THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF JESUS
CLARENCE Erickson

I

Many and of astonishing variety have been the interpretations placed upon the semi-mythical personality and teachings of Jesus, as presented in the Books of the New Testament. Most of these interpretations of the words of the reputed founder of Christianity have little or nothing in common with one another. Some of them are exceedingly far-fetched and frankly amusing.

Witness the attempt on the part of that prophet of the spirit of modern business, Bruce Barton, to transmogrify Jesus into a handshaking, go-getting club member. An astonishing miracle of scriptural exegesis indeed, to discover a spiritual likeness between the guileless other-worldliness of Jesus and Business—with its motive of profit shamelessly betraying itself beneath its too-transparent euphemism, "Service"!

Amazing in number and diversity are the religious, social, and ethical movements that have claimed possession of the only true insight into Jesus' message. The Ana-baptists, the Mormons, the Christian-Socialists, the Salvation Army, the Dukhobors, the Tolstoyan Anarchists, are only a few of the hundreds of cults having a social significance that have arisen since the Reformation introduced freedom of scriptural interpretation.

All of the Western nations, with the exception of Russia, call themselves Christian, in spite of the fact that there are great social, political, and economic differences among them. It is interesting to see how proposed changes of any sort in countries having the most dissimilar institutions, uniformly draw the same kind of protest
from the pulpit—the proposed reforms are un-Christian, and the existing state of things is the only Christian one. The divine right of kings, the institution of slavery, are but two examples drawn from history of decaying social institutions seeking justification in religion. Even to-day, in our own America, we hear no end of arguments on prohibition, capital punishment, marriage and divorce problems, claiming to be based on the Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus.

What is the reason for this Babel of conflicting social interpretations of the saying of Jesus? The answer is that Jesus had no consciously-held social philosophy. His teachings and sayings, scattered through the four Gospels, do not form a finished, rounded-out social program. They consist rather of ethical commandments delivered to the individual, not to society as a whole. A social philosophy representing the teachings of Jesus does not exist ready-made from the hand of the Master Himself. The various teachings, addressed to the individual only, must be interpreted and scanned for their social implications. Interpretations of sacred writings usually take on a form calculated to fit in with the interests and pre-conceived notions of the interpreter. Hence, it is not strange that the teachings of Jesus have been aligned with so many conflicting social philosophies. Allegorical writings are usually sufficiently vague to allow several conflicting interpretations to be drawn from them. The words of Jesus have been treated as allegories, and have thus been made the divine props of a great diversity of social institutions and social movements.

Properly speaking, it is misleading to speak of the social philosophy of Jesus. Jesus was not a sociologist, but a teacher of individual morality. He lacked entirely, or else ignored, the conception of the individual man being a part of an organic whole, Society, to which he has clearly defined obligations. Morality, to Jesus, was not the subordination of the wayward individual to the collective good. The ethics of Jesus is almost entirely individualistic in tone. It appeals to the man, not as a member of a social body, but as an individual morally responsible only to his Maker, his God. The individual conscience, the God-given light within, was the guide to the morally right action with Jesus. The conception of morality as being founded on social necessity or utility was foreign to Him.

Hence, Jesus was not concerned with the establishment of an
ideal society, directly at least. He was more or less indifferent to the condition of earthly institutions. His great concern was the salvation of the individual soul. The object of being good was to enter the kingdom of Heaven. The other-worldliness of Jesus, then, prevented His having a conscious social philosophy, designed towards bettering conditions as they existed on this earth.

That Jesus had no desire to institute any social or political reforms, that he was not a revolutionist and a social agitator as has sometimes been maintained by radicals seeking to set up Jesus as one of their number, is proved by His refusal to allow the priests and scribes to draw forth any seditious utterances from Him. "'Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?'" asked one of the scribes. Jesus answered, "'Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it?' they answered and said 'Caesar's.' And he said unto them, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.'" (Luke 20:22.)

Jesus did not seek to reform man from without, by reforming his social, economic, and political institutions. His method was to reform the individual man from within. If society ever were to be bettered, thought Jesus, the change was to be brought about from within, by the moral regeneration of the separate individuals of which society is composed.

