



PRO REGE

Vol. I - A. Kuyper

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PRO REGE

OR

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

BY

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PART ONE - THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN HIS HIGHNESS.

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Vol. I

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FOREWORD.

Pro Rege aims to abolish the separation, which in our consciousness, much more sharply than was good, has marked our life in the Church from our life outside the Church. The confession of Christ as our Redeemer is in the foreground of the Church's life, as it had to be. The Redeemer of himself sets up the opposition between our lostness in guilt and sin and the grace that stands in opposition to it, and it is precisely in the fluctuation between these two poles that church life must move. A church life that lapses into the observance of churchly duties disintegrates itself, and if it is primarily aimed at a walk in the path of virtue, it exchanges its deeply religious character for a superficially moral one. The result of which was, and always will be, that the spiritually inspired do not feel at home in their Church and, joining like-minded people in closer bonds, cause the sect to flourish.

Therefore, the Redeemership of Christ does not exclude His Kingship. On the contrary, it has always been acknowledged in the Church that the Church is lost without the holy protection of its King, and that it is not least in the Church that the Christ reigns royally in the midst of His people. This need for protection and for the regiment of her King, therefore, our Reformed Churches felt very strongly in its first emergence. These were times of bitter persecution and uncommon confusion in every area. Thus it could not be otherwise than that people passionately confessed that our King was watching over His Church, and in the hour of distress for salvation and protection they looked up to Him who, with all power in heaven and on earth, was seated at the right hand of the Father. And even when, after the break with Rome, the churches had to be rearranged and a higher authority was felt everywhere, people continued to honor in the Redeemer also His King, to Whose guidance they surrendered without reservation. But this changed when the persecution ceased, the public religion itself received the Reformed stamp, and the Reformed Churches gradually came into a more solid order.

Hence, the Kingship of Christ, although still professed, lost its high significance for life, and one hardly heard of the King anymore, but everyone almost single-handedly of the Savior and Redeemer.

This was accompanied by a 'change in life' in other areas as well. When the ecclesiastical conflict was settled, the Reformed peoples threw themselves into civil and social life. For them, life was divided into two parts, one in the Church and the other outside the Church, and the unity of the two was no longer appreciated. This rupture could only have been avoided if the confession of the

Kingship of Christ, which emanated from the Church, had been perceived by popular consciousness as the governing power for all of life. But this was not the case. Rather, the Kingship of Christ was increasingly overshadowed, and this in turn caused the contrast between church life and civil life to permeate the consciousness of the Reformed peoples in a most dangerous manner. In the end, it was as if one only had to do with Christ in the Church, and as if outside the Church one did not have to reckon with the majesty of Christ. This contradiction lasted well into the last century, and only then did it begin to give way to a better harmony in life. Thus we received our Christian press, our Christian science, our Christian art, our Christian literature, our Christian philanthropy, our Christian nationalism, our Christian professional organization, etc. In short, the realization that the Christ is the Son of God. In short, the realization that the Christ also lays hold of extra-Christian life has gradually become commonplace. At present we have come so far that none of us wants to do otherwise. However, the Christian character of these various expressions of life is still too much sought exclusively in the Christian principles, and the awareness is not yet sufficiently alive that it is the Christ Himself, as our King, who must leave this Christian mark on our expressions of life. Hence the need to awaken and strengthen this awareness. And it is to this need that Pro Rege is trying to satisfy.

From this enlivened awareness naturally flows a modified relationship toward those who, although professing the Kingship of Christ with us, nevertheless differ from us ecclesiastically.

In the field of the church, one must be one in sense and one in feeling, right down to the finest layers of faith, and therefore it was inevitable that the nations would have to split up into different churches. Thus arose the Roman, Greek, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist and Independent churches, and no matter what efforts are made, it will not be possible to eliminate these differences in the church sphere. But these ecclesiastical differences have long threatened to divide Christians in the civil field as well. And against this danger a remedy can only be found in the all-sided confession of the Kingship of Christ, and this for the very reason that on the civilian terrain one does not have to deal with the finer layers of the faith. On the civil level, a common Christian action is possible with others, possibly even with all those who profess the Kingship of Christ, even if we are divided in the spiritual and therefore in the Church. With the deeper need now becoming apparent to unite all Christian elements in the struggle against infidelity and revolution, it was so urgent to place greater emphasis on the Kingship of Christ as the master of our

whole life. And also in this sense, a study such as Pro Rege offered, seemed for our time to be a requirement, if not indispensable.

Already now, since the articles Pro Rege appeared in the Herald, it was repeatedly noticeable how, in all kinds of areas, the honor of Christ as King was being paid much more than before. That this may continue is my silent prayer.

The Latin title Pro Rege is, as in the past, E Voto, half taken for brevity. Long titles are too difficult to quote. A short Pro Rege or E Voto easily establishes itself in the memory and immediately tells you which writing is meant. Pro Rege means: For our King!

After this first part both other parts will appear, as soon as possible. Like De Gemeene Gratie, this work will have three voluminous octavo volumes.

KUYPER.

The Hague, December 20, 1910.

PRO REGE.

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

PART ONE - THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN HIS HIGHNESS I.

FIRST SECTION.

I. - The obscurity of Christ's Kingship.
Christ and Mohamed.

Surely I have anointed my King over Zion, the mountain of my holiness. PSALM 2:6.

Nothing strikes you more in the distant land of Islam than the fidelity and loyalty with which all the people uphold the name of "the Prophet", the honor of Muhammad. Not with the fading light of the Crescent Moon

Moon, which shines over our East Indian Archipelago, you should count on this. To admire this loyalty, this attachment in all its warmth and inner beauty, you have to listen in the Khalif's own country, in Istanbul and in Brussa, in Khonia and in Damascus, in Cairo or in Alexandria. The keynote of life is and remains everywhere the ancient: "Allons, marchons, chantons en l'honneur de Dieu et son Prophète". "To God and his prophet be our ascent and our song of praise".

Without fail, day after day, as soon as the prayer time returns each morning, the Mn'cizzin climb the gallery of the Minnaret, or if there is no Minnaret, they place themselves near the mosque, on the side that touches the public road, to sing their azan, i.e., their call to prayer, in a recitative. And then it echoes through all the towns and villages and places, at one and the same time from tens of thousands of mouths:

God is great, God is great, God is great,

God is great, God is great!

I testify that there is no god but God.

I testify that there is no god but God.

That's for Allah. But then follows unchanging, in honor of the Prophet:

I testify that Mohamed is the messenger of God.

I testify that Mohamed is the messenger of God.

Come to prayer, come to prayer.

Come to salvation, come to salvation.

And at least early in the morning, they call out:

Prayer is better than sleep.

Then, when the people are assembled in the mosque or the prayer hall, the prayers are introduced by repeating the same words again; and also at that Iquamah, as this introduction to the actual prayer is called, it is shouted out again:

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Envoy of Allah.

I testify that Mohamed is the messenger of Allah.

Now the prayers begin.

This honoring, highly honoring, of Muhammad takes place with a show of high, religious seriousness, because the prayer tone in the mosque never sinks, but always remains elevated. First it is shouted: "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate!" and then follows the so-called Fatihah, which reads as follows:

Glory be to God, who is the Lord of all the worlds.

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

The King of the Day of Judgment.

Thee alone we worship, and unto Thee alone we cry for help. Lead us in the right path.

In the path of those who have experienced Thy mercy.

Against whom thou wert not wroth.

And who do not stray. Amen.

And so it goes on in a sacred, ever elevated sound, until they come to the actual rak'ahs, or individual prayers, which are sometimes first completed in a series of nine supplications. For example, in the Nafl. And after every two rak'ahs comes the remembrance of Mohamed, and this in two instantiations.

First it is called:

To God be the worship of all tongues.

For God be the worshipful attitude of our body.

And to God be the worship that lies in our alms.

Then follows in honor of the Prophet:

Peace be upon you, O Muhammad, with the peace of God and His blessing!

But it does not stop there. They always add, to honor the Prophet once again:

I testify that there is no god but God.

And I testify that Mohamed is the ambassador of Allah.

And, to mention nothing more, in what they call the Darud, the praise for Muhammad returns once again, and much more extensively, as it is called:

O God, bless Mohamed and his descendants, as Thou hast blessed Abraham and his descendants.

Thou, O God, art to be praised, for Thou art great!

O bless Mohamed and his descendants, as Thy blessing rested on Abraham and his descendants.

Thou art to be made great, for Thou art great!

These prayers are obligatory five times a day, to which two or three free prayers are added for the particularly pious Mohamedan, the so-called Ishraq, Zuha and Tahajjud.

All together this amounts to over 1800 prayers in a year, and for some prayers even over 2500; and in each of these prayers Muhammad is commemorated from four to ten times. A commemoration of Muhammad that for one single prayer can rise to far over ten thousand times in one year.

Of course, there is something mechanical about it; how could there not be? But the prayers are arranged in such a way that the body takes part in all kinds of prescribed postures and movements, something that repels all dreaminess and breaks the mechanics. And anyone who has attentively observed this broad, elaborate act of prayer inside and outside the mosque, and has an eye for the calmness, the seriousness, and the warmth with which these prayers are performed, soon realizes how in the Easterners' minds lives a tendency to rapture that is capable of inspiring much of what is mechanical.

On top of the gallery of the Hagia Sophia mosque in Constantinople, the author saw a bell ringer, who could not suspect that anyone was watching him, perform his prayer for more than twenty minutes with an enthusiasm in his entire posture and with a glow of seriousness on his face that could be the envy of many a Christian worshipper.

But there is more.

