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The Church in the Synoptics: The Gospel of Matthew

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I

My assignment was to prepare a paper on "The Church in the Synoptics." "The Church in the Synoptics" suggests that there is one concept of the Church which is more or less common to the first three Gospels. The presuppositions behind such an assumption will be familiar to anyone acquainted with the standard works on "The Church in the New Testament" of an earlier era.¹ They are: (i) either Jesus founded a Church or he intended that a Church should be established after his resurrection; (ii) it is possible to go behind the formulations of the Gospels to the authentic words of Jesus and through such a procedure Jesus' concept of the Church can be deduced; and (iii) this concept, in any case, dominates the presentation of the three Synoptic writers. Some modern scholars continue to work under such presuppositions.²

I do not intend to go into the question of "the idea of the ecclesia in the mind of our Lord."³ The quest has been held to be critically non-viable. The variations and inconsistencies found in the reporting of the same saying by the three Gospel writers indicate that the early Church made no attempt to distinguish between the words spoken by the historical Jesus and the words spoken through his disciples by the Christ of faith. The much touted criteria of dissimilarity and coherence, as a means of discovering the words of Jesus,⁴ in actual practice have formal and practical difficulties about them. The criterion of dissimilarity, for example, will pick out only

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¹ Such as: Newton Flew, *Jesus and His Church: A Study of the Idea of the Ecclesia in the New Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1938); and George Johnston, *The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament* (London: O.U.P., 1943).

² For example, R. Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament* (London: Burnes and Oates, 1965), and R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (London: O.U.P., 1969).

³ Newton Flew, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁴ Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967), pp. 39, 46.

that which is "distinctive" in comparison with ancient Judaism and the early Church. The contours of the teaching of Jesus thus arrived at may well be misleading. Not only is a Christian motif "Jesus is unique" being used here as a standard of judgement,⁵ but the assumption is also made that the early Church must have departed from the teaching of Jesus. Further, our knowledge of the primitive Church is in very great part derived from the very documents that we are studying. One example of the kind of problem that is faced is brought out by even a casual consideration of Matt. 24:34: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (RSV). Are these *ipsissima verba Jesu*, leading to the view that Jesus foresaw an indefinite period of time between his death and the *parousia* and hence probably founded a Church, or is this text to be judged as an early Church redaction explaining the delay of *parousia*? The criterion of coherence is a nebulous criterion. It is a criterion in the use of which subjective influences play a great part; and it assumes that it is possible for the modern mind to delineate what was coherent to the first century mind. The assertion here is not that the early Church constructed all the materials out of its need. The assertion is that there is no sure way in which one could distinguish with any reasonable certainty between the authentic words of Jesus and their modification by the Church.

If we, then, abandon the "quest for the historical primitive Church,"⁶ we are thrown back to considering the concepts of the Church in the individual Gospels of Matthew, Luke and Mark. This paper will attempt to give a barely adequate introduction to the concept of the Church found in the Gospel of Matthew.

There are two reasons for choosing to begin with the Gospel of Matthew. First, along with a growing number of scholars both in India and elsewhere, this writer believes that Matthew was the first Gospel to be written. It is logical, therefore, to start with Matthew. Secondly, as Bornkamm states, "No other Gospel is so shaped by the thought of the Church as Matthew's, so constructed for use by the Church; for this reason it has exercised, as no other, a normative influence in the later Church."⁷

For the purposes of this paper, the assumption of Matthaean priority will only mean that the Gospel will be studied in terms of itself, without recourse to comparisons with the Gospels of Mark or Luke. This kind of redactional study is in any case to be preferred to redactional studies based on a source hypothesis. The method of

⁵ F. G. Downing, *The Church and Jesus: A Study in History, Philosophy and Theology*, Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series 10 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1968), p. 116.

