

The Alleged Absence of a Christian Social Ethic

Abstract: *The late, prominent American economist, Frank Knight, believed that Christianity had no social relevance, being confined to personal morality. This view appears to have exercised influence up to the present day. Knight reached this position from looking at certain sayings and actions of Jesus. This paper argues against his interpretations, contending that Jesus' teachings and actions were fraught with social implication. Knight's views are examined first. Then, three of Jesus' teachings singled out by Knight are investigated — the Sermon on the Mount, how Jesus' instruction related to the Torah, and what Jesus meant by his paying tribute to Caesar text. Each of these is analyzed via the work of biblical exegetes. They come to contrary conclusions from Knight's.*

JEL: A13, Z10, Z12.

Keywords: *Knight, social implication, personal implication, Jesus, exegesis.*

1. Introduction

Frank Knight's views on Christianity, and how he saw them relate to economics are analyzed. Although criticizing Christianity frequently, Knight had an ambivalent attitude to the religion (Emmett, 2008), while recognizing the strength of institutional Christian belief. The reason for examining the matter now is that Knight's views on Christianity seem to have influenced the thinking of some US Christian economists since the 1950s. The discussion focuses on Knight's argument that Christianity has no relevance to social or economic matters, being confined to personal behavior. Knight can be interpreted as saying that Christian ethics applies only to personal, not to interpersonal relations, meaning relations between two and more people.

Section two examines Knight's views from the two of his works (1939, 1948) summarizing his thoughts on Christianity. Sections three, four and five investigate interpretations by contemporary biblical exegetes of the specific Jesus' texts Knight specified to substantiate his viewpoint. They come to opposite conclusions from Knight. In section six, a selection of modern theologians, biblical ethicists, and economists is reviewed who adopt the interpretations of sections three, four and five. The overall case is that Knight did not substantiate his case that Christianity applies only to personal ethics. The weight of current opinion — biblical exegetes,

theologians, biblical ethicists, and Christian economists — is that Christianity embodies a social as well as a personal ethic. They are inseparable from each other.

The reason for investigating the topic is that it is the idea for which Knight is most quoted by Christian economists today: that biblical ethics applies only to personal relations and not to interpersonal relations characteristic of the modern market. Another way of saying this is that Jesus' ethics apply only to personal and not social behavior. Therefore, biblical ethics have no relevance to the modern economy. Knight's views on these matters are still quoted as though they were valid in Christian economics. For instance, Emmett (1994, p. 107) spoke of "Knight's opposition to any form of Christian social thought." This was because Knight believed that "the Christian gospel of love is directed at *personal relations*... whereas the central problems of a liberal society revolve around issues of *social relations*" (Emmett, 1994, pp. 107-108; original emphasis). On this basis, Waterman (1999, p. 65) cited Knight approvingly, contending that Knight's assertion "has never been answered to my knowledge." Other Christian economists accept Knight's opinion without giving him as a direct citation as its source. Hill and Lunn (2007, p. 647), for instance, believe that "the Bible concentrates on the world of personal relationships." These interpretations deriving from Knight are still presented as though they were a major and new insight for Christian economists relevant to the modern economy. They are held to provide a decisive thrust against the idea of using normative Biblical teaching to analyze modern economic systems.

2. Knight on Christian Ethics as Relevant Only to Personal Relations

This section considers Knight's idea that "social ethics" within Christianity was "a matter of no consequence" (1948, p. 22). This was because "the teachings of Christianity give little or no direct guidance for the change and improvement of social organisation." If guidance was to be sought, there was "little to be found in Christianity in the way of moral principles or ideals which can serve for the ethical guidance of deliberate political action" (1939, p. 399). The reason was that Christians believe that life on earth would be transformed "by supernatural intervention" so that "the ordinary problems of living, material and social, would no longer exist" (1948, p. 22). This is a caricature of Christian belief that could only be made by someone antipathetic to Christianity, as was Knight frequently.

This type of thinking assumes humans are passive onlookers until this transformation or Second Coming occurred, without having to do anything, except have “faith.” “Rational thought or action” by people up to the parousia has no place in this transformation, “it explicitly opposed critical reflection in favour of leaving everything to the divine will” (1948, p. 22). Looking only at Jesus’ teaching and behavior reveals the invalidity of this type of thought. Jesus called his followers to have faith in himself as God’s Son, but also to take specific action now, requiring rational thought and critical reflection. The specific action included keeping and practicing Jesus’ commandments (as in Jn 14.15, 21). Individual persons were to practice Jesus’ instruction that would coalesce with that by other practitioners to combine, blend, meld, and fuse into social phenomena.

Consider just one of Jesus’ commandments, involving the rich sharing their wealth with the poor, that has no presumption of achieving absolute equality. Jesus states this demand in numerous texts, such as Mt 19:21 (=Mk 10:21=Lk. 12:33, 18:22), “sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor;” Mt 19:24 (=Mk 10:25 = Lk 18:25), “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God;” Mt 25:31-46, the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats; Lk 14:12-14, invite the poor to a banquet; and Lk 16:19-31, the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. If all rich individuals practiced these commands they would conjoin to form a social trait by which the poor were to be treated. None of these demands are to be postponed until the Second Coming, they require action now, and they are directed to the world, not just to Jesus’ followers. How all this assisting the poor might be done requires “critical reflection” by Christians. Jesus left open the precise mechanisms by which the poor were to be helped, in which “critical reflection” has occurred among Christians about the mechanisms (e.g., Beed and Beed, 2010). That the church throughout history has downplayed Jesus’ instruction on this matter is irrelevant to what Jesus was requiring.