Not only that Muhammad is remembered restlessly in the prayers, but also the honor paid to anyone who is considered to be a descendant of Muhammad in any way, shows in a moving way how deeply the name and the memory of Muhammad lives on among all the people of Islam.

And what speaks even stronger, and to which all of the above was only an introduction, even the half-Westernized Mohamedans still stand up for Mohamed; they do not tolerate in any way that his high calling is being diminished; and in this at least they still agree with all the pious people that whoever does not stand up for Mohamed, throws away his own honor.

What one encounters in our Christian countries, indifference to Jesus, or cowardly silence at the insult to the Divine Founder of our religion, is in the countries of Islam sufficiently unknown with regard to Muhammad.

It is true that the Chodchas in Persia and India put Ali above Mohamed, but these Chodchas are a sect, which included all kinds of Buddhist elements, e.g., the transmigration of souls. Precisely because of this, this does not detract from the common rule that where Islam retained purity, Muhammad receives all the homage.

It is true that also among Islam there is a tanning of the glow of religious life. Not in the countryside, not in the more remote areas, but in the centers of social life, in places like Constantinople, Cairo, Alexandria and Algiers.

Many from those cities repeatedly visited the West, or even made their studies in Paris and London. From there they took an interest in life in the West and, having returned, tried to introduce Western mores into their own homes and courts. This naturally led to a weakening of their religious awareness. Such people are no longer bothered by the ban on drinking wine. Just like many a Reform Jew, they feast on boar meat if necessary. Sometimes they are half moderns.

But and this speaks so strongly, even with these modernized Mohammedans you will never hear a word that would do short shrift to the honor of Mohammed.

Despite their indifference and religious instability, they deeply feel the difference and the contrast between the Christian and the Mohamedan world and almost without exception they cling to the high excellence of Islam. Even among the highest circles you will not find one in which you would dare to scorn Muhammad with impunity.

At least in such high circles, thoughts are expressed freely, and you can present your dissenting views without hindrance, but on one condition: you must not think of falling short of what is sacred to them. If you do this even for a moment, you will immediately meet with resistance, and everyone in that circle will stand up for Mohamed. Of course, this is much more sensitive in houses and circles of a real oriental type, as it is in orthodox circles in our country; but what speaks so strongly in the countries of Islam is that even in the most deviated circles the loyalty to the founder of their religion implacably persists.

And in defending Muhammad and Islam they are not at all shy. They know very well the weak points on which they can attack you and they are eminently aware of the bright side that falls on their Muzelman life. Even in the lower classes they know the very peculiar meaning of their religion, and, thus armed, they know how to talk themselves out of it. Especially the fact that Mohamed came after Jesus, remains to them the solid proof that therefore Mohamed too must stand higher.

Every statement that would be beneath the honor of Mohamed is immediately rejected by contradiction. Not vehemently, not rudely, the Oriental remains polite, but in that politeness he decides. You will not touch the honor, the good name of Mohamed. Everyone immediately stands up for Mohamed, in his own way, as soon as Mohamed is mentioned. For everyone, he is and remains, among all the great names of history, the one that arouses a feeling of quiet honor in them.

This state of mind in the Mohamedan country seizes a believer in the Christ, even after a short visit, so much, because in his own country he is used to such a different approach to the Christ. He feels ashamed of his own country of origin. He regrets the profound decline of the power of the Christian religion in the baptized countries. And the memory grieves and irritates him because of the lukewarmness, the indifference, if not the hidden hostility, with which in the Christian country the memory of his Savior and King is so often treated.

It goes without saying that this did not escape the notice of the Mohamedan, who was often in the West. In his own country, accustomed to the high reverence for Muhammad, he could not at first form an idea of the unsparing, the unsparing hubris, with which in the Christian country the high honor of the Christ is attacked in some circles. He too has heard, he knows, how in their Confessions the Christians place their Christ much higher than Mohamed. The Muslims honor Muhammad as an envoy, as a prophet, as an apostle, but they do not deify him. In Christianity, on the other hand, they expect to find a much deeper respect for the Godhead, one that progresses to worship. And how very different is the outcome! They find an entire literature which is intended to bring down the high honor of Christ. They find profoundly hostile statements, which bear witness to hatred rather than love for the Christ. They meet entire circles in which the name of Christ is either systematically withheld or only mocked. And in the circles of intelligence and artistry they find neither such enmity nor such derision, but a calm, and precisely in that calmness so shocking, dethroning of the Christ, so that nothing is left of him but a certain religious genius, good for that long ago period, but now gradually obsolete, and subject to the scrutiny of a sharp critique even from a moral point of view.

In Java, too, one knows how nothing frustrates or at least disturbs the work of the mission as much as the un-Christianity of so many among the European population who call themselves Christians, and who benefit from Christianity in their legal and civil position, but who in their confession and walk have done away with even the faintest hint of respect for Christ. Ask yourself, what impression it must make on the Mohamedaan, if you want to lure him to say goodbye to Mohamed and come over to your religion, when they have such people before them as examples of what your religion is capable of.

This is something that the knowledgeable Mohamedan finds all the more disturbing because, in his own way, he does not only bring honor to Mohamed, but also to Moses and Jesus. Better than many Christians, he too honors Jesus Christ as the prophet sent from God; recognizes much divinity and wonder in his appearance; and does not think of equating Jesus with an ordinary teacher. In the Khoran itself, Jesus is not so briefly mentioned. And to notice how in our own Christian country the Christ is even less important to the intelligent circle than he is as a Mohammedan, - it surprises, it amazes and leaves an indelible impression on him of the minority of our holy religion, and makes the mission among them almost impossible.

The title of this series of articles is Pro Rege, which means that we want to issue a call for the honor of our King.

Does the Mohamedan testify for his Prophet, we confess of our Savior, that He is not only our highest Teacher, and our only High Priest, but also that He is: our eternal King.

Lord of Lords and King of Kings" is His highest title of honor, and our longing for eternity is to reign with Him one day, anointed as kings.

You call Him your Saviour, your Redeemer, your Borgion, and you delight in the Atonement and Redemption that He brought you; but all this still only means what He was for your good, to save you from destruction. But the Christ is more. He is also your King, and in that very Kingship His honor is expressed, and thus also what you will be to Christ. After all, the Kingship of Jesus comes to you with a demand. It demands loyalty, it demands adherence, it demands submission. It demands that you, most of all in the Christian country, confess Him, stand up for Him, plead for the honor of His Name.

And it is precisely in view of this demand that the contrast is so frightening and so terrible between what almost everyone in the land of Islam still feels for the Prophet and what those in the Christian world who set the tone feel, call and do for the King given to us by God.

And this not only among those who have fallen away from the faith of their fathers, no, also in the professing circles the confession of the Kingship of Christ has been so much weakened and fainted, sometimes it even seems to be forgotten in the preaching. The praise for the Prophet and the High Priest is great, but the complete dedication and manly loyalty to the anointed King no longer overwhelms the hearts of his people. It is precisely the Kingship of Christ that is so often lost in a haze, even among the devout.

For our King we therefore want to testify, for our King we want to send out a call. Not as if by a single series of articles, the disruption caused in such a number of years could be undone, but that at least the will, the attempt may come to pass, where God's Word tells us that Jesus Christ "must reign as King until all enemies are subdued at His feet", then through that Word and for that Word we may again awaken for our King the homage, the loyalty, and the devotion, which more and more elude him from many enemies and all lukewarmness.

Our Queen rules over fewer Christians and more Mohamed Than the Sultan of Turkey in Europe and Asia together. England, with its 63 million Mohamedans in the East Indies alone, is ahead of the curve; but after England, the Crown of Holland covers by far the largest number of Mohamedans of any power. The Sultan rules in European Turkey over 4 million Mohamedans and in Asia over 16, altogether 20 million, while Java alone far exceeds this figure. The comparison with what in the countries of Islam is felt for the Prophet, and among us as a Christian nation for our God-anointed King, is therefore not unpleasant, especially for us, the Dutch. And should it then, unfortunately, be confessed that, in spite of all sectarian mixing, and in spite of all religious fading, the splendor of the Crescent Moon still stands high in all countries of Islam, while, looking at the masses, the splendor of the Cross has faded so distressingly, is there not more reason than ever to again, more deliberately than before, issue an appeal for the honor of our King in our Herald?

Among Islam, religious adherence, loyalty and attachment to the Prophet are still so powerful that even serious statesmen recognize the possibility that, sooner or later, the holy war will once again be declared by the Khalif, with the almost certain certainty that this call will be echoed far and wide. And even though this is related to the article of faith of the Khoran that the Muslim people, if necessary, must also use the sword for their religion, this unreasonable mixture nevertheless expresses the enthusiasm and enthusiasm, the spark of which still smoulders in the hearts of all people under Islam.

The waters of fading may temporarily pass over this glow and dampen it, but they cannot extinguish it. As when a burning pit of fire is doused with a wide jet of water, yet every time the flame flares up from the smouldering ground, so it is with Islam.

And even if God forbid that fanaticism in a bad sense should ever break out among us, we would still be higher in our Christian countries if the faithfulness and loyalty to our God-anointed King were still so deep in everyone's heart that, whenever his honor and glory were at stake, the same fervor filled the hearts and the same enthusiasm united all confessors in one holy, unbreakable order.

Even in quiet times, when Christianity was not under direct attack, our honor as professors of Christ would demand this witness for our King. How much more so in our twentieth century, which already in its first decade has been characterized by nothing so sharply as by the almost universal endeavor to push back the Christian

religion from the place of honor, which it had tenaciously conquered in a history of just fifteen centuries.

II. - Tribulation in the Christian land.

And Pilate said unto him, Art thou a king? Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose was I born, and for this purpose have I come into the world, that I may bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." JOH. 18:37.

