

THE PRESENT-DAY MATERIALISTIC STANDARD OF VALUE
IN THE LIGHT OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS
ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL BY MATTHEW

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to

DR. HELEN L. GARBEN

whose understanding and endless patience have
been invaluable during this year of study.

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gift of author

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INTRODUCTION

THE PRESENT-DAY MATERIALISTIC STANDARD OF VALUE
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

1. Statement of the Problem.

This thesis will be an investigation of the Gospel of Matthew with special emphasis upon those portions containing the oral teaching of Jesus in regard to values with the purpose of evaluating the materialistic standard of value in the light of Jesus' teachings.

2. The Problem Delimited.

The treatment of this problem will not be from the philosophical viewpoint, but rather from the experiential or practical. However, some consideration will be given to axiology as is needed for an understanding of values and value judgments and their importance in daily living. Therefore, materialism as a philosophical system will not be considered.

An overall study of the Gospel by Matthew will be made, but only to gain perspective for an accurate study, in their contexts, of those portions which are related to the field of values. These passages then will provide the main body of material from Matthew.

For the most part, the problem will be viewed as it applies to adults, although in the field of education it must be viewed as applying also to youth, for they are the major recipients of formal education.

B. Significance and Justification
of the Problem

Concerning the problem of values, Harold H. Titus has written, "To ignore this important field is to produce a very distorted or one-sided view of man and his world."¹ Life forces all persons to make choices each day, and each choice involves rating some things as better or worse than others. Thus, a sense of values is experienced by all persons and each must have a scale, or standard, of value. The question is not whether or not one will have such a standard, but rather what kind of a standard he will have and what the basis will be.²

The type of society which exists in America adds to the importance of the problem of values in relation to the individual, since the democratic social framework distributes the powers of decision among all the people. In respect to this, L. W. Harding wrote,

For this reason it is imperative that, in our system, all individuals develop sound powers of choice and

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1. Harold H. Titus: Living Issues in Philosophy, p. 294.
2. Ibid., pp. 293-294.

reach decisions based on wholesome points of view and integrated value patterns.¹

Any casual observer can see that there is much that is wrong in society today, for example, crime, war, class struggle, and other conflicts in economics, politics, and education. Conflicts in actions and in ideas indicate that there are more basic conflicts in the realm of values, and, if values are in conflict, either between individuals or between groups, then some scales of value are in error. Obsession with material goods is also apparent in society, which would indicate that there is a materialistic standard of value being held by some people.

Jesus taught extensively in the field of values, and, although He taught nearly two thousand years ago, His teachings are still commanding attention. Therefore, it is relevant to view the present-day materialistic standard of value in the light of the standard of value taught by Jesus. Since large portions of the Gospel by Matthew are records of the oral teaching of Jesus, much of which is concerned with the problems of goals and values, this book will be used as the source for His teaching.

C. Procedure

In the first chapter of this thesis the present-day materialistic standard of value will be considered,

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1. Harding, L. W.: "Building Values in a Problem-Centered Curriculum," *Progressive Education*, October, 1948, p. 19.

and the second chapter will investigate the teaching of Jesus concerning values as found in the Gospel by Matthew. The third chapter then will be an evaluation of the present-day materialistic standard in the light of the value standard taught by Jesus.

D. Sources of Data

The primary source for this study will be the Gospel by Matthew. Books and articles in recent periodicals pertaining to ethics, to value, and, more specifically, to practical materialism will provide further sources.

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT-DAY MATERIALISTIC STANDARD OF VALUE

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A. Introduction

In considering the present-day materialistic standard of value, the first step will be to investigate the theory of value in general and the importance of value standards in daily living. From this the subject will be narrowed as the materialistic standard of value is defined.

The value standards of individuals are revealed by their conduct, and so a survey will be made of conduct in various areas of present-day society to discover the ways in which a materialistic value standard is evident. The areas to be covered are education, politics, economics, social problems, and the church.

B. Definition and Importance of Standards of Value

1. Definition of Standard of Value.

Axiology is the "study of the general theory of value, including the origin, the nature, the classification, and the place of values in the world."¹ Special fields within the larger conception of value are ethics, the study

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1. Titus, op. cit., p. 294.

of values in human conduct, and aesthetics, the study of values in the realms of beauty and art. Only the former field, ethics, is pertinent to this study.

According to Titus, professor of philosophy at Denison University,

The term value has been variously defined as "that which satisfies a human need" or a human desire and as "the quality of things" which evoke some "appreciative response." The term expresses an element of desirability in an experience or an object.¹

An object possesses value in much the same way that it possesses other qualities, such as weight, but the awareness of its value involves a different psychological response than does the awareness of its weight, for the process of valuation requires the functioning of emotions. "An object is said to possess value when we add to the ordinary qualities known in cognition other qualities apprehended in appreciation."² Comparison of the types of judgement made by persons is a further aid to understanding the meaning of this elusive term. Factual judgements enumerate certain observable characteristics of a thing, whereas value judgements appraise the worth of objects. However, this does not mean that facts and values are not interdependent, for there is interaction between facts and values in that the changing of facts alters evaluations.

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1. Ibid., p. 295.
2. Walter S. Gamertsfelder and D. Luther Evans: Fundamentals of Philosophy, p. 583.

One of the main questions of controversy in the field of values has to do with the relationship of values to the mind which does the evaluating. The subjectivist takes the position that values exist only in the mind of the person, that is: an object possesses value only because it is desired by a person. According to the objectivist, values are recognized and appreciated because they are out there in the world to be discovered and are independent of the individual. However, neither of these extreme positions is tenable. In regard to this matter, Titus states,

Value is neither subjective in the sense that it is merely in the mind nor objective in the sense that it is entirely in the object. Value is the product of two or more variables which are in interaction. There are qualities or environmental situations which arouse in sentient organisms the peculiar responses that we call value judgements.¹

To deny the objectivism of values is to be in danger of absorbing either of two attitudes prevalent today. The one moves from the subjectivity of value to relativity in morals and thence to amorality. The other accepts the subjectivity of value judgement but debunks sentiment in making value judgements. C. S. Lewis refers to those who hold this position as "Men without Chests."² In defense of the necessity of sentiment, Lewis writes,

Without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is

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1. Titus, op. cit., p. 303.
2. C. S. Lewis: The Abolition of Man, Chapter 1.

powerless against the animal organism. . . It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal.¹

The position of Lewis is further substantiated by Gamertsfelder and Evans, who say that the process of valuation requires more than apprehending objects as they are but also considering them as they enter into the meanings and conduct of life.²

Since values are in part subjective, they are to a great extent determined by the individual himself. According to Davies, "Values emerge involuntarily from the assent that engages the whole being of man. They are predetermined for us by that to which we say our yea or nay with our entire self."³ Yet, in Religious Education Lindeman writes,

that no matter what the source of values the final test of their validity is, not their genesis but, rather their ability to get themselves incorporated in our habits and in our culture. . . Those which survive the test of experience carry their own warrant.⁴

This does not necessarily mean that the values of a society are revealed by the actions of the individual or the society. It must be remembered that without the living experience there can be no adequate understanding of values. Words and

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1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Gamertsfelder and Evans, op. cit., p. 583.
3. D. R. Davies: *The Sin of Our Age*, p. 124.
4. Eduard C. Lindeman: "Sources of Value for Modern Man," *Religious Education*, September-October, 1947, p. 290.

definitions cannot be substituted for experience, although definitions do focus attention on the common elements in the living experiences and serve as aids in discussing them.¹

In making a value judgement, an individual is showing that he considers one value as being higher than another, or that he has a scale or standard of value. This standard is the individual's ranking of his values according to his preference for them with that which he considers the highest good or most to be desired at the top. Regardless of what is the actual situation in life, the following principles for formulating a standard of value are generally accepted in philosophical discussions:²

1. Intrinsic values are to be preferred to those which are extrinsic.
2. The values which are productive and relatively permanent are to be preferred to those which are less productive and less permanent.
3. As persons we ought to select the values of life on the basis of self-chosen ends or ideals.
4. Of two values, the greater ought to be selected.

2. Importance of Standards of Value.

In a society where there are right and wrong ways of doing things, everyone is constantly being called upon to make decisions which determine his conduct. The mature person, when confronted with a moral problem, will consider

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1. Titus, op. cit., p. 295.
2. Ibid., pp. 297-298.

all the various possible lines of action and the relevant factors and after comparing the values involved, will make his choice. "Reflective morality," writes Titus, "consists not only in forming judgements but in setting forth the reasons for one's moral judgements."¹ Such reasons are dependent upon the individual's standard of value, and so his moral behavior is determined by his value standard.

C. Definition of a Materialistic Standard of Value

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines materialism as follows:

Any theory which considers the facts of the universe to be sufficiently explained by the existence and nature of matter. The ethical doctrine that consideration of material well-being, especially of the individual himself, should rule in the determination of conduct. The tendency to give undue importance to material interests.²

Davies states that materialism is comprised of two elements: "First, it sees the supreme values of life in terms of material accumulation and use; and second, confidence in the power of collective man to ensure such accumulation."³

From these concepts of materialism, a materialistic standard of values is defined: a standard of value which holds supreme the material well-being of the individual

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1. Ibid., p. 342.
2. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition.
3. Davies, -op. cit., p. 82.

and the resulting accumulation and use of material goods.