Another of Jesus’ commandments was directed to authority structures in organizations. Biblical exegetes argue that Jesus gave much teaching on how power, authority, hierarchy and status were to be changed in the world. Specifically, he called his followers to construct an organization (the church) marked by a low degree of

hierarchy, of minimal internal power structure, and high degree of democracy. It seems reasonable to believe that the church was to serve as a model of social relations for the world. Jesus explained this commandment in texts such as Mt 18:1-5, “whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven;” Mt 20:25-28, 23:8-12 (=Mk 9:35-37, 10:42-45, “whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant;” Lk 9:46-48, “for the least among all of you is the greatest” (=Lk 14:7-11, 18:9-14, 22:24-28); and Jn 13:3-11, Jesus washing the disciples feet. Again, how all these teachings and actions might be pursued in the world requires “rational thought or action” by Christians (e.g., Beed and Beed, 2011). To interpret and apply Jesus’ teachings on these matters needs discussion among Christians that Knight erroneously assumed could not occur. In fact, it has occurred and is occurring still. Clearly, the two dispositions above Jesus advocated — assisting the poor, and constructing low hierarchy — indicate that he did not presume the maintenance of the social *status quo*. They were fraught with social implication. As biblical exegetes point out below, they were directed to creating the social phenomenon of a counterculture.

Jesus’ teachings required people to use their minds to establish what his instruction meant and how it might be applied, nowhere more obvious than in interpreting his parables. Human intellect was to work in tandem with revelation, the latter stimulating the former. Nothing in Jesus’ instruction suggests that it was “exclusively an emotional and personal morality.” It can be agreed with Knight that “social problems require intellectual analysis in impersonal terms” (1939, pp. 399-400). But the strength of Jesus’ instruction was that personal morality accumulated into social ethics.

Jesus did direct his teaching to people, but they were aimed both at individuals, and collections of individuals. In this sense, Jesus’ instruction carried both personal and social connotations. Even one person’s practice of Jesus’ commands is likely to have spill-over effects on other persons, and therefore be social in their impact. Instruction directed to groups of individuals is social instruction. One of these collections of people to which Jesus spoke was his followers, who eventually constituted the church, but Jesus’ social implications extended wider than this. Jesus’ teaching was intended for the people of God, and also for the wider world. Any suggestion that Jesus’ teaching was oriented to relationships just in his own community is contradicted by many of his sayings that are directed to the world, as well as to his disciples. Jesus

hoped to make all people part of his community, but there is no implication that his teaching applied only to those who were already in that community, or became part of it. His teachings, healings and miraculous feedings were aimed at all people everywhere, they had social as well as individual implication.

Take just the gospel of Matthew. In Mt 4.23, Jesus goes throughout Galilee proclaiming the good news to “the people.” Mt 5.1 can be interpreted as Jesus addressing the Sermon on the Mount to “the crowds” as well as the disciples. The Sermon finishes in 7.28 with “the crowds were astounded at his teaching.” 7.24 has Jesus explaining that “everyone” is intended to hear His words and act on them. If we assume that Jesus combined His healings with teaching, that seems reasonable, then, as in 8.16, he “cured all who were sick.” Anybody who was sick was a candidate for Jesus’ healing. In 9.8, “the crowds” glorified God, and in 9.35-37, he asks that laborers be sent to “the crowds.” In 10.32, “everyone” is a candidate for God’s mercy, so that in 10.40-42, “whoever” behaves in a certain way is accepted by Jesus. In 11.4-6, “the poor have good news brought to them;” not just the poor within Jesus’ community, but anyone who is poor. In 11.7, Jesus addresses “the crowds” directly, and in 11.20-4, judgment is cast over whole cities. In 12.15, “many crowds followed him,” and we might assume benefited from His teaching and healing.

In Mt 12.46, Jesus speaks “to the crowds,” and in 13.1, he directs the parable of the sower to “great crowds.” Since in 13.36, he “left the crowds,” we can assume he had directed the parables of the weeds and the wheat, of the mustard seed, and His teaching on mixing yeast with flour to these crowds. Jesus also taught in many synagogues, made up of people who did not constitute his own community of followers, and were unsympathetic to his teachings. An example is Mt 13.54-6, of Jesus teaching “the people in their synagogue.” In 15.10, Jesus teaches “the crowd,” and in 21.23-46, he directs his teaching to the “chief priests and elders of the people.” In 23.1-39, Jesus gives lengthy teaching to “the crowds and to his disciples,” in the process castigating the behavior of the scribes and Pharisees. Most biblical interpreters hold the parable of the sheep and the goats (25.31-46) to be directed to the world at large, such as Hendriksen (1985, p. 886), Patte (1987, p. 348), Gundry (1994, p. 511), Hagner (1995, p. 742), Bruner (2004, p. 566), Witherington III (2006, p. 466), and Turner (2008, p. 605). As the *NSRV* puts it for 25.32, “all the nations will

be gathered before him,” suggesting in a footnote that “a better translation would be ‘all the people of the world’.” Matthew finishes in 28.19-20, again directed to the world. Jesus’ followers are to “make disciples of all nations,” “teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” God and Jesus are urgent that all people behave in the ways they require. Jesus proclaimed these dispositions to society at large, not just to the church. In one sense, they have social implication.

Knight’s rejection of the idea that Jesus’ teachings carried social implications is contradicted by his readiness to accept that Christians were “required to live a moral life in accord with extremely high and austere standards” (1948, p. 22). What those standards are, he does not explain. But, if Christians as a group did abide by them, they would be engaging in social as well as personal action. Knight did not believe that the standards were achievable, for they would be “destroying the material and social basis of life” (p. 23). The standards are rendered impossible before they are examined. One biblical allusion Knight makes to these standards is to the common sharing of property in Acts 4. Since Jesus never advocates anything like this, it cannot be supposed that Acts 4 displays the corpus of Jesus’ ethical teaching about possessions. Another allusion is to the Sermon on the Mount, “less fantastically impossible” if it relates “only to small communities” (p. 23). Interpretations by biblical exegetes of the Sermon on the Mount, discussed in section three, take a contrary view to Knight’s.