The States of Europe are still considered Christian countries. There are also several million people in the East who follow Islam; there is a diaspora of Jews spread through all countries; among the Lapps and Finns in northern Scandinavia there are even some pagans; but all these together make up less than four hundred percent of the European population, and still the baptized portion of the population in Europe is reported to be ninety-six hundred. This also continues in the Netherlands.

According to the latest census, there are 104,000 Jews in our country, and some 80,000 people without confession, but out of more than 5 1/2 million inhabitants of our country, this is only about 3 percent.

No doubt, therefore, that in the world at large the name of Christ is still being proclaimed over our country. According to the statistical data, the Netherlands also still belongs to Him in its great massiveness. For, after all, these declarations are not made by anyone outside the country, but at the census by the heads of the families themselves. It is therefore the population itself that in these declarations, as officially as can be, has registered itself as baptized and as belonging to Christ. It is true that the heads of the families did not mention anything personal about their own faith, nor about the faith of their own families, but they nevertheless stated that they belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church, to the Roman Catholic Church, and to the Church of Jesus, to the Lutheran Churches, etc., and that they wished to be officially counted among them; and almost without exception, all these churches still statutorily profess and honor Christ as King. Of the Reformed Churches, everyone knows this. Of the Roman Catholic Church, it is equally certain. And, however one may look at it, the great Dutch Reformed Church still has no other official confession than the Confession of Guido de Brés, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Dortmund Doctrines, in which the recognition of the Kingship of Christ is clearly expressed. If, therefore, we do not step into the personal relationship, but look at the official figures, and take the official documents as a basis, the entire population of the Netherlands, except for a small percentage of three hundred, has still officially declared itself as belonging and as wanting to belong to those Christian churches that have proclaimed the banner of Christ's kingship in their official confession.

But now set the painful reality against these figures, and where can you say that in our official country and in the demonstrating circles you still find anything of the homage to Christ as our King?

The fact is that there is still a remnant in the recognition of Sunday and in the celebration of generally recognized Christian holidays. Not Friday as with Islam, not Saturday as with the Jews, but the first day of the week is still regarded as the day of rest, and even those who have in fact broken with Christianity entirely, but who nevertheless devote themselves to a weekly day of rest for the sake of the lower classes, have come out in favour of Sunday being the only day that can be set apart as such. Sunday is the day of Christianity, sanctified by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And so, it is with the Christian holidays. The Puritans in Scotland had wanted to abolish those feast days, not out of unfaithfulness to Christ, but out of over-spirituality. The Quakers and other sects drifted along on that stream of overexcited spiritualism. But in popular life, these Christian holidays have managed to assert themselves, sometimes with a certain amount of protest against the second and especially the third feast day of Pentecost, but, taken as a whole and officially, it is still everywhere the feast of Jesus' birth, the feast of his resurrection from the dead, the feast of his ascension, and the feast of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which (with the addition of Good Friday as a day of commemoration) break with the ordinary course of popular life, and are also recognized by the government in laws, decrees, and administration. Superficially, a phenomenon without higher significance, but in its official character still a fact of importance. Not so much as if one could say that in this, tribute is paid to Christ, but as proof that the Christian tradition has taken such deep root in national life that in this, as in the population registers, the Christian character of our people is expressed, at least nominally.

In the second place, something of this Christian tradition is still officially expressed in our School Law, which demands education not only in social but also in Christian virtues; here, however, the meaning changes. For historically it is certain that what was meant was the reduction of Christianity to a bare moral factor, deliberately separated from the root of faith in Christ as our King. The virtues were pushed to the foreground. At the very most, it was still recognized that the Christian standard of moral life recommended itself as desirable. The only thing that was not indicated was what the Christian virtues were as distinguished from the social virtues; and the result was soon that the "Christian" was completely drowned in the social, and that the social virtue system in many schools was built

on a foundation which was more opposed to Christianity than it was paved on faith in Christ. The result was that those who still clung to the Kingship of Christ avoided these schools and that they, in turn, became the sought-after Dorado for that part of the population which had wandered away from Christ to seek refuge in the tent of skepticism and social democracy.

And yet with this everything has been said, and everything exhausted, that on the official level would still remind us of the Christian character of the State. While there are other countries where even Parliament is opened with a prayer in Jesus' name, in our States General there is no prayer at the opening of the session. God's blessing" is still mentioned in the speech from the throne, but in a vague formula, which does not seem to cause any problems even for declared atheist ministers. Laying one's hands on the Gospel when swearing the oath is no longer considered. And when the Christian foundations of our national life were occasionally mentioned in an official word, this always led to protest. Even the completely unadorned, bare historical reminder of the basic type of our national character sometimes caused offence. And wherever, in the official field, one may still find a certain weak recognition of the Christian element, it never rises above the formal and traditional, and not a single trace of an acknowledgement of Christ as God's anointed King can be detected.

And is it different now, is it better, if you leave the official terrain, to continue your research on the public terrain?

There are three groups in our popular life. A first group consists of those who take refuge in silence and obscurity; a second group is made up of those who are involved in the great popular movement, but who do not even lead it; and finally, there is a small, but nevertheless very influential group, which is in the foreground everywhere, speaks the highest word in everything, leads every field, and is said to represent the Dutch spirit abroad and at home.

The last, not very numerous, but highly intellectual circle sets the tone for public opinion; the second, broader layer speaks at the stock exchange and on the market, but interferes less in public life; while the third, the deepest, but by far the most numerous layer is almost entirely absorbed in domestic life and in the office and in small business.

This first, small but influential circle is formed by the professors at the universities of the State and of the municipality and at the Technical High School; by the teachers at the grammar schools and the higher civic schools; by the writers in the

large press; by the higher and lower civil servants; by the men of art and of artistic criticism; by the members of the States General; by statesmen in a wider circle; by the heads of large corporations; by the chief speakers at meetings; - in short by all together who in public life, either by their position or by their talent, are in the front rank.

Can it be said that, just as in Islam even the most deviant Muslim still shouts as one for Muhammad, so also in the tone-setting circle of the Dutch people the honor of Christ's Kingship prevails?

Christ's Kingship inspires word and deed? Does public life show you that in this influential circle the upholding of Christ's name is an urge and a need for the interpreter of our people's life? Do you perceive any general annoyance when the name of Christ as our King is disregarded? Do you feel that on the public domain in our Christian country the honor of Christ weighs on everyone's heart? Does it express the realization that our people's life, born of Christian action, and still finding its firmest root in Christ, whatever may come, must never be separated from Christ, but must always find in Him its power-replenishing concentration? Is there any loyalty which, in spite of all deviations and all differences, nevertheless faithfully and courageously clings to Christ and does not tolerate that His Holy Name, in its high significance for our national existence and for the entire life of our people, should ever sink?

Alas, nothing of the sort!

From the bosom of the Christian parties a mighty campaign for the honor of Christ may have sprung up, but the circle that so far still sets the tone in our public life no longer calls for the Kingship of God's anointed King in any area. Not only is loyalty gone, but even the notion that there is a cause for loyalty here has faded away. All Islamic countries still praise their Prophet, but in our Christian country honor and opposition to the God-anointed King is the public tone.

It is true that one still hears the acknowledgement, at least insofar as Jesus cannot be ignored for other reasons, that he was one of the various founders of a world religion who displayed a higher and finer religious awareness than Kungfutse, Buddha and Mohamed. However, one is not yet unwilling to leave the high place of honor among religious geniuses to Jesus. The Rabbi of Nazareth as a human being is still spoken of with a certain reverence. We have not yet reached Voltaire and his "crush on the infamous". And it is still generally recognized that Christian morality has a certain preference. But public opinion no longer feels anything for

Jesus' Kingship; indeed, they know nothing about it. And however high one values Jesus' religious and ethical awareness, one does not hesitate for a moment to declare that there is still a higher religious and ethical awareness than that found in him, and one is already preparing to praise this higher awareness.

And this partial veneration of Christ as an ethicist is found mostly in the smaller groups that came under the care of modern preachers; i.e., men who still have to pronounce on Christ more or less *ex officio*. But in the more broadly representative circle you will not find this even as a rule anymore. There you come up against a harsh reality that is so far removed from all Christian tradition that one simply keeps silent about the Christ. Nothing comes from the heart for Him. In their self-satisfaction, they find no reason to mention the Christ anymore. The entire existence and virtually all thinking of this wider circle is devoid of the Christ. Jesus no longer occupies any place in such a life-consciousness. They have almost completely forsaken the Christ. In their knowledge, in their art, in their literature, in their press, you can see almost nothing of a holy inspiration to feel rich in the Christ, to look up to Him in admiration, and to strengthen themselves by paying homage to the Christ. What would people in this public sphere still feel for Christ as the God-fearing King? In fact, people often no longer understand what is meant by honoring Christ as our King.

Yes, it goes even further. The Christ has been set to fall and to rise. One can avoid and avoid Him and try to keep Him quiet, but in history, in the life of the people, in reality, one comes into contact with the Christ again and again.

The confessors of Christ are still there. In history, time and again, one encounters powerful events that have taken place around the honour of Golgotha's Cross. Even now, in literature, the press, and politics, one repeatedly finds oneself confronted with thorny issues, which are now and then engaged in this way with the Christ, with his confessors, and with his significance in the world. There is the relationship between Church and State; there is the deeply-rooted question of schools; there is the question of universities; there is the question of the ballot box; there is the problem of appointments, and also there are the great religious and ethical problems, with which no one can concern himself, or time and again he encounters the one Name, which for eighteen centuries has had such a decisive influence on and in all this. Those questions and problems are faced in our country and abroad. They appear to be more and more difficult to solve. Therefore, like it or not, many from this circle are forced to make known the feelings they have for Jesus.