D. Evidences of a Materialistic Standard of Value
in Present-Day Society

According to Davies, "Material interests already¹ dominate our urban masses." Even if such interests were confined to our urban population, this would be indicative of the philosophical attitude of our society, for in 1940 the urban population in the United States was almost 60%² of the total and the percentage is probably even higher today. "The extent to which the concern with physical necessities and wealth has determined human thought and institutions is obvious to any thoughtful observer."³ A specific illustration of this is found in the characteristic architecture of today. Even a casual glance around any city reveals that most of the buildings are devoted to the economic activities of man; banks, for instance, nearly always occupy the best sites.⁴

1. Evidences in Education.

In regard to the attempt to resolve the difficulties of the present times, Taylor writes,

We have tried, and are continuing even now to try, the

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1. Ibid., p. 81.
2. John F. Cuber and Robert A. Harper: Problems of American Society: Values in Conflict, p. 13.
3. J. Richard Spann, editor: The Christian Faith and Secularism, p. 21.
4. Davies, op. cit., p. 21.

materialistic solution to our pressing problem. The evidence is accumulating -- some of us believe that it is already overwhelming -- that while it has worked thus far for science it provides no solution for the ills that beset man today. Should anyone doubt this, it is pertinent to recall that throughout one sixth of the world today, in the schools, the colleges, and the universities of those lands, human values are being systematically defined in terms of dialectical materialism.¹

Harding defines another aspect of the problem in education:

More serious than complaints about problem-solving, spelling, grammar and word-usage, or letter writing are the short-sighted actions, the bigotry and prejudice, the narrow, biased points of view, and the negative, selfish, anti-social values being developed.²

The charge is also made that our schools are failing to teach any values at all, as Benne writes in Progressive Education,

The schools in our country have tended to adopt a position of "neutrality" with respect to the cultivation of values in students, particularly with respect to values involved in contemporary choices. . . . Others in our schools defend the generally amoral and informative emphasis of our schools on the basis that the school's basic responsibility is intellectual rather than moral.³

Therefore, the need for education in values is obvious, whether to correct the value content of the existing curricula or to provide the missing emphasis on values. However, the solutions being presented by educators are no improvement upon the prevailing conditions. In the proposals for value education, the emphasis is on material things; even the end, as well as the means, is for the satisfaction of

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1. Hugh S. Taylor: "Science, Education, and Human Values," Association of American Colleges Bulletin, March, 1949, p. 30.
2. Harding, op. cit., p. 20.
3. Kenneth D. Benne: "Educating for Wisdom in Value Judgments," Progressive Education, April, 1950, p. 183.

material human wants.¹ Further, it is recommended that middle-class values be taught, even though this may produce a conflict in the child or youth because of his background. The advocates of this proposal claim that the goals on which the middle-class values are based are the same as those for the lower class and that it is only the means which differ. Even so, the goals are social acceptance (by the middle class!), the satisfying of personal desires, and the attainment² of material success.

2. Evidences in Science.

The very real possibility of a war that would annihilate humanity is certain indication that something is wrong with or missing from the fields of modern science and technology. The intellect of modern man has devised the means by which the very existence of civilization is jeopardized, but has failed to provide the control which would prevent the annihilation or the scale of value which would channel the results of science and technology into useful areas.³ Taylor's explanation is that:

The intensity of the effort and the riches of the yield that have come from the scientist's exploration of the areas where matter and energy are dominant have tended to blunt his perception of the importance of values, to

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1. R. Bruce Raup: "Frontiers of Human Values," Progressive Education, October, 1948, pp. 1-7.
2. Celia Burns Stendler: "Class Biases in the Teaching of Values," Progressive Education, February, 1950, pp. 123-126.
3. Arnold J. Toynbee: Civilization on Trial, pp. 24-28. Davies, op. cit., pp. 36-40.

identify him with purely materialistic, secularized attitudes towards life and its manifold problems.¹

3. Evidences in Politics.

Probably the most widely admitted problem in American politics today is the conflict with Communism, the danger of which, according to J. Edgar Hoover, "lies not in the fact that it is a political philosophy but in the awesome fact that it is a materialistic religion."² Lack of awareness of this real danger of Communism has already lured many into its ranks. The American people are rendered even more susceptible to the danger by the prevailing materialism in their society, including the realm of politics. James E. Ward partially explains this condition:

In our politics we "render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's." The only trouble is that Caesar's domain is so large and the things of God are so few and insignificant in comparison.³

Not only the politicians are to blame either, for it is the individual citizen, too, who clamors for the "welfare state,"⁴ demanding that the state serve his material needs. The lobby system in Washington, and in the state capitals as well, furnishes further evidence of the materialistic goals in politics, as pressure groups strive for governmental power to serve their own ends, for the acquisition of wealth,

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1. Taylor, op. cit., p. 28.
2. Spann, op. cit., p. 187.
3. Ibid., p. 95.
4. Ibid.

and for further power to gain more wealth.¹

4. Evidences in Economics.

In the economic realm a problem which looms large in many minds is that of "social security." However, the problem is not really what it seems to be, not the avoidance of actual poverty, but the satisfaction of persistently increasing wants. According to Davies,

Material needs have been endowed, as they have never been before, with a false infinity, by the values which our society considers to be the supreme values. . . By making the good life dependent on material consumption, modern man has made his material needs artificially infinite.²

This term "social security" then conceals a confusion of values and a problem that is not primarily economic, for no abundance of material goods can meet the demands of an expanding material appetite and the failure to do so results in an inner sense of psychic and spiritual insecurity.³

A widely-used college textbook in social problems lists "Income and Its Distribution" as one of the major problems of American society, and the chapter dealing with this problem is opened with the statement, "Securing adequate income from one's labor can easily be conceived as the elemental problem of living."⁴ Evidence of widespread agreement with this statement is found in the labor unions, whose

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1. Ibid., p. 98.
2. Davies, op. cit., p. 47.
3. Ibid., p. 49.
4. Cuger and Harper, op. cit., p. 60.

members include some fourteen million wage earners in the United States, and in their persistent demands for higher and higher wages.¹ Even so, the fault lies not entirely with the workers, for the employers are equally guilty of materialistic goals. Ordinarily they are interested in only the amount and quality of the goods which the worker is able to produce.² "In capitalist civilization the chief non-human objective is private profit, which is the acid test of all economic undertakings."³ A socialistic economy would be no improvement either, for as Davies writes,

A post-capitalist generation in Europe, at any rate, has come to maturity which has been moulded by ideas and values wholly consonant with a one-dimension order of life and the predominantly materialist character of the human being.⁴

5. Evidences in Social Problems.

a. Crime.

Cuber and Harper state, "Crime is probably the most universally recognized social problem,"⁵ but admit that criminologists are baffled when they attempt to ascertain the causes of crime.⁶ However, J. Edgar Hoover indirectly suggests the cause:

Proof that large numbers of our people have turned away from God can be found in the sordid record of crime and in the predominance of a materialistic way of life which

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1. Spann, op. cit., pp. 146-151.
2. Ibid., p. 152.
3. Davies, op. cit., p. 109.
4. Ibid., p. 113.
5. Cuber and Harper, op. cit., p. 156.
6. Ibid., p. 164-165.

has steadily become more evident each year since the turn of the century;¹

and more directly:

Secularism, I have never doubted, is the basic cause of crime, and crime is a manifestation of secularism. The secular notion that whatever gets results is good, the secular preoccupation with goods and gadgets, and the secular indifference to what Paul calls "the unsearchable riches of Christ" -- these ultimately find expression in the man who takes a short cut across all the moral and legal codes of humanity and grabs what he wants by force. The difference between this man and the man, who, by devious practices, spends his life accumulating wealth, totally indifferent to the moral chaos around him, is merely a difference in technique. They both itch with the same greed, and both have the same goal.²

b. Race.

From a strictly scientific point of view there seems to be only one human race.³ However, even though "race" doesn't appear to be a scientific reality from a physical anthropological standpoint, the concept is of social significance, for many people act as if it were a reality. If there is no scientific basis for the concept, then the real basis and the cause of the related problem of racial prejudice must lie in other areas. One argument often advanced is that of the "superiority of white civilization," but according to Cuber and Harper, "if we take almost any other criterion than sheer bulk of material 'progress', we can find other cultures with more convincing achievements

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1. Spann, op. cit., p. 180.
2. Ibid., p. 182.
3. Cuber and Harper, op. cit., p. 217.

than that of Western civilization." ¹ The attitudes and actions of the American people, in the North as well as in the South, indicate what is probably the basic cause of racial prejudice, and this cause is materialistic in nature.