Knight’s views of Christianity’s alleged absence of a social ethic is contradicted also by his admission that “no clear line separates” the ethics in Christianity intended for “private conduct and personal relations” from “the problems of organized social life” (1948, p. 29). He lists a litany of “specific teachings generally associated with Christianity which might be selected as commendable by modern standards”, such as “aid to persons in distress” (p. 30). Indeed, “Christianity has stood for the moral and spiritual values which are within reach of all and are most fully social and communal” (p. 30). Thus, Knight’s views are not so clear-cut in rejecting the notion of a Christian social ethic as his earlier quotes might suggest. Instead, he occasionally contradicted himself about the personal and social ethics of Christianity. That is, he admitted that Christianity contained both personal and social ethics.

In Knight's opinion, "the ethical content of the 'Christian life,' was "based primarily" on the Jewish Torah (1948, p. 23). The Torah is replete with social ethics, as numerous exegetes have shown, of whom Baker (2009), and Domeris (2007) are recent examples. Knight suggests that interpretation of the Torah by the time of Jesus had become "spiritualized" (p. 24). Presumably, this meant that it had lost its practical personal and social import. Jesus is supposed to have carried this spiritualization "even further." Knight regards "the way of the spirit, or 'love'" as in conflict with the concrete demands of the Torah. The interpretations by biblical exegetes of the relation of Jesus' teaching to the Torah, discussed in section three, do not see Jesus as having spiritualized the Torah.

Knight also sees Jesus as an apologist for the current political and economic *status quo*. People were directed to "passive acceptance of material and social conditions," and "obedience to established authority" (1948, pp. 24, 32). This is alleged to show the "positive conservatism of the Christian doctrine on political and social questions" (1939, p. 400). Moreover, all this is supposed to tell against people using their "intelligence, critical judgment and the rational use of means or power" (1948, p. 24). The only biblical evidence Knight cites for this proposition is Jesus in Mt. 22:21 (= Mk. 12:17; Lk. 20:25), "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." This is held to indicate Jesus' "indifference to economic and political considerations," "accepting things as they are," "conforming and obeying" to established authority (p. 33). If Christians are to accept the *status quo* they can offer no social guidance by which the existing order might be changed. Exegetical evidence will be presented in section five to dispute this contention.

Knight believed that a discontinuity exists between the omnipotent divine will and human action (1948, p. 25). This must mean that even a personal ethic is impossible, let alone a social one. If God's will cannot be known to human beings, they have no way of knowing how their actions measure up to God's will. Once again, this does not conform to orthodox Christian belief, or to normative biblical teaching. Traditional Christian thought would hold that God's will for the individual person can be known through a regimen of regular prayer, Bible reading and analysis, and church involvement. Each person's interpretation accumulates into a social interpretation or ethic that can be activated by corporate prayer. Examples of these

processes occur in the present world, guiding the efforts of numerous Christian aid agencies, and of the few business firms that seek to function on explicitly Christian lines. They apply also to churches that engage in social outreach, of which many exist. Sider et al. (2002, p. 86) point out that social ministries “fall into four basic categories,” concerned with personal relief, individual development, community development, and structural change. All of these have social repercussions, one person’s actions reacts on others.

Knight makes the perfectly sensible observation that “the will of God can be practically useful as a guide to action only if God in some way makes his will generally known to men” (1948, p. 25). However, he did not believe this was possible. This was evident in the “hopeless disagreement as to what God wills,” and of the power of “other explanations... more plausible” to “the modern student” (p. 25). Knight also objected that if God “wished to say something to some individual,” he would do it directly, rather than “through some other person in the distant past.” None of these objections rest on empirical data provided by Knight. No evidence or examples were given of such “hopeless disagreement” occurring. This objection is part of the folklore case against Christianity that does not depend on recognizing the power of prayer or of biblical exegesis, or of how they can function in a practical way.

The enticement of “other explanations” is just part of the battle Christianity has and has had with secular explanation, of which the modern “New Atheists” are an example. As for God not talking to people via the distant past, Knight might not be referring to scripture, but to theologians of the past. Tradition is a useful reference point for Christians, but it can never take the place of prayer and the Bible. If Knight *was* talking about scripture, it makes every sense that God should explain his guidance to humankind via oral teaching that was then codified into a book. Knight reiterates his first objection as the most conclusive: “concrete revelations” by God to people lead to “differences of opinion as to their meaning in any concrete case” (p. 26). This is the “hopeless disagreement” specified above. It is an unsubstantiated opinion by which God is consigned to irrelevance. Where disagreement does occur among Christians, prayer and careful biblical exegesis should be able to attenuate, if not resolve the difference.

Knight seems to take the views he does because he regards God's love as vacuous. The notion that God extends His love to all people equally "seems to be practically identical with loving nothing" (1948, p. 27). Knight could not get his head around the idea that God's love is always abundant, never in short supply, never scarce. Just as God never inclines "towards intolerance and fanaticism," so humans are expected by God to model his nature. By seeking to emulate God's nature, people are still expected to make selective choice and undertake responsible action, qualities Knight thinks evaporate with belief in God (p. 27). The Bible contains a great deal more concrete normative advice than just practicing "personal affection and abstract mercy" (p. 27).

Much of the remainder of Knight's treatment of Christianity and its ethics was composed of standard secular objections to Christian belief. These included that "Christianity is very much a religion of reward and punishment" (1948, p. 28), that its views are those of "modern 'philosophical' anarchist communism" (p. 29), that it accepts "a social order based upon status" (p. 29), that Christianity had a negative view of science (p. 32), that Jesus "condemned outright" "anything outside the spiritual life of love" to God and fellow man (p. 33). Knight attacked also that the officially-sanctioned church "set itself up as a political dictatorship" (p. 34), but he did not show how this derived from biblical teaching. He castigated the "glaring discrepancy between Christian preaching and Christian practice" (p. 38), without considering how either related to biblical thought. He believed that Christianity "has no place in the social discussion of values in a liberal society" (Emmett, 1994, p. 111). Overall, Knight thought little of Christianity, of the same mind from 1939 to 1948, for:

Christian teaching not only has nothing to say about this whole problem-field of change in social organisation... but that it positively diverts attention from a correct view of the problem and from the fundamental facts of social life out of which the problem arises (1939, p. 410).