Jesus, instead of offering a direct remedy to cure the injustices and abuses of human society, gave merely a balm to assuage the pain of the victims of the cruelly functioning social machinery. He offered consolation to the unsuccessful and lowly in such sayings as "'Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. . . . But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! For ye shall mourn and weep.'" (Luke 6:20.)

This implies that those who are wretched in this life will be happy in Heaven, and that those who are happy now will suffer in the hereafter. The future state is to be a reversal of the mundane state. The happy and the miserable will exchange places. It is easy to see how the asceticism of medieval, and some forms of modern, Christianity could have had one root at least in such teachings.
Happiness in this world virtually carried with it a penalty in the hereafter; hence, suffering and misery were deliberately cultivated for future blessedness.

Addressed, then, to the individual, and not to society, and designed to console and give comfort to the former rather than to reconstruct the latter, the teachings of Jesus can hardly be said to constitute a consciously-held social philosophy. His teachings are a set of commandments that the individual must follow to win the blessing of God, and to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

But while Jesus cannot be said to have had a conscious social philosophy, His various teachings are full of social implications. If these teachings were universally accepted by all men, society would undergo a radical transformation. The social philosophy of Jesus, then, for our purpose, will consist of the hidden social consequences latent, but unexpressed, in His message to the individual.

As before intimated, various attempts have been made to construct a complete social philosophy out of the sayings of Jesus. But almost invariably these constructions have been made by the partisans of some preconceived religious or social creed. Far-fetched and ingenious distortion of the meaning of the scriptural texts; the taking of isolated passages out of their context, thus destroying their original meaning; and allegorical interpretation are some of the means by which the sayings of Jesus have been made to fit such a large and conflicting variety of movements and cults.

A disinterested tracing of the social implications in the teachings of Jesus, up to the present day, has scarcely been made. All the existing social interpretations have been biassed by special interest on the part of the interpreters. Even the official interpretations of the Church itself, during the early history of Christianity, and the Middle Ages up to the time when the Reformation gave the individual the right of private interpretation, were bent to the social and political requirements of the particular time in which they were made. All too often the Christian religion became a supernatural sanction for all sorts of injustices and abuses on the part of rulers, feudal barons, and church dignitaries.

This paper, as far as is humanly possible, will be a disinterested study and research into the inner sociological meanings of the message of Jesus. No attempt will be made to make the teachings of Jesus conform to any particular creed, whether religious, eco-
onomic, political, or ethical, of the present time. The words of the Scriptures will be taken at their face value, and not treated as so many cryptograms in which the true meaning of Jesus is supposed to be hidden. The tendency toward excessive reading between the lines when interpreting the Bible has ever been dictated by preconceived interests. Ingenious interpreters have ever made the sacred texts mean whatever they personally wished them to mean, or whatever their sect or cult wished them to mean. The sayings of Jesus in the New Testament will be the sole source of material used, so that no ideas foreign to the mind of Jesus will be allowed to creep in.

Our plan of procedure will be to take the various teachings and sayings of Jesus, and show what sort of a social order would result if every individual took these teachings into his heart and actually lived them. First we shall examine our present society and show the ways in which it runs counter to the social tendencies inherent in the message of Jesus. And then we shall give a brief sketch of the truly Christian society, in which every person puts the principles of Jesus into practice.

II

This is an era of the deification of business and the business man. Some years ago, a prominent business man, in an interview published in one of our leading chains of newspapers, was asked to set forth his ideas as to the nature of God. He said that to him God was Business, with its spirit of mutual helpfulness and service! This calls to mind Francis Bacon's Essay of Superstition, in which he says, "It were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of him. For the one is unbelief, the other is contumely: and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity."

