

## Various Teachings and the Golden Rule (7:1–12)

### On Not Judging Others (7:1–5)

#### Translation

<sup>1</sup>“Do not judge unfairly,<sup>a</sup> lest you be judged in a similar way.<sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup>For by the kind of judgment with which you judge others, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you measure to others, it will also be measured<sup>c</sup> to you. <sup>3</sup>Why do you see so well<sup>d</sup> the speck in the eye of your brother or sister,<sup>e</sup> but fail to regard the log in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how will you<sup>f</sup> say to your brother or sister:<sup>g</sup> <sup>5</sup>‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while behold there is a log in your own eye? <sup>6</sup>Hypocrite! First take out the log from your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to take the speck out of your brother’s or sister’s<sup>h</sup> eye.”

#### Notes

- a. “Unfairly” added to translation.
- b. “In a similar way” added to translation.
- c. For μετρηθήσεται, some MSS (Θ f<sup>13</sup> it vg<sup>cl</sup>) read ἀντιμετρηθήσεται, “it shall be measured to you in return,” probably by the influence of the Lukan parallel (Luke 6:38).
- d. “So well” added to translation.
- e. τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου, lit. “your brother.”
- f. Some MSS (κ\* Θ lat mae) have the present tense λέγεις for the future ἐρεῖς, a natural scribal alteration.
- g. τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου, lit. “your brother.”
- h. τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου, lit. “your brother’s.”

#### Form/Structure/Setting

A. The sermon turns to the importance of avoiding a judgmental attitude toward others. We encounter a relatively abrupt break with the preceding material as this new subject is addressed. Nevertheless, earlier material in the sermon may be regarded as related generally to the present passage (viz., 5:7, 9, 22, 44; 6:14–15). Possibly this pericope corresponds to the fifth petition (6:12) of the Lord’s Prayer (thus, e.g., Bornkamm, NTS 24 [1978]), which concerns forgiving and being forgiven (see discussion of structure in the Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount).

B. The fact that vv 3–5 shift from the second person singular to the plural points very probably to the evangelist’s combination of logia derived from different strata of oral tradition. To be sure, the same shift is found in the Lukan parallel (Luke 6:41–42), but there the sayings are preceded by other material that softens the transition. Some of the material of this passage can be said to derive from Q: e.g., v 1 = Luke 6:37; v 2b = Luke 6:38c; and especially vv 3–5, which, apart from word order, are closely paralleled in Luke 6:41–42. Matthew appears to have dropped the inappropriate vocative ἀδελφέ, “brother,” at the beginning of the statement in v 4 (cf. Luke 6:42). V 2a, however, is altogether lacking in Luke and probably derives directly from oral tradition. The only verse of the passage found in Mark (4:24) is 2b, where Mark’s μετρηθήσεται agrees with Matthew, against Luke’s ἀντιμετρηθήσεται, and where Mark alone adds καὶ προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν, “and it shall be added to you.”

C. Once again we encounter extensive use of parallelism. Each of the first three verses contains its own parallelism, and vv 4–5 also contain some parallelism. V 1 is tersely parallel with μή ... ἵνα μή and serves as the basic proposition of the passage. The two halves of v 2 are exactly parallel, both beginning with ἐν ᾧ, except for the insertion of the final ὑμῖν with the preceding verb. The sayings of this verse seem to have become a standard part of the oral, memorized catechetical tradition of the early Church, as the successive words κρίματι, κρίνετε, κριθήσεσθε and μέτρῳ, μετρεῖτε, μετρηθήσεται show. The logia of v 2 are found in 1 Clem 13:2 and Polycarp, Phil. 2:3, but in both cases oral tradition is reflected rather than dependence on Matthew (see Hagner, *Use*, 135–51). The two halves of v 3 are chiastically constructed (a b b a; verb, noun, noun, verb) and are closely, though not exactly, parallel. This enhances the contrast being set forth. Vv 4–5 are again chiastic in structure (speck, log, log, speck) with some parallelism in the log sayings and more in the speck sayings. A partial parallel to vv 3–5 is found in Gos. Thom.. 26b.