Knight would give no ground to Christianity on these matters, for "the idea that Christian social ideals are sound but impracticable is a fallacy, if not a subterfuge; a patently impracticable theory of conduct is a wrong theory, and if it has any practical

effect, tends to create a cynical disregard of all moral obligation” (1948, p. 38). No basis exists for Knight’s views, that Christian ethics might be imposed on society (Emmett, 2014, p. 143). Jesus never taught that his teachings were to be, or could be, imposed on individuals or society. People are to come to belief in God triune voluntarily, showing that “the kingdom of God is within you,” as the King James Bible puts Lk 17:21. Redeemed persons influence others generating social effects. In the history of humankind, a majority of people has never professed Christian belief sufficiently to practice Jesus’ teachings. No way exists of demonstrating Knight’s belief that a fully Christian society “would be destructive to social and economic progress,” as Emmett (2014, p. 143) expresses it. Since God triune wants all people to commit to him, involving abiding by his teachings, we could only expect *a priori* that such a society would be infinitely superior to any known in history.

3. Biblical Exegetes on Personal and Social Relations in Jesus’ Teaching

This section examines the interpretation of biblical texts by exegetes that counter Knight’s assertion that Christianity has no social relevance. As noted above, Knight specified only one main text spoken by Jesus to support this assertion, the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-7:27), examined in this section. In addition, Knight claimed that Jesus carried even further the spiritualization of the Torah that had developed by Jesus’ time. This means that Jesus interpreted the Torah’s provisions to apply to relationships between God and people that affected only the spiritual domain of life. Its concrete social proposals were emasculated, but Knight did not cite any biblical text to support this judgment. Jesus’ relation to the Torah are explored in section four. A third biblical allusion Knight made was the paying of tribute to Caesar text (Mt 22:21= Mk 12:17= Lk 20:25). This was supposed to illustrate Jesus’ “indifference to economic and political considerations” (1948, p. 33). By inference, this text is alleged to demonstrate Jesus’ lack of social application. That is, if the present social order is to be maintained, no social changes are called for by Jesus. What biblical exegetes make of this text is examined in section five.

The argument here is that Knight was in error in terms of scholarly biblical interpretation in claiming that Christian ethics had no social implications. All Knight’s claims were made with little biblical analysis, except as provided by

himself. The main sources for his views on Christianity were how he regarded the belief system, in terms of his own *ex cathedra* statements unsupported by any substantive biblical, Christian or theological input. Knight's lack of reference to the Bible is ironic for he was "more inclined to insist on the scriptural character of Christianity" so that some "defensible interpretation" of the New Testament was necessary to establish a Christian ethical position (1948, p. 2).

A consensus of biblical exegetes examined below draws conclusions about Jesus' teachings contrary to Knight's. The exegetes contend that the Sermon on the Mount did have, and has, social implications. This is because Jesus' teaching had practical import that was directed to the world at large, not just to his disciples. In addition, the Sermon requires critical reflection by people to discern how its instruction can be practiced. This reflection has to be done with God. They argue that Jesus' teaching captured the essence of the true meaning of the Torah, but did not suggest that it had implications only for the spiritual dimension of life, and not to the material conditions affecting people's lives. Finally, paying tribute to Caesar does not imply the maintenance of the social status quo.

The Sermon on the Mount

This Sermon is intended for all people, and is not aimed only at a "spiritual" level, thereby having no social relevance. On its intended audience, Stassen (2006, p. xiii) believes that "the Sermon is God's will for all the people God created." Carter (2007, p. 18) puts it that "Jesus announces that God's favour extends to all people." Finally, Carson (1994, p. 13) holds that "God's kingdom — his reign — is eternal and all-embracing." In all these senses, Jesus is teaching that God's purposes are all-encompassing, and therefore social.

Nor does the Sermon hold out impossible ideals or those relating only to the spiritual scope of life. If, for example, spiritual ideals might be thought of as difficult to achieve, Stassen (2006, p. 16) points out that "holding at a distance and straining towards impossible standards of perfection are not what Jesus teaches here." This is because Jesus' teachings are to be achieved not only through personal exertion. Strenuous human effort to achieve high ideals is not what is involved. Instead, the Sermon is about the gift of "God's grace" (Stassen, 2006, p. 16). Jesus' teaching in

the Sermon “often leads people to praise Jesus for teaching wonderfully high ideals, but then to say that in real life we have to live by some other, more realistic ethic” (Stassen, 2006, p. 40). Knight was one such case. Jesus announced the arrival of the kingdom of heaven in the Sermon. This means “God’s reign, God’s presence, God’s coming to deliver us and reign over us” (Stassen, 2006, p. 18). Again, this kingdom is a social construction, intended for, and available to, the world.

The example of the first beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount

To demonstrate these contentions, consider just the first beatitude, Mt 5:3, “blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Does the poor in spirit mean those who consider themselves to be so, or are judged to be, spiritually empty as they stand before God? Putting it another way, are they poor in spirit, or materially poor? Most exegetes regard them as both. This is because “Jesus was quoting Isaiah 61:1 in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew word *anawim* combines both meanings. It means the poor, oppressed by the rich and powerful, powerless, needy, humble, lowly, and pious” (Stassen, 2006, p. 43). To such people is the kingdom of God promised, as long as they do the will of God (Mt 7:21). On this basis, Carter (2007, p. 18) contends that “the phrase ‘the poor in spirit’ is not to be spiritualized... they are the literal poor, the destitute, those without options and with few resources who are part of the 97 percent or so of the empire’s population.” Accordingly, “poverty is very physical and material,” but it “also crushes people’s spirits,” emptying them of hope, dignity and value, fostering hopelessness and desperation. As Turner points out (2008, p. 149), the *anawim* are “people whose economic distress left them with nothing to rely upon except God.”

