exalted status. The human Jesus already possesses an authority that belongs to the "future" Son of Man (e.g., 2:1–12, 23–28); he also will have authority (8:38), but all this is tied to the necessity of suffering. Thus, in Mark, the term has "purposeful ambiguity" (144).

18. The connection of Mark 10:45 to Isaiah's prophecy is a controversial issue in NT scholarship. Hooker (1959) vigorously denies any direct connection. The position taken here reflects the work of Stuhlmacher 1986 [1981], 16–29, and Marcus 1992, 186–196.

19. Kingsbury 1978.

20. On this passage, see Wheeler 1995, 39–56.

21. Via (1985, 164–165) emphasizes this point: "[F]or Mark discipleship would be impossible without a divine miracle. Apart from the latter there is no opening of the eyes (10:52); following Jesus is not a human possibility but must be enabled by God (10:21–22, 26–27)." Tolbert (1989, 310) notices the same feature of Mark's account but finds it objectionable:

> The difficulty Mark furnishes for modern appropriation is not its negative assessment of the human situa-
> tion but its solution to the problem. Mark argues that only direct divine intervention can save the elect
> from the mess this generation is making of the cosmos. While some even now may wish to continue af-
> firming Mark's view, such acquiescence has unfortunately permitted this generation to keep increasing
> the mess for almost two thousand years. Mark's analysis should be valued, but Christians today must work,
> not individually, but in solidarity with others to bring to fruition this abundant and lovingly created vine-
> yard that is God's intended kingdom.

While appreciating Tolbert's candor in offering her frank corrective to Mark, one must wonder whether a gospel that places its fundamental trust in human effort rather than divine intervention can any longer be called a gospel. Such questions, however, anticipate the concerns of Part III of the present study.

22. The story also demonstrates that Mark offers no blanket condemnation of the Jewish people; authentic individual response to the Law is recognized and affirmed.

23. Despite the strangeness of this ending, the manuscript evidence is decisive: all manuscripts that supply "endings" beyond 16:8 are late and secondary (Metzger 1975, 122–126; Lane 1974, 601–605). Thus, unless the original ending was lost at a very early stage, we must reckon with a text that ends enigmatically. As I shall seek to demonstrate, such an ending is consonant with Mark's overall vision.

24. My translation here reflects the Greek word order, which has the effect of laying emphasis on the perfect participle *estaurōmenon* and turning it virtually into a title: "the Crucified One." Even after the resurrection, Jesus is rightly identified as the one who was and remains (hence the perfect tense) crucified.

25. For references, see Farmer 1974; Lane 1974; N. Petersen 1980.

26. Even if Mark's formulation comes from an early stage of the tradition that literally expected the immedi-
ate return of Jesus to occur in Galilee (Marxsen 1969 [1956], 57–95), the language has taken on a richer sym-
bolic significance within the world of Mark's narrative (Tolbert 1989, 298).

27. It is important to recognize that Mark has shaped the story to highlight the elements of apocalyptic con-
flict and that this highlighting may produce a skewed view of first-century Judaism. In a significant communi-
cation, Daniel Boyarin notes that "in cases of threat to life and limb, rabbinic Judaism sanctions, even
demands, healing on the Sabbath. . . . Keeping the Sabbath is not irreconcilable with compassion, and Mark's
Jesus here is engaged in a rhetorical, eschatological attack on the Sabbath more than an act of compassion for
its own sake" (private communication, Jan. 18, 1995).

28. Myers 1988; Marcus 1992.

29. The fact that Mark's Gospel can be read as a two-edged sword, comforting the afflicted and afflicting the
comfortable, should warn us against framing hypotheses that too narrowly circumscribe the original purpose or
social setting of the text.

Chapter 4

The Gospel of Matthew

Training for the Kingdom of Heaven

If Mark's Gospel ends without closure, requiring readers to supply the imaginative completion of the message in their own lives, Matthew adopts a very different narrative strategy. The ending of Matthew's Gospel explicitly draws together the threads of the story and commissions the disciples—and Matthew's readers—with a clear task.

> *Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* (Matt. 28:16–20)

Mark ends with a promise that Jesus "is going ahead" to Galilee, but the risen Lord does not appear. "He has been raised; he is not here." Matthew ends with the im-
mediate presence of the risen Lord, who promises to remain present always, until the end of the age. This reassuring word grounds the life and mission of the church on solid rock (cf. Matt. 7:24–25).

The contrast between Matthew and Mark is not limited to their endings; it is characteristic of their stories from start to finish. Matthew, who incorporates almost

all of Mark's material, consistently seeks to resolve ambiguities, explain mysteries, and bring closure.

A typology of narrative modes suggested by John Dominic Crossan provides a helpful way of categorizing the differences between the narrative sensibilities of these two Gospels. Crossan proposes that narratives may be classified according to their point of view toward "world." (The term "world" here signifies the conventional understanding of reality prevalent in the culture to which the narrative is addressed.) The narrative text renders its own fictive world; Crossan's heuristic question, then, is how the world of the narrative is related to the "world" of its cultural environment. He suggests that narratives may be ranged along a spectrum that encompasses five categories: myth, apologue, action, satire, and parable. The differences among these narrative types are encapsulated as follows: "Myth establishes world. Apologue defends world. Action describes world. Satire attacks world. Parable subverts world."[1]

Crossan develops this typology in order to demonstrate that Jesus' parables are world-disrupting. We may borrow the typology, however, to elucidate the striking differences between Matthew and Mark. (To use these categories does not imply any particular judgment about the historical factuality of the traditions employed by the evangelists; both history and fiction create narrative worlds. The historical writings of Josephus, for example, clearly belong to the category of apologue.) In terms of Crossan's categories, Mark is a parable, whereas Matthew falls somewhere at the myth/apologue end of the spectrum.

Matthew is both creating an ordered, symbolic world, in which Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, and defending it against rival worldviews. The way in which Matthew constructs that world may be seen in his representation of Jesus as teacher, his account of discipleship as community formation, and his adaptation of eschatology as a warrant for ethics. After considering each of these themes in turn, I shall offer some brief remarks about the historical background against which Matthew's creative use of the Jesus-tradition must be read, along with some conclusions about Matthew's narrative world as a context for moral discernment and action.