The extreme lengths to which some white members of our society will go, often at great inconvenience to themselves, to "keep the Negro in his place" indicate that race prejudice must serve some purpose for the prejudiced. . . . The primary motive seems to be an economic one.²

In other words, the race problem in the United States is another example in a long history of the exploitation of minority groups for the fruits of their labor.

c. Social Class.

In spite of the often expressed claim that American society is classless, "class differences are one of the most omnipresent facts of American social life."³ For the most part, class distinctions are made on the basis of materialistic standards: present income, accumulated wealth, type and location of dwelling, and position in the industrial, business, or professional world. The efforts of people to maintain their "station in life" or to rise into a higher social class also substantiate this, which is further described by Don D. Lescohier:

We think we need neckties, bobby pins, personalized clothing, furniture that has beauty as well as utility, and many other things that are conventional necessities

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1. Cuber and Harper, op. cit., p. 221.
2. Ibid., p. 225.
3. Ibid., p. 192.

in our stations in life. . . Each person and family feels the necessity of upholding certain conventional standards, and often they sacrifice on necessities to buy the things which they think people expect them to have.¹

d. Recreation.

Cuber and Harper consider the use of leisure time as a major social problem in America because people are not using it wisely. These writers state,

For the most part people do what is easiest to do in their leisure, and the most universally accessible form of recreation for Americans of all ages is the commercially provided variety. The leading American "amusements" are movies, "beer joints," night clubs, reading, sports, and radio, both from the standpoint of amount of time spent and from the standpoint of the percentage of persons participating.²

Movies can be considered as a representative example of this commercial recreation, especially since it is probably the most widely patronized. Although one must admit that some films are masterful productions and do help to fulfill man's aesthetic needs, in many other instances, "the screen enshrines false gods, gods which are dearest to the American heart -- money, glamour, and success."³ These movies not only influence but also reflect the American thought, ideals, and way of life. "We do judge success in terms of money, power, and fame. Our standards of living, our cars, bathtubs, and beautiful clothes are the things which Americans hold dear."⁴

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1. Spann, op. cit., pp. 147-148.
2. Cuber and Harper, op. cit., p. 265.
3. Spann, op. cit., p. 65.
4. Ibid., p. 73.

6. Evidences in the Church.

In discussing the nature of secularism, which is the larger concept of practical atheism and of which practical materialism is a part, Leroy E. Loemker states that "aside from merely external habits of behavior, secularism within the church is scarcely to be distinguished from that without."¹ Davies concurs in this opinion: "Church members are only a degree less secularized in their consciousness than the public that is completely divorced from the Church."²

Concern with material goods does have a place in the Church, for such are necessary in the maintenance of the Church, but the handling of financial matters does not have to be from a materialistic standpoint, as is often the case, The same is often true in regard to employment practices. The churches have been charged with the operation of profit-and-loss systems similar to those of any business concern, except that "surplus" and "deficit" are more frequently used than "profit" and "loss", and with often treating their employees less considerately, sometimes even less honestly, than do the secular employers in order to keep their financial balances in favor of the "surplus" side.³

Further evidence of a materialistic standard in the Church is the evaluation of local churches in terms of

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1. Ibid., p. 12.
2. Davies, op. cit., p. 61.
3. Spann, op. cit., p. 161.

the physical property -- the spacious accommodations, the lavish decorations, sometimes even the swimming pool and other recreational facilities -- and in terms of the size of the budget instead of in terms of the accomplishments of a spiritual ministry.

Even the message of the Church, as it is often given, bears a materialistic note, especially as ministers attempt to motivate their congregations. The emphasis in such motivation is often upon material success and physical well-being as the results of a godly life. Neither are such emphases limited to the sermons pertaining to the life-to-come. In these latter, people are urged to repent and turn to God in order to escape an eternity of physical torment and to gain an everlasting life in which there will be no suffering or other physical discomfort. Also, ministers often stress the setting of this future life in terms of the "streets of gold" and the "pearly gates" rather than the blessedness of being forever in the presence of a holy, loving God.

E. Summary

Value is that quality of an object or experience which is apprehended in appreciation and which makes the experience or object desirable. It is both objective and subjective, for the object or experience possesses qualities

which arouse in human beings responses that are called value judgments. In making such a value judgment, an individual shows that he considers one value as being higher than another, or that he has a standard of value with that which to him is most desirable at the top of his standard. Value standards are important because they determine the moral behavior of individuals.

A materialistic standard of value is one which holds as supreme the material well-being of the individual and the resulting accumulation and use of material goods.

That a materialistic standard of value is prevalent today in American society is apparent to even the casual observer. A closer study of the fields of education, science, politics, economics, and the major social problems reveals the more specific evidences of the concern with material goods. The church itself has also been infected by the materialistic attitude and reflects it even in its message.

CHAPTER II
THE STANDARD OF VALUE TAUGHT BY JESUS,
AS RECORDED BY MATTHEW

CHAPTER II

THE STANDARD OF VALUE TAUGHT BY JESUS, AS RECORDED BY MATTHEW

A. Introduction

In order to ascertain the general context of the specific teaching of Jesus concerning values in the Gospel by Matthew, one must first have an overall perspective of the book. This view of the book as a whole is necessary also in establishing the identity of the teacher, and since the major part of Jesus' teaching was intended for members or prospective members of the kingdom of heaven, it will include a summary of His teaching about the kingdom.

After the general survey of the book, a more detailed study will be made of what Jesus taught about values, specifically, the Father as a value, Jesus as a value, the kingdom of heaven as a value and value standards within the kingdom, man as a value, and material goods as values.

In making more practical application of the study, a presentation will be made of the expected evidences in present-day society of the standard of value taught by Jesus.

B. An Overall Perspective of the Gospel by Matthew

1. The Main Message of the Book.

The Gospel by Matthew is the story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth from His birth to His death and resurrection. However, in scope the book both antedates and postdates the earthly life of Jesus, for it looks back to David and Abraham¹ and forward to the close of this age.²

The first major movement of the book is concerned with the identity of Jesus of Nazareth.³ In the first twelve chapters, Matthew constantly refers to Old Testament prophecies regarding the promised Messiah, and successfully demonstrates that this Jesus is the fulfillment of those prophecies. Although the Jews were expecting the Messiah to be an earthly king and to establish an earthly kingdom, Jesus almost without fail referred to His kingdom as the "kingdom of heaven." His identity was revealed by who He was, as was evidenced by His descent from David and the testimony of the voice at His baptism, but even more by what He did. The miracles that He performed proved His authority,⁴ and the authoritative

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1. Matt. 1:1.
2. Matt. 28:19-20.
3. Matt. 1:1-16:20.
4. Matt. 4:24, 8:17, 9:2-8, and 11:4-6.

quality of His teaching was acknowledged by the people. In Peter's confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,"¹ the first movement of the book reaches its climax.

As soon as Jesus was definitely identified as the expected Messiah, He revealed the implications of His identity as He showed His disciples the purpose of His life: that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer at the hands of the religious leaders, be killed, and be raised the third day.² Thus is begun the second major movement of the book,³ in which Jesus concentrated on the training of the twelve disciples, from the transfiguration on to the cross and the resurrection and culminating in the great commission.

In chapters 21 to 28, and especially in chapters 26 to 28, the presentation of the narrative is much more detailed than in the rest of the book, which indicates that this is the focal point of the whole book with the climax in the crucifixion and the resurrection; the preceding portions of the book are the preparation for this. Although it was only after Peter's confession that Jesus began to teach His disciples about the cross, it is evident that from the time of His temptation in the wilderness Jesus had His face set toward Jerusalem and

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1. Matt. 16:16.
2. Matt. 16:21.
3. Matt. 16:21 through chapter 28.

the fulfillment of the purpose of His earthly life, that He should be the Saviour of the world.

Therefore, the purpose of the book is to show that this Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, King and Redeemer, the initiator of the kingdom of heaven, and that the most important part of His earthly ministry was His death and resurrection.

2. A Summary of Jesus' Teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Among the Jews in the period just preceding the time of Jesus, there were various conceptions of the expected kingdom of God. Many of them were materialistic, and probably the majority of the Jews were anticipating military conquest by Israel and the exaltation of Israel to a position of political power among the nations. However, there were others who thought more of peace and the ascendancy of righteousness, mercy, and truth. Out of this latter group came the nucleus of the followers of Jesus, for He taught that the kingdom was to be one in which peace, righteousness, mercy, and truth would prevail: the "kingdom of heaven", not an earthly kingdom. As the name implies, the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual order, existing for a time in this present world but unlimited by time and space, and under the dominion of the heavenly

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1. Andrew R. Osborn: Christian Ethics, p. 98.