⁶ F. G. Downing, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁷ G. Bornkamm, in G. Bornkamm et. al., *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, trans. Percy Scott (London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), p. 38.

studying the changes one Gospel makes in another is in danger of overlooking the total picture that is presented, in terms of the matter taken over *plus* the matter redacted.⁸ It also ignores the possibility that some at least of the changes that a writer seems to be making in his sources may be due to his copying a *Nebenquelle*.⁹ By applying the insights of form-criticism, by applying the principles of composition-criticism and literary-criticism, and by applying the criteria of frequency and distribution, it is possible to make a study of a Gospel without resorting to comparison with its alleged sources. The Gospels of Mark and John have always had to be dealt with in this way. The studies of Kingsbury and Thompson on Matthew follow this method.¹⁰

II

If no other Gospel is so shaped by the thought of the Church as Matthew's, it must also be admitted that, "only the most meagre beginnings of a real ecclesiology, centred in the Church as an independent, empirically circumscribed entity, are to be found in Matthew's gospel."¹¹ It is not a manual of Church life like the *Didache*. It is a life of Jesus written to meet the needs of a congregation or congregations. There is not in Matthew a fully explicit and inclusive doctrine of the Church. What we have is a conception of the life of Jesus intended to promote a more profound self-understanding than existed on the part of particular congregations. An important literary feature of the Gospel of Matthew is his arrangement of the teaching of Jesus in the form of five discourses, consisting of chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18 and 24-25. These discourses seem related to the subject of the Church.¹² I propose to examine these five discourses in turn to see what we can learn about the Matthaean concept of the Church.

1. The Sermon on the Mount

Broadly speaking this section may be summarised as instruction for disciples. The first thing that must be noticed is Matthew's attitude to the law. It is not the Pauline attitude. 5:17-18 reads: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets;

⁸ C. H. Talbert, "Shifting Sands: The Recent Study of the Gospel of Luke," *Interpretation* 30 (1976), p. 392.

⁹ Tim Schramm, *Der Markus-Stoff bei Lukas*, SNTSMS 14, (London: O.U.P., 1971).

¹⁰ J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology and Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) and *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13* (London: S.P.C.K., 1969). W. G. Thompson, "Reflections on the Composition of Mt. 8: 1-9:34," *CBQ* 33 (1971), pp. 365-88.

¹¹ Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹² So Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 13; J. P. Martin, "The Church in Matthew," *Interpretation* 29 (1, 75), p. 43.

I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." These verses must be considered together with 23:2, 3: "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practise and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach but do not practise"; 15:3: "Why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"; 24:20: "Pray that your flight might not be in winter or on a Sabbath" and 12:7, 8: "And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is the lord of the Sabbath." It is not possible within the confines of this paper to go into the details of the exegetical problems involved in the above texts. 5:18 may mean either that "the whole of the law is binding until the end of the world; or that the law would stand in its entirety unless it was fulfilled in Jesus—and because he fulfils its demands, it will no longer be binding on Christians."¹⁸ 15:3 suggests that the oral tradition handed down by the Pharisees was used in a way that broke the commandment of God, but in 23:2, 3 fault is found not with the oral tradition but with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes. In fact, in Matthew's Church there may have been even Christian scribes who handed down Christian traditions in addition to Jewish oral tradition. (Cf. 13:52: "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a house-holder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.") If the disciples' hunger is sufficient reason for breaking the Sabbath (12:7, 8), why should not the trials of the last days (24:20) be? Casuistry on the one hand and antinomianism on the other may have been problems in the Church. Casuistry gives rise to self-righteousness, a problem which will come up again in our consideration of ch. 13. Antinomianism needs to be investigated further.

It is to be doubted whether the antinomianism in the Matthaean Church is to be regarded as a philosophical discussion about the validity of the Torah for the Christian. The problem may have been lack of regard for ethical behaviour. The ending of the Sermon on the Mount poses an interesting problem. The Sermon for all practical purposes ends with a restatement of the love command in 7:12. Then follows in 7:15-23 a warning about false prophets. Here the false prophets are probably Christians, since they are described as being "in sheeps' clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." These are probably the people who relax commandments and teach others to do so (5:19). These are probably also the false prophets who "will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect" (24:24). These men, it seems, depended on their charismatic ministry, patterned on the charismatic ministry of Christ, to enter into the Kingdom of God. (Cf. 7:22: "On that day

¹⁸ J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel of St Matthew*, The Pelican Gospel Commentaries (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1963), p. 84.