And what comes to light then? What comes out of it? What is it that inspires the leading spirits? What else but deep-seated aversion to all God's special Revelation? Dislike of every piece of confession, which came to us as dogma from that special revelation. No Trinity, no God revealed in the flesh, no Redemption through the blood of the Cross may be mentioned any more. When, in Psalm 2, God Himself declares: "I have anointed My King over Zion, the mountain of My holiness", then the smile of unbelief folds over the lips. And if there are still those who dare to stand up for the honor of Christ as our King, then no weapon of scorn and contempt, of mockery and ridicule, is ever sharpened enough to try and break their influence, to stifle their word, to dampen their faith. Then an enmity arises that spares nothing, spares nothing, and never rests as long as the pedestal of the Christ as God's anointed King is not overturned and pulverized.

And although there are still noble men in this circle who disapprove of such unholy enterprise and who feel that the freedom which they desire for themselves must also be granted to the professed Christ, these more prudent and calmer characters also have in common with the more savage and rude opponents that they too look down with pity on the backwardness of the professed Christ. For them, too, Christianity is an outmoded viewpoint, and they themselves have outgrown it. Whoever still clings to that outmoded Christianity is a backward man in his development, and if the process continues at a steady pace, they expect nothing else than that nearly everything that is still called orthodox and swears by orthodoxy will climb to their higher position and that the delusion in which they have been under about the Christ will be abandoned forever. In America and England it is different. In Germany, too, one has not yet advanced that far. In Roman countries, such as Belgium, Italy and Spain, one can still find a somewhat different position, but in our country by far the majority of those who set the tone in the public arena no longer have any respect for historic Christianity at all, and a sparing spirit is rising up, as it is in France, which either tries to turn Christianity into modernism, or simply shuts up all Christianity, or finally fights tooth and nail against everything that is still called Christian according to the history of the centuries.

It is therefore no exaggeration, it is the naked truth, which cannot be contradicted, that in our leading circles no voice is raised anymore for Christ as our God-anointed King. Just look at our great press, read our literature; consult what science has to say. Attend lectures, visit meetings, listen to conversations, and after all,

either you hear nothing of Jesus at all, or, wherever His name is still mentioned, no one cries out for the Christ, as the Discount given to us by God.

And this may have bothered you in your own country, but you never get such a painful impression of it, than when you go for a while to Islamic countries.

There the calling for Mohamed as prophet in all ranks and classes of society. Weakening of the orthodoxy of Islam. There too, religious life collapsed. Especially in Europeanized circles, one no longer bothered by Islamic ritual and ceremonial rules, at least within one's own circle. But in the public domain, and in private conversations with Christians, the enthusiasm to stand up for Muhammad and his honor and to hold him up as a God-given Prophet is still undiminished.

And if, in contrast, you find in our Christian countries a lukewarmness and indifference, a disengagement of the spirits, yes, a resistance to what is revealed in Christ, which makes it impossible for even a small spark of enthusiasm to arise in our public life for the Christ as the God-given King, are you not facing a raw reality that cuts and wounds you in the soul?

III. - Tribulation in the Church.

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion rejoice over their King. PSALM 149:2.

So almost no one stands up for Christ anymore, as our King, in those advanced groups, whose minds are governed by the spirit of the age; least of all among the professors of Christ, so you may think, will the cry for the Majesty of our Lord prevent the day and enter the night with it.

But, alas, here also disappointment awaits you and you find dull silence, where you thought to catch the cheers of praise from all lips.

Understand this, there is no lack of reverence for Jesus as our Savior among the confessors of His holy Name. In that sense the praise is rather abundant. But that is not what we are dealing with now. This time it is about the Kingship of Christ, about the throne from which He rules us, and about the crown of the purest gold, which has been placed on His head. And from this we now complain, with a complaint that cannot be stifled, that not only outside the court, but also in the Holy Place, the memory of His Kingship is fading more and more, and the inspiration for it is almost dying away.

That He, who as our High Priest brought His self-sacrifice for us, in order to reconcile us to God, was "extremely exalted for the very reason of this self-sacrifice", and that He was given "a name above all names", so that all knees would bow before Him, God's angels never forget this in their restless worship, in their never-ending praise, and in their skillful service to Him who, seated at the right hand of the Father, is clothed with honor and majesty. But on earth there is only a faint awareness of the majesty of the Lord's Kingship. Not that one even thinks of denying it. Far from it. That Majesty shines out from God's holy Word against us constantly. We confess it in our confessions. We teach them to our children from the Catechism. There are still songs in use among us in which it is honored. Also, in the sermon the preacher does not always leave it out. Yes, who is there among us who, if the Kingship of Christ were deliberately assaulted, would not stand up for it with seriousness and with a certain warmth?

But even if we gratefully acknowledge this, it still does not by far touch what we have in mind. Even a Madurean knows that our Queen rules over our Indies. The Javanese too recognize this and tell their children about it. And when the authority of our Queen is attacked and our troops march to restore that authority, the native also fights bravely and often sacrifices his life.

But now compare the history of the royal authority on Java with the enthusiasm and the enthusiasm with which all the people in Neêrlands capital greet our Queen on her joyful arrival in the spring, and you will feel, touch, see through, that this sunshine versus sallowness, jubilation versus coolness, a driving of the national spirit versus unwilling resignation.

And now, should not the holy enthusiasm for our God-anointed King up there, in inspiration and high-mindedness of tone and in glow ignited by the Holy Spirit, far exceed all national enthusiasm for the best of earthly kings? And if you measure the enthusiasm, even of the professed, for the Majesty of our heavenly King against such a natural requirement, can you defend yourself against the painful conviction that there lurks a shortcoming in our love?

There is zeal for the cause of Christ, oh, certainly. With some more, with others less, but zeal glows on all sides, to recruit for Jesus, to bless in the name of Jesus, and through His power to leave no one behind in deeds of devotion and of mercy.

But all of this is a seeking of the Savior, an exclaiming of the Redeemer, a praising and commending of the Redeemer, the Savior, the Savior, the Reconciler of

sinners. And is this the same as honoring His Kingship? Do you not feel the profound difference between the two? Are they not very far apart?

To want to be saved as soon as the painful realization of your lostness dawns in you. To take refuge in the Savior, as soon as you cast off the false appearance of imagined holiness, and saw that you needed salvation. To seek your reconciliation in the Lamb of God, who carries away the sin of the world, as soon as sin begins to weigh deadly upon your soul. Yes, to rejoice in the redemption obtained, as soon as you yourself may feel in the depths of your souls as a child of your God, sprinkled with the blood of reconciliation - where else does all this find its cause, its urge and its motive, than in a holy egotism? In all this it is the love of self that drives you. Not the wrong love for yourselves. On the contrary. Wrong was your love for yourself as long as you stayed away from your Savior, stood on your own, and looked for the satisfaction of your ideals in the world. But it is and remains the longing, the urge, now that you have learned to think of yourself as a drowning man, to be pulled up out of the stream of lostness. You were the sick one, you came to the only Master Physician. Thou feltest thyself sinking under the wrath of the Holy One and thou didst seize the slips of thy Savior's garment in order to be wrenched out of the depths of perdition. You face eternal death, and in deep faith you cling to Him who through life has conquered death. And, oh, that is glorious, and God's angels have cheered it. But however serious, however tenderly conceived, all this nevertheless only served to save you, to reconcile you, to bless you. It only moved for your sake, for your salvation, to open the entrance to eternal life for you. It was your Savior in all this for you and for you, but what it did not say is that you shall be, exist and live for and with your Jesus.

Even if you have gone further, and the love of Christ aroused in you a passionate love for Him who loved you so dearly; even if the thanks rose from your heart, and you sang it in a song of praise and worship; even if, for the sake of Jesus, you have persevered in the struggle against sin, and offered Him your money, your goods, your strength, your time, your effort and your devotion in the labor of Christian love; - Then all that still remains on a par with your thanks and your feeling of obligation towards a doctor who was able to bring you back from a deadly illness; with your thanks and feeling of obligation towards him who saved your life when you were shipwrecked; and it is and remains an expression of the soul, rising up in you because you have been saved, because you have been redeemed, because you have been done well. Taken strictly, it is and remains an offering of praise and

thanks and honor to Jesus as your only High Priest. But is your King not something else entirely, is he not much more than the Priest who reconciles you?

When you entice and call others to the Savior, you discover the same thing. A mother who lures her child to Jesus early on and tries to instill unlimited devotion for his Jesus, is first and foremost concerned with guiding her child into the sphere of salvation and making him part of the inheritance in heaven. He who calls the disbelievers to Jesus in his surroundings, among his relatives and friends, and pleads with them to draw them to Jesus, aims first and foremost at their salvation. And likewise, he who goes out on the road to seek the lost, to light up their darkness, and to save them from destruction, aims at delivery, wants to be a means in the hand of God, to bring them over from the kingdom of the world into the kingdom of the Son of God. Everything that is based on seeking, enticing, and bringing the lost, points to Jesus as the instrument of salvation. Jesus is the means of salvation, of redemption, of the healing of diseases, of the anointing of wounds, of the salvation of souls, of the bringing of eternal life. It remains here always the love for the lost that urges and animates. It is knowing that the Master Physician is there; that the medicine that can save from death is ready. And now, seeing that so many do not know the Master Physician, and have never put his holy medicine to their lips, you bring that Physician in his eternal love and in the never-failing power of his sanctifying grace before them, yes, bring that medicine to their lips, if they will drink it in full and also thank their salvation to it. But what does this bringing under the High Priestly grace of your Jesus, in itself, have in common with the honoring of His Kingship.