Other biblical exegetes support these interpretations of the poor in spirit. Lambrecht (1985, p. 55) argues that “there is no spiritualization of the concepts... all poor people are meant,” a position echoed by Brooks (1985, pp. 21-22), France (2007, p. 165), and Osborne (2010, p. 166). This is epitomized by Hagner (1993, p. 91) that it “refers to the frame of mind characteristic of the literally poor.” In the same way, Hendrickx (1984, p. 19) regards the poor in spirit as destitute, downtrodden, oppressed, powerless, without influence or prestige. Betz (1995, p. 115) holds that “the characterization of Matt 5:3a as ‘spiritualization’ and as a softening of Jesus’ original radicalism... is misleading.” This is because “the term ‘the poor’ has always

referred to persons living in social and economic misery” (p. 114). Guelich (1982, p. 75; original emphasis) points out that “the *poor in spirit* of 5:3, viewed as an explication of Isa 61:1, is no different from Luke’s poor.” They “find themselves waiting, empty-handed, upon God alone for their hope and deliverance while beset with abuse and rejection by their own social and religious context.” Stassen (2006, p. 44) sums up these interpretations nicely, that Jesus’ teaching toward the poor is social in implication: “He offers his presence to the social and religious outcasts, inviting them into community, feeding them, making them into disciples.” A curious anomaly arises in Knight. The interpretations in this and the preceding paragraph of who are to receive the kingdom of heaven are not dissimilar to Knight’s. He put it that “Christianity’s message was first addressed to the lowly, the weak, and especially the politically helpless, living in a world where they had no outlook, no future, no ‘hope’” (Knight, 1939, p. 403). Few biblical exegetes would disagree with this interpretation, but it does stress the social nature of Jesus’ message.

Jesus’ teaching in the first beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount presents a counter-cultural view of the world, of its dispositions between poor and rich, and by implication, of power relations in the world, in which mutual servanthood replaces domination. Carter (2007, p. 18) expresses this as “the dignifying promise of reversal.” Fler and Bland (2007, p. 2) suggest that “the Sermon on the Mount is a counter-narrative, a work of resistance providing a plausible and persuasive worldview that creates an alternative community, one that is identified as inclusive, egalitarian, and merciful.” It is not so far removed from our world as to be irrelevant today. As Carter (2007, p. 25) puts it, “our world, with its hierarchies and vast inequalities of wealth and unjust access to resources and multiple casualties of power, shares some of the features of Rome’s world.”

4. Jesus’ Teachings and the Torah

Most biblical exegetes hold that Jesus maintained an intentional continuity with the Law rather than to its letter (such as Hare, 1993, pp. 46-50; Hagner, 1993, pp. 102-110; Keener, 1999, pp. 175-180, 532). Jesus is also seen as committed to the Torah. Lapidé (1986, p. 14), for example, believed that “in all rabbinic literature, I know of no more unequivocal, fiery acknowledgement of Israel’s holy scripture than this opening to the Instruction on the Mount.” In Lapidé’s view, Jesus “confirmed and

affirmed” the Torah. Consider now just two exegetes who stress Jesus’ love for and interpretation of the Torah as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, focusing on Mt 5:17. Keener (1999, pp. 175, 176) holds that although Jesus’ demands were “more stringent than other interpretations of the law ... Jesus demanded total obedience to the Scriptures.” Indeed, “*Jesus’ language clearly affirms his commitment to the law of Moses,*” for “to ‘fulfill’ God’s law was to ‘confirm’ it by obedience and demonstrating that one’s teaching accorded with it ...” (p. 177; original emphasis). In Keener’s view, “the idea that Jesus’ death and resurrection is the ‘goal of the world,’ thus allowing the law to be set aside as fulfilled, violates the whole thrust of the passage.” (p. 178). Rather, “Jesus upholds the law ... but is the decisive arbiter of its meaning” (p. 182).

Hagner (1993, pp. 103, 104) also believed that “it is necessary at the outset to indicate Jesus’ full and unswerving loyalty to the law ... the presentation of the true meaning of the Torah.” In his view, to “fulfill” (Mt 5:17) is “to present a definitive interpretation of the law,” for “Jesus’ teachings ... penetrate to the divinely intended (i.e., the teleological) meaning of the law” (p. 106). On this basis, “the law, as interpreted by Jesus, will remain valid until the close of this age” for “the law as *he* teaches it is valid for all time, and thus in effect the law is upheld” (pp. 108, 109-110; original emphasis). Hagner summarizes all this that “the ethical teaching of Jesus the Messiah ... is nothing other than the true meaning of the Torah” (p. 110).

On these interpretations, nothing could be further from the truth than that Jesus “spiritualized” the Torah. Jesus taught its social provisions as he interpreted them in the context of his own society. Consider two social provisions of the Torah. One was the obligation of the well-off to assist the poor materially, enabling them to lead a life-style sufficiently provisioned to participate fully in the life of the Israelite community. Detailed regulations were given by which this assistance was to be carried out. By Jesus’ time, these obligations were disregarded, partly because the social structures of farming had changed from self-owned to tenant farming. Rich landlords owned most of the land, and the overwhelming majority of population worked as their tenants. The structural basis of land ownership that the Torah envisaged by which the poor were to be helped had disappeared, and was probably forgotten. As Lunn (2002, p. 15) pointed out, “what was supposed to be a relatively egalitarian society was transformed into one

where the rich and powerful exploited the poor and weak.” Nevertheless, Jesus’ teachings in this deleterious social environment re-affirmed the duty of the rich to help the poor. That they were cast in different terms from the Torah indicates the literal inapplicability of the Torah provisions to Jesus’ Palestine, but not their intent. Jesus’ readiness to seek assistance for the poor in a completely different socio-economic context shows that he upheld the essence of the Torah provisions for helping the poor.