But however our religious susceptibilities (if we have any in this advanced age) may be shocked by such an arrant piece of irreverence, the fact remains that to-day the business man gets the largest share of the material goods of life, and all too often the spiritual goods as well—but however unable to appreciate them he may be.
The attitude of Jesus towards business is unmistakable. Any attempt to prove that business is Christian, or based on Christian principles, is a most transparent bit of sophistry. Every one must be familiar with the story of Jesus and the money-changers who turned the temple into a place of business. Jesus chased the bankers, money-lenders, merchants, or whatever they were, out of the temple, saying, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” (Matthew 21:13.) It has been claimed by apologists for business men that the men Jesus expelled from the temple were usurers, but the Scripture is quite clear on this point. It is written that Jesus “cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple.” Even if we regard Jesus’ attacks as addressed only to usurers, and not to business men or merchants as such, we must remember that in the time of Jesus, and indeed until only a few centuries ago, a “usurer” was not only one who took exorbitant interest, but one who charged any rate of interest whatsoever. All forms of interest constituted “usury” to Jesus, so that banking and investment in general would fall under the disapproval of Jesus, and would in His eyes be simply robbery. It must be plainly apparent to any unprejudiced thinker that Jesus regarded business, that institution of helpfulness and “Service”, as a form of robbery.

Modern business is certainly no whit better than the business of the time of Jesus. That its essential nature has remained unchanged is shown by the character of the teachings given students in schools of commerce and business. It is only necessary to cite the remarks of a professor in a business school of good repute, who, in the first lecture of all the various courses he taught, was in the habit of telling his students that the fundamental principle of sound business practice was to regard every one with whom one has dealings as a potential “crook”. Do not trust your own brother, do nothing without all the necessary written agreements, receipts, contracts, etc., are other fundamental axioms of modern business. These rules exist only because of the dishonesty and unreliability of men in general in their business dealings. The essence of successful business is the obedience to the letter of the laws while their spirit is being violated.

Imagine business men endeavoring to follow the Golden Rule in their practical dealings with their customers and competitors!
"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." (Matthew 5:39.) If such precepts as these were put into practice, what a plight business would be in!

It is certain that business as we know it would soon vanish if all men were suddenly to accept and live the philosophy of Jesus. Accumulation of wealth and Capital would be impossible, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away," said Jesus. (Matthew 5:42.) Obviously, no man could ever acquire any capital if he practised such unbusinesslike principles.

Our economic system depends for its distribution of the goods produced by agriculture and industry upon certain men having in their possession goods which they themselves have no intention of consuming. These goods they acquire for the purpose of conveniently passing them on to the ultimate consumers, or to still other distributors. For the service of forming a chain linking the consumer with the actual producer, these distributors get a remuneration in the form of profits. The distributors of the material goods of society, and the financiers who control, or try to control, the workings of the monetary exchange and credit system, make up the class engaged in what is called business. Their services are, of course, very necessary, for without distribution and a smoothly functioning system of monetary exchange, production would be of no use except to the immediate producers themselves and their near-by neighbors. Business is a necessary evil.

But while business is thus socially necessary in a society in which the principle of the division of labor exists, the fact that the men engaged in business get their recompense for their services in the form of profits is the unfortunate circumstance which leads to the intolerable abuses, chicanery, veiled deceit, and hypocrisy characterizing the business of Christ’s time as well as our own. The profit system leads to an unjust reward for services performed in all but exceptional cases. Either the profits are far too much, or else far too little, for the relative value of the service rendered to society. In the mad scramble for large profits all ideals and restraints are cast aside. The man with high ideals of justice and honesty entering business is at such a great disadvantage in
competing with those who act only from motives of material gain, that by a process of natural selection the idealists are weeded out, and only the Pharisees and hypocrites remain. Thus it happens that business has its double-faced character, its hiding of the motive of material gain beneath a cloak made of such shibboleths and by-words as "Service", "Integrity", "Probity", "Square-dealing". It is said that honesty is the best policy. In reality, the business which gives the outward appearance of honesty, while secretly violating the spirit of honesty, succeeds best. The proverb should be amended to read, "The outward appearance of honesty is the best policy." Jesus observed these same facts nineteen-hundred years ago, hence his calling of the business men "thieves".

Jesus constantly reproached the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, so that the word "pharisaical" has come to stand for the practice of observing the letter of the laws while violating their spirit. Business, driven by the main-spring of profit, is the example par excellence of the pharisaical spirit. Jesus said that no one whose righteousness did not exceed that of the Pharisees could enter the kingdom of Heaven. Hence, if men became really Christian, according to the true meaning of Jesus’ message, business as we know it would disappear, and society would be vastly different.