many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?') Their main attribute is the doctrine of *anomia* (7:22). *Anomia* is a term found in the Gospels only in Matthew, at 7:23, 13:41, 23:28; 24:12. It means lawlessness, as a frame of mind and as a deed opposed to *dikaiosune*.¹⁴ Over against this stands the Matthaean emphasis on "doing and teaching" the commandments (15:19), "bearing good fruit" (7:18), "doing the will, of God" (7:22) and "hearing and doing the words of Christ" (7:24, 26). The nature of the Church, Matthew asserts, does not lie in a charismatic ministry even if that ministry is patterned on the ministry of Christ himself, and even if Christ himself has authorised it (10:8). The nature of the Church lies in ethical obedience to the law of God radicalised by Jesus (5:21-47) and interpreted by the love-commandment (5:47; 7:12; 19:19b; 22: 37-39).¹⁵ The Sermon on the Mount is ethics for the Community.

2. The Missionary Discourse

Matthew's Missionary Discourse in chapter 10 raises the problem concerning the Gentiles and the Jews. On the one hand in 10:5 we have the stringent command, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." On the other hand, we have the so called great commission in 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." On the one hand we have 8:11-12, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness"—which is usually interpreted to mean that the Gentiles will be accepted into the Kingdom of Heaven and the Israelites will be rejected. On the other we have 15:24, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." In 5:47; 6:7; 6:32 and 18:17; we have derogatory references to the Gentiles, but in 9:33b; 11:16-24; 21:33-43; 22:1-10 and 23:37-39, there is, at first sight at least, an anti-Jewish tendency.

There are many solutions offered to this problem.¹⁶ One is to suggest that one or other of the tendencies is redactional while the other is from tradition. But the problem does not admit of such an easy solution. By any criteria 28:18-20, being the final words of the Gospel, should be considered redactional. But on the other hand

¹⁴ Arndt and Gingrich, *sub voce*.

¹⁵ On this whole section see J. P. Martin, *op. cit.*; K. Tagawa, "People and Community in Matthew," *NTS* 16 (2, 70), pp. 149-162; E. Schweizer, "Law Observance and Charisma in Matthew," *NTS* 16 (3, 70), pp. 214-230; and D. Hill, "False Prophets and Charismatics: Structure and Interpretation in Matthew 7: 15-23," *Biblica* 57 (3, 76), pp. 327-348.

¹⁶ For a summary of these solutions I am indebted to K. Tagawa, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-162.

one derogatory word *ethnikos*, occurring in the New Testament only in Matt. 5:47; 6:7 and 18:17 and 3 John 7, should also probably be considered redactional. Similarly the anti-Jewish or universalistic words at 8:11 and 21:43 have a right to be considered possibly redactional. Another type of solution is what may be called the *heilsgeschichtlich* interpretation. The period of Jesus is the period of the mission to Israel; the period of the resurrected Christ is the period of the mission to the whole world. Therefore there is no real contradiction. This explanation is possible if we assume that Matthew is writing from the point of view of the Gentile Church. A third kind of interpretation is to suggest that Matthew is a Jewish Christian and that he speaks of the Gentile Mission only as a peripheral concern. On the other hand the criticisms of Judaism are really criticisms of the Pharisaic sect and of the religious leaders. This explanation does not seem to take seriously the exclusivism involved in saying "only to the lost sheep of Israel." A fourth kind of interpretation suggests that, since the Church is the true Israel, Israel means Christians. Consequently the mission of Jesus is to those who will form the true Israel. The anti-Jewish polemic is then to be understood as a warning to Christians that belonging to the Church does not guarantee salvation. This explanation has many problems, the least of which is that the Church is never called Israel in the Gospels.