And this we note, not as if there were in all this in itself something less than good, something less than noble, something too selfish or too altruistic. It is lowering yourself, and dishonoring your God as your Creator, if that holy selfishness, that high egotism does not work in you. And also, it is to forsake the bond with your fellow creatures, if you do not feel a thirst in you to lift them up out of their lostness. Oh, of course, the Christ is also anointed as our eternal High Priest, and whoever does not wish to be impressed with the highness of His Priesthood will never be able to give Him honor and worship as King. But even if the honor of Christ as our Supreme Priest is not forsaken at a moment, God's holy Word still distinguishes, and tells you so deliberately and emphatically, that he is anointed by God not only as High Priest, but also as our eternal King. And how can you ever give foot to the delusion that, as long as you honor the High Priest in Jesus, the honor of the King should remain indifferent to you?

This applies even more to those who stand by the Prophet; a group of believers whose number, unfortunately, is still growing. It is true that you could exclude all such, deeper seen, half-believers, from the circle of true believers. But we do not do this. Where thousands upon thousands also refuse to honor the highest Prophet and Teacher in Jesus and place their own knowledge above the Word of Him, who was given to us by God as the revelation of the highest wisdom, it rather suits us with joy to also approach those, who, vexed by this delusion of the world, at least still stand up for Jesus as our highest Prophet. Certainly, to remain there is a very sinful weakening of our confession, it is a prying loose of the Cross, a blindness to what in our holy confession must always remain the center and the pith. But they too then stand up for Jesus, albeit only for a third of the whole truth, and for them too it applies: "Do not destroy them. He who is not against him is for him". Especially in times of numbness of faith and numbness of feeling, it is fitting that we gratefully honor the testimony for Jesus, even if it is too faint on our lips, and even if people do not follow us.

And so, a place must also be reserved for those who, cold in the face of the deep mystery of divine vindication, refuse to warm their hearts to the heart of the High Priest and seek almost all their strength in the word that powerfully emanated from Jesus' lips; who take pride in his high-moral ideal and raise themselves up to that ideal, in order to approach communion with their God through their very religious self-awareness.

Provided - and this remains the never-to-be-let-off condition - that in this honoring of the Christ as our Highest Prophet, they do not derive the high character of his ethical-religious revelation from a spark of genius, not explaining himself by being high among men, but consciously and with all decisiveness confessing that he is God revealed in the flesh, and that therefore in him the complete, the highest, the absolute, the revelation of God, which can be surpassed by nothing, has been given to us. Thomas' "My Lord and my God" must not be silenced on the lips, or all confession will fall to the ground withered, all fellowship with the confessors will be broken, and the cry for the Highest Prophet will become a lie on the lips.

And with this proviso, it is undoubtedly of great significance in the wrestling of the minds that was involved, if there is still a wide circle in which at least the divinity of Christ is still honored, the absoluteness of His revelation is still generously and wholeheartedly professed, and in the face of the errors of our time the fullness of the Gospel in the ethical and religious fields is still zealously advocated. He who

still swears by the Word of the Savior, may still be far away, but he is nevertheless not very far from the Kingdom of God. The highest prophet, if only known better and understood more intimately in his Word, leads by itself to the only High Priest.

But however grateful we may be, as often as a word of warm pleading for the highness of the Gospel emanates from these circles as well; and however much we value these voices, yes, we do not hesitate to acknowledge that among those who have found the Highest Priest, there is too often a lack in honoring the Highest Prophet; yet all this has nothing to do with honoring the Christ as the God-anointed King. The real, warm jubilation for Jesus as our King is, unfortunately, almost never heard from the more contemplative circle.

Even recognizing and honoring Him as the Head of the Body is something else, although it can come close. The Head of the Body is a mystical-organic concept. It refers to the organic community of those who are one in faith, hope and love. Every community can be compared with a body, and the image of the body automatically evokes the image of the head.

Hence it is not uncommon for those who have an eye and a sense for the mystical life, who seek fellowship with God's saints, and in that fellowship experience the sustaining and inspiring influence of Christ, to particularly enjoy honoring Christ as the Head of the Church, and to feel and perceive that, thanks to that fellowship, there is a leading influence of Christ upon them as well. It is just a pity that this conviction is all too often desecrated by comparison with philosophical theories, and thus loses the dusty gold of the wings. But even where this is not the case, and the honor of Christ as the Head of the congregation is conducted in purely mystical channels, it is still something quite different from His Kingship. A prince on earth, like William the Silent, may temporarily be the Head of his people by thinking for them, by inspiring them with courage and courage and by leading them to victory, but that does not make him a King in his own right.

This recognition of Jesus as the head of the church is even weaker if it is limited to his church, as it often emerges from the old opposition to the Papacy. Because one does not recognize the vicar of Christ on earth, one is inclined to withdraw into Christ Himself, without even mentioning Him, and to cover oneself with Jesus' name in all ecclesiastical acts. But however much this actually approaches the concept of the King, it nevertheless, precisely because of its limitations, closes the eye to the majesty of the One who, as our King, is seated at God's right hand. It determines the idea to the church regiment, and precisely because that church

regiment appears among us in such an extremely simple form, it is completely incapable of lifting the soul even slightly to the height of the majesty of Jesus' Kingship. Certainly, the ecclesiastical regiment is also enclosed in the Kingship, but it reveals itself here in such an imperfectly human form, in such a small area, with such intangible power, that it does not even evoke an inkling of the Majesty that shines forth in the full Kingship of Christ.

Thus, it will be understood what we meant with our complaint that the Kingship of Jesus is not only misunderstood, denied and disputed in the world outside us, but that the glory of that Kingship is also waning in all circles of the professed.

One honors the Christ as God revealed in the flesh; one kneels down in adoration before him; one swears by him as our most High Prophet; one approaches him as our only High Priest; one allows oneself to be animated by him as the Head of the Body; On the ecclesiastical plane, all action is derived from him, and him alone; and the Kingship of Christ, in his eternal Majesty and glory, is well confessed, well recognized in writings, and would even be defended with insistence and earnestness against anyone who would deny it. But to profess it, not to deny it, even to acknowledge and advocate it, is quite another thing than to have taken it into one's soul and to live from it oneself.

And this latter is now lacking. We do not say in everyone. We do not pass judgment on anyone's personal standing before his Savior. For that you would have to know everyone's more intimate life, and who knows this more than a single bosom friend; how many know it of their own children, indeed of themselves? Our judgment may be based on the expression, revelation and outward appearance of the Christian life alone. And then we may not hold back from saying that in the world of Islam there is a more powerful, more sustained cry for Mohammed as the Prophet than there is among us for Christ as our God-anointed King.

This weakens us, it undermines our strength, and above all it is a failure to pay to Jesus that all-transcending homage which we as his subjects owe him as our King.

IV. -The general apostasy.

Unless the apostasy come first. 2 THESS. 2:3.

Thus, the collapse, the lowering of the honour offered to Christ's Kingship, came at the same time from two sides. The glory of that Kingship was almost entirely extinguished in the wide circles of the intellect, and it waned in the circle of the professed. This last point should also be emphasized. People are so easily tempted to shift all responsibility to the children of the world, thinking they are free to do as they please, and in doing so, break its power. This is not meant in the general sense of the unmistakability of humility for anyone who is preparing for action in the spiritual domain. Unfortunately, we have always seen that this urging to humble oneself was most prevalent among those who wanted to resist any vigorous action with all their might. Humility was then preached without restraint, and it was added that action could only begin after humility. And because humility never went deep enough, action could never begin. A sedative of fear! Oh, sure, humbling oneself about personal sin and personal unfaithfulness can be stirred up by a tone of holy earnestness, but humbling oneself about general conditions of the people, about social aberrations and about church laxity and lukewarmness is an act of mind, which at the most a single prophetic man, a single priestly figure, can achieve, but which is inconceivable for the great mass. It is possible to make the masses understand in a meeting or gathering for a few moments that there is also a debt in these broad, communal fields that should make us small, but this impression will later be erased by the diversity in personal life. He who is not concerned with the world of his imagination, but with the real world in which he lives with the great masses on a daily basis, must realize that, from a spiritual point of view, such a general humiliation about general situations, if not immediately followed by action against evil, is and can never be anything other than a haze which passes over the minds for a moment, but then also a haze which is immediately driven away again by the wind of the day. Such a general humiliation, on the other hand, is not only conceivable, but is even a duty and constitutes an uncommon strength, if one, ready to make a vigorous attempt to defend or attack, exhorts at that very moment that first everyone will kneel down to confess his guilt before God, and not in a delusion of his own holiness, but only in the power of the Lord to take action. On the other hand, anyone who refrains from all action, and then calls year in year out for humility - we repeat, not about personal sin, but about the common guilt that lurks in the general situation - is either a stranger in the field of spiritual science, or he is deceiving himself and the multitude. Such a

call to humility is lost in words and ultimately affects neither the spirit nor the mood of the people. Honor weakens such pleading, extinguishes all holy spirit drive, and leads to sickly complaining and idle sitting. In the powerful moments of history, an impressively humbling atmosphere prevailed. Then it was there and did wonders, but it arose out of the very decision to take action. On the battlefield, too, even the most insensitive soldier is never in a lower mood than the moment the first cannon shot thunders through the air. Our pointing out the gap in honoring Christ's Kingship, also among the professed, had by no means the intention of extinguishing courage, but rather to lead to a better understanding of the existing situations, and in that clarity to discover the path we have to follow.