But Jesus, with His system of individualistic ethics, and His attempt to better the world only by morally regenerating the individuals that make up society, was mistaken in attacking the business men themselves. Business is evil not because the men engaged in it are evil: on the contrary, the men engaged in business are Pharisees because business under the profit system corrupts them and makes them Pharisees. The men engaged in business must become Pharisees: if they remain idealists they will be at such a disadvantage that natural selection will soon eliminate them.

Social institutions cannot be reformed through the medium of the individual conscience. Human nature is as much a product of existing social institutions as institutions are a product of human nature. Moral reformers are prone to see only one phase of this double truth, and have ever confined themselves to the hopeless task of reforming society from within, through the individual
conscience alone. Man cannot be reformed from within alone; he must be reformed from without, through the medium of the social institutions which constitute the influences determining and shaping his character.

Hence, it is futile to attempt to idealize business, or any other human institution, by threatening the individual business man with Hell-fire and damnation, for the business man is not a sinner through free will, but through the shaping influences of the social institution Business. The doctrine of the freedom of the will is thus seen to be partly responsible for the mistakes of moral reformers in trying to bring about reforms by individual regeneration alone. Business men and business can be reformed only by ridding business as an institution of the moral canker that makes it an evil. That canker is the profit system. It is up to would-be reformers to find a satisfactory substitute for the present main-spring of business, the profit motive.

Modern preachers, of course, do not stress those teachings of Jesus which damn business men, for the Church, both Protestant and Catholic, depends upon the support of wealthy contributors. It would be poor diplomacy, to say the least, for a minister, with the wealthy donors to his church sitting in their pews, to quote such sayings of Jesus as “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Luke 18:24).

Since the Church is so indebted to wealthy patrons and business men, it is not surprising to find attempts among theologians to reconcile the practical ethics of business and society with the obviously conflicting teachings of Jesus. Some time ago, a prominent Roman Catholic divine, noted for his profundity in matters of church doctrine, advanced in a newspaper devoting a weekly department to the views of prominent clergymen, an ingenious ethical theory designed to vindicate to-day’s ethical practices. He put forth a double standard of ethics. One was based on the old Mosaic law, and was termed the “minimum requirements of religion.” To se-
cure salvation, and escape damnation, it was only necessary to observe the ten commandments. The much more advanced requirements of Jesus, according to this authority, were not absolutely necessary for salvation. They represented a higher set of religious requirements, the "maximum requirements of religion". They were for intensely spiritual, ideal natures, who would not be satisfied with the "minimum requirements" of Moses.

Now, the chief distinction between the old Mosaic law and the law of Jesus is as follows. The law of Moses was directed toward overt acts, while the law of Jesus goes to the inner man and questions his motives. A man might observe all the commandments of Moses, and still be a very bad man. Take for example the commandment, Thou shalt not lie. A man with an evil motive might tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, but tell it in such a context, or with such an inflection, or in such circumstances, that it would deceive and mislead the listener, and have the same effect as a deliberate lie. Indeed, the most dangerous kind of a lie is the half-truth. Judged by the old Mosaic code, the man thus using truth in the interests of an evil motive, is not sinning, since he is not guilty of the overt act of lying. But judged by the law of Jesus, the man is a sinner, because his motive is contrary to the spirit of the commandment.

It is easy to see how the theory of "minimum and maximum requirements of religion" allows for the escape of business men and the wealthy from damnation. They are safe so long as they follow the crude rule-of-thumb ethics of the ten commandments, with their innumerable loop-holes. The author of the theory did not try to explain what Christ had in mind when he so unequivocally said that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

The teachings of Jesus unmistakably imply that no man can be both a capitalist and a Christian at the same time. This is proved by the story of the rich man who came to Jesus asking him what he must do to win salvation and eternal life. Jesus said to him, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother... One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."
(Mark 10:19.) The man went away downcast, according to the Scripture. It is thus clear that in a social order based on the Christian teachings there could be no capitalism and capitalists.