#### Comment

1–2 The command μή κρίνετε, lit. “do not judge,” should not be taken as a prohibition of all judging or discerning of right and wrong, since elsewhere in Matthew’s record of the teaching of Jesus—indeed, already in v 6—the making of such judgments by disciples is presupposed (see 7:15–20; 10:11–15; 16:6, 12; 18:17–18). Furthermore, v 2a assumes the making of fair or charitable judgments and does not entail the avoidance of judgments altogether. The meaning here, accordingly, is that unfair or uncharitable judgments should be avoided. A note of humility is suggested too by the immediate context (vv 3–5): one should not judge others more harshly or by a different standard than one judges oneself.

Similarly, the warning ἵνα μή κριθῆτε, “lest you be judged,” does not imply that one can avoid judgment by God at the eschatological judgment (this judgment is presupposed in the following words) but merely that the way in which one judges others will be the way one is judged by God at the eschatological judgment (for a parallel principle, see 6:14–15; 18:32–35). The viewpoint expressed in these verses finds strong Jewish parallels in Sir 18:20 and m. ’Abot; 1:6; 2:5; m. Soṭa 1:7. See Str-B 1:441–42, 444–46. Paul seems clearly dependent on these sayings of Jesus when he writes in Rom 2:1 (NRSV), “Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things” (cf. 14:4; 1 Cor 4:5; and 5:12, reflecting a tension similar to that of the present passage). See too Jas 4:11–12 and 5:9 for dependence on these logia of Jesus.

κριθήσεσθε is a divine passive: God is the acting subject who will judge. Judgment is God’s prerogative alone. The formal parallelism between v 2a and v 2b leads naturally to the conclusion that the latter constitutes a synonymous parallelism in the manner of the Psalms. The “measuring” then has to do with charitable judging. If there is a wider connotation here, it is not as clear as it is in both Mark 4:24 (with the added προστεθήσεται, “it will be added”) and Luke 6:38 (in a context explicitly referring to giving). With v 2b, cf. m. Soṭa 1:7.

3–5 κάρφος refers to a small speck of anything (perhaps here “sawdust,” given the meaning of δοκός) that may get in a person’s eye; here it is used metaphorically to indicate some slight or insignificant shortcoming. The repeated reference in these verses to “your brother” indicates that it is primarily the Christian community that is in view. δοκός, “log,” is an intentionally ludicrous exaggeration in its contrast to the speck of sawdust. What is a tiny flaw in another is seen so clearly by a censorious person, while ironically what is an outrageously huge failure in the latter is conveniently overlooked altogether. It is the self-righteous, censorious person who is particularly

eager to correct the faults of others. The logic of v 4 is clear: with a log in one's own eye (καὶ ἰδοῦ, "and behold," makes the point an emphatic one), it is impossible to see well enough to take out the speck in the eye of another. The hyperbolic speck and log contrast is found also in b. 'Arak; 16b Bar. b. B. Bat. 15b (see Str-B 1:446). Also to be kept in mind in this analogy, however, is the familiarity of Jesus with the carpenter's shop (cf. Matt 13:55, "the carpenter's son"; Mark 6:3, "the carpenter"). The vocative address ὑποκριτά, "hypocrite," at the beginning of v 5 indicates that some form of deception is involved (whether only of self or deliberately of others). For "hypocrite," see Comment on 6:2. The solution indicated by v 5 indicates the responsibility that is prior: one's own faults are to be remedied first. Then, and only then, may one turn to help with the shortcomings of another. διαβλέψεις in v 5, "see clearly," intensifies the βλέπεις, "see," of v 3. Behind the exhortation of v 5 is the obvious implication that an awareness of one's own faults (it is assumed that all have such) will make more charitable one's judgment of others. Thus in this way we are reminded of vv 1–2. There is no need to conclude from this passage that one is not to judge at all (contra Hill; Schweizer; Guelich, Sermon; Davies-Allison understand Jesus to have meant no judging at all, but not the evangelist [673–74]).

### Explanation

This passage concerns relationships in the community of faith and may be regarded as one expression of the ethic of love that is the summary of the law and the prophets (see 7:12; 22:39–40). Although the disciples cannot avoid making judgments (cf. 18:15–18), their judgments are to be made charitably and not censoriously. Judgment of faults is to begin with oneself, and one is to be as scrupulous in this self-judgment as one is generous and tolerant in this judgment of others. For the same standard of judgment that we apply to others will in turn be applied to us. The hypocrite ignores the significant failures in his or her own life while becoming preoccupied with the slighter failures of others. Such a person violates the love commandment.