Father.¹ Admittance into the kingdom is granted only to those who acknowledge the supremacy of the Father and, as evidence of such acknowledgement, desire and do His will.²

The constituency of the kingdom is to be limited, because not everyone will find the way.³ Neither will everyone receive the word of the kingdom in the same manner or with the same results, for, according to the parable of the soils, the reception of the message is dependent upon the condition of the hearer.⁴ In spite of the distinction between those in the kingdom and those outside the kingdom, all will live together in this world until the separation in the "harvest" at the close of this age, at which time the subjects of the kingdom will fully inherit the kingdom.⁵ The growth of the kingdom is to be phenomenal even though its beginning was small,⁶ and, although constituting only a small part of mankind, it is to permeate and to influence all of society.⁷ The responsibility for the extension of the kingdom was to lie with the disciples of Jesus, but only

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1. Matt. 5:34-35.
2. Matt. 7:21 and 12:50.
3. Matt. 7:13.
4. Matt. 13:3-8, 13:18-23.
5. Matt. 13:24-30, 13:36-43, 13:47-50, 25:34.
6. Matt. 13:31-32.
7. Matt. 13:33.

as they are identified with and empowered by Jesus.¹

A discussion of the kingdom as a value and of the value standards within the kingdom will be presented in a later division of this chapter.²

C. The Teaching of Jesus Concerning Values

1. The Father as a Value.

According to Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, God the Father is the supreme authority in the universe for He has dominion over both heaven and earth.³ Since this is His dominion, then He must be greater than the whole of the universe and greater than any part of it, and so He is the highest value in the universe. This fact is either assumed or explicitly stated in all of Jesus' teaching. For example, when He told the crowds and the disciples that they had only one Father who is in heaven, He was saying that there was only One in authority above them.⁴ As He exhorted them to love their enemies, He held up God as the standard of perfection for man's behavior,⁵ which He could do only because the Father is perfect and higher than man. Also because of the supremacy

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1. Matt. 10:5-42 and 28:18-20.
2. Post, pp. 34-39.
3. Matt. 5:34.
4. Matt. 23:9.
5. Matt. 5:48.

of the Father, He could say that the commandment of God is superior to the tradition of men,¹ the superiority of the commandment being derived from its superior source.

Since God is the supreme authority in the universe and thereby in control of all of it, man is extremely unwise if he chooses to disobey God. However, this does not imply that God is ruthless in asserting His authority, for the terminology most often used by Jesus in referring to God was "your heavenly Father" or "your Father who is in heaven." The term "father" connotes not only authority but also loving concern and care. Thus, the heavenly Father is concerned about the welfare of His children and, more than that, is able because of His dominion to provide for them as Jesus assured them that He would.² The logical response of man to this concern and care is complete devotion to the Father, which Jesus taught as the first and greatest commandment.³ Of course, this is also evidence of the supremacy of the Father: that He is worth loving with all one's heart, soul, and mind. Further evidence is one of Jesus' answers to Satan in the temptation in the wilderness which implied that it is more worthwhile to worship and serve God than to gain

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1. Matt. 15:1-9.
2. Matt. 6:25-33.
3. Matt. 22:34-38.

all the kingdoms of the world.¹

Since God is above all of creation and man is only a part of creation, man is obligated to acknowledge God as the supreme value and to live accordingly with his goals centered in the Father. This was the teaching of Jesus when He urged the disciples to have as their primary goal the Father's kingdom and His righteousness,² not the satisfaction of their material needs. In teaching them the model prayer, which has come to be known as the Lord's Prayer, He had already indicated this order for their interests: the things of the Father are first and the petitions for man's needs, both spiritual and material, are second.³ Goals determine behavior, and so it was that Jesus taught that man's actions are to be motivated by a desire to please the Father and not by the desire to receive praise and acknowledgment from other men.⁴ To please the Father is to do His will. Jesus emphasized the importance of this when, in denoting kinship to Himself, He indicated that doing the will of the Father is a more determinative factor than blood relationship.⁵ Jesus Himself was the example of complete obedience to the will of the Father, as He taught in

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1. Matt. 4:8-10.
2. Matt. 6:33.
3. Matt. 6:9-13.
4. Matt. 6:1-6 and 6:16-18.
5. Matt. 12:46-50.

reference to the crucifixion: in the first foretelling of the cross, in His prayer in Gethsemane, and at the time of the betrayal in indicating His preference for the way of the cross in order to fulfill the plan of God.¹ In addition to the desirability of pleasing God by doing His will is the realization that His will is superior to that of any other being because of its source, and, in fact, it is perfect in keeping with the perfection of His character. Man's obligation to do the will of the Father also attests the superior value of the Father, for he who subjects himself, or is subject, to the will of another thereby shows that he considers the other as being superior to him. In this manner Jesus taught that He Himself was a lower value than the Father. However, this was true only during Jesus' earthly life in which He was the incarnation of the Father.

2. Jesus as a Value.

In giving His life "as a ransom for many,"² Jesus gave the ultimate proof of His superior worth in relation to mankind. No man can possibly buy even his own life,³ and yet Jesus was able to purchase eternal life for all men. The value of this eternal life is derived

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1. Matt. 16:21-23, 26:36-44, and 26:53-54.
2. Matt. 20:28.
3. Matt. 16:26.

from the value of the Father, since the possession of eternal life includes the privilege of being forever in the presence of the Father, the supreme value in the universe. As previously mentioned, Jesus in His atonement was acting in obedience to the Father, and so His action takes on added meaning since it was conceived in the will of the Father. Even the ability of Jesus to take the role of Redeemer is dependent upon the Father in that it resulted from His identity with the Father, which He explicitly taught when He said, "All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."¹ He also implied this identity in referring to Himself as the Christ, such as in acknowledging Peter's confession of Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God,"² and in the Olivet Discourse in His warnings against the impostors who would come in His name, saying, "I am the Christ."³ The significance of the term "Christ" is assumed in Jesus' teaching, as recorded by Matthew, for Matthew was writing to the Jews who were very familiar with the concept of "the Christ" -- the "anointed," the one chosen of God, the Messiah. All these terms denote the

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1. Matt. 11:27.
2. Matt. 16:13-17.
3. Matt. 24:4-5 and 24:23-27.

same close relationship of Jesus with the Father.

A few days before the crucifixion, Jesus told the crowds and His disciples, "you have one teacher . . . you have one master, the Christ."¹ Much earlier in His ministry, when He sent forth the twelve disciples, He had said, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master."² Thus, Jesus as teacher and master ranked above those who followed Him, and He was alone in that position. The value of His teaching also attests His worth. In the parable of the two foundations, He showed that acting upon and obeying His teaching is analagous³ to building a house upon a rock. In the construction of any building, rock is the best possible foundation because it is durable and stable. Likewise, the teaching of Jesus is a stable, durable foundation on which to base one's actions. His teaching is valuable also because of its eternality, which He stated when He said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."⁴ Such teaching gives meaning to life because it is dependable and will not change with the passing of time; it is absolute and basic. The teaching possesses value because of the value of the Teacher; it is stable, dependable, and eternal because the Teacher is stable,

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1. Matt. 23:8-10.
2. Matt. 10:24.
3. Matt. 7:24-27.
4. Matt. 24:35.

dependable, and eternal.

Very striking evidence of the value of Jesus is found in the cost of discipleship. When a scribe came to Jesus expressing willingness to follow Him, Jesus answered, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head,"¹ thus indicating that He Himself did not have the security of a home and implying that neither would His disciples. Harder to bear than the surrender of home is the loss of reputation, and Jesus told His disciples that this latter would also be their lot as He spoke of the certainty of hatred from all, defamation, and slander. In fact, He warned that the opposition which would arise against them because of their identification with Him would reach such intensity that they would be physically persecuted and some even put to death.² Nevertheless, He never once hinted that even the greatest of these persecutions would be sufficient reason for turning aside from following and serving Him.

Another requirement for discipleship is complete devotion to Jesus and His cause. As He sent forth His twelve disciples, He warned,

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1. Matt. 8:18-20.
2. Matt. 10:17-25.

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.¹

Not even the dearest member of one's family may rate higher devotion than Jesus. Such a high standard of devotion is demanded so that the disciple in serving Jesus will not be distracted by a greater love and concern for another person. Willingness to suffer for the sake of Jesus is also a test of devotion to Him. Probably this test and the test of self-denial are even more difficult to face than the denial of family. Immediately after Peter's confession and His first foretelling of the cross, Jesus again mentioned the necessity of the disciple's cross and self-denial.² When speaking of the man who "loses his life for my sake," Jesus didn't mean merely the loss of physical life, even though such loss for His sake would result in the gaining of eternal life. Rather, He was saying that any disciple of His must completely discard all personal interests and desires and be wholeheartedly devoted to His cause. The result of such giving of one's life is the gaining of life -- obviously a higher life, but this gain must not be the primary motivation for such surrender. The disciple must be compelled by love for

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1. Matt. 10:37-39.
2. Matt. 16:24-25.

Jesus to do it for His sake. Jesus has the right to make these demands because of His superior worth as the Redeemer, the chosen of the Father. Concern with the cause of Jesus is concern with the greatest cause in the universe, because it is the will of the Father, the supreme value in the universe.

The personal return of Jesus at the consummation of this age also attests the value of Jesus, partly because of the importance of the event itself which will mark the end of time. When He returns, He will be enthroned and will judge the nations; ¹ the power and the ability to judge are further evidence of His supremacy over men. Anticipating the personal return of Jesus adds meaning to life for His followers, for His coming will mean the end of tribulation for them and at that time they will fully ² inherit the kingdom of heaven.