Consider a second social provision of the Torah. This is that production units (farms) were to be made up of family-owned and –run farms whose usufruct use of their land provided by God was to be preserved in perpetuity via the Jubilee. Again, by Jesus’ time, this condition was totally ignored. In Jesus’ Palestine, most people had lost their family land. As noted above, most farming land was owned by rich landowners, with perhaps 97 percent of people tenant farming on these lands. How did Jesus respond to this appalling situation? He showed how His new community would function on the basis of democratic control and greater egalitarianism, a paradigm or model for the world. All Jesus’ teachings had practical import against the prevailing social power structures of His time.

5. Jesus on paying tribute to Caesar Mt. 22.15-22 (= Mk. 12:13-17; Lk. 20:20-25)

As noted in section two, Knight used this saying by Jesus to suggest his “indifference to economic and political considerations,” to “accepting things as they are,” “conforming and obeying” established authority (1948, p. 33). If everything is to be left as it is, Jesus’ sayings have no import for social change. As long as people pay their taxes and are obedient to earthly rulers, they can fulfil their spiritual obligations to God. The two spheres of the material and the spiritual can therefore be regarded as separate and disconnected. Biblical exegetes do not interpret Jesus’ saying in this way. As Bock (1996, p. 1607) sees the text, it “does not endorse the ‘two-kingdoms’ doctrine or the separation of church and state.” In Luz’s view, “there is no basis in [Mt] 22:16-21 for a Christian *theology* of the state” (2005, p. 67; original emphasis). The idea comparable to these interpretations is put by Davies and Allison (1997, p. 218) that there is “no precise theory of governmental authority” in Mt 22:21. Or, again by Blomberg, that “obviously this one saying does not provide a comprehensive treatment of the relationship between Christians and government”

(1992, p. 332). Does the text nevertheless infer that Jesus supports maintenance of the *status quo*?

Luz (2005, p. 67; original emphasis) points out that “*everything* belongs to God — heaven and earth, all people, and, of course also all empires and all emperors... God’s claim on a person has no limits; it embraces all areas of life.” This is so even though people have the choice to follow God and be answerable to him, or to refuse God and his leadership. Osborne (2010, p. 810) interprets Jesus’ saying in Mt 22:21 as “God is sovereign over Caesar.” In this case, “Caesar can have his paltry tax if only one gives to God his due” (Hagner, 1995, p. 636). The *NRSV* expresses it (2001, p. 81NT; original emphasis) that “*the things that are the emperor’s*, i.e., nothing: *the things that are God’s*, i.e., everything.” Jesus requires that all that comes from God be offered to Him — people’s lives, talents, time, fruits of production. Caesar can have what is left, that is nothing of value to God, such as the denarius shown to Jesus. This interpretation does not deny that people have duties both to God, one’s fellows, and earthly rulers. But there is an order of priority. Jesus had already taught that “you cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt 6:24; Lk16:13). One inference in this teaching is that Jesus stresses wealth or money as a major competitor to God. On being shown a denarius, Jesus says give it back to the false god from whence it came. This interpretation is stressed by Garland (2011, p. 802) that:

Give back to Caesar’ does not acknowledge Caesar’s authority so much as confine it to those things that have his image stamped on it, namely, money, which Jesus dismisses as Mammon, an idol.

In this way, “Jesus’ respect for the integrity of God’s Law and reign is publicly revealed” (Tiede, 1988, p. 346).

These interpretations are fraught with social inference. All behavior is subject to God’s rule, and therefore has social impact. Since Jesus simultaneously announces the arrival of the kingdom of God, a counter-cultural kingdom of social and political behaviour disconforming to the world, as argued above, Jesus can be pictured as a nonviolent radical. Blomberg’s comment (1992, p. 332) is apposite, that “Jesus was no political revolutionary, though a good case can be made for seeing him radically protesting social injustice in peaceful, nonviolent ways.” This emphasis is pursued by Aslan (2013).

6. Biblical Ethicists on Personal and Social Relations in Scripture

The contention that biblical and Christian ethics apply only to personal and not social relations is not widely accepted in Christian circles today. Indeed, the assumption that biblical ethics applies to both personal and social ethics has become a standard tool of trade among Christians analyzing socio-economic phenomena. A plethora of books have appeared in the last twenty years and beyond using this contention in their analytical work. In effect, they contradict Knight's assertion that "Christianity affords no concrete guidance for social action" (1939, p. 419). Some examples of contemporary Christians who assert the social ethics of Christianity are Hay (1989), Tiemstra et al. (1990), Chewning (1991), Wilson (1997), Gushee (1999), Stapleford (2000), Sider (2007), and Hicks and Valeri (2008). This is not just a liberal Christian tendency, for conservatives such as Schneider (2002), Bandow and Schindler (2003), and Claar and Klay (2007) relate biblical principles to contemporary economic issues. Catholic social thought is of the same ilk, as per Alford and Naughton (2001), and Alford et al. (2006). Recent papal encyclicals make a similar point, epitomized in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2012). Christian business ethics shows comparable tendencies, like Rae and Wong (2004), Hill (2008), Hill and Rae (2010). Theologians who have considered the relation of biblical ethics to modern socio-economic matters exhibit similar trends, such as Stackhouse (1997), Erickson (1998), Forrester (2001), Berkman and Cartwright (2001), Carter (2001), Stassen and Gushee (2002), Grudem (2003, 2010, 2013), Witherington III (2011), and Blomberg (2013). All these authors do not reach identical conclusions, but they do construct cases that biblical ethics have social and economic implications for today.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that some Christians today may practice just a personal, and not a social ethic. They may direct personal offerings to the poor, and leave it at that. The authors above hold that this is an insufficient response to the needs of the poor. As well as direct aid, the poor need adequate housing, and jobs paying enough to get them out of poverty. Christian aid agencies grapple with these issues, thereby endeavoring to apply biblical social ethics, in the developing and developed world.

Citing Biblical ethicists and theologians, as above, does not constitute an argument. However, since a consensus emerges from them that Jesus' ethics apply to both personal and social matters, it can be assumed reasonably that they capture the essence of thinking about the relevance of Biblical ethics to these two dimensions of human life. We are not arguing that consensus emerges about the content of these personal or social ethics, just whether either or both exist. For instance, Schottroff and Stegemann (1986, p. 117) maintain that "Luke has a concrete social goal in view: an equal distribution of property within the community." Other theologians might hold different views about Luke's aims, even while accepting Jesus as proclaiming personal and social implications of his gospel.