### Discernment in Proclaiming the Gospel (7:6)

#### Translation

<sup>6</sup>"Do not give what is holy to dogs and do not set your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them down<sup>a</sup> with their hoofs and then turn to slash you with their teeth."<sup>b</sup>

#### Notes

a. The critical text, following B C L N W Θ f<sup>13</sup> 33, prints the future indicative καταπατήσουσιν, which is grammatically allowable following μήποτε in contexts of fearing (see Turner, 3:99). ✎ f<sup>1</sup> and the majority text have the subjunctive καταπατήσωσιν, probably by influence from the other subjunctive verbs in the verse.

b. "Slash with their teeth" is an interpretive paraphrase of the verb ῥήξωσιν, "tear in pieces" (see BAGD, 735).

#### Form/Structure/Setting

A. This verse appears to be a detached independent logion apparently unrelated to the preceding (pace Guelich, Sermon; Davies-Allison) or following context, inserted here for no special reason but only as another saying of Jesus. It has the character of a proverb, which may have had a range of application. Although it is very obscure as it presently stands in Matthew, when Jesus first uttered

these words he quite probably made clear what he meant by them. That explanatory material has not come down to us.

B. This verse is from Matthew's special source and is not found in any other canonical Gospel. The first half of the verse is found in the "Gospel according to Basilides" as reported by Epiphanius (Pan. haer. 24.5.2). It is also found, slightly modified and incomplete, in the Gos. Thom. 93. The first clause of the verse is found in the Didache (9:5), where "the holy thing" is understood to be the Eucharist. All of these instances are probably to be explained through dependence on Matthew.

C. The structure of the logion is balanced, with the two halves of the verse each having parallel clauses. The first two clauses constitute a synthetic parallelism and make essentially the same point. The second two parallel clauses describe the results of the foolhardy action described in the first half of the verse. Possibly this second half of the verse forms a chiasm with the first half of the verse. That is, the first verb (καταπατήσουσιν) obviously refers to the second element of the first half (the pigs), while the second verb (ῥήξουσιν) may refer to the first element of the first half (the dogs), thus giving an a b b a pattern.

#### Comment

6 The key question of this difficult verse concerns, of course, the meaning of the metaphorical terms in the first half of the verse. To whom do these words refer, these words that are among the most derogatory in the Jewish vocabulary—the dogs and the swine? And what is depicted by "the holy thing" and "the pearls"? Some (e.g., with variations: Perles, Jeremias, Schwarz) have speculated that το ἅγιον is a mistranslation of the underlying Aramaic word "the ring" (ܩܕܫܐ, qēdšā, the same consonants as for the word "holy") and that the logion alludes to Prov 11:22, which refers to "a gold ring in a pig's snout." Little is gained from this, however, in understanding the intended meaning. By the time of the Didache (early second century?), the saying was applied to the exclusive access of believers to the eucharist. The "dogs" and "swine" in this instance were the unbelievers. It is unclear, however, why witnessing or participating in the Eucharist would cause unbelievers to turn upon believers. It is also improbable that esoteric teachings are in view (contra Davies-Allison), since Matthew never hints at such things elsewhere. More likely, "what is holy" and "pearls" (cf. 13:45–46) refer to the gospel of the kingdom. Since for the Jews "swine" are unclean animals and the term "dogs" was often used for "Gentiles" (cf. 15:26), it is possible that this logion prohibits the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles (thus reinforcing the teaching of 10:5 and 15:24; cf. Manson, Sayings, 174). In the Torah, the "outsider" was not allowed to eat the food of the offerings because they were "holy" (Exod 29:33; Lev 22:10). Still, Matthew believes the gospel will go to the Gentiles. And while Jews, for whom the gospel was clearly a stumbling block (1 Cor 1:23), might be expected to react violently to the proclamation of the gospel (as, for example, repeatedly in Acts), it is uncertain that Gentiles, for whom the gospel was only a kind of foolishness, would react this way. It seems best not to limit this verse unnecessarily but to regard it as applicable to both Gentiles and Jews, i.e., to all who are unreceptive. (cf. the similar attitude, clearly pertaining to Jews, in 10:11–14.) The imagery of trampling down in the sense of spurning and profaning what is holy is found also in Heb 10:29, where, however, it refers to apostate Christians. It is unlikely that our passage specifically has apostates in view (contra Guelich, Sermon) or that it corresponds to the final petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Insofar as apostates become and continue to be unreceptive of the gospel, however, they could well be included in the application of this proverb.