It must be realized that we have gradually arrived at a period of general waste. We do not yet draw the conclusion that we are ready for the great apostasy that will bring the end of all things near. The times and occasions are in the Father's own power, and always it will be daring, as long as there are no special signs, to proclaim the end of things as imminent. History shows us how often even the most pious of men have failed in this. Each time it appeared from behind that God's ways are higher than our ways, and that He nevertheless swept away the clouds and broke through the light once more, even though the Christian people thought they were on the point of the final destruction of the light. But while it is certain that, time and again, Christendom has been mistaken in predicting the end of the world, it must also be acknowledged that some of us have become far too confined within our own circles and, because things are going well within them, unfortunately remain all too blind to the desolation that, in general, affects the world of spirits. People may rage against public opinion, they may condemn without reservation the rise and increase of all kinds of social evils; they may be annoyed at the most insolent expression of unbelief; but they do not open their eyes to the general character that this drift carries, nor do they realize the imminent danger that such a general situation ultimately presents to our own circle in the next generation. Alen is one of the peaceful ones in Zion, and does punish other apostates, but considers himself safe within his own circle. And it is precisely because of this that one does not understand the world outside that small circle and is therefore unable to exert any positive influence on it.

In nothing does this contradictory state of mind among the faithful show up so strongly as in their mutual quarrels and strokes. They almost never agree on everything. That is not possible. That is why our strong individualism works too powerfully. All kinds of peculiarities and sensitivities, arising from what lies

behind us, have too strong an effect. The derivation of our conclusions from what all confess together is too variable and too uncertain. But if you look carefully at the issues and points on which the faithful have fought in the last half century, and note the bitterness with which the battle over such issues has been fought, and is still being fought in part, tell me yourself, can you escape the impression that you see a powerful enemy emerging? that you see a powerful enemy advancing to besiege a small fortress and soon to take it, while in that fortress the chieftains and soldiers, far from being prepared for vigorous defense, are almost attacking each other to decide whether the facade of a barracks should be built in Renaissance or Gothic style.

Of course, we would not wish to deny that such questions are not important in themselves, nor would we wish to deny that in times of peace such questions can be important; But what must not be overlooked is that when the enemy is at the gates, the weight of such issues is dwarfed, and that it is neither his duty nor his vocation for anyone at such a time not to prepare with all his might for the defense of the fortress against the enemy. From the fact that people often do not do this, but continue to exhaust their strength in settling all kinds of second, third and fourth order issues, it is all too clear that they do not have an open eye for the danger that threatens, they do not see it, and therefore imagine that they can afford a luxury that can only be enjoyed in days of complete peace. In addition, love will cool; it will not be won, but repelled, and the impression will be disastrous: in order to admire and enjoy the mighty rule of Christian love, one should at least not seek refuge in the tents of the faithful. The odium theologicum, i.e., the fierceness with which those who are theologians tend to fight each other, has unfortunately become proverbial. Even now, in the Far East, one can lament the unfortunate division of Nestorians, Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Armenians, Copts, Marionites, and whatever else their names may be, which, as a bitter result of that theological quarrel, keeps the Christians powerless under the supremacy of Islam. There, too, when the enemy stood at the gates, the Christians failed to see the imminent common danger, and for twelve or thirteen centuries now their descendants have been reaping the bitter fruits of what, when Islam arose, the Christians of all kinds had sinned, neglected and done wrong. The issues that divided Christians in the East were certainly important in themselves, but what they overlooked was that where the very existence and prosperity of Christ's Church are at stake, every other issue loses its predominant weight and importance. How one should dress is in itself by no means an unimportant question, but when you are lying in bed stricken

with death, you would still condemn your family and relatives if, instead of focusing all their attention and love on saving your life, they stood at your doorstep arguing whether, as a Christian in the East, one should dress as a European or as an Oriental.

It should therefore be pointed out to the faithful with all seriousness that their little circle cannot be hermetically closed off from the great spirit world, and that in that world of spirits an action is now taking place that is increasingly assuming the character of a rejection of Christianity, a rejection that is proceeding ever further. In fact, it must be made clear that a situation is already developing in which not only the Christian religion, but all religion is increasingly losing its influence. Throughout society there is a separation from religious life, which is becoming more evident with each new generation that comes along. It is so in the wide circle of the baptized, but it is also so with the Jews, and partly even with the Mohammedans. In all three great monotheistic religions, which stand together against Paganism as adherents of polytheism and Pantheism, a dulling and sinking of religious feeling is at present unmistakable, and in all three it is equally clear why. Neither the Christians, nor the Jews, nor the Mohammedans are affected by the apostasy. Almost everywhere it can be said that among the petty bourgeoisie and among the lower classes a very considerable group still maintains the ancient historical traditions. As far as the Christians are concerned, this is evident in our own country. As far as the Jews are concerned, this is confirmed by broad orthodox Jewish circles in Amsterdam, but especially by what one finds among the Jews in Poland, Russia and Rumania. And among the Mohamedans, the decline of religious life affects only a very thin upper layer of their modernized society. But in the higher social strata an entirely different spirit has gradually gained influence, one that everywhere leads people away from religion; one that closes their eyes to the world of unseen things; and one that, under the name of the modern spirit of the age, has brought to power an entirely different conception of life and the world. That spirit now, that modern zeitgeist, descends ever further from above, first to the middle layers and then to the lower layers of society as a whole. It is like an oil slick on blotting paper, which of itself spreads in more and more circles. It is true that in this modern spirit of the time a sharp distinction must be made between a cynical-materialistic and an idealistic-mystical current, but the latter is so weak and insignificant in comparison with the former that it neither stirs nor supports. It is very much the cynical-materialistic current which is gaining ground hand in hand in order to spiritually bind more and more of our sons and daughters to the rising

generation. There is also an intellectual circle which, without being idealistic, nevertheless opposes both cynicism and materialism, but numerically (as far as the number is concerned), this circle is also so small that it barely leaves a trace in the wider stream. And even if you include all the more ideally inclined, more intellectually developed, and more mystically inclined, these three small groups together form no more than a vanishingly small minority that exerts almost no influence on the wider masses. The quiet hope, once cherished by modern theologians, and in which many of them stood completely sincere, that they would succeed in making all our people religious again through a higher religion, has ended in a fatal fiasco; and what was recently declared on the Dageraad's jubilee day: The Christians sang: "High, up, the heart up, down here it is not", but we counter that: "Here down here it is"; we work only for this earth. " - betrays the spirit that now sets the tone in the higher layers. In this earthly life all intentions come together and merge, and in this earthly life some people strive only for money and goods, others for art and beauty, a third for science, a fourth for sport, a fifth for pleasure, but in this all agree that it must be found here on earth, in this world, that we have to confine ourselves to this earthly circle of life, and that about what lies beyond and within and above this one should preferably neither muse nor think, think or speak. We know nothing about it, and whoever claims to know something about it is either a clever man and then a hypocrite, or not a hypocrite but then stupid.

There are many different causes for this, but the main cause is the decline, the sinking of the activity of religious awareness. And whoever realizes this clearly will also realize that this evil is not limited to our modern circle, but has affected our own circle just as well, though thank God to a lesser extent.

However much the Christian's personal life of faith is concentrated in the conversion of his soul to God, we are also subject to certain currents in the circles of Christendom. Sometimes there are times when the spiritual life of the people is the most sacred; other times there are times when the spirituality of the people is more influenced by the past; then there are times of weakening and diminishment and finally there is the period of spiritual depression. Everyone who reads about the Reformation era and compares the situation then with what we see around us today can feel that. In the 16th and 17th centuries religion was the main issue of life, not only for the faithful, but also for those who opposed them. The religious yardstick decided. The importance of religion came before all else. People were familiar with it, they talked about it, they read about it, they made the greatest

sacrifices for it, courageously and perseveringly, and precisely because of this, the life of religion in those days had a depth, which future generations looked back on with envy. But already in the second half of the 17th century this changed. In the first half of the 18th century, one notices a barrenness, where once the roses and the lilies bloomed. And at the end of the 18th century this barrenness had almost turned into mortification. Since then, the wonderful revival has given rise to a new awakening, and since the revival has passed into more national action, there has been a revival for which we cannot be thankful enough. But no matter how highly we value this, the contrast with the 16th century remains. It's not that anymore. It is something else, it is something of a lower degree, of a lower elevation, of a weaker tone, and continually you see how that tone is still dropping in more than one circle of professors.

This now we have to receive from the Lord's hand, as He disposes it in His omnipotent will. Our century, as well as the second half of the previous one, is more marked by matter than by religion. The religious movement in the minds of the people lacks the holy energy that it has known in other periods. This is so in all countries. It is to be observed all over the world. The atmosphere of religion itself has been pressed down, and we who breathe in it no longer drink from it that full and abundant measure of spiritual oSon which kindled in our fathers their high spirits. There are signs of a favorable change in the state of the religious atmosphere, but this is still more like a gentle evening chill than a strong, gale force wind that shakes the trees of the forest and shakes the dust from their foliage.

Now this does not prevent God's grace from being and remaining powerful to strengthen the personal life of faith, even in that dull atmosphere, to keep it healthy, and to inspire it with holy enthusiasm, but never think that the atmosphere in which you breathe has no influence on you. Matt, as that atmosphere is, it dampens to some extent the most powerful life of faith, and above all it has a highly detrimental effect on those broad circles of believers in which the personal life of faith has not yet attained sufficient strength. And since this is unmistakable even in religious circles, how could it be otherwise, or in the circles outside the firm faith, the influence of this oppressive atmosphere must have been even more fatal. When the water level in the religious stream is high, people in worldly circles are also lifted up by that stream, and automatically live higher. But if, as now, that stream sinks, then everything goes down, and finally it sinks to such a low level that all religious influence in these wider circles disappears completely. The more one feels that a general evil is at play here, under which we ourselves suffer, the

more grateful we shall be for what the Lord has left us, and the better we shall also be able to feel something of compassion for the spiritual poor in these other circles and to be a blessing to them by God's power.