In addition to the authors above, a selection of Biblical ethicists is canvassed in this section to see where they stand on whether Jesus expounded personal ethics as well as social ethics. Going back no further than the 1980s reveals that Biblical scholars regularly accepted Jesus as presenting a personal as well as a social gospel. To Mealand (1980, p. 97), the idea "that Jesus was only concerned with personal morality and religion" was "in conflict with the evidence of the gospels." Pilgrim (1981, pp. 166, 167) concludes his interpretation of wealth and poverty in Luke-Acts that the good news to the poor conveyed a message of hope and comfort to "the socially and economically dispossessed," that the gospel in its fullness contains "social, political, and economic dimensions." As far as the substance of Jesus' economic ethic is concerned, Pilgrim held this to be that "for Luke wealth is a gift from God to be used primarily in the service of the poor and needy" (1981, p. 168). To Pilgrim, "one of the most difficult and necessary tasks for the church today is to move from a private to a public ethic" (1981, p. 175).

Another theologian who accepted the proposition that Jesus' ethics had both personal and interpersonal relevance was Yoder (1994). He held that "there is no room for the prevalent tradition of discounting Jesus' ethic as socially irrelevant either because Jesus' intentions were only on some other level or because the issues he faced were radically different from our own." He categorically rejected "that the gospel deals only with personal ethics and not with social structures." In his view, this would be for Jesus to take "such a short view of the existence of society that he taught no relevant social ethic" (Yoder, 1994, pp. 97, 153, 162). Even if Jesus' ethics

are thought to be personal and apply only to his own group, they still can have powerful effects on society. This is because his creation of an alternative social group serves as a disquieting model for the world.

By its very name, Catholic Social Thought also accepts the relevance of Jesus' teaching to personal and social matters. Consider Pope Benedict XVI 's (2009) encyclical. The term, "the Church's social doctrine" opens the encyclical (n. 2). This social doctrine is held to stem from the Gospel, for "the Church's social teaching [which] is ... the proclamation of the truth of Christ's love in society" (n. 5). This body of social thought derives from the Gospel, and underlines "the indispensable importance of the Gospel for building a society according to freedom and justice" (n. 13). So much so that "*the Gospel is fundamental for development*" (n. 18; original emphasis).

Finally, a miscellany of theologians accept that Jesus' teaching carries social as well as personal implication, even if they do not interpret them identically. Malina (2001, p. 142) argued that Jesus proclaimed "a political, religious, and economic theocracy." In contrast to this view, Hoppe (2004, p. 14) held that the Bible "held up the ideal of a community-based economic system based on mutual support and equal access to the means of production." This view has persisted for a long period. For instance, Gnuse (1985, p. 94) points out that even in Jesus' imperative to one particular person, "a message may be found for all," such as asking rich people to share some of their wealth with the poor. Jesus was not ignoring "the social implications of the gap between rich and poor." In Lk. 6:20-21, 24-25, blessings are pronounced on the poor, and woes on the rich. They apply to poor and rich in the society at large. Schottroff and Stegemann (1986, p. 116) concluded their examination of Luke's gospel, "that Luke formulates his Christian social ethics to meet the social situation of his community." Jesus intended this community to expand and encompass all people.

7. Conclusion

The Bible is the word of God triune, explaining who he is and what he does, how all people are expected to behave to him, and how they are expected to behave to each other. God's message is cast in the context of universal issues encompassed by

the specific contexts of Biblical description. There is no separation of Jesus' commands to the individual believer from the impact they have on other people. Indeed, they are meant to affect other people. If Jesus commands us not to steal, the beneficial effect of so behaving unavoidably has moral effects on others. Jesus' commands, therefore, are social in implication, as well as producing change in the individual believer's behavior. At the same time, Jesus' normative ethical instruction is directed to individual people. But if social means interdependent, interpersonal, cooperative, concerned with mutual relations, friendly companionship, and sharing with two people or more, Jesus' teaching and behavior manifested all these qualities.

Biblical commentators point out that all Christian ethics are social ethics because human behavior is unavoidably social in nature. Allen (1993, p. 592), for example, explains that social ethics can "refer descriptively to socially shared patterns of moral judgment and behavior." This is because "the discipline of Christian ethics stresses people's mutual belongingness under God and their responsibility for one another in society." The conclusions of this paper accord with Allen's summary of the compass of Christian ethics. This is that "any effort to establish boundary lines between social ethics and what one might call individual or interpersonal ethics is artificial." So much so, that "Christian moral teachings have always included concern about moral responsibility in political, economic, and other social relationships" (1993, p. 592).

References

Alford, H., Clark, C., Cortright, S., & Naughton, M. (Eds.) (2006). *Rediscovering abundance*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Alford, H. & Naughton, M. (2001). *Managing as if faith mattered*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Allen, J. (1993). Social ethics. In J. Macquarrie and J. Childress (Eds.), *A new dictionary of Christian ethics*. London: SCM Press, pp. 592-593.

Aslan, R. (2013). *Zealot: the life and times of Jesus*. New York: Random House

Baker, D. (2009). *Tight fists or open hands: wealth and poverty in Old Testament law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Bandow, D. and Schindler, D. (eds.) (2003). *Wealth, poverty, and human destiny*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books.

Beed, C. & Beed, C. (2010). Assisting the poor to work: a biblical interpretation. *Christian Scholar's Review*, 40, 1, 13-37.

Beed, C. & Beed, C. (2011). Jesus' teachings on governance, and their implications for modern business. *Faith in Business Quarterly*, 14, 3, 13-20.