III

Perhaps the most salient feature of modern society is the efficiency, complexity, and enormous extent of industry. Primitive man lived from hand to mouth, never caring for the future, while modern man produces goods to satisfy his wants sometimes years in advance. More and more man harnesses Nature to his purposes, wresting ever greater security and abundance of living from her, whereas he once depended upon her free gifts, which were niggardly and frequently withheld altogether for long periods, leading to hardship and famine.

But if men turned Christian and lived up to the commandments of Jesus, our wonderful industrial system would vanish, along with business and capital. Jesus' sayings on this point leave no room for doubt. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matthew 6:25.) Man, then, said Jesus, is to stop providing for his sustenance and material well-being, for God will feed him as He feeds the birds.

The contention that has been advanced that Jesus was a Socialist is thus seen to be erroneous. The Socialist aims at the establishment of an industrial social order in which the industrial machinery and means of production are publicly owned. But Jesus considered industry superfluous. God alone was to look after and provide for the wants of His creature, Man. The social order that would result from the universal application of the teachings of Jesus is, then, a non-industrial one.

The modern trends in the relations of the sexes are also utterly
contrary to the views of Jesus. Divorce is constantly becoming more free and easy, and the divorce rate is increasing at a pace that has aroused the fears of sociologists and thinking people in general for the continued existence of the family. John B. Watson, the behaviorist psychologist, has gone so far as to predict that marriage as an institution will disappear in another fifty years.

The teachings of Jesus in regard to marriage are as clear and unequivocal as his other teachings, when they are taken at their face value, and without any preconceptions. Divorce and re-marriage were absolutely banned by Jesus. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." (Luke 16:18.) In this one respect, at least, the Roman Catholic Church is true to the spirit of Christ.

Our religious institutions, with their often immense, sumptuous palaces of worship, their elaborate rituals and formal services, are also contrary to the spirit of the alleged founder of the form of worship practised in them. How many so-called Christians go to church only to keep up the outward appearance of piety, to conform to convention! "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of man. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (Matthew 6:5.)

Neither was the attitude of Jesus toward the priesthood or ministry one of sympathy and approval. He warned His apostles not to be as the scribes and rabbies of the time. "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even
Christ; and all ye are brethren. . . Neither be ye called master: for one is your Master, even Christ." (Matthew 23:24.) The simple, straightforward doctrine of Jesus required no long years of study of the laws, the sacred books, and theology. His disciples never studied for the priesthood. The long, arduous studies of the priests, then as now, were due to the necessity of their learning to interpret the sacred writings properly; that is, to twist and misconstrue the words of the laws and commandments, so as to make them fit the practical ethics of the particular time.

Jesus cast some aspersions on the missionary work of the scribes and Pharisees that are strikingly relevant to-day to our modern Christian missions. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourself." (Matthew 23:15.) All too often, along with our so-called Christianity, we introduce to the frequently contented and peaceful heathen people we convert, ideas of warfare, deceit, vice, and drunkenness. It is a well-known fact among students of the various races of mankind that many tribes of savages have a much higher morality among themselves than we supposed Christians. Lying, stealing, and murder are often practically unknown among these simple folk. They obey all the commandments of Moses and Jesus without actually knowing them. But how different is the story when the white man takes hold of the savage and tries to civilize him! He soon learns all the vices of his Christian brothers, and is exploited and cheated out of his land and possessions by the Christian imperialist country that sent the missions.

Needless to say, if all men became true followers of Jesus, there would be no more wars. All resistance and force are forbidden by Jesus. Even self-defense is un-Christian, for did not Jesus say, Resist not him that is evil, and Turn the other cheek? In our society, the only instance known of any one turning the other cheek, is that of the bribed prize-fighter who allows himself to be "put away" for a consideration. Patriotism and defense of one's country would be non-existent in a society truly Christian.

Not the least of the ways in which our society runs counter to the will of Jesus is the manner in which its work of charity is conducted. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen
of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:1.) The ostentation and pomp with which a great deal of our charitable work is performed, indeed, remind one of the sounding of a trumpet. The names of the givers of large gifts to charity are conspicuously displayed on the front pages of newspapers, and unusually large gifts draw forth the thunderous applause of the press. However, it is not necessarily a condemnation of the really valuable work carried on by our charitable organizations, that they should be so ostentatious in their work of almsgiving. Perhaps this open display and glorification of the alms-givers is as necessary to charity as the profit motive is to business, at the present time at least.