#### Explanation

The mission to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom is an urgent one, and at least by the end of Matthew it is a universal one (28:19; cf. 24:14). In this mission everything depends on the receptivity of those who hear the message. Although it cannot be known in advance what the response will be, when the disciples encounter resistance or hostility they are not to persist, but as emphasized in 10:13–14, they are to proceed on their way in order to reach others with the message. The issue here thus focuses on the lack of receptivity rather than on any intrinsic unworthiness of any individuals or group.

### The Answering Father (7:7–11)

#### Translation

<sup>7</sup>“Ask<sup>a</sup> and it will be given to you; seek and you will find what you want;<sup>b</sup> knock and the door will be opened for you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone asking<sup>c</sup> receives; the one seeking finds; and for the one knocking the door will be opened. <sup>9</sup>There is no one among you who when a son or daughter asks for bread will give a stone, is there?<sup>10</sup> And there is no one who will give a snake to the child who asks for a fish, is there? <sup>11</sup>Well, then, if even you who are sinful know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more is it true that your heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask him?”

#### Notes

- a. The three imperatives in this verse are in the present tense and could also be translated “keep asking,” etc.
- b. “What you want” added to translation, supplying a direct object for the verb.
- c. The three participles are in the present tense and could also be translated “who keeps asking,” etc.

#### Form/Structure/Setting

A. This is another self-contained unit having no real connection with the material that precedes or follows it. In Luke, this pericope occurs together with other passages on prayer, viz., after the Lord’s Prayer and the parable of the importunate friend (Luke 11:1–8). Bornkamm (NTS 24 [1978] 419–32, followed by Guelich, Sermon) relates this pericope also to the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew (cf. 6:8–9, 11).

B. This pericope is found also in Luke 11:9–13. Except for Luke’s introductory “and I say to you,” vv 7–8 are in verbatim agreement with Luke 11:9–10. The questions of vv 9–10 are also represented in Luke 11:11–12, except that the fish/snake question comes first in Luke and is followed by an egg/scorpion question rather than the bread/stone question found in Matthew. The explanation of this difference can now only be speculative. If Matthew and Luke are using the same form of Q, the bread/stone question could have been added by Matthew (cf. the same contrast in 4:3), bread being a staple food, and the egg/scorpion question omitted because of difficulty in seeing a connection between these last two items. On the other hand, the two forms could represent two independent oral traditions (tracing back perhaps to the same original logion). Apart from minor differences, v 11 agrees verbatim with Luke 11:13, with the single important difference of Matthew’s ἀγαθά, “good things,” for Luke’s πνεῦμα ἅγιον, “Holy Spirit.” Probably Luke wants here to make more of a contrast between what God gives and what humans give, and so he avoids repeating ἀγαθά, heightening it and making it more specific by substituting “Holy Spirit.” This explanation is supported by Luke’s obvious interest in the Holy Spirit in his second volume (cf. esp. Acts 2:1–4).

C. The passage readily divides into two major sections: (1) three exhortations and complementary assertions of God's faithfulness, vv 7–8; (2) two examples of human faithfulness, followed by an *in minori ad maius* argument concerning the faithfulness of God to those who call upon him, vv 9–11. Both sections involve considerable parallelism. Each of the three imperatives in v 7 is immediately followed by the result expressed in the future tense; v 8 reflects the same sequence of verbs (except for λαμβάνει, "receives," which actively expresses the meaning of the passive δοθήσεται, "shall be given"). Furthermore, the rhetorical questions in vv 9 and 10 are almost exactly parallel in form. V 11 ends with a reference to the giving of what is asked for and thus forms an *inclusio* with the beginning of v 7.