1. Matthew's Christology: Jesus As Teacher

Matthew has marshaled the traditions at his disposal in a way that highlights Jesus' role as the authoritative teacher of the people of God. Taking Mark's narrative outline as a framework, he fills out the story in two important ways.

First, he gives the story a beginning (genealogy and birth narratives, 1:1–2:23) and an end (resurrection appearance and commissioning of the disciples, 28:8–20). The effect of these narrative bookends is to establish the basis for Jesus' authority. He is by birth "the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (1:1), who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; furthermore, the strong Moses typology of the birth

narrative material establishes the interpretive expectation that Jesus will assume and fulfill Moses' role as deliverer and law-giver for God's people.[2] The ending of the Gospel establishes his divine authority by virtue of the resurrection; that is why all nations—not just Israel—should be taught to obey his commandments.

The content of those commandments is spelled out through Matthew's second major supplementation of the Markan narrative: he makes incisions in Mark's outline in five places and inserts extensive blocks of teaching material (5:1–7:27, 10:5–42, 13:1–52, 18:1–35, and 23:1–25:46).[3] At the end of each of these five sections, Matthew calls attention to the discourse unit by using the formula, "When Jesus had finished [*etelesen*] these words . . . ,"[4] which once again underscores the Moses typology (cf. Deut. 31:1, 32:45). Thus, the narrative line becomes the cargo vehicle for large shipments of didactic material, and Jesus' role as teacher of the church is accentuated.

The programmatic placement of the Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of Jesus' ministry also ensures that the image of Jesus as authoritative teacher will dominate this Gospel's Christology. (Indeed, as a consequence of Matthew's placement as the first Gospel in the New Testament canon, this image of Jesus as pedagogue came to exercise a disproportionately weighty influence in the early church's piety.) At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew remarks that "the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (7:28–29).[5] To know the Matthean Jesus rightly, then, is to acknowledge his authority by obeying his word.

> *Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 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 deeds of power in your name?" Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers."* (7:21–23)

Those who obey Jesus' teachings are like the wise man who built his house on rock, and those who disobey are like the foolish man who built his house on sand (7:24–27). Thus, while Matthew retains the Markan material that speaks of following Jesus' example by taking up the cross, Jesus' distinctive role in Matthew is more didactic: he becomes the "one teacher" who supplants all other rabbis (23:8). The Messiah expounds Torah in a new and authoritative way.

Jesus' continuity with the Torah is an important thematic emphasis for Matthew. A programmatic statement in Matthew 5:17–20 asserts that Jesus has come not to abolish the Law and the prophets but to fulfill them. The rest of the Sermon on the Mount then elaborates the meaning of this statement. The six antitheses of 5:21–48 ("You have heard that it was said . . . , but I say to you. . . .") explicitly counterpose the authority of Jesus to the authority of traditional understandings of the Law: rather than reading the Law's requirements as rules that fix the normative standards of righteousness, Matthew's Jesus sees them as pointers to a more radical righteousness of the heart, intensifying the demand of God far beyond the letter of the Law. Where the Law forbids murder and adultery, Jesus calls for the renunciation of

anger and lust; where the Law poses regulative limitations on divorce and revenge, Jesus calls his followers to renounce these options altogether. Where the Law limits the obligation of love to the neighbor (i.e., the fellow Israelite), Jesus calls for love of enemies. In short, he tells his disciples to "be perfect [*teleios*] . . . as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48). This is one of the senses in which Jesus is said to "fulfill" the Law: he elucidates its inner intent, demanding of his followers a righteousness that "exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" (5:20). Probably Matthew's insistence on this point reflects an urgent debate in his own time concerning the authentic interpretation of Torah; perhaps responding to charges from the "Pharisees" (i.e., those representing nascent rabbinic Judaism) that Christians are antinomians, Matthew insists that it is Jesus—not the punctilious Pharisees—who truly instructs his followers to do what the Law requires.[6]

At the same time, however, Jesus also "fulfills" the Torah, in the sense that his life is the typological completion of numerous Old Testament prophecies and stories. Matthew, distinctively among the evangelists, repeatedly offers authorial asides to the reader, declaring that various events in Jesus' career happened in order to fulfill what the prophets had spoken. There are more than a dozen such "formula quotations" in Matthew.[7] One effect of this Matthean narrative technique is to highlight the "scripted" character of salvation history; nothing is random or uncertain, for all events are under the authority of God's providence. Reality has an orderly pattern: no loose ends are left dangling, because Jesus the Messiah has tied them all up. Matthew sees it as his business to demonstrate the continuity of Jesus—both in his teaching and in his person—with the Torah; thus, he argues for a harmonious correspondence between Law and gospel.

By Matthew's time, about fifty years after the death of Jesus, the teaching authority of Jesus had to be mediated somehow to the church; the formula quotations stand as evidence that within Matthew's community there were scribes and teachers who undertook the task of collecting the traditions about Jesus, arranging them for pedagogical purposes, and seeking out correlations with the Torah.[8] Matthew himself is best understood as a scribe of this sort, whose signature may be traced in the saying of Jesus—found only in this Gospel—that concludes the collection of parables in Matthew 13: "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (13:52). The new and the old together are collected, treasured up, and "brought out" by this "scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven." Nothing is lost, not a jot or a tittle; everything finds its place within the fullness of Jesus' messianic kingdom.

2. Training for the Kingdom

It follows naturally that when Jesus is conceived as a teacher, the church is seen primarily as a community of those who are taught—which is, of course, the meaning of the word "disciples." The formation and discipling of the church occurs through

the instruction offered by this Gospel. The "great commission" at the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel is pointedly a mandate to teach: "Make *disciples* of all nations . . . *teaching* them to *obey* everything that I have commanded you." Matthew is not interested merely in soliciting converts; the gospel, according to Matthew, summons people to join a disciplined community of Jesus' followers who put his teachings into practice.