3. The Kingdom of Heaven as a Value and Value Standards within the Kingdom.

a. The Kingdom of Heaven as a Value.

Many prophets and righteous men of old longed to hear the message of the kingdom of heaven and to see its coming, but did not; and so, in this respect, the disciples of Jesus were more privileged than they, for

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1. Matt. 25:31-46.
2. Matt. 24:3-14 and 25:34.

they not only heard its message but also Jesus promised¹ that some of them would see its coming. From this unfulfilled anticipation of the men of old, one may conclude that the kingdom of heaven is a greater value than the order established by the old covenant, or else the prophets and the others would have been content with the previous order. Further evidence of the supremacy of the kingdom of heaven over the earlier order is Jesus' statement about John the Baptist: "among those born of women there has risen no one greater . . . yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."² Since even the greatest person under the old covenant is less than the least in the kingdom of heaven, the latter order must be superior to the former. Also, as Jesus sent forth the twelve disciples, He told them that those people who rejected the message of the kingdom would receive greater judgment than Sodom and Gomorrah, which cities had been judged according to the standards of the old covenant.³

The value of the kingdom was explicitly taught by Jesus in the parable of the treasure in the field and in the parable of the pearl of great value: the kingdom⁴ is worth exchanging all one's possessions for it. The

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1. Matt. 13:16-17 and 16:28.
2. Matt. 11:11.
3. Matt. 10:14-15.
4. Matt. 13:44-45.

great desirability of entrance into the kingdom was assumed in much of His teaching, as He described the way of entry and warned of its difficulty. An example of this was His discussion with the disciples following His advice to the rich young man, who had turned away rather than sell his possessions. At this time He told them that it would be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom, and, in fact, it would be impossible. To their astonished query, "Who then can be saved?", He replied that it would be possible only with God.¹ Earlier, in the Sermon on the Mount, He had taught that the way into the kingdom is narrow and hard and only a few find it, but warned that the alternative leads to destruction.²

According to the Beatitudes, the kingdom of heaven is the source of supreme happiness for man, or the ultimate in spiritual well-being, and so it is that which makes life meaningful.³ The kingdom can be this source only because it is under the dominion of the Father, which dominion has been allocated to the Son, the King.⁴ The kingdom has value only because the King is also the Redeemer, and citizenship in the kingdom is valuable only because of the superior worth of the King.

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1. Matt. 19:23-26.
2. Matt. 7:13-14.
3. Matt. 5:3-12.
4. Matt. 11:25-27.

b. Value Standards within the Kingdom.

Although all members of the kingdom are valuable, there are degrees of value among the members. The least in the kingdom is he who relaxes even the least of the commandments of the law and teaches others to do likewise. In contrast, the greatest is he who keeps the commandments and teaches them.¹ This is the distinction to be expected, because the commandments are from God and he who does not respect the commandment of God is showing lack of respect for God Himself. Another indication of greatness among those in the kingdom is humility. In fact, Jesus taught that only those who came with childlike humility could enter the kingdom.² Humility should manifest itself in a willingness to serve, and he who would be first in the kingdom must be a slave to others.³ The example of servitude was Jesus Himself who "came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."⁴

The members of the kingdom are to desire to be righteous, or sinless, for it is better to lose a part of oneself than to be sinful or to cause another person to sin.⁵ In being righteous, purity of heart is more important than outward cleanliness, for any external show of

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1. Matt. 5:19-20.
2. Matt. 18:1-4.
3. Matt. 20:26-27 and 23:11-12.
4. Matt. 20:28.
5. Matt. 18:5-9.

righteousness is worthless without the internal cleanliness from which true righteousness stems.¹ More specifically in regard to true righteousness in religious observance, Jesus denounced the scribes and Pharisees for neglecting the "weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith," but, of course, He said that the material tithes were also necessary, even though of lesser importance.²

The absolute standard for attitudes and behavior is the Father, as Jesus told the disciples, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."³ Because He is the supreme value, the character of all other beings must be judged in the light of His perfection, and all others should have as their goal the attainment of like perfection.

In keeping with Jesus' teaching about true righteousness was His warning to the disciples against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which implied that such teaching had a negative value.⁴ Yet, when addressing the crowds as well as the disciples, He advised them to observe and practice whatever the scribes and Pharisees taught. This seeming discrepancy is explained by the reason given for the observance in the second case: because they "sit on Moses' seat." In this capacity the scribes and Pharisees

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1. Matt. 15:10-20 and 23:25-28.
2. Matt. 23:23.
3. Matt. 5:48.
4. Matt. 16:5-12.

were instructors in the law of Moses, which was to be obeyed by the people because it was the command of God, whereas the earlier warning of Jesus was directed against their general teaching. Also, Jesus' advice in the second case included the admonition not to do as the scribes and Pharisees do, for they preached without practicing.¹

4. Man as a Value.

Jesus clearly taught that man is the highest value in creation. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, He said that man is more valuable than the birds of the air and the grass of the field,² and, in His charge to the twelve disciples, that man is more valuable than many sparrows.³ Also, as He answered the Pharisees just before healing the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, He stated that man is of much greater value than a sheep. This latter statement was made in His process of showing the Pharisees that caring for the needs of man is more important than the observance of the Sabbath.⁴ He had also taught this precedence of the welfare of man over the institution of the Sabbath in the immediately preceding incident of the disciples picking and eating grain on the sabbath.⁵

However, not all men are of equal value, because

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1. Matt. 23:1-7.
2. Matt. 6:26-30.
3. Matt. 10:29-31.
4. Matt. 12:9-13.
5. Matt. 12:1-8.

the members of the kingdom have greater value than those people outside the kingdom. Jesus called the former group "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Salt preserves, seasons, and heightens the flavor of food, and in like manner the members of the kingdom are to keep society from "spoiling" and to give meaning and "flavor" to it. As lights, they are to dispel the darkness of ignorance and unbelief and to serve as guides to other people. However, this superior worth also entails a higher responsibility, as indicated by the statement of Jesus that the purpose of having the "light of the world" to shine is so that other men might give glory to the heavenly Father.¹ The members of the kingdom possess this superior value only because their membership in the kingdom identifies them with the Father, from whom their value is derived. All men are of equal value in the sense that each is potentially a member of the kingdom. However, if a person does not in this present life appropriate membership in the kingdom through acknowledgment of and faith in the Father, at the end of this life he loses the potentiality of entering the kingdom and thus becomes a disvalue, as Jesus taught that the end of such a person is destruction.²

Jesus also taught the value of children in the kingdom, as He spoke of the necessity of receiving such

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1. Matt. 5:13-16.
2. Matt. 7:13.

children in His name and strongly warned that death would be a better fate than the results of causing a child who believes in Him to sin. Continuing in this same vein in the parable of the straying sheep, He stressed the value of the return of a wayward child. As the shepherd would rejoice more over finding one lost sheep than over ninety-nine who had never strayed, so is the Father's joy great when an erring child is returned to Him. Older persons are to recognize this value of children because the Father values them.¹

Within the make-up of man there are two natures, the physical and the spiritual, with the spiritual being a higher value than the physical. Jesus revealed this in His charge to the twelve disciples, as He admonished them not to fear those who can kill only the body but to fear the one who is able to destroy both soul and body.² Again, immediately after His first foretelling of the crucifixion, as He discussed the implications of the cross for discipleship, He spoke of the high value of life. Gaining the whole world would not make the loss of one's life worthwhile. Obviously He was here referring to spiritual life.³ Spiritual life is the most important because the kingdom of God is a spiritual order, and it is the spirit, not the body,

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1. Matt. 18:5-6 and 18:10-14.
2. Matt. 10:28.
3. Matt. 16:24-26.

which possesses the possibility of eternal life with the Father.

The most repeated teaching of Jesus was the fore-¹telling of His own suffering, death, and resurrection. He also taught that this was the will of the Father in² heaven, and that the purpose was the redemption of many.³ This is the greatest evidence in His teaching of the value of man. Of all of creation only man possesses the possibility of attaining eternal life, and this life is gained for man at the expense of the suffering and death of the King.