#### Comment

7–8 The three imperatives in v 7 and three participles in v 8 refer to the same activity. No object is specified. One is not told what to request, what to seek, or that for which one knocks. The invitation is apparently as broad as the questions of vv 9–10 imply and the object thus as general as the ἀγαθά, "good things," of v 11. These "good things" can be thought of as the eschatological blessings that accompany the presence of the kingdom (cf. Luke's "Holy Spirit"), so that the work of the disciples in proclaiming the kingdom is primarily in view, or alternatively the more ordinary and ongoing needs of the disciples (cf. 6:32–33). Less likely is the suggestion (e.g., Carson) that the qualities of character and life demanded by the sermon (i.e., righteousness, humility, purity, love) are intended. In the present passage we do not have the seemingly unlimited "whatever you ask," including even the miraculous, found in 21:22 (cf. 18:19; John 14:13–14; 15:7). The passage does not emphasize the "good things" themselves but the faithfulness of God as the provider of his people's needs. Thus the passive verbs δοθήσεται, "it will be given," and ἀνοιγήσεται, "it will be opened," are so-called divine passives: God is the one who will give (cf. v 11) and open the door. The three imperatives of v 7 as well as the three participles of v 8 are all in the present tense, conveying the idea of a continual asking, seeking, and knocking. This implied notion of persistence in asking is found in the teaching of Jesus (Luke 18:1–8; 11:5–8; both passages lacking in Matthew) and is made explicit in the early Church's transmission of this logion: "Let the one who seeks not cease until he finds" (Clement, Strom. 5.14.96.3; cf. POxy 654.1; Gos. Thom. 2). The πᾶς, "everyone," of v 8 means, of course, everyone participating in (*viz.*, receiving) the kingdom reality brought by Jesus. Whereas in v 7 the promises are all in the future tense, v 8 contains two present tenses, λαμβάνει, "receives," and εὕρισκει, "finds," which emphasize the reality of the promises for the present. It is interesting to note that the promises here are not conditional as in 21:22, "if you have faith" (cf. Mark 11:24). The faithfulness of God in answering prayer has a rich OT (cf. Jer 29:13; Prov 8:17 for strikingly parallel language) and rabbinic background (references in Montefiore, *Rabbinic Teaching*, 146–49). Nevertheless, the statements of the present passage have a unique quality about them when considered in the total context of Jesus' teaching and his announcement of the kingdom.

9–10 The rhetorical questions together with the negative constructions beginning with μή amount to affirmations. When a child asks for bread or a fish, no parent would respond with a stone or a snake. The requests here involve food (as also in Luke's "egg"), and this enables us to conclude that the requests in this passage are not requests for the miraculous (usually explicitly conditioned by the necessity of faith, as in 21:22) but requests for the necessities of life (cf. 6:25–34). Round stones look like loaves of bread; a snake can resemble a fish (and some scorpions can apparently be egg-like in shape). The point is not in these specific items, however, but in the faithful provision made by human parents.

11 It must be conceded that human parents give δόματα ἀγαθά, “good gifts,” to their children. They know how to do this even though (ὄντες, taken as a concessive participle; Robertson, Grammar, 1129) they are πονηροί, “sinful.” This word, which occurs far more often (twenty-six times) in Matthew than in any other NT writing, presupposes the moral degradation of all members of the human family, especially when compared, as here, with the righteousness and goodness of the Father who is in heaven (this last phrase alone suggests the same contrast). The ἀγαθά, “good things,” that God gives correspond to the δόματα ἀγαθά, “good gifts,” given by human parents. Instead of preserving the parallelism by having the Father give τοῖς τέκνοις, “to his children,” he has the Father give τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν, “to those who ask him,” thus forming an inclusio, reminding the reader of the initial imperative “Ask.” Similarly, the δώσει, “will give,” echoes the δοθήσεται of v 7.

#### Explanation

Jesus here invites his disciples to rely upon the faithfulness of their heavenly Father. The threefold invitation and promise of v 7, emphasized in v 8, have as their main point that the disciples may confidently trust God. Much more than parents, who reliably provide their children with what they need, will their heavenly Father provide the disciples with that for which they ask. The unlimited scope of the passage need not entail the expectation that every request will be answered positively; it points rather to the basic principle of God’s comprehensive and faithful care of the disciple. The “good things” cover certainly the ongoing needs of the disciples (cf. 6:25–33, where even the form of the argument is the same), but in the larger context of the Gospel, they suggest also the blessings of the kingdom. This passage focuses on the answering, providing Father. It is he who provides the material blessings of the present age as well as the transcendent blessings connected with the coming kingdom of God.