There can be no question here of a purely individualized spiritual formation. Matthew is strongly ecclesially oriented. Indeed, only in Matthew's Gospel does Jesus speak of the *ekklēsia* ("church"). Though the term appears just twice, the contexts of its occurrence are highly significant. The first is Jesus' declaration to Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:18: "On this rock I will build my church"; note the absence of this theme from the parallels in Mark 8:27–30 and Luke 9:18–21); the second is Jesus' instruction that unrepentant offenders should be disciplined by the church (18:17). Unmistakably, Matthew depicts Jesus as the founder of the church. To join his movement is to join the community of disciples that he has expressly called, taught, and authorized. Matthew pointedly omits Mark's story of Jesus' tolerant response to "the strange exorcist," with its concluding aphorism, "Whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:38–40). Indeed, in the context of one of his polemics against the Pharisees, Matthew's Jesus provocatively reverses the aphorism: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters" (Matt. 12:30). One cannot follow Jesus, according to Matthew, except by becoming part of the community that he trained to carry out his mission in the world.

(A) A COMMUNAL ETHIC OF PERFECTION But what is the character of that community, and what specific teachings shape its life? The Sermon on the Mount calls for a life of uncompromising rigor in discipleship. The community of Jesus' followers is to be a model community living in obedience to God: the salt of the earth, the light of the world, a city set on a hill (5:13–16). This task of modeling obedience is an integral part of the community's mission: "[L]et your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (5:16). The church is a demonstration plot in which God's will can be exhibited. For that reason, the righteousness of Jesus' disciples must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees; otherwise, the church will not be a compelling paradigm of the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed.

The character of the community is sketched, though not legislated in detail, in the Sermon. First of all, the Beatitudes pronounce Jesus' blessing upon those who are meek, merciful, and pure, those who make peace, and particularly those who suffer for righteousness' sake (5:3–12). The counterintuitive paradoxes of the Beatitudes alert us to the fact that Jesus' new community is a contrast society, out of synch with the "normal" order of the world. What sense does it make to say, "Blessed are those who mourn"? Such a judgment can be made only in view of the eschatological promise that accompanies it: ". . . for they will be comforted." The community of Jesus' followers lives now in anticipation of ultimate restoration by God. They do

not seek to enforce God's way through violence; rather, they await God's act of putting things right. To be trained for the kingdom is to be trained to see the world from the perspective of God's future—and therefore askew from what the world counts as common sense.

The teachings of the rest of the Sermon, then, specify the character of a community that seeks to embody this eschatological vision of God's righteousness. Community members are to put away anger, lust, violence, hypocrisy, pride, and materialism. In place of these self-asserting and self-preserving behaviors, they are to love their enemies, keep their promises (including promises to their marriage partners), forgive freely as they have been forgiven by God, give alms in secret, and trust God to provide for their material needs.

When we compare these teachings to the halakic rulings of the Mishnah or the detailed regulations for community life codified in the Community Rule of the Qumran covenanters (1QS), we can hardly help noticing the rather broad and incomplete character of Matthew's programmatic presentation. As Wayne Meeks observes,

> . . . [W]e have here no system of commandments. The rules are exemplary not comprehensive, pointers to the kind of life expected in the community, but not a map of acceptable behavior. Still less does Matthew's Jesus state philosophical principles from which guidelines for behavior could be rationally derived. We are left with the puzzle that while Jesus plays the role of a conventional sage in Matthew, his teachings recorded here do not add up to an ethical system. It is not in such a program of teaching, apparently, that Matthew understands the will of God to be discovered.[9]

Matthew's rigorous summons to moral perfection cannot be rightly understood as a call to obey a comprehensive system of rules. Despite his emphasis on the church's commission to teach obedience to Jesus' commandments, Matthew sees such teaching as instrumental to a deeper goal: the transformation of character and of the heart. As Thomas W. Ogletree remarks, "Matthew is expressing in the language of law and commandment what might more appropriately be stated in the language of virtues."[10] Of course, "the language of law and commandment" is given as a part of Israel's heritage, which Matthew eagerly claims, while subjecting it to a hermeneutical transformation in light of Jesus' teaching. Whether, as Ogletree suggests, it would be more appropriate to use "the language of virtues" is a debatable point: the power of Matthew's vision is generated precisely by the paradoxical tension between his stable deontological moral categories and his message that the coming of the kingdom transforms everything, including the people who live under accountability to those categories.

While rules and commandments provide an orderly structure for the moral life, Matthew also thinks of actions as growing organically out of character. False prophets, for instance, may be recognized "by their fruits," for "a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (7:15–20). The fruit-bearing metaphor appears again in Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees who have accused him of casting out demons "by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons" (12:24):

> *Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.* (12:33–34)

Speech and action are the outward manifestations of what is in the heart. Presumably that explains why, in Jesus' great parable of the final judgment, the "sheep" who inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world did not even know that their actions were serving Jesus: they were simply, to mix the metaphor, bearing fruit, giving expression to the goodness of their character. How is this "expressivist" view of ethics related to Matthew's emphasis on obedience to Jesus' words? Matthew gives no systematic account of the matter, but the solution to the puzzle is probably to be sought along the following lines. Action flows from character, but character is not so much a matter of innate disposition as of training in the ways of righteousness. Those who respond to Jesus' preaching and submit to his instruction will find themselves formed in a new way so that their actions will, as it were, "naturally" be wise and righteous. They will learn the skills and discernments requisite to living faithfully. In this respect, Matthew's moral vision has much in common with Israel's wisdom tradition, though Matthew is more concerned with community formation than with the cultivation of wisdom and virtue in the individual.