V. - Man great.

They set their mouths against heaven, and their tongues walk on the earth.

PSAL. 73:9.

AGAINST the: Great is the Prophet! which still resounds loudly which still resounds loudly in the land of Islam, the Pro Rege, the: Great is our King! in the Christian land is increasingly dying away. And not only did it die away in the circles that set the tone for public life, but it faded away, albeit for other reasons, also painfully among the professed. The atmosphere of Religion, see our previous article, shows on the thermometer of religious life a decline in inspiration and glow. The modern spirit of the times, compared with the spirit of earlier centuries, has deprived religion of its prominent significance. Religion still receives a tribute from the modern spirit, but from afar. Just as there is a group of artists among the masses, the existence of a certain group of pious and mystical people is also honored; but to the powerful flow of life these small groups are incidental. It is true that Religion still exerts a certain moral cleansing influence on the public, and wins the first prize in relieving all kinds of distress, but the Art group also exerts a seductive influence on the masses in its own way; but both Art and Religion are secondary influences on the spirit of the age. The gust of wind that drives the stream of life and determines its direction is now coming more and more from the side of material interests, from the side of the intellect, and from the side of technical nature management. The heroes of religion are found in the days of martyrdom; the highest glory of art in every field is found in Dantes and Shakespeares, Michael Angelos and Rubens; the heroes of the modern spirit are the great philosophers, the powerful physicists, the magicians with instruments and electricity.

That turnaround in the state of affairs must be clearly seen. Whoever wants to live powerfully and exercise power over life must begin by understanding the basic outlines of the life of his time. These basic lines are not religious; rather, a certain anti-religious tendency is mixed into the type of life of our time. An anti-religious tendency, arising partly out of enmity against God, partly out of enmity against the "fines", but more especially wrought upon the face of our century by the intention to cut off forever the return of the rule of religion.

However serious and sad this phenomenon may be, can we not explain the cause of it?

Or does it not strike one as striking how, in comparison with the previous century, mankind as mankind has risen in power and might, in knowledge and ability, in control and submission of natural power, from the dwarf he once was, to a giant, and that not with slow growth, but as if with sudden thrust and jolt? There is simply the contrast between man and the world that surrounds him; and is it then disputable that man, right up to the heart of the 18th century, was still almost a martyr to nature, if you compare what was then the dominion of nature with what man has achieved in the second half of the 19th, and already in our 20th century?

Our power, our dominion over nature and its forces has increased more than tenfold in less than half a century. Whereas before the powers and forces of nature a certain feeling of minority and weakness prevailed in man, now he stands before that same nature with a magic wand in his hand and knows that with that wand he can conjure it. The fear of the past has faded; and a sense of strength that is forever giving way to overconfidence has taken its place. Triumph after triumph mankind has won over the resistance of natural forces. Formerly its plaything, he now feels himself its master. For not all natural forces are yet subdued at our feet, but the triumph so far won has been so decisive, so comprehensive, so constant and still going on, that the supremacy so far won is also a prophecy of coming triumphs. Man feels ahead of time that his trophy will soon be a complete one. This continues in all areas. Each year that passes surprises us again and again with the profits made and discoveries made. And the fruit, the blessing of this permeates the whole composition of social life. Man and woman, young and old, rich and poor all benefit from it. Everyone enjoys it. A completely different awareness than before has penetrated all walks of life. And even those among the confessors, who view this restless progress with sorrow for the consequences, use the advantages that this new situation offers just as much as others, and, willingly or unwillingly, they too undergo the overwhelming influence of it in their inner consciousness.

This change in the state of affairs cannot but have a partial effect on the state of religion. Even if we do not admit Schleiermacher's statement that religious awareness is a feeling of absolute dependence, it is nevertheless certain that the feeling of dependence on a higher power has always been one of the most powerful factors in religion. The dependence on God Almighty was most pervasively felt in the supremacy of nature in our human existence. Epidemics, sickness and death, shipwrecks and floods, lightning and earthquakes, beating of crops, destruction by vermin, cramping by cold, scorching by heat, violence of distances, - all these gave a sense of powerlessness and embarrassment; 'and as often as the need grew, there

manifested in all circles an inclination, a need, an urge to seek relief from a higher grace. The sick person's prayer was never more heartfelt than when the doctor proved powerless. Epidemics immediately populated the houses of prayer. In case of a shipwreck one saw the roughest Janmaat kneeling down. When there was an earthquake, the first thing to do was to go to the church. Necessity always taught us to pray. And in nothing so much as in the feeling of permanent minority in the face of nature, and in the possibility of new imminent danger, did Religion find its powerful support. Now add to this the abuses that resulted from this supremacy of nature in human coexistence, the constant wars, the ever-recurring famines, the rapacity and murderous lust that had free rein, the dangers of fire, riot and mutiny, and you understand how, in an earlier society, the little person lived in constant worry, from one day to the next, and was continually plagued by a gloomy foreboding of what tomorrow might bring. And all this maintained a sense of smallness in general popular opinion on the one hand, and on the other hand an urge to seek help and salvation from Him who, more powerful than both nature and man, could offer help in distress and rescue in danger. Hence the general religious character that once characterized life, the stamp of religion, with its days of thanksgiving and prayer, which was imprinted on all public and special life.

Now we are understood here. Pure Religion thrives on holier roots than those of need and anxiety. It arises from the activity of the Holy Spirit. And now as in the days of our fathers, the hidden contact with God, for those who know Him, has its origin in a special effect which has emanated from God on the souls of His elect. But it must never be forgotten that Religion has two spheres. It always has a very particular character among true devotees, and is so similar to Art that both, Religion and Art, in its higher, purer expression, never originate except from inspiration, and that inspiration, too, in both Religion and Art, never worked except within a limited circle. But this is only the one sphere; that in which Religion shines with its full, pure brilliance. Next to it, or rather around it, extends a second, much more comprehensive sphere, which may not penetrate to the core of the soul, but which is nevertheless indispensable and of great importance. In this wider sphere of Religion, its impulse goes much less deep, is much less constant, and hangs much more in the external. This sphere forms, as it were, the court of the holy temple. And precisely because in this court the spiritual conditions and perceptions, the core of holiness, and thus the sense of guilt and sinfulness are less pervasive, in this second sphere Religion is driven much more and much more strongly by the sense of dependence, by the need for salvation and relief from the

ordinary necessities of life, and by the moral effects that Religion has for individuals, for families and for society. Between these two spheres of religion there is the difference that the first, which reigns in the sanctuary itself, retains its own power and character through the ages and under all circumstances, while conversely, in the sphere of the court, the stream of religion rises and falls as need rises, and falls as need is removed. Those who live in the first sphere, in that of the Sanctuary, pray always and all the time; in the second sphere of the Sanctuary prayer fades away or passes into idle clapping when everything is going well, only to become more intense, more sincere and more robust when the need arises again.

The result of this we see before our eyes. In the small circles of the pious, Religion suffered almost no damage. In the sanctuary it is still what it always was; and however high man's power over nature and the order of life may have climbed, the intimate, spiritual mystery of Religion remains in this small circle what it always has been: a walk with God, an entry into His holy communion, a life in His hidden intercourse. But things were very different in the sphere of the forecourt. There is less need now, therefore less prayer. There is less powerlessness with an increasing sense of strength, and therefore less need to seek help from God. Awareness of one's own strength keeps one from turning to the Strong God. In the event of unexpected, sudden and poignant need, the old consciousness does return, but it no longer has the old meaning, and it disappears as quickly as it appeared. One feels less dependent, and therefore no longer knows the urge to honor and invoke the Almighty.

And do not say that this sinking of the feeling of dependence, this sinking of the feeling of need for supernatural salvation, may affect the people of the world, but that it does not affect Christ's Church, for you are mistaken if you imagine that this feeling of smallness, helplessness, helplessness and dependence would not be an integral element in all religion. Read your psalms, read your prophets, read your Gospels and each time you will find the keynote again: "I have committed myself to God in my distress, I have found my high refuge in Him, I trust in Him completely, the Lord whose work I will praise. Ask the most pious of pious people, and they will confess to you, to the last man, how in their own lives they have been compelled to look up to their God by nothing so much as by that feeling of deep dependence. The child that learns to bow its knees for the first time knows no other religion, and can know no other religion, than the one that rises from this feeling of deep dependence. Here, too, first is the natural, and then the spiritual. Even though a spiritual influence of God may have preceded the child's inner life, and may have

potentially borne the seed of true faith, the need for help, salvation and blessing remains at the forefront of the child's consciousness, even in the circles of the faithful. And so it goes throughout the years, sometimes into adulthood, until finally a higher urge awakens in the soul, and God Himself reveals His holy presence and enters into communion with the child in the form of the Holy Spirit. And even then, when that higher point of view has been reached, and faith has felt its wings washed out, in order to lift itself up to the Highest, the need of life, the embarrassment in worldly matters, the concern for the future or an emerging danger, still continue to inspire the wings of faith with new strength. Distress reveals sin. Discovering sin drives one towards grace. And thus, even in the Sanctuary the need of life and the deep sense of dependence again and again drives the soul closer to its God. The atmosphere of the forecourt still retains its own electrifying power, even for those who have penetrated into the sphere of the Sanctuary. Yes, only on him who is allowed to dwell in the Sanctuary does need, smallness and dependence exert their full influence. Christ's Church is not an assembly of only living believers. The Sacrament of infant baptism also recognizes the seed of the Church.