5. Material Goods as Values.

When Jesus answered the devil in the wilderness by saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," He was not imply-
ing that man's physical needs are to be ignored, but rather was indicating the insufficiency of physical food for life and the indispensability of spiritual food.⁴ All of God's word is included in this spiritual food which is valuable because of its source, God Himself. Later in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus indirectly indicated the relative importance of the physical and the spiritual: one short line regarding

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1. Matt. 16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19, and 26:1-2.
2. Matt. 16:21-23, 26:36-44, and 26:53-56.
3. Matt. 20:28.
4. Matt. 4:4.

the physical need of man and two longer lines regarding
the spiritual.¹

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus urged His followers not to accumulate earthly treasures but to concentrate on acquiring treasures in heaven, for earthly treasures are perishable and there is no surety of keeping them even in this life whereas heavenly treasure is imperishable and secure. A more important reason, however, is that a person's desire and devotion are centered in his treasure, and Jesus wants His followers to have a heavenly goal with their devotion centered in the Father. As He continued the discourse, He stated the general principle that it is impossible to serve two masters, and then made the specific application that no one can serve both God and "mammon." By "mammon" is meant not merely money but the inordinate desire for wealth. Thus, devotion to God and the desire for wealth are mutually exclusive. Jesus' conclusion was His admonition not to worry about food or clothing, which He then supported by the illustrations of God's care for the birds and the lilies. He assured the disciples that God was aware of their need, and that the solution is very simple: since man cannot be a slave to both God and the accumulation of material goods, he must put the Father and His kingdom and His righteousness first in his mind and

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1. Matt. 6:9-13.

heart, and then God will supply all his material needs.¹

Jesus' teaching about material goods and man's attitude toward them was not that they are valueless or to be scorned, because they are valuable in that they satisfy the physical needs of man, who is a value in God's sight. However, they must be kept in the right place in man's scale of values. Man must recognize them as instrumental values, that is, as means to an end, and not as end values. They are a lower value than the life of man² and so, of course, are a much lower value than God. Man's desire for material goods and preoccupation with gaining them are not to supplant his devotion to and service for God.

D. The Expected Evidences in Present-Day Society
of the Standard of Value Taught by Jesus.

1. Expected Evidences in Education.

In regard to the importance of education, J.

Donald Butler of Princeton has written,

Among the institutions of society the school is primary because it represents the deliberate and organized effort of society to nurture and guide the development of the individuals constituting each oncoming generation.³

Since education has this important role in life, its purpose, content, and methods must be determined according to the value standard taught by Jesus.

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1. Matt. 6:19-33.

2. Matt. 6:25.

3. J. Donald Butler: Four Philosophies and their Practice in Education and Religion. p. 516.

In the mind of God, the destiny of man is for him to be a child of God, a member of the kingdom of heaven. Thus, the objective of education should be to help the student to become what God has intended him to be. Morally, by nature the student's character lacks much, for he is commonly in opposition to God and possesses character traits that are contradictions of the righteousness of God. Therefore, the task of education is to teach the student the standard of value taught by Jesus, to show him what he should be according to the will of God, and to lead him into the right relationship with God through Jesus Christ so that he may take his place as a member of the divine society, the kingdom of heaven.

The content of education should of necessity include training for living in this world. A curriculum can include the humanities without being humanistic. The danger to avoid is the over-emphasis on social and vocational training for the present life to the exclusion of preparation for eternal life. A further danger is the elevation of man as a value without the realization that the value of man is derived from a higher value, God Himself. Concerning content, to quote again from Butler, "the Bible should have its place in the midst of this subject matter, as the superb and most direct medium of communication of the Ultimate."¹ In this respect, the whole of the Bible

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1. Butler, op. cit., p. 519.

must be used, for, as Gordon H. Clark of Butler University has written, "Unless the whole system of Christian truth is taught, it is not a Christian education."¹

Because of the nature of the purpose and the content of Christian education, those who are to do the teaching must be members of the kingdom. They must be devoted to God and absolutely convinced that the only valid standard of value is the one taught by Jesus. In other words, the prime requirement for each is relationship to God through the work of Jesus Christ. Since this is true, the public school as it is today is incapable of being the agency for education that is truly Christian. However, the public school can and should make its contribution by providing the student with a general background that is favorable to the Christian position. For instance, the policy of the International Council of Religious Education as adopted at its 1949 meeting advocates that the public schools teach the common religious tradition of "belief in God as the source of all spiritual values and material goods, the determiner of the destinies of nations and the loving Father of all mankind."² The home and the church must take the responsibility for the distinctively Christian aspects of education.

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1. Gordon H. Clark: A Christian Philosophy of Education, p. 212.
2. Harold E. Fey: "Religion in Public Education." Christian Century, February 23, 1949, pp. 231-233.

2. Expected Evidences in Science.

The standard of value taught by Jesus should influence the scientist in his attitude and in his approach to his work and especially in the use of his results. Although his immediate concern is with the physical, he must avoid the ever-present danger of centering his philosophy in material things, and realize that material things have value only as they can meet the needs of man. As he approaches his work, his attitude should be that he is investigating an area of God's creation and that his findings are part of the natural revelation of God. Since his primary motivation should be service to his fellow man for the glory of God, his results must not be used for any end other than the welfare of humanity. Thus, none of the results of science or technology can be rightly used as instruments of destruction. God has placed a value upon human life and man is to respect it. However, man, not even the scientist, is to conclude, since he is able to decipher much of the meaning of the physical world and to control large parts of it, that he is "king" of the physical world. Neither should his ego be bolstered by the knowledge that material goods exist for the fulfillment of his needs. God has thus provided for his physical needs because of the value of man which is derived from God Himself; and man has partial knowledge and control of the physical world only because God has allocated such knowledge and control to him.

3. Expected Evidences in Politics.

According to the standard of value taught by Jesus, the Christian politician would be the servant of the people in actuality, not merely in theory, and would be aware that his position is dependent upon talents given by God. In reference to such talents, Osborn has written,

Whatever the gift may be, it is not to be neglected, but it is to be used for the glory of the one who bestowed it. In terms of social ethics this means that the ultimate criterion of conduct is the glory of God. In the sphere of morals God's glory is His character, and, since He is the great giver, those likest Him prove their greatness by the way they give their service to their fellow men.¹

Such a politician, aware of the source of his ability and serving for the glory of God, could not be underhanded in his methods or motivated by selfish interests. Neither could he resort to exploiting another person or group, for men must be regarded as ends, never as means to some other end, and no end is so worthy that one can justly choose that another person can serve as means to that end.² In making decisions he would be governed by two factors, which in reality are only one: love for his fellow man and love for God. The former is the result of the latter. For specific guidance he would not depend solely upon human wisdom but would seek guidance from the Father that His will may be done.

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1. Osborn, op. cit., p. 130.
2. Butler, op. cit., p. 515.

4. Expected Evidences in Economics.

Concern about one's "social security" is incompatible with holding to the standard of value taught by Jesus. He advocated the elimination of all ties that would bind to the things of this world, but also gave the strong assurance that the Father would supply all needs. Realization of the character of God as the supreme value, the creator and controller of the universe, and His loving concern for the welfare of man is sufficient basis for laying aside all worry about and desire for the accumulation of material wealth.

In the realm of business and industry, those who are in control should exercise such control as a trust from God. God has supplied the material goods for the use of man and has entrusted to man the responsibility for developing and distributing those material goods. The goods themselves are not ends in themselves but are means to an end. Those who have the responsibility of control must be motivated in their decisions by love for man, because of the value God has placed upon man. Thus, there should be no exploitation of the people in their employ nor any "cut-throat" practices in their dealings with each other. Management and labor, all divisions of business and industry, should be co-operating toward the common end of supplying the material needs of mankind.

In this area of life one must remember that it is

the worship of money that is condemned, not the possession of it. Concerning Jesus' view of this, Osborn has written,

He drew a clear distinction between the service of the Kingdom of God and that of the kingdom of Mammon. Mammon stood for the empire of trade and the spirit of materialism, an empire which the prophets had condemned, not because trade in itself was wrong, but because it was so closely associated with greed and injustice.¹

Thus, the crucial point is not the possession of wealth but the attitude of the possessor and the use that he makes of the wealth.

5. Expected Evidences in Social Problems.

The standard of value taught by Jesus should influence both the diagnosis and the remedy of social problems. Whereas the secular analysis is obsessed with the exterior social maladjustment, the Christian analysis probes deeper into the cause for the maladjustment. Regardless of the specific problem, each time the basic cause is found to be the same: the egocentricity of human nature.² Thus, the remedy is also singular. There was no systematic program of social reform in the ministry of Jesus, because His task was more fundamental; it was that of changing the human heart. According to Osborn,

Of necessity, a political or economic system is limited and conditioned by the circumstances of place and time. . . . Membership in the kingdom as our Lord established it involved a life in communion with God, and the

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1. Osborn, op. cit., p. 136.
2. Davies, op. cit., pp. 134-137.

possession of those attributes of character which, like the nature of God, never grow old. . . . The gospel is the source of inspiration for and the dynamic motive behind reform, for which it supplies standards and ideals.¹

6. Expected Evidences in the Church.

The message of the church must be founded upon the standard of value which Jesus taught: God is supreme and all other values are derived from Him. The major part of this message will be concerned with teaching about God and man's relationship to Him, for, according to Butler,

If all value is ultimate and enduring precisely because it is of God, then necessarily the prior value for every individual and for all societies is to be related to God so as to share His goodness.²

The only valid motivation for causing a person to desire this relationship to God is the realization of the character and purpose of God. He is perfect in all aspects of His being, including knowledge, wisdom, and love, and it is His purpose that man should be in fellowship with Him in the present life and throughout eternity. Such fellowship, which is the essence of membership in the kingdom, is possible only because Jesus is the Redeemer of mankind. The church is to teach its people to have a heavenly perspective as well as a heavenly goal. The message is to include instruction for living in this present world, but the moral value of each act and attitude must be measured in the light

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1. Osborn, op. cit., pp. 124-126.
2. Butler, op. cit., p. 514.

of the heavenly standard and with the horizon of eternity.