(B) THE HERMENEUTIC OF MERCY One of the most important character qualities that Jesus seeks to inculcate in those who heed his words is the quality of *mercy*. On two different occasions—again in dispute with the Pharisees—he cites Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13, 12:7). It has often been noted that this passage was cited by the great rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, the founder of the rabbinic academy at Jamnia, as a word of reassurance for Israel after the destruction of the Temple, when the prescribed sacrifices were no longer possible.[11] Thus, Matthew is citing a passage that had been given great hermeneutical prominence in pharisaic Judaism precisely contemporary with his composition of the Gospel, but he applies it in a different way, as we shall see. The repetition of the citation marks it as a matter of special importance for understanding Matthew's ethic.[12]

On the first occasion (9:10–13), the Pharisees are grumbling about Jesus' practice of eating with tax collectors and sinners; he replies with the proverb, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Thus far Matthew's account follows Mark 9:15–17 closely. Next, however, he inserts the Hosea quotation: "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'" The conclusion of the pericope returns to the Markan source: "For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." What Hosea 6:6 means, according to Matthew's use of it here, is that God's mercy is extended to sinners. Nothing is said here about the destruction of the Temple, or about acts of loving-kindness as *atoning* for sin, as in Yohanan ben Zakkai's teaching, but the discussion of these issues was surely in the background for Matthew's original readers. His citation of this key scriptural text has a polemical point, as John Meier notes: "Mercy, not sacrifice, is God's will.

And, if mercy replaces the chief act of cult, how much more does it take precedence over Pharisaic rules of purity!"[13] Jesus shows God's mercy on sinners and suggests that this is precisely what the Law requires of others as well.

The second citation of Hosea 6:6 appears in the controversy over plucking grain on the Sabbath (12:1–8). Here again Matthew is following a Markan story about conflict with Pharisees, but he introduces two arguments in defense of the disciples' action that are not found in his source.

> *Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless.* (12:5–7)

The christological claim that Jesus is greater than the Temple and that therefore those who serve him are, like priests in the Temple, not subject to the ordinary restrictions on Sabbath activity is an extraordinarily bold—some would say nearly blasphemous—assertion; in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction, it takes on a specially freighted import. To this christological argument is coupled once again an appeal to the Hosea text: the "hermeneutic of mercy" supplants or relativizes the Law's specific commandments (cf. Exod. 34:21).[14]

In these passages we see the outworking of Matthew's earlier claim in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus fulfills rather than negates the Law. When that formula is applied to test cases, such as eating with sinners and harvesting grain on the Sabbath, we see that the Law is understood to bear witness to what Matthew elsewhere calls "the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith" (23:23). Jesus' teaching provides a dramatic new hermeneutical filter that necessitates a rereading of everything in the Law in light of the dominant imperative of mercy. In contrast to the scribes and Pharisees, who are said to "tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others" (23:4), the wisdom taught by Jesus yields a very different reading of Torah:

> *Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* (11:28–30)

The language of this invitation echoes the call of the traditionally personified figure of Wisdom, often virtually equated with the Torah (see, for example, Prov. 8; Sirach 24, especially vv. 19–23; Sirach 53:23–28; Baruch 3:9–4:4). Those who take upon themselves Jesus' yoke are in effect taking up the yoke of Torah as interpreted by Jesus, but his yoke—in light of his hermeneutic of mercy—is not burdensome, in contrast to the systematic interpretations of the Torah being promulgated by Matthew's pharisaic rivals. (The invidious characterization of the Pharisees reflects a bitter conflict located in Matthew's specific historical setting, a point to which we must return below, but the reading of mercy as the real aim of the Law is a positive component of Matthew's moral vision.)

The pronouncement story about the greatest of the commandments (22:34–40) again highlights Matthew's hermeneutical transformation of the Law. In response to the Pharisee's test question, Jesus first quotes the Shema (Deut. 6:5) as the greatest of the commandments (an obvious answer for any Jew), then links to it the commandment of Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." So far, Matthew agrees with Mark. Once again, however, he appends his own tag line to sum up the significance of what Jesus has said: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (22:40). This introduces a subtle but important claim. It is not merely that the two love commands are the greatest of the Torah's commandments, as Mark had affirmed (Mark 12:28–34). Rather, everything else in the Torah "hangs" upon them; everything else must be derivable from them. In consequence, the double love command becomes a hermeneutical filter—virtually synonymous with Hosea 6:6—that governs the community's entire construal of the Law. This has wide-ranging consequences for the specific content of Matthew's moral vision. Those who are trained for the kingdom of heaven are trained to evaluate all norms, even the norms of the Law itself, in terms of the criteria of love and mercy. In the community that lives this vision, then, acts of love and mercy should abound.

(C) COMMUNITY DISCIPLINE AND FORGIVENESS In light of the foregoing observations, we see that Matthew's narrative sets up a serious tension between rigor and mercy. On the one hand, the community is called to perfection: as a city set on a hill, the community is to exemplify a rigorous standard of righteousness exceeding even that of the scribes and Pharisees. On the other hand, the community is called to interpret the Torah in light of a hermeneutic of mercy that leads them to subordinate the Law's specific commandments to its deeper intent; consequently, following the example of Jesus, the community must receive tax collectors and sinners and deal mercifully with human weakness and failure. Thus, rigor and mercy are set side by side in Matthew's story. How are these apparently contradictory demands to be held together in the life of the community?

It is characteristic of Matthew that he never provides a systematic theological solution to this problem. But the fourth major discourse unit in this Gospel (18:1–35), dealing with community discipline and forgiveness, offers some guidelines for the community's practice.

> *If your brother sins against you,[15] go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*[16] (18:15–20, RSV)

In this passage Jesus makes it clear that sin is not to be tolerated or ignored within the community. Someone—in the first instance, the offended party—must go to the sinner and confront him.[17] The stipulation that this initial conversation is to be "between you and him alone" is an important one: this rule, if followed, would eliminate much gossip and backbiting in the church. It also provides the opportunity for the offender to receive the word of admonition and repent without public scandal. This directive is by no means an innovation on the part of Jesus: it is a restatement of Leviticus 19:17, where the admonition to reprove the erring neighbor is an integral part of the obligation to "love your neighbor as yourself" (see Lev. 19:17–18). Not surprisingly, the Qumran community, with its urgent concern for the holiness of the community, also stressed the importance of mutual rebuke and correction, explicitly citing Leviticus 19 as the scriptural basis for this practice.[18] The requirement of additional witnesses is also based on Old Testament precedent (Deut. 19:15), although Matthew 18:16 changes the setting from a legal proceeding to the context of pastoral admonition within the community. The final step of expulsion of the unrepentant sinner from the community (18:17) indicates how seriously the imperatives of righteousness are to be taken. One cannot be an unrepentant sinner and remain within the community of Jesus' disciples.