There is as yet no satisfactory solution to this problem. Perhaps the traditions inherited by Matthew contained these prejudices and Matthew forbore from altering them because the situation demanded that he did not. If the Gospel was written in the cosmopolitan city of Antioch around A.D. 85 and if there were many churches in Antioch (as is likely from the geography of Antioch suggested by Josephus), it is likely that divergent traditions with varied prejudices were preserved in those churches. From Josephus we know that there were periodical Jewish pogroms in Antioch; and after the Jewish war in which the sons of Antioch were used by the Romans, there was no doubt a lot of bitterness in both Jewish and Gentile hearts at Antioch. Under such a circumstance the Matthaean understanding of the Church would be that still, Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians together, are one Church. In fact Matthew was trying to practise the love-commandment by bringing together the two parties by finding a place for the tradition of both parties in his Gospel.¹⁷

3. The Parable Collection

The Parable Collection in chapter 13 has two parables which speak about the nature of the Church.¹⁸ The two parables are the

¹⁷ This suggestion was made to me orally by Prof. W. R. Farmer of Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

¹⁸ For much of the material in this section I am indebted to C.W.F. Smith, "The Mixed State of the Church in Matthew's Gospel," *JBL* 82 (2, 63), pp. 149-68.

parable of the tares among the wheat (13:24-30, 36-43) and the Parable of the Fish Net (13:49-50). It has been recognised that the interpretation added to the Parable of the Tares among the Wheat is a Matthaean construction. Jeremias¹⁹ lists no less than 37 examples of the linguistic characteristics of the evangelist Matthew in this passage. And the interpretation of the Parable of the Fish Net (13:49-50) is simply a shortened form of the interpretation of the Parable of the Tares (13:36-43), containing seven linguistic expressions in common with it. The Matthaean Church seems to contain a mixed group of people, some of whom can be described as "sons of the kingdom" (vs. 38) and "righteous" (vss. 43, 49) and some who can be described as the "sons of the evil one" (vs. 38), and "causes of sin and evil doers" (vss. 43, 49).

The question is raised by those who would like to make the Church a community which separates itself from sinners, on the lines of the Pharisee movement or on the lines of the community of the Qumran covenanters, as to why the Church should tolerate those who perpetuate *anomia*.²⁰ Two reasons are given as to why this should be done. First, men are not able to make judgements about other men and inevitably good wheat will be plucked out along with tares (13:29). Secondly, the separation should not be made until the time is fulfilled (13:43). Till then it is the nature of the Church to be a mixed group and not a holy club. Till then the net must be cast as widely as possible. Till the time is fulfilled there is opportunity for repentance. This union of end-expectation and conception of the Church is peculiar to Matthew and may be found in all the discourse material of Matthew.²¹ It must be noted that the theme of the Church as a "mixed bag" occurs elsewhere in the Gospel also, for example at 3:12; 7:21-22; 9:10-13; 24:12. Not everyone in the Church will inherit the kingdom, but the separation is an eschatological act of the Son of Man (vss. 41, 49).²²

To these two parables should probably be added the Sub-parable of the Wedding-garment (22:11-14) and the discourse concerning the judgement of the nations (25:31-46).²³ There are formal parallels between the Parable of the Wedding-garment and the two parables just discussed. The explicit statement in vs. 10 that all who were

¹⁹ J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), pp. 82-84.

²⁰ On *anomia*, see *supra*, p. 162.

²¹ Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 19 and *passim*.

²² It must be noted that all our evidence has been taken from the interpretation of the Parable of the Tares. There are scholars like J. D. Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13*, pp. 63-75, who think that the parable, as apart from its interpretation, has to do with the controversy with the Jews. Kingsbury, however, agrees broadly with our evaluation of the interpretation of the Parable of the Tares, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

²³ C. W. F. Smith, *op. cit.*, also includes the Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13).

found in the streets were gathered (*sunago*, also in 13:30 and 13:47), both good and bad (*poneros* also in 13:40) is reminiscent of the gathering together of the good and bad fish. The term "to bind" in vs. 13 is reminiscent of the binding of the tares. And the concluding formula "there men will weep and gnash their teeth" is the same as in 13:42, 50. The parable applies to the Church because those who had not responded had already been excluded. And there is a time-interval between the assembling of the guests and the coming of the host—the discrimination does not take place at the time of admission.

The formal parallels between the discourse concerning the judgement of the nations and the two parables discussed above are less striking. *Sunago* occurs here also (vs. 32). There are two identifiable groups—the sheep and the goats. The basis of judgement is not of concern to us here, but it must be noted that there is a final separation after a period of time when a very mixed state of affairs exists.