Thus, it is apparent that the mission of the church is to proclaim this message to the people with the sole objective of leading them into the right relationship with God and instructing them in living in fellowship with Him. Primarily, the work of the church is not social but individual. However, as the individual is changed, society is changed, for a change in fellowship and in standards results in a change in conduct, as Osborn has written,

It is the constant reference of conduct to its source in the heart which makes the ethics of Jesus significant and distinctive. His followers do good, because they live in intimate communion with God, the source of all good.¹

In handling the business affairs of the church, the same principle applies as was previously mentioned for the realm of economics: such business is to be treated as a trust from God. The material possessions of a church are merely means to be used in accomplishing a spiritual ministry, and certainly are not to be used as an index of the success of the church.

E. Summary

The Gospel by Matthew is the story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth from His birth to His death and resurrection, and the purpose of the book is to show that this Jesus

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1. Ibid., p. 119.

is the promised Messiah, King and Redeemer, the initiator of the kingdom of heaven. He clearly taught that the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual order, existing for a time in this present world but unlimited by time and space, and under the dominion of the heavenly Father. Admittance into the kingdom is granted only to those who acknowledge the supremacy of the Father and desire to do His will.

The standard of value taught by Jesus can be summarized as follows:

God the Father

Jesus, as the Incarnation of the Father

The Kingdom of Heaven

Man (in the Kingdom)

Man (outside the Kingdom)

Material Goods

God the Father is the supreme value and the value from which all other values stem. As the Incarnation of the Father, Jesus is a value in that He not only brought the message of the Father but also performed the work by which man can be related to the Father. The value of the kingdom is derived from the value of the King, and is meaningful to man because membership in the kingdom is synonymous with being related to the Father, the supreme value. For this reason, man in the kingdom is a higher value than man outside the kingdom. The latter is a value because God has ordained man to be the highest value in creation, but the

former is a higher value because his relationship to God is not only as man to Creator but also as man to Redeemer and higher will. Material goods are valuable only in that they supply the physical needs of man, and are not to be sought as ends in themselves but are to be used merely as means in serving a higher value, man.

Adherence to the standard of value taught by Jesus would have profound effects in various areas of society, such as education, science, politics, economics, social problems, and the church. The primary goal of all areas would be that man be in fellowship with God for His glory. The conduct of man in each area would be governed by that relationship to the supreme value and would manifest the love of man for man because of man's prior devotion to God.

CHAPTER III
THE PRESENT-DAY MATERIALISTIC STANDARD OF VALUE
IN THE LIGHT OF
THE STANDARD OF VALUE TAUGHT BY JESUS

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THE PRESENT-DAY MATERIALISTIC STANDARD OF VALUE IN THE LIGHT OF THE STANDARD OF VALUE TAUGHT BY JESUS

A. Introduction

The first step in this portion of the study will be to evaluate the materialistic standard of value in the light of the standard of value taught by Jesus, first according to bases and then according to the results in society. After thus pointing up the differences in the two standards, and having already established in Chapter I that the materialistic standard is prevalent in present-day society, the next concern will be to determine the basic cause of this prevalency of the materialistic standard. The implications of these results for the individual Christian will then be considered.

B. An Evaluation of the Materialistic Standard of Value in Light of the Standard of Value Taught by Jesus

1. According to Bases

According to the materialistic standard of value as defined in Chapter I, man is the supreme value,¹ whereas according to the standard taught by Jesus, as

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1. Ante, p. 7.

established in Chapter II, God the Father is the supreme value.¹ The differences between these two standards are more clearly seen as the standards are placed side by side as shown below:

The Standard Taught by Jesus	The Materialistic Standard
1. God the Father	1. Man
2. Jesus, the Incarnation of the Father	2. Material Goods
3. The Kingdom of Heaven	
4. Man (in the Kingdom)	
5. Man (outside the Kingdom)	
6. Material Goods	

If one begins at the lowest value in each standard and proceeds toward the highest value, it is apparent that the two are identical up to a point. Thus, the main difference between the two is that the materialistic standard stops at man, but the standard taught by Jesus goes further and includes values higher than man, namely, the kingdom of heaven, Jesus, and God the Father. Also, the materialistic standard includes all of mankind in the one category, whereas Jesus distinguished between man in the kingdom and man outside the kingdom. A further distinction lies in the concepts of the nature of man: the materialist emphasizes the physical aspect almost to the exclusion of the spiritual (mind and emotions), but Jesus put much greater stress on the spiritual side of

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1. Ante, pp. 26-29.

man's nature than He did on the physical. It is obvious that the basic assumption of the materialistic standard is that there is nothing beyond this world of time and space; therefore, since all values are determined by the present life, man is the highest value. D. R. Davies highlights this basic assumption of the prevailing value standard:

Belief in a world-order beyond death has exactly nothing to do with the hopes and activities and enjoyments of the secularized man of to-day. Heaven and hell have no bearing whatever on a life whose fulfilment is thought of in terms of ample material consumption or cultural self-display, when culture has become inseparable from expanding material appetite.¹

In contrast to this position, Jesus taught that the present life is only the beginning and that the destiny of each person in the life-to-come is dependent upon his choices in the present life, specifically his choices regarding God. This teaching necessitates the horizon of eternity in establishing a standard of value, and Jesus taught this standard which holds that God is the supreme value. In its basic assumption the materialistic standard limits man to physical life in this world of time and space, whereas the basis of the standard taught by Jesus lays before man the freedom of eternity unlimited by time and space.

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1. Davies, op. cit., p. 59.

2. According to Results.

The keynote of the life which is lived according to the standard of value taught by Jesus is love, primarily love for God and secondly love for other men. This was the answer of Jesus when the Pharisees questioned Him as to which is the great commandment in the law:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.¹

It is impossible for any person to keep these commandments unless he is convinced that God is the supreme value and realizes the place of man in the resulting value standard. This love would be the ruling factor in making decisions in all areas of life, and man's first thoughts and desires would be first for God and then for his fellow man with his own interests third. Material goods would have a place in such a life only as means to accomplishing the end of sustaining physical life, which is necessary as long as man is living in the present world. Man would not be devoting his life to the accumulation of material goods or to maintaining prestige among his fellows, and so economic, political, and social strife would cease. His goal in life, both for himself and for other men,

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1. Matt. 22:34-40.

would be fellowship with God and partaking in His nature through faith in Jesus Christ -- the one goal which is God's destiny for man both now and for eternity.

The materialistic standard of value quickly degenerates into a "me first" philosophy, and man is striving with man for the possession of material goods, as these material goods become ends rather than the God-intended means to serve a higher value. The value of other men is lost sight of and the result is man's inhumanity to man, overwhelming evidence of which has been two literally "world" wars in twenty-seven years. On lesser scales the conflict is seen in everyday life in the economic and social realms. Titus has aptly described this condition in present-day society:

During recent centuries man has gained great power to control the material world of "facts." . . . With marvelous means for enriching life at our disposal, we have seen unrest, maladjustment, and much barbarism in our world. Many persons live exceedingly shallow lives with few interests beyond meals, clothes, amours, bridge, and automobile trips. As men of affairs, we have put wealth, power, technical efficiency, and special privilege first.¹

Osborn has written of the "perverting effect which the desire for gain has upon the sense of justice and right,² which lies at the very foundation of righteous conduct," and supports this by the following statements:

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1. Titus, op. cit., p. 304.
2. Osborn, op. cit., p. 136.

Every horrible crime that the brain of man could devise has been perpetrated for the sake of gain, and it has even come to pass that those who have done these things have tried to represent them as warranted and right. . . . If it is objected that the commands of Jesus are too severe for ordinary life, and that the thought of modern times is in a different direction, it is a sufficient reply to point to the chaos in economic and political affairs in the world to-day. Beyond question the world is under the rule of Mammon, and the result is a tale of horror.¹

These results are to be expected when life is based upon a value standard which is not the highest possible. Even as the physical nature of man can not remain healthy when confined to a space too small to permit normal activity, no more can the mind and heart of man be healthy when confined to a world which does not permit the full exercise of the mind and heart such as God has intended for man.

Thus, the contrast between the results of the two standards of value is tremendous: the two kinds of life are direct opposites. The result of the materialistic standard is greed, conflict, chaos, and frustration; whereas adherence to the standard taught by Jesus results in love and peace among men with each concerned for the physical and spiritual welfare of others. Of course, the results are more far-reaching than this, for the man who in this life puts God first in his life will have eternal

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1. Ibid., pp. 136-137.

life in fellowship with God and the materialist will be denied this privilege even as he in this life denies God by choosing to serve mammon.