Berkman, J. & Cartwright, M. (eds.) (2001). *The Hauerwas reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Betz, H. (1995). *The sermon on the mount*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Blomberg, C. (1992). *The new American commentary vol 22: Matthew*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Blomberg, C. (2013). *Christians in an age of wealth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Brooks, O. (1985). *The sermon on the mount*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Bruner, F. (2004). *Matthew: a commentary volume 2: the churchbook* Rev. and exp ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Carson, D. (1994). *The sermon on the mount*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press.

Carter, C. (2001). *The politics of the cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos.

Carter, W. (2007). Power and identities. In D. Fler & D. Bland (Eds.), *Preaching the sermon on the mount*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, pp. 8-21.

Carter, W. (2007). Embodying God's empire in communal practices. In D. Fler & D. Bland (Eds.), *Preaching the sermon on the mount*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, pp. 22-35.

Chewning, R. (ed.) (1991). *Biblical principles and public policy*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.

Claar, V. & Klay, R. (2007). *Economics in Christian perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Davies, W. & Allison Jr., D. (1997). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the gospel according to saint Matthew* vol. 3. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Domeris, W. (2007). *Touching the heart of God: the social construction of poverty among biblical peasants*. New York: T&T Clark.

Emmett, R. (1994). Frank Knight: economics versus religion. In G. Brennan and A. Waterman (Eds.), *Economics and religion: are they distinct?* Boston: Kluwer, pp. 103-120.

Emmett, R. (2008). The religion of a skeptic: Frank H. Knight on ethics, spirituality, and religion during his Iowa years. In B. Bateman & H. Banzhaf (Eds.), *Keeping faith, losing faith: religious belief and political economy*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 315-337.

Emmett, R. (2014). Economics and theology after the separation. In P. Oslington, (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Christianity and economics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 135-150.

Erickson, M. (1998). *Christian theology* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Fleer, D. & Bland, D. (eds.) (2007). *Preaching the sermon on the mount*. St Louis, MO: Chalice Press.

Forrester, D. (2001). *On human worth*. London: SCM.

France, R. (2007). *The gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Garland, D. (2011). *Luke: Zondervan exegetical commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Gnuse, R. (1985). *You shall not steal*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Grudem, W. (2003). *Business for the glory of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Grudem, W. (2010). *Politics according to the bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Grudem, W. and Asmus, B. (2013). *The poverty of nations*. Wheaton, ILL: Crossway, 2013.

Guelich, R. (1982). *The sermon on the mount*. Waco, TX: Word Books.

Gundry, R. (1994). *Matthew* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Gushee, D. (ed.) (1999). *Toward a just and caring society*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Hagner, D. (1993) *Matthew 1-13*. Dallas, TX: Word Books.

Hagner, D. (1995) *Matthew 14-28*. Dallas, TX: Word Books.

Hare, D. (1993). *Matthew*. Louisville, KY: John Knox.

Hay, D. (1989). *Economics today: A Christian critique*. Leicester: Apollos.

Hendriksen, W. (1985). *The gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House).

Hendrickx, H. (1984). *The sermon on the mount*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.

Hicks, D. & Valeri, M. (2008). *Global neighbors*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Hill, A. (2008). *Just business* 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Hill, A. & Rae, S. (2010). *The virtues of capitalism*. Chicago: Northfield Publishing.

Hill, P. and Lunn, J. (2007). Markets and morality: things ethicists should consider when evaluating market exchange. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 35, 4, 627-653.

Hoppe, L. (2004). *There shall be no poor among you*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Keener, C. (1999). *A commentary on the gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Knight, F. (1939). Ethics and economic reform III Christianity. *Economica*, 6, 398-422. Reprinted in Emmet, R. (Ed.) (1999). Ethics and economic reform, in *Selected*

essays by Frank H. Knight Vol. 2: *Laissez-faire: Pro and Con*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1-75.

Knight, F. and Merriam, T. (1948). *The economic order and religion*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.

Lambrech, J. (1985). *The sermon on the mount*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier.

Lapide, P. (1986). *The sermon on the mount*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Lunn, J. (2002). On riches in the bible and the West today. *Faith & Economics*, 39:14-22.

Luz, U. (2005). *Matthew 21-28: a commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Mealand, D. (1980). *Poverty and expectation in the Gospels*. London: SPCK.

Osborne, G. (2010). *Matthew: Zondervan exegetical commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Patte, D. (1987). *The gospel according to Matthew*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Pilgrim, W. (1981). *Good news to the poor*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2012). *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church*. London: Continuum International Publishing.

Pope Benedict XVI (2009). *Caritas in veritate encyclical letter*. Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications.

Rae, S., & Wong, K. (2004). *Beyond integrity: a Judeo-Christian approach to business ethics*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Schneider, J. (2002). *The good of affluence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Schottroff, L. and Stegemann, W. (1986). *Jesus and the hope of the poor*.

Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Sider, R. (2007). *Just generosity* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Sider, R., Olson, P., & Unbuh, H. (2002). *Churches that make a difference*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Stackhouse, M. (ed.) (1997). *Christian social ethics in a global era*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.

Stapleford, J. (2002). *Bulls, bears & golden calves*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Stassen, G. (2006). *Living the sermon on the mount*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Stassen, G. & Gushee, D. (2002). *Kingdom ethics: following Jesus in contemporary context*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Tiede, D. (1988). *Augsburg commentary on the New Testament: Luke*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.

Tiemstra, J., Graham, F., Monsma Jr., G., Sinke, C., & Storkey, A. (1990). *Reforming economics*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen.

Turner, D. (2008). *Matthew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Waterman, A. (1999). Social thinking in established Protestant churches. In J. Dean & A. Waterman (Eds.), *Religion and economics: normative social theory*. Boston: Kluwer Academic, pp. 51-67.

Wilson, R. (1997). *Economics, ethics and religion*. New York: New York University Press.

Witherington III, B. (2006). *Smyth & Helwys bible commentary: Matthew*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys.

Witherington III, B. (2011). *Jesus and money*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos.

Yoder, J. (1994). *The politics of Jesus* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI/Carlisle, UK: Eerdmans/Paternoster Press.