The Church to which these passages were written obviously has existed long enough to become a very mixed bag. There is no prospect of an immediate or sudden *parousia*. Therefore the nature of the Church is being reflected upon. The Church is a Church consisting of sinners and righteous men of varying degrees. The separation and purification can only be an eschatological act.

4. The Discourse to the Congregation

It is customary to interpret the whole of chapter 18 as one unit, either addressed to the whole congregation²⁴ or to the apostles.²⁵ The chapter is introduced by the phrase, "At that time the disciples came to Jesus" (18:1). The evangelist Matthew uses the word *mathetes* to describe either the apostles (13:10, 36; 14:16, 22, etc.) or to describe the followers of Jesus (5:1, 8:21, etc.). Sometimes he distinguishes the apostles with the adjective "twelve"—twelve disciples (10:1; 11:16; 26:20 etc.). The contents of the chapter defy any neat classification. It is possible that 18:1-4, the sayings about "the greatest in the kingdom," is addressed to the twelve. But it seems likely that the sayings about "temptations to sin" (18:6-9), to which is prefixed an independent logion about receiving a child in Jesus' name (18:5), are addressed to the congregation. Similarly, if the Parable of the Lost Sheep (18:10-14) is addressed to the leaders of the Church, it seems clear that the sayings about "a brother who sins" (18:15-17) is addressed to the congregation. 18:18-20 seem to be three independent logia. 18:19 is connected to 18:18 by *palin*, which has frequently no sequential force in Matthew (13:45; 13:14; 19:24). 18:19 and 18:20 are more closely linked together by an explanatory *gar* which is also not infrequent in Matthew (12:40, 50; 23:3, etc.). 18:18 is probably addressed to the twelve, but 18:19, 20

²⁴ Bornkamm, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

²⁵ Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

are likely to be addressed to the congregation; and certainly the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant is addressed to the congregation. It may be noted that the three pericopae addressed to the leaders of the congregation are introduced by the asseverative phrase *αληθῶς λέγω ὑμῖν*, a phrase common in Matthew, but not exclusive to him, in words addressed to the leaders of the congregation.

If our analysis is right, then the regulation about "a person who sins against you" (*eis se*, singular) (18:15-17) is only an apparent modification of the general principle about the nature of the Church which we derived from the Parable Collection in the last section. It is not often noted that, while the parables discussed in chapter 13 have to do with the nature of the Church, the instructions in 18:15-17 have to do with relationships between two members of the Church. And in vs. 17 ("let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector"), there is no question of excommunication from the Church, but only permission to break the love-commandment, under somewhat extreme circumstances, with a fellow-member of the brotherhood. Even then, it is immediately followed by the pericope about "forgiving seventy times seven" (18:21-22) and the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (18:23-25). Here, in the face of the radicalised demands of the love-commandment of Jesus, there is a recognition of the practical realities of life. Such a recognition is also found in the Matthaean appendix to the Lord's Prayer: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (6:14-15). What else do you say to two people who simply will not be reconciled?

The sayings to the leaders of the Church can be summed up easily. Leaders are to consider themselves as humble as children (18:4), a theme which recurs with different imagery in 20: 26, 27. And because of this they exercise unwearied and faithful pastorship even towards the least among their flock (vs. 10) and towards the wayward (vs. 12).

It is to be noted that the word *ekklesia* occurs in 18:17. This, apart from its occurrence in 16:18, is the only occurrence of the word in the Synoptic Gospels. I do not think that any particular significance needs to be attached to the word here. Matthew might have chosen the word simply because the Greek-speaking Jews of Antioch had already picked the word *sunagoge* to designate their religious fellowship.²⁸ In the Old Testament two words are used to denote the people of Israel, *qahal* and 'edah: "Where *qahal* stresses more the idea of assembly, 'edah denotes the group of people who may be assembled, but the two words can in fact be used with no real difference in meaning . . . In the LXX . . . *ekklesia* translates *qahal* 73 times but never 'edah. *Sunagoge* translates *qahal* 35 times and 'edah 130 times . . . Philo uses the term *ekklesia* when quoting from

²⁸ A similar suggestion is made by S. Neill, "The Church: An Ecumenical Perspective," *Interpretation* 19 (1, 65), p. 133.