#### The Golden Rule (7:12)

##### Translation

<sup>12</sup>“Therefore<sup>a</sup> everything you would like others to do to you, you yourselves do to them. For this is the essence of<sup>b</sup> the law and the prophets.”

##### Notes

a.  $\aleph^*$  L sy<sup>p</sup> bo<sup>mss</sup> omit οὖν, “therefore.”

b. “The essence of” added to translation.

##### Form/Structure/Setting

A. This separate logion is probably added here by the evangelist because of the reference in the preceding pericope to the giving and receiving of good things. But the connection is not that clear, and this may explain the omission of οὖν in some MSS. This logion functions as the summarizing and climactic demand of the main body of the sermon. It is followed by a collection of concluding warnings (7:13–27).

B. The first sentence is Q material paralleled in Luke (6:31, where it is inserted into the Q passage found also in Matt 5:38–48). Matthew’s form of the logion is more emphatic than Luke’s: Matthew adds πάντα ... ὅσα, lit. “everything ... whatsoever,” as well as the more forceful οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, “thus also you.” Only Matthew has this summarizing of the “law and the prophets” (cf. 22:40, again unique to Matthew).

C. The golden rule is widely known in different cultures and religions (see Dihle, 8–12, 80–109). At least in its negative form it is known in pre-Christian Jewish sources. Hillel summarized the law to a proselyte in these words: “What is hateful to yourself, do to no other: that is the whole law and the rest is commentary” (b. Šabb. 31a). It is found also in Tob 4:15 (cf. Sir 31:15), Ep. Arist. 207–8 (with the positive also indicated), and the Jerusalem Targum of Lev 19:18. The negative form is found also in Christian sources: Did. 1:2, in the Western text (D and a few other witnesses); Acts 15:20, 28; POxy 654.5; and the Coptic Gos. Thom. 6. The negative and positive forms are two ways of saying the same thing, but although the former is original and may be more fundamental, the latter is the superior form (contra Luz, Davies-Allison) and “the fuller expression of practical morality” (Abrahams, Studies 1:22). The positive form must include the negative form but not vice versa.

#### Comment

12 The golden rule is properly regarded as an exegesis of the great positive commandment of Lev 19:18, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” This is probably true also of the negative form in its various occurrences in Jewish tradition (in addition to the references listed above, cf. Sir 31:15, where the Hebrew text has in the second half of the verse “and keep in mind your own dislikes”). That the golden rule as uttered by Jesus is derived from Lev 19:18 is clear from Matt 22:35–40. There, in the only other “summary” of the law in the gospel tradition, Jesus quotes Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18 as the two commandments upon which “the whole law and the prophets” depend. To “love your neighbor as yourself” is the equivalent of doing to others what you would have them do to you, and thus the latter can also be described as the essence of “the law and the prophets” (cf. Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:14). With this reference to the law and the prophets, the evangelist brings the main part of the sermon to a close in the same way he began it in 5:17.

The emphatic πάντα ὅσα, lit. “everything whatsoever,” and the present tense of ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς, lit. “you be doing to them,” presents a high challenge to the Christian in his or her relations to others, involving both unlimited scope and faithful persistence. Moreover, the statement that such activity constitutes the fulfillment of the law and the prophets is not less astonishing because rabbinic contemporaries (e.g., Hillel) were saying the same thing concerning the negative formulation of the golden rule.

#### Explanation

It is from this saying and that of 22:37–40 that love became the dominant and summarizing theme of the Christian ethic. To act in this manner, in constant deeds of love, is to bring to expression that to which the law and the prophets pointed. That is, a world where only good is done to others involves by definition eschatological fulfillment, a return to the paradise of the Garden of Eden. To do good to others is to mirror the activity of the Father (7:11), which of course finds its supreme manifestation in the eschatological fulfillment brought by the Son. If the ethics of the kingdom of God anticipate the coming future in the present, then this is especially true of the ethic of the golden rule, which is the distillation of kingdom ethics. If this teaching of Jesus were to be lived out in the world, the whole system of evil would be dramatically shaken. Even if it were to be manifested seriously in the Church, its impact would be incalculable. In this sublime command, so simple and yet so deep, we encounter a challenge central to the purposes of God and therefore one that is also eschatological in tone. No other teaching is so readily identified with Jesus; no other teaching is so central to the righteousness of the kingdom and the practice of discipleship.