The entire procedure prescribed in Matthew 18:15–17, however, aims at regaining the brother; the familial language of the passage is not insignificant. In the wider narrative context of the Gospel of Matthew, to say that the expelled sinner must be "as a Gentile and a tax collector" cannot mean that the person becomes a pariah to be shunned by the church; it means, rather, that the person becomes an object of the community's missionary efforts. As we have already seen, Jesus notoriously sought out fellowship with tax collectors and sinners, and he commissioned his disciples to preach the gospel to all nations (*ethnē* = "Gentiles"). Thus, the community's necessary action of expelling the offender must be read together with the immediately preceding parable of the shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to search for the one that went "astray" (18:12–14). Because "it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost," the goal of the community's disciplinary action must always be the restoration of the sinner to fellowship. Thus, the three-step disciplinary procedure of Matthew 18:15–17 both upholds the community's rigorous moral norms and provides for forgiveness and reintegration of the wrongdoer into the community's life.

At the same time, enormous authority is given to the community. In exercising its disciplinary power of "binding" and "loosing," the church effectually acts as God's agent in the world. This authority—in contrast to Matthew 16:19, where the authority to bind and loose is granted specifically to Peter—is said to be exercised by the community as a whole in its corporate decisions.[19] How can so much spiritual power be entrusted to the *ekklēsia*? The answer lies in the remarkable promise of Jesus' continuing presence in and with the gathered praying community: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." The community can exercise Jesus' authority because Jesus is present with them (cf. also 28:20). Thus, they are not acting merely on their own authority; they are acting under Jesus' instructions and under his continuing guidance.

Might a church entrusted with such disciplinary power be tempted to develop a proud and censorious spirit? This danger is immediately recognized and dealt with by Matthew in verses 21–35. Peter, upon hearing Jesus' instruction concerning the three-step process for calling sinful members back to the fellowship, recognizes the potential here for a never-ending cycle of sin and repentance; quite reasonably, he asks how many second chances the offender should receive. Showing a graciousness far more liberal than the widespread enthusiasm in late-twentieth-century America for a "three-strikes-and-you're-out" policy toward lawbreakers, Peter asks whether he should forgive his brother as many as seven times. Jesus' stunning answer proclaims the superabundance of divine mercy that the church is called to display to the world: "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (18:21–22, RSV). Here again rigor and mercy are strangely combined. Jesus' disciples are faced with a demand that seems humanly incredible: to be as infinitely forgiving as is God.

The climax of this discourse on discipline and forgiveness is the parable of the unforgiving slave (18:23–35). The king in the parable forgives the slave a debt of ten thousand talents, a staggering sum that is something on the order of the national debt. ("Herod's total annual income amounted to only nine hundred talents, and the taxes imposed on Galilee and Perea together only two hundred.")[20] The slave then turns around and bullies and threatens another slave, who owes him the comparative pittance of a hundred denarii. When this comes to the attention of the king, he is furious at the unforgiving slave:

> *You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you? And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.*
> (18:32b–35)

The parable hints at the theological underpinnings of this whole chapter on church discipline and forgiveness—indeed, at the underpinnings of Matthew's understanding of the relation between God's mercy and God's demand. Mercy precedes everything: that, and only that, is why the announcement of the kingdom of heaven[21] is good news.

Shakespeare dramatizes a similar message in *Measure for Measure*. The hypocritical and judgmental Angelo declares to the pleading Isabella, the sister of a man condemned to die, "Your brother is a forfeit of the law,/ and you but waste your words." She replies,

> Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
> And He that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy. How would you be
> If He, which is the top of judgment, should

But judge you as you are? O, think on that:
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.[22]

Similarly, Matthew's summons to the disciples to forgive, to obey Jesus' words, is nothing other than a logical extension of God's mercy. And yet the threat of God's future judgment hangs over those who despise God's grace.

3. Matthew's Eschatology: "I am with you always, to the end of the age"

Matthew retains intact the early tradition's apocalyptic eschatology: his story confidently affirms the future coming of the Son of Man in glory, the resurrection of the dead, and God's final judgment (e.g., 16:27; 22:23–33; 24:3–44; 13:24–27, 36–43). Nonetheless, in contrast to the earlier role of apocalyptic traditions as the ground of hope in Paul and Mark, a subtle shift has occurred in the ethical use to which Matthew puts these eschatological motifs and in the way they relate to other elements in his theology. The nature of that shift has significant implications for understanding Matthew's moral vision.

(A) RELAXATION OF ESCHATOLOGICAL URGENCY First of all, the imminence of the eschatological expectation seems to have receded slightly in Matthew. The shift of emphasis here is subtle, for Matthew continues to affirm that "the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour" (24:44) and that the church should therefore remain in a state of readiness. Nonetheless, the passage of time has inevitably caused certain adjustments of perspective. Jesus has been raised from the dead, but the world goes on as before—for fifty years or more by the time Matthew writes this Gospel. The passing of years is marked by Matthew's comment on the story spread among the Jews that Jesus' disciples had stolen his body: "And this story is still told among the Jews to this day" (28:15). The Temple has been destroyed (see 24:1–2), but still history goes on as before. Various indications in the story show that Matthew has settled into the expectation of a protracted historical period prior to the eschatological consummation. Jesus established a church, an institution built on the confession of Peter (16:18), and that church has a mission to proclaim the gospel to the whole world (24:14), a project that will take time. Even within the church, some have begun to say, "My master is delayed," and to behave irresponsibly (24:48–49). Matthew warns against this attitude, but the very fact that he has to warn against it is significant (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3–4). Thus, when the Gospel concludes with Jesus' promise to be present with his community "always until the end of the age," some temporal duration for the present age is indicated. The reality of the final judgment is crucial for Matthew, but not its timing.