the Septuagint and apparently never uses *sunagoge* to refer to the people of Israel. . . . Similarly Josephus uses *ekklesia* some 48 times to refer to Israel and uses *sunagoge* 6 times to mean a building for Jewish worship. Thus Greek-speaking Judaism in the first century used *ekklesia* for Israel as a whole, and *sunagoge* was used mostly for a building (occasionally for a local group of Jews).²⁷ The Aramaic equivalent for both *ḡīzā!* and *'edah* seems to have been *kenishta* which is normally translated by *sunagoge*. The first century usage in *Ἰωάννης* and Philo possibly determined the choice of the word *ekklesia* in Matthew. But, in view of the confused background, it is difficult to draw any etymological mileage out of this usage.

The independent logion in 18:18 has to be considered along with the complex logion 16:18-19. The "binding and loosing" attributed to the twelve in ch. 18 is attributed to Peter in ch. 16. If, as I have suggested earlier, Matthew collected traditions preserved in different churches, then the problem becomes much simpler. There is no doubt that there was a strong tradition in the early Church about the primacy of Peter. This tradition is echoed in the "feed my sheep" pericope in John 21 and probably in Gal. 1:18 (Paul visiting Cephas in Jerusalem) and Luke 24:34. But if we are to go by Gal. 2:9, soon a triumvirate (which included Peter) replaced Peter at the head of the nascent Church. And other parts of the Gospel tradition such as Luke-Acts and probably Mark do not seem to contribute to this doctrine of the primacy of Peter. If we are to go by the Galatians account, the function of the triumvirate was a teaching function rather than a disciplinary function. There is no need to suggest either, as Bornkamm does,²⁸ that 16:19 refers to teaching authority while 18:18 refers to disciplining authority, or, as Bultmann does,²⁹ that a group of leaders took over after Peter lost his position. The evangelist simply found two different traditions; and since neither was relevant for his time and since both were respected traditions, he included them both. Such a possibility should at least be considered.³⁰

5. The Apocalyptic Discourse

The matter in this section can be dealt with quite briefly. These chapters are dominated by the idea of the delay of the *parousia*, but

²⁷ I. H. Marshall, "New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: V. The Biblical Use of the Word 'Ekklesia,'" *Expository Times* 84 (12, 73), pp. 359-360.

²⁸ G. Bornkamm, "The Authority to 'Bind' and 'Loose' in the Church in Matthew's Gospel," in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, Vol. I (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1970), p. 40.

²⁹ R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), p. 141.

³⁰ The rest of the complex problems connected with 16:18-19 cannot be dealt with here. I find the suggestions of B. T. Dahlberg, "The Typological Use of Jeremiah 1:14-19 in Matthew 16:13-23," *JBL* 94 (1, 75) pp. 73-80, full of interesting possibilities.

yet the Church is not so far removed from imminent expectation that it has lost its eschatological outlook. Thus into the traditional apocalyptic schematisation and description of signs in chapter 24 is twice interposed the concept of the delay (vs. 14—that the end will not come till the Gospel is preached to all the nations; vs. 36—that no one really knows the time of the end). Therefore, watchfulness is commended, since the end will come suddenly (24:37-44 and the Parable of the Ten Virgins, 25:1-12). And it is emphasised that the interim period is a time of testing (24:45-51 and the Parable of the Talents, 25:14-30). The Parable of the Last Judgement reiterates the eschatological importance and all-inclusiveness of the love-commandment. Thus eschatological expectation is still essential for ecclesiology.

There is one last point that needs to be added. The Church in Matthew is a community of disciples. Matt. 28:19 charges the Church to make disciples. The word *mathetes* is the common word in Matthew for believers. But the relationship of the disciple to the teacher is not that of *mathetes* to *didaskalos*. In Matthew *didaskalos* as a title of Jesus occurs only on the lips of others. To the disciples he is always *kurios*. This means unquestioned and undivided loyalty to Jesus, which might mean leaving home (4:20, 22; 8:9; etc.), family (4:22; 10:21; etc.) and all earthly possessions (6:19-21; 19:21; etc.). The Church in Matthew understood itself to consist of followers of its Lord.