C. The Basic Cause of the Prevalency
of the Present-Day Materialistic
Standard of Value.

In view of the preceding evaluation of the materialistic standard of value in the light of the value standard taught by Jesus, it would seem incredible that any one could choose to be a materialist. Yet, as was shown in Chapter I, the materialistic standard prevails in society today.

The most readily given explanation for the prevalence of the materialistic standard is the scientific and technological emphasis of the times. Lindeman, professor of Social Philosophy at Columbia University, states, "Science is the foundation upon which our world rests. . . . It is the great transformer, the source of social, economic, and political change."¹ With such an attitude towards the place of science in the world order rampant in colleges and universities, it is small wonder that the rest of society has been infected by it. Davies pictures the situation thus:

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1. Lindeman, op. cit., p. 287.

In the motor-car, the internal-combustion engine, we have the symbol of the vast technological revolution of our time, by which man is ceasing to be the chief source of productive energy, with consequences of profound significance to society. . . The technological revolution of our time has invested matter with a new value, which is proving deadly to the spirit of man. . . In spite of the acceleration of the progress of our civilization to hell, it still requires an almost superhuman¹ courage to challenge the domination of science.

However, the fault lies not in the methods of science nor even in the direct results of science, but rather in the use made of the results and in the obsession with the results as ends in themselves. Even so, this false philosophy of science is not the basic cause of the prevailing materialistic standard of value. Davies goes back to what he calls the "root sin of Western civilization. It is the enthronement of Man at the centre of life, being and thought."² The production of material goods, together with the scientific and technological efforts to increase the quantity and the quality of those goods, is for the sole purpose of satisfying the desires of "deified Man."

The Church is not free from blame either, for if man has set himself up as the supreme value in the universe, it is partially because the Church has failed to present God as God, a vital living Person and the only One

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1. Davies, op. cit., pp. 13-14.
2. Ibid., p. 23.

worthy of being the Supreme Value, and has failed to convince the people of the reality of life beyond this time-space world. One must agree with Loemker that "the achievements of science and technology, of the arts, of national power and world-wide economic structures, being more conspicuous than is the experience of God, offer themselves as tempting substitutes for him."¹ In the same vein, Carl Wallace Miller comments:

The man on the street may not be too much concerned about the origin of the resources being tapped by the scientist, but he is tremendously impressed by the benefits which accrue to him from these colossal discoveries, and he cannot help making unfavorable comparisons between the claims of the church and the actual achievements of the secular-minded research worker.²

Even a superficial evaluation of the program of the church reveals that it is not effectively coping with the problem. In referring specifically to the role of the church in reducing crime, Cuber and Harper state that not only does the church fail to reach half of the non-criminal population, let alone the criminal and potentially criminal elements, but it seems at a loss as to methods for increasing its appeal and gives no indication of knowing how to reach the criminal or potential criminal.³

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1. Spann, op. cit., p. 15.
2. Ibid., p. 58.
3. Cuber and Harper, op. cit., p. 169.

D. Implications for the Individual Christian

Since the differences between the two value standards are so clear-cut, according to bases and according to results, and the materialistic standard is obviously inferior, the only reasonable choice for the Christian is complete acceptance of the value standard taught by Jesus and absolute adherence to it in all areas of life. The implications of this way of life can be mentioned here only briefly and in general because such implications are many. The primary goal of the individual will be relationship to God through faith in Jesus Christ, and his life will be surrendered to the will of God. In his relations to other men, his attitude will be that of love and selflessness and his actions will clearly reveal this. He will possess material goods as a trust from God and will use them only as means, realizing that their value is limited to the specific use of meeting the physical needs of man.

Whether the individual be a professional Christian leader, laborer, business man, scientist, or politician, his main concern will be the advancement of the kingdom of God among men. This is true for two reasons: first, because it is God's purpose for man that he be a member of the divine society and partake of the nature of God, and second, because love for one's neighbor must

result in the desire for that person to have the best that is possible in life, which is, of course, fellowship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. This is summed up in Jesus's final and great commission to the disciples:

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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.¹

In carrying out this commission, the individual must present God as God, the Supreme Value, but also a vital living Person active in the world in general and specifically in the life of man and desiring that man be related to Him through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and he must convince others of the reality of life beyond this physical world.

E. Summary

According to bases, the materialistic standard of value is inferior to the value standard taught by Jesus for two reasons primarily. The supreme value in the former, man, is one of the lower values in the latter, which holds that God is the supreme value. Also, the materialist limits man to physical life in the present world of time and space, whereas Jesus in His teaching lay before man the incomparably broader and higher potentiality

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1. Matt. 28:19-20.

of heavenly life unlimited by time and space.

The results of the two standards of value further prove the inferiority of the materialistic standard. In the present life, the standard taught by Jesus results in love and peace among men, whereas adherence to the materialistic standard results in life of an inferior quality marked by greed and conflict. In the life-to-come only those who accept and live by the standard which holds that God is supreme will have eternal fellowship with God, and the materialist will go to destruction.

The most readily given explanation for the prevalency of the inferior materialistic standard of value is the scientific and technological emphasis of the present day, but the real reason is more basic than this and is traceable to the deification of man for whom, as well as by whom, the scientific efforts are made. In this matter those in the church are as much to blame as are those outside the church, for if the church were preaching a dynamic message of a living God and the reality and importance of the life after death, man would be less likely to set himself up as the supreme value.

The only path for the Christian is complete acceptance of God as the supreme value and absolute adherence to the standard of value which follows as a consequence. His primary goal will be to be related to

God through faith in Jesus Christ and to have his life conform to the will of God. This goal will also be his highest desire for his fellow man, first because it is God's purpose for man that he be related to God and secondly because such a desire for his fellow man is the normal result of love.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

This study was an investigation of the Gospel of Matthew with special emphasis upon those portions containing the oral teaching of Jesus in regard to values with the purpose of evaluating the materialistic standard of value in the light of Jesus' teaching.

The first step in approaching the problem was to investigate the theory of value and to define the materialistic standard of value, noting especially the evidences in present-day society.

Value is that quality of an object or experience which is apprehended in appreciation and which makes the experience or object desirable. In making a value judgment, an individual shows that he considers one value as being higher than another, or that he has a "standard of value" with that which to him is most desirable at the top of his standard. Value standards are important because one's moral behavior is determined by his value standard.

As defined in Chapter I, the materialistic standard of value holds as supreme the material well-being of the individual and the resulting accumulation and use of material goods. That such a standard of value is

prevalent today in American society is obvious to even the casual observer, and more striking evidences of it are revealed by a closer study of the fields of education, science, politics, economics, and the major social problems. Even the church has been infected by the materialistic attitude and reflects it in its message as well as in its attitude towards and handling of material goods.

Chapter II was a study of the Gospel by Matthew, which revealed that Jesus taught the standard of value which maintains that God the Father is the supreme value and that other values follow in the order indicated below:

God the Father

Jesus, as the Incarnation of the Father

The Kingdom of Heaven

Man (in the Kingdom)

Man (outside the Kingdom)

Material Goods

Thus, God, the supreme value, is the value from which all other values stem. Man is a value because he is a potential member of the kingdom of heaven, which is a value derived from God and His Son, Jesus Christ, the King. Material goods possess value only in that they supply the physical needs of man, and are not to be sought as ends in themselves but are to be used merely as means in serving a higher value, man.

Adherence to the standard of value taught by Jesus

would have far-reaching effects in all areas of society. The primary goal of man would be to be in fellowship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, which is the essence of membership in the kingdom, and his conduct in each area of life would be governed by that relationship to the supreme value and would manifest the love of man for man because of man's prior devotion to God.

From the evaluation, in Chapter III, of the materialistic standard of value in the light of the standard taught by Jesus, both according to bases and according to results, it was evident that the materialistic standard of value is inferior to the value standard taught by Jesus. The former includes only the two lowest values of the latter and limits man to physical life in the present world of time and space. In contrast, Jesus taught that man has the potentiality of spiritual life unlimited by time and space. In the present life the results of the two are in striking contrast: the standard taught by Jesus results in love and peace among men, but the materialistic standard results in greed and conflict.

Usually the scientific and technological emphasis of the present day is blamed for the prevalency of the inferior materialistic value standard, but the more basic cause is the deification of man for whom and by whom the scientific efforts are made. In this matter the church must accept a large share of the blame, for if the

church were preaching a dynamic message of a living God and the reality and importance of life after death, and still making such a message relevant to the present life, man would not be so likely to set himself up as the supreme value.

In view of these findings there is only one pathway open for the Christian: complete acceptance of God as the supreme value and absolute adherence to the resulting value standard. His primary goal, both for himself and for his fellow man, should be to be related to God through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

B. Conclusion

The essence of the conclusion of this study has been stated in the previous section of this chapter and more fully in Chapter III. In the light of this study the Christian cannot but realize the extreme importance of living a life of complete devotion to God and Jesus Christ and striving for the advancement of the kingdom of God among men, viewing all parts of life with a heavenly perspective.

Further and more thorough study of this problem is advisable and would be very profitable. A similar approach could be used in demonstrating the weaknesses of materialism as a philosophical system.

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