In a purely Christian social order, our present system of law and justice would of necessity vanish. For Jesus taught that judgment and punishment should be left to God alone. “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” Thus all our human institutions of law and justice, our entire system of trial and judgment, are against the teachings of Jesus. Likewise, the means of executing and enforcing the decrees of our judicial institutions are denied us by the unmistakable import of Jesus’ message. All compulsion, force, and resistance are contrary to the will of Jesus. Resist not evil, and Do unto others as you would have others do to you, clearly exclude the sanction of force and compulsion in a truly Christian society.

The enforcement of justice depends ultimately upon force, or the threat of force. When a man convicted by our courts of justice is taken away to have his punishment given him, if he resists, he is taken by force, perhaps at the point of arms. If he submits peaceably in the great majority of cases, it is only because he realizes that force will be applied to him if he does resist. In our human system of law and justice might is used to enforce the right, or rather what we think to be the right. Unfortunately, might is not always on the side of the right.
It follows from the impossibility of a human system of law in a truly Christian society that government and State would also have no place. The power of the State, in the final analysis, depends ultimately on might and compulsion, on the police and the militia, to be specific. The State, in a democratic form of government, represents, in theory at least, the will of the majority of the people. But there must always remain a minority unsatisfied with the decrees of the majority. It is only the force held in reserve by the State, that prevents a disgruntled minority from using violence to gain its ends. The rarity of the occasions where the State is forced to use its might to protect itself does not mean that the State could dispense with force. It is the constant threat of force that maintains peace and order within the State.

Government and the State, being thus based upon actual or potential compulsion of man by man, are absolutely against the spirit of Christ.

IV

What sort of a society, what sort of a social philosophy, is really implied in the teachings of Jesus? We have seen that if Jesus' teachings were really followed by all men there could be no government and no State; no compulsion of man by man; no law, at least no law that depended upon coercion for its enforcement; no accumulation of wealth or property; no industry; no war or strife of any kind; and, of less importance, no divorce and remarriage. We have also seen that our religious, charitable, and business institutions would be profoundly different, if not absent, in a hypothetical Christian society.

Inasmuch as there could be no State, the social order built upon the philosophy of Jesus would be an Anarchial society. Jesus was then an Anarchist. But He was an Anarchist unwittingly, of course, for He did not trace the social consequences hidden in His message to the individual.

The word "Anarchist" carries with it to the general mind connotations of a violent criminal with long whiskers who carries bombs, with which to blow up public buildings, kings, government officials or other personages who have incurred his displeasure.
Needless to say, this is not the real meaning of the word, but only one of the nonessential traits that have unfortunately accompanied a certain type of Anarchist known as the "direct actionist". By definition, Anarchy merely means a form of society in which there is no State or government. There are many different kinds of Anarchy, having in common only the idea of a social order in which the State has been abolished.

The type of Anarchy suggested by the principles of Jesus would be a very simple and primitive one indeed. Unlike most other forms of Anarchy, the Anarchy of Jesus would have no industry, because Jesus believed that we should make no effort to provide for our food or clothing, since God would care for us as he cared for the birds. Men would live together in simple, peaceful brotherhood, sharing all possessions alike; and living off the gifts of nature only. Society would revert to the condition called by economists the "direct appropriation stage", in which man appropriated the free gifts of nature, and subsisted without the aid of agriculture and industry. A description of the type of society latent in the teachings of Jesus, in one phrase, would be Non-industrial Anarchial Communism.

It would appear, then, that of all the interpreters and followers of Jesus, Tolstoy has come nearest to catching His true spirit. Tolstoy advocated a communal brotherhood of men, living a life of simple toil. In two important respects, however, Tolstoy differs from Jesus. Tolstoy's simple, Anarchial society was to be agricultural, while Jesus made no provision for any kind of employment for His followers, believing as He did that the Heavenly Father would care for them as He did for the birds and beasts of the field. Also, if Tolstoy's proposals were followed, the human race would die out in a generation, for he advocated strict celibacy, even among the married. Jesus did not go to such an extreme as His follower, Tolstoy, however, in this matter. He merely spoke against adultery and divorce.

