And the two-edged sword will cut even

more sharply than that (7:21-23); the line of cleavage will run through the very midst of the new community of those who call Jesus Lord. The disciple is told that there will be those in the new community who say the right things and do great things who will yet be rejected on the Last Day. There is no membership in any community which can exempt a man from personal responsibility for what he has done with the grace he has received. The man who receives of the Messianic Giver and receives in vain must face Him as the Judge at the last assize, to be disowned by Him: "I never knew you." The disciple's sin is judged as severely as Israel's sin, and the call to repentance is put over his whole life with the same rigor. His life is centered in God and moves toward judgment; for those who abide under the Messianic word of Jesus there is no escaping that tension while the world stands.

*The Disciple Under the Word of Jesus:  
Hearing and Doing*

The parable which closes the Sermon on the Mount, that of the wise and the foolish builder, again very plainly marks His word as a Messianic word. Jesus asks of His disciples that they hear His words and do them. Any rabbi might demand as much. The remarkable thing about the parable is, however, that it makes hearing and doing one unitary act; the right foundation for a house that shall endure the wind, rain, and flood of God's judgment (and this is

what is meant—all are common Old Testament images of the judgment of God, cf., e.g., Ezek. 13:10 ff.) is a hearing and doing of Jesus' word. Jesus is not merely asking that His commands be translated into action; He asks that all His words be received for what they are, Messianic words, a deed done for men, divine grace conveyed to men, a divine claim being made upon men. Jesus asks faith. Jesus wants not hearers but followers; not students who memorize His words but disciples who hear and do them, all of them. The beatitude upon the beggar is to be "done" as completely and wholeheartedly as the demand for the better righteousness, for the one is impossible without the other.

Thus Jesus molds the wills of the men whom He has called, centering their life so wholly in God the Father that their whole life is a receiving, a purely passive yea to God's act in Christ and a whole submission to the will of God, and for that reason a wholly active doing of the will of God in Christ, a doing carried out under the twin tension of eschatological hope and sober and fearful eschatological responsibility. Paul wrote a caption for the Sermon on the Mount when he said: "The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, *training* us . . . to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

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