(B) THE PRESENCE OF JESUS One factor that allows Matthew to settle more patiently into the present age is his conviction that the risen Lord is present in and with his church. Unlike Mark, whose Gospel depicts the present as a time of absence and grim waiting for the parousia, Matthew assures his readers in numerous ways of the powerful and abiding presence of Jesus with his people. The theme first appears in the narrative as a prophecy before Jesus' birth, when the angel in Joseph's dream declares that Mary's pregnancy has occurred in accordance with God's will:

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God with us." (1:22–23)

This final lexical gloss is a characteristically Matthean gesture, making sure that no one can possibly miss the point. Jesus is to be the one in whom God is present to his people.

As we have already seen, the same point is made again in Jesus' instructions on church discipline. Wherever two or three gather in his name, he is there. This promise suggestively echoes a rabbinic tradition about the study of Torah: "If two sit together and words of the Law [are spoken] between them, the Divine Presence rests between them."[23] If such a tradition was already current in Matthew's time, then Matthew 18:20 serves as one more provocative claim that Jesus himself has now supplanted the Torah. How are we to understand the mode of his presence? Is he, like the *Shekinah* ("Divine Presence") in rabbinic lore, mediated textually, so that to gather in Jesus' name is virtually equated with gathering to study his words as collected in Matthew's Gospel? More likely, Matthew thinks of him as present—in a way closer to Paul's vision—as a powerful spiritual presence in the worshiping community. The *magisterium* is neither confined to an authoritative text nor transmitted through an institutional authority. It remains grounded in the personal presence of Jesus in the *ekklēsia*. In any case, his presence gives the church an experience in the present of sufficiency, clarity, and authority. The urgency of his coming again is somewhat mitigated by the consolation of his presence already.

Finally, it is no accident that the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel sounds this same note of Jesus' presence: he is present as the one who authorizes the disciples' mission (28:16–20). Beginning, middle, and end, Matthew explicitly structures this theme as the backbone of his narrative. Similarly, Matthew has also handled much of his other material in a way that reinforces the proclamation of "God with us" in Jesus, so that it underlies the whole Gospel as a ground figure. The narrative is to be read not merely as an account of historically past events but as a figurative portrayal of Jesus' ongoing presence and activity in the church. One illustration will have to suffice.

Matthew's adaptation of the Markan story of Jesus walking on the sea (Mark 6:45–52, Matt. 14:22–33) exemplifies his reading of the miracle traditions as allegories of Jesus' presence. Matthew introduces two major changes in his retelling of the story. First, he adds the tale of Peter's getting out of the boat to walk on the water along with Jesus (14:28–31). The story cries out to be read allegorically. The

boat (read: church) is battered by waves and wind (read: persecution and adversity); Jesus comes mysteriously to rescue them. Peter, the leader and symbol of the disciples, ventures to emulate Jesus' miraculous actions but starts to sink and has to be saved by Jesus. Peter, still the symbolic figure, is rebuked by Jesus for his little faith. When they get into the boat and the wind ceases, the disciples worship Jesus, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

This last event is Matthew's second major modification of the story. In Mark, when Jesus gets into the boat and the wind ceases, the author remarks acerbically, "And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened" (6:52). No understanding, no worship, no confession, just bewilderment. Matthew finds this eminently unsatisfactory and gives this epiphany story a proper doxological ending, even though his doing so renders Peter's subsequent confession at Caesarea Philippi anticlimactic. The disciples in the boat worshiping Jesus as Son of God are manifestly a figure for the church in Matthew's own time—or any future time—which may also pray for and expect Jesus to rescue them from trials and tribulations. The meaning of the story for Matthew can be grasped only when it is interpreted as an allegorical promise of Jesus' continuing presence with the church—and therefore also as an exhortation to eschew doubt. Such promises of Jesus' presence do not supersede the hope of the parousia, but they prefigure it so palpably in the church's experience that they diminish its urgency.

(C) ESCHATOLOGY AS ETHICAL WARRANT The final shift in Matthew's use of apocalyptic eschatology is the most obvious one: in Matthew, eschatology becomes a powerful *warrant* for moral behavior. The motivation for obedience to God is repeatedly grounded in the rewards and punishments that await everyone at the final judgment. To be sure, we have seen this idea in Paul and Mark also, but Matthew greatly increases the emphasis that it receives. This is nowhere more evident than in Matthew 24:37–25:46, where he appends to the Markan apocalyptic discourse five units of additional material stressing in various ways the necessity of being prepared for the coming of the Son of Man. The first of these units (24:37–44) is a composite group of sayings highlighting the suddenness and uncertainty of the hour of judgment, comparing the coming of the Son of Man to the flood in the days of Noah or to a thief breaking into a house in the middle of the night. The other four units are all parables of judgment: the parable of the faithful and unfaithful slaves (24:45–51), the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (25:1–13), the parable of the talents (25:14–20), and the parable of the sheep and the goats (25:31–46). The primary point of the wise and foolish virgins is the same as that of 24:37–44: "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (25:13). The other three parables, however, all underline the direct connection between faithful stewardship and one's fate in the final judgment. Those who beat the other slaves, waste the master's resources, and fail to respond to the needs of the hungry, the sick, and the prisoners will be cast into "the outer darkness, where there

will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (25:30); however, those who do their duty, make imaginative use of the resources given them, and minister to the needs of the poor will go "into eternal life" (25:46). The aim of such stories is to instill godly fear in the hearers and to motivate them to do the will of God while they still have opportunity, before the judgment comes upon them.