As we have already intimated, it must not be supposed that the social order that would result from the universal application of the teachings of Jesus was the conscious object of His efforts. Jesus had no social ends in view. His purpose was a purely individualistic one, the salvation of souls, the pointing out of the means by which the individual could win the approval of God.
The object of living, with Jesus, was merely to win blessedness in the hereafter. If some of His teachings have a high ethical or social value, it is only because He deemed them commandments of God which must be followed to secure salvation. It is significant that the first great commandment of Jesus was, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." (Mark 12:30). "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was placed second.

Jesus was not an Anarchist in the sense that He wished to construct a new and better social order. But He was an Anarchist in the sense that if His teachings were adopted by all men, a simple fraternity of men, under the fatherhood of God, would result, in which government, law, and compulsion would have no place.

Jesus never intended His aims to be brought about through active antagonism to the existing government. "Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's". If Jesus' teachings were followed, governments and all the present legal and political machinery would disappear, because of there being no man willing to exercise the compulsion upon his fellowmen demanded of a ruler, official, or judge.

V

It is scarcely necessary to say that such a social order as that implied in the message of Jesus has never existed, and never will come into existence. The teachings of Jesus have always been only partially accepted, and there is no reason to believe that this will not always be the case, as long as men continue their pretense of being Christians.

There are two senses in which the teachings of Jesus have been only partially accepted: a part, and not the entire body of people, may accept the Christian ethic, allowing exceptions, in the shape of rulers and exploiters; a part of the Christian teachings may be accepted, but enough ignored so that the true spirit of Christ is lost. Both of these methods of partial acceptance have been prominent in the history of Christendom.

Alas, how often have rulers, exploiters, and "strong" men of all
descriptions used Christianity as one of their instruments of control of the exploited! How well adapted to the purpose of tyrants and exploiters are the admonitions, Resist not evil, Turn the other cheek, and Do unto others as you would have others do unto you! When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire and rulers and emperors adopted it, what a transformation and perversion took place in the doctrine which once had been the sole source of comfort of the slaves, the oppressed, and the lowly! The religion of brotherly love and equality of all under God the universal Father; the religion which had had no place for compulsion and force, became an instrument of social control, used by rulers to help hold the masses in unresisting subjection. The original Christian doctrine was sufficiently tampered with to make it a supernatural support for the divine right of kings, of feudal barons; and in our own day, the divine right of property, capital, or what not. While the lowly and the righteous followed the teachings of Jesus, burly sinners ruled, and are still ruling, the world.

As for the second of the methods of partial acceptance of the teachings of Jesus, we have already seen how the teachings detrimental to the interests of the privileged classes are carefully ignored or expurgated by the ministry and the priesthood. Such ingenious doctrines as the theory of maximum and minimum requirements are advanced, in the attempt to render Christianity not too obviously incompatible with the ethical practices of modern Christians.

It is obvious that the true Christian society can never appear as long as some men remain who do not accept Christianity. These latter will have a tremendous advantage in the pursuit of life over the followers of the true Christian ethic, and will inevitably rise to the position of mastery. Since it is now more impossible than ever that all men should become miraculously converted to Christianity, we may consider the realization of a social order based on the teachings of Jesus an absolute impossibility. Man no longer has the simple faith that God looks after us and cares for us as He does the birds. In fact, we know that even the birds are not thus cared for. They must struggle and compete with other birds for their living the same as men, and the apparently well-cared-for birds we see are merely the survivors of a process of natural selection.
These last reflections suggest an explanation of the hypocrisy, the glaring contrast between ethical theory and ethical practice, which pervade modern life. In a society only partly Christian, we have seen how the believers will be at a marked disadvantage in the struggle for life with those who disregard the Christian ethic. Hence, the instinct of self-preservation will cause great numbers of believers to violate the teachings of their religion. But respectability demands that they remain nominal Christians. Besides, many people have a sentimental regard for the religion in which they were brought up. The world becomes filled with nominal believers, who through economic pressure no longer practise Christianity. But, as Kipling would say, that is another story.