It would not be correct to say that these stories provide only *warrants* for obedience to God; they also define significant ethical *norms* having to do primarily with just and merciful treatment of others and with responsible use of property. (In view of the earlier teaching on possessions in Matthew [6:19–34; 19:16–30], however, the parable of the talents must be interpreted allegorically; it is not just a literal teaching about the wise investment of money.) The parable of the sheep and the goats, with its powerful portrayal of care for the needy as the basic criterion for God's eschatological judgment of human deeds, has had a powerful impact on the church's imagination; the story reinforces Matthew's earlier emphasis on mercy as the hallmark of the kingdom of God.

4. Historical Setting: Matthew As Ecclesiastical Diplomat

We can speak only hypothetically about Matthew's historical setting; we do not know with any certainty even where this Gospel was written, though recent scholarship has gravitated toward a consensus that Antioch is the likeliest location. Matthew's distinctive shaping of the story does, however, lead us to certain plausible hypotheses that make sense of many of the features of this challenging text.

The likeliest historical hypothesis is that Matthew was written sometime during the last twenty years of the first century, after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans. The definitive separation between church and synagogue had occurred only recently, leaving rancorous feelings on both sides, as both groups found themselves in a critical period of identity formation.[24] Matthew's Christian community was engaged in a struggle with the representatives of emergent rabbinic Judaism, each side claiming to represent the authentic interpretation of the Torah and of Israel's traditions. The strategy of the rabbis, whose roots were in pharisaic Judaism, was to circle the wagons, establishing strong group boundaries defined in terms of orthopraxy. Matthew, on the other hand, represents an originally Jewish-Christian community that chose to spiritualize the meaning of the Torah by means of a love hermeneutic and to create an inclusive community that reached out to Gentiles. Subsequent history shows that Matthew was spectacularly successful in formulating a foundational narrative for Gentile mission and almost completely unsuccessful in keeping that mission grounded in Judaism.

The crucial question that separated Matthew from "formative Judaism" was christological, for his distinctive claims about the proper reading of the Law are all grounded in his more fundamental claim that Jesus is the fulfillment and definitive interpreter of the Law. It is noteworthy that Matthew shows no trace of the earlier

Christian debates over the requirements of circumcision and dietary laws in the church. Is that because these debates were all over and Matthew's church was well on its way to becoming the Gentile "early catholic" church? Or is it because Matthew remained, on such questions, within the orbit of Judaism?[25] The general line of development of early Christianity would suggest the former as the likelier situation, but the evidence does not permit a certain decision on this point. In any case, Matthew saw the destruction of the Temple as God's definitive judgment on a corrupt and faithless generation of Jews who had rejected God's Messiah. (See extended discussion of this point in Chapter 17.) This is the situation that underlies Matthew's sharp polemic against the Pharisees.

At the same time, Matthew probably faced divisive tendencies within his own community. The warning against judging one another (7:1–5) and the procedures for resolving grievances against other members of the community (18:15–17) are of universal applicability, but we may assume that they were pertinent to actual issues in Matthew's church. The parable of the wheat and the weeds (13:24–30) and its interpretation (13:36–43) suggest that there was an active debate in Matthew's community concerning whether the church should seek to be a community of the pure or whether it should accept a more ambiguous status as *corpus mixtum* awaiting the final judgment. Matthew clearly opts for the latter view but tries to do so in a way that takes the demand for righteousness seriously. Some studies have suggested that Matthew, in writing this Gospel, was seeking (among other things) to bridge differences in the church, including social-ethical differences between wandering charismatic prophets and a more stable urban Christian community.[26] At the literary level, Matthew brings together diverse sources, including Mark's Gospel and some collection or collections of sayings of Jesus. Whether these different literary sources should be linked with specific social groups in Matthew's church is purely speculative.

In any case, the composition of this Gospel was a grand act of synthesis, pulling together disparate traditions into a master narrative that could unify the community in its confession of Jesus.[27] If this reconstruction of the situation is correct, then Matthew should be seen as "an astute church diplomat,"[28] creating a conciliatory platform for a pluralistic church. This hypothesis would explain some of the unresolved systematic tensions in Matthew, such as the tension between rigor and mercy that we have explored above. The theological tensions within the text are the conceptual deposit left by the specific challenges that Matthew confronted in his own time.

The unavoidable question is whether Matthew's synthesis *works*. Is there a coherent theological and moral vision in this text, or has Matthew simply produced an unstable compromise? To the extent that the synthesis works, it works not through systematic coherence but through the power of narrative to bind together disparate elements and hold them in solution. Matthew narrates a Jesus who proclaims the kingdom of God but at the same time demands radical ethical obedience and teaches mercy toward sinners, a Jesus who commissions the church strictly to teach

and obey his commandments and yet at the same time remains present with the community to enable more flexible discernments. Leander Keck's assessment of the result is judicious: "It is precisely the logical instability of the text which prevents an ideological position from forming permanently, on the one hand, and which, on the other, makes it possible for different parts of the text to emerge with special power from one situation to the next."[29]

Thus, Matthew presents in microcosm the same possibilities—and problems—for ethics that we see on a larger scale in the New Testament canon as a whole.

5. Matthew's Narrative World As Context for Action

How does Matthew's moral vision impart a particular shape to the tasks of discipleship? In light of the foregoing observations, I offer some summary conclusions about the way in which this Gospel defines the context of moral action.

First, the world according to Matthew is *a world stabilized and given meaning by the authoritative presence of Jesus Christ.* Doubt and ambiguity have no legitimate place in the community of those who follow Jesus. Right and wrong are defined with clarity, and full-hearted obedience is to be expected as the norm within the church. The Father of Jesus Christ is the same God who gave the Torah through Moses; even though Jesus has brought a new interpretative perspective on the Torah, it remains abidingly valid. Thus, the moral order of God's dealing with the world remains stable and continuous.

Second, although the future judgment of God is sure, the present age has significance in its own right. *The present is the time of the church's mission to make disciples of all nations,* a mission that may extend into the foreseeable future. During the present age, the church stands as a model of the will of God for human community. The gates of hell cannot prevail against this community founded upon the word of Jesus.

Third, God's ultimate judgment of all will be based upon *concrete works of love and mercy,* in accordance with the teaching of Jesus. Confessional orthodoxy counts for nothing unless it is accompanied by obedience to the will of God. The kingdom of God is characterized by compassionate outreach to the weak and needy.

Fourth, the *bitter conflict with the synagogue* is a salient aspect of Matthew's world. According to Matthew, the leaders of the Jewish people have imposed upon them intolerable burdens and have led them astray from true obedience to God. The battle between Matthew's community and emergent rabbinic Judaism has left indelible scars upon Matthew's Gospel, in the form of scathing prophetic denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew's text provides no clues about how this implacable hostility toward the traditional representatives of Israel is to be integrated with Jesus' teaching concerning the love of enemies.

Fifth, within the church, however, Matthew envisions a *community characterized by humility, patience, and concern for the "little ones"* who may stumble or be

weak in faith. Love is prized above theological consistency, and forgiveness is the hallmark of the community's life. No one should be quick to judge others, for all are radically dependent upon the mercy of God.

Sixth, even though individuals will continue to sin, so that correction and forgiveness are necessary aspects of the community's life, Matthew offers no hint that the propensity to sin is related to some deep flaw in the self or, as in Paul, to a state of bondage to powers beyond the control of the will. *Obedience is represented as a simple possibility* for those who hear the word of Jesus.[30]

Seventh, the cumulative effect of these teachings is that the church is represented as a community in which people can find *security* and can act with *moral confidence.* The distinction between insiders and outsiders is clear, and those who are inside are granted to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. The will of God is clearly revealed in the teaching and example of Jesus, and the church is expected to obey all that he has commanded, to the end of the age.

NOTES

1. Crossan 1975, 59.
2. For a thorough summary of the evidence, see Allison 1993, 140–165. Cf. France 1989, 186–189.
3. Some of the material in these units is taken from the Markan source; however, in each case, Matthew has supplemented it significantly.
4. The precise formula appears in 7:28 and 19:1, with minor variations in 11:1 and 13:53 (the parallelism is clearer in the Greek text than in most English translations). The last time the formula occurs (26:1), Matthew emphasizes the finality of the foregoing discourse with an emphatic cadence: "When Jesus had finished *all* these words. . . ." Kingsbury's argument (1975) that Matthew should be read as having a tripartite structure downplays this clear evidence of authorial structuring and points instead to the phrase "From that time Jesus began . . ." (4:17, 16:21) as a major structural marker. Kingsbury's reading is to be rejected, not least because it splits the Caesarea Philippi pericope (16:13–28; cf. Mark 8:27–9:1) in half.
5. The sentence is taken from Mark 1:22, where it refers to Jesus' teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum; Mark, however, neglects to tell us the actual content of Jesus' teaching. For him, the authority of Jesus is manifested more decisively in his power over demons (Mark 1:27) than in his Moses-like instruction in the way of righteousness.
6. One of the most thoroughgoing demonstrations that the Sermon on the Mount must be read in the context of debates with emergent rabbinic Judaism is W. D. Davies's magisterial work *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (1964). Despite criticism of various particulars of Davies's work, its central thesis remains persuasive and has commanded virtually universal scholarly assent.
7. Scholars count as few as eleven or as many as fourteen, depending on how strictly the formula is defined. See 1:22–23, 2:5–6, 2:15, 2:17–18, 2:23, 3:3, 4:14–16, 8:17, 12:17–21, 13:14–15 (referring to the people who do not understand), 13:35, 21:4–5, 26:56 (no text explicitly cited), and 27:9–10 (referring to Judas). The foundational study of these passages is Stendahl 1968 [1954].
8. Stendahl (1968 [1954]) suggests that this sort of organized scribal activity might have occurred within a "school" of Christian scribes.
9. Meeks 1986b, 140.
10. Ogletree 1983, 111.
11. Noted by Ernst von Dobschütz, "Matthew as Rabbi and Catechist," in Stanton 1983, 20; W. D. Davies 1964, 306–307.
12. The following passages are best read with the aid of a synopsis of the Gospels, such as Throckmorton 1992, or, for those who can use the Greek text, Aland 1985.
13. Meier 1980, 94–95.
14. The apt phrase "hermeneutic of mercy" is taken from Meier 1980, 130.
15. Although the words "against you" appear in the majority of later Greek texts, they are absent from some of the oldest and best manuscripts. A good case can be made that they do not belong to the original form of the text. For an argument in favor their inclusion, however, see Davies and Allison 1991 (vol. 2), 782 n. 3.
16. In this case I have cited the RSV in preference to the NRSV, whose laudable effort to employ inclusive lan-

just "another member of the church" (NRSV) but "your brother" (RSV, translating the Greek text literally). Of course, the provisions of the passage apply to male and female members of the community alike.

17. Since I have quoted the RSV, I will continue here to use masculine pronouns to refer to the offender. The reader is trusted to supply the tacit understanding that women, as well as men, can be sinners in need of admonition and discipline.
18. 1QS 5.25–6.1; CD 9.2–4.
19. The verbs in 18:18 are second-person plural, in contrast to the second-person singular verbs in the parallel formulation of 16:19.
20. E. Schweizer 1975, 377.
21. Matthew prefers the phrase "kingdom of heaven" to "kingdom of God," the characteristic phrase in Mark and Luke. Matthew's usage does not reflect a conception of the kingdom as otherworldly; rather, it is a pious circumlocution—in accord with Jewish practice—to avoid using the name of God.
22. *Measure for Measure,* act II, scene iii.
23. m.Aboth 3.2.
24. For a balanced and helpful discussion of the historical evidence, see Stanton 1992, 113–281.
25. Luz 1989, 79–95, takes the latter view. "Matthew obviously does not know Paul and his theology; but it is basically the case that he would belong to the side of the opponents of Paul" (87).
26. Keck 1984, 42–43, following the work of Theissen 1978.
27. For a carefully nuanced discussion of Matthew's achievement in this regard, see R. E. Brown 1984, 124–145.
28. Keck 1984, 43.
29. Keck 1984, 55.
30. Keck 1984, 41–42.