And so, until the end, the Church of Christ will remain a mixed body, and in that Church the Court will also remain distinct from the Holy of Holies.

The supremacy gained over nature and the orderly course established in our human life could not, therefore, remain without great influence on the Church of Christ. Even the inflicted have been affected by it, but especially the young, the growing generation and those who, even though they have already reached manhood, still remain distant, must be affected by the whole changed relationship in which we now find ourselves in relation to the forces of nature. Had our present-day generation lived in the 16th century, it would be in an entirely different religious position than it is today. And, vice versa, had the generation of then possessed our power over the forces of nature, their religious life would have been much weaker in tone than it is now in history before us. Man remains man. In himself he remains practically the same throughout the centuries, and what makes the difference between century and century are the very different influences that act upon him. That is why you are unfair to your environment if you attribute what now annoys you only to anger and wantonness, and explain what used to set the tone only by piety and devotion. So powerful a factor in life as powerlessness in the face of nature, or the supremacy which we have now won over it, could not remain without influence on the way in which religious life appears and presents itself.

We, who in our days may still cling to the faith of the fathers, become unjust to our less fortunate contemporaries if we see only evil in their lack of religion, and we cut ourselves off from having a positive effect on them if we do not make a serious attempt to see through and understand their lack of religion. In itself every opposition to religion is an evil of the soul, but this evil is naturally in every man's heart, and was also in the souls of former generations; and the question is, whether the influences which temper or promote this evil do not operate entirely differently now from what they did then.

And so now the question is posed, there can be no difference of opinion, whether the triumphs gained over the powers of nature and society by intellect and skill, by our knowledge and ability, had to bring about a complete change in the way of thinking, in the consideration of the world and life, and thereby also in the state of religion. Our dependence decreased; our power increased. Great forces of nature, which in the past overwhelmed and crashed down, have now been subjugated to us and placed in our service. Man works magic with them. All kinds of distress, which used to rain down, has now almost been averted and hardly occurs anymore. All kinds of remedies have been discovered for the need that still exists, and they are generally applied both to believers and non-believers. Through the mists that once darkened life, a bright ray of light has broken through. What ancestors did not know, has been revealed to us. Our eye sees through the microscope what they did not see, our arm reaches ten times farther than the arm of man in their days. Distances have been reduced, the separation of country and country has been abolished in every way by powerful communication. Scarcely a dam that resisted has broken through. We are spreading our wings to all directions, as never before. And how do you expect that those who do not know a higher grace, in this full awareness of man's increased power, will still feel the way their ancestors did, and be small under a need that no longer exists, or feel small and dependent because of a powerlessness that disappeared. As the course of events was once, it could not be otherwise than that feeling of deep dependence, which never had a deeper root in the masses than fear and anxiety, must be weakened in a generation that has conquered necessity and feels it can even control the future in so many ways.

So do not be fooled. This feeling of dependence, insofar as it had no other basis than the awareness of powerlessness and smallness, also suffered very serious damage in the circle of the faithful, and if you turn in yourselves, almost every one of us will have to testify that his inner awareness has also undergone a quite appreciable change. To convince yourself of this, take a look at an intimate

document from the days of our fathers, in which a man of that time recorded the sensations of his soul in this respect, and if you compare what was going on in him with the sensations of your own soul on this point, and if you search for the cause of this change, you will always come to the same conclusion, that it is due to the completely changed relationship in which we now stand in regard to nature and the needs of life.

This is the only explanation for the fact that the decline in the energy of religious life is a general phenomenon that occurs in all countries and among all peoples, and among Christians as well as Jews and Mohammedans, although to an unequal degree.

VI. -The sense of religion diminished.

And they have no rest day or night. REV. 14: 11.

The universal mastery which we have acquired over the forces of nature has overexcited man's sense of power; thereby dangerously weakening his sense of dependence; and this was bound to culminate in the attenuation of religious life, in a shrinking of the sphere of piety, in a lowering of the temperature in many a man's devotion to God. Herein lies the root cause of religious decay and of the hand over hand increasing unbelief, and therefore this had to be the primary concern. But still, in this dominance over nature lies not the sole cause of the strong ebb and flow of religious life. From this conquest of power over nature, so much more has emerged that has broken with religion. Let us first of all draw attention to the loss of that peace and quiet in which the life of piety once flourished.

The Book of Revelation speaks of the lost in their destruction: "They have no rest day nor night"; and this in contrast with the wonderful promise: "There remains a rest for the people of God". Time and again God's Word points out the preciousness of rest for our hunted and tortured hearts. The Sabbath as a day of rest rhythmically comes to bring quietness into our lives on the seventh day, and so beautifully does our Catechism say that this is a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath with God. A dry drink and rest with it" seemed to the poet of Proverbs a desirable fate; and the Ecclesiastes said again: "A handful with rest is better than both fists full of labor and torment of spirit. In the song of the good Shepherd, the Psalmist sings: "He leadeth me gently beside very still waters." In the lament of Jerusalem it is said: "My eye flows with tears, because there is no rest", and Baruch laments to Jeremiah: "I am weary with my sighs and find no rest." The apostle of Tarsen, in his wanderings, suffers oh, so bitterly from that lack of rest for mind and body (2 Cor. 2: 12 coll. 2 Cor. 7: 5.). And already in the prophecy it was said to Israel: "This is the rest, give peace to the timid, and this is the refreshment' (Is. 28:12), in Christ our peace appeared, and therefore he could promise it to us: "Learn from me that I am humble and meek, and you will find rest for your souls'.

Not all rest, alluded to here, is equal. The deepest rest is that which, in the secret of the soul, dispels the turmoil of the passions and brings us peace with our God. Then comes the peace that redeems us from the discontentment that men bring us. Then there is rest from the chasing of fate, which chases us, be it under the bitterness of our enemy, be it under the hardness of disappointment, painful loss or illness. Then there is rest, which dispels the doubt in our hearts and brings peace to

the world of our thoughts, senses and imagination. And from the rest already enjoyed here on earth, it then ascends to the higher rest of the eternal Sabbath in the Father's house of our God.

But whatever degree or form, whatever storm or agitation, from within or from without, the unrest, the turmoil, the discontent also overpowers our spirit, time and again the longing for rest, for peace, for quietness rises from the depths of our soul. This is most frightening to us in the delusional, in the emotional, in the always tense and overstrained man, who finally forgets himself and his God and seeks a solution in suicide. Just as Jesus says of the possessed that they wander in the tombs, seeking rest, so, and no other, is the turmoil of the human spirit, which must always go on, is never left still, and which is consumed internally by thirst, by hunger, by a piercing longing to come to rest. Especially in the East, from where the Scriptures came to us, this hunger and desire for quiet and rest for the horrified spirit is a characteristic of all people.

After the day comes the night, when God extinguishes the light for us, and draws long, pale shadows over our towns and villages. And with that nightly hour, and the darkness in which it envelops life, comes the rest of sleep. A rhythmic turning and turning of our life, in which the goodness of our God gives a new grace to the child of man. When the eye is closed, and our weary members stretch, and the agitated spirit sinks into self-indulgence. A rest from sleep for the third part of our existence. He who dies when he has reached the age of ninety, spends almost thirty years in that rest of sleep, and in that sleep comes his revival, his refreshment and the rebirth of his lost strength. Yes, even the silent grave, in the peace it brings, possesses a sweet attraction. What Marnix chose as a motto: "The rest hereafter", "repos ailleurs", is expressed on the headstone in the "Here rests". Always, in every way, in every tone of voice, this unquenchable desire, this written homesickness, this unquenchable thirst for rest is expressed. Rest for our conscience, rest from our sins, rest from our work, rest from our fellow man, rest from our enemy, rest from the fate that pursues us.

And to the enjoyment of that rest depends to such a considerable extent the quiet flourishing and soft blossoming of the life of our piety. The hermit, the saint of the pillars, the monastic, and those who withdrew into the desert, whatever their sins, never aimed for anything else but to withdraw from the turmoil and ferment of the world in order to seek communion with their God in silence and in prayer. It was the attempt to live in the world through separation, but as though the world did not

exist, and if necessary to give up the whole world rather than be robbed by the world of eternal peace, of the peace of the soul. The "solitary, but in communion with God" was also, among Protestants who left the monastery, the indication of the path that leads to the quiet of God's Zion.

In the countryside, where the turmoil of the world is at such a low ebb, the life of religion always found a place of refuge, when in the big cities it was smothered by the shouting and the tumult. Because of the peace and quiet it brought to the streets, to businesses and to the family, the Lord's Day was always the day when religious life was at its best.

In childhood, before entering the world, and in old age, when one had withdrawn from the world, listening to the heavenly voice was always so much lighter than in years of manly vigor, when one had thrown oneself into the stream of full life. The custom, which exists especially in Russia, to withdraw now and then for a few weeks into a house of seclusion, and to live only for his God, has in that powerful empire still best protected the riches of the mystical life. In order to pour out his soul before his God, all pious people still seek solitude, and when they have withdrawn into the inner chamber, and the door is closed, and thus a place and place of rest has been found, the soul will open itself to prayer in the presence of the Lord. It is even remarkable how the boatmen of our inland navigation, proportionately, still have so much piety. After all, they too wander the waters, separated from the world, and in that isolation find a peace that is not found on the fixed shore.

This is not to say that godliness and piety cannot also flourish in the midst of the most tense life. The life of a man like De Ruyter, or Marnix van St. Aldegonde, shows otherwise. But then piety emerges precisely from the tension of the terrible responsibility with which one lays oneself to rest and with which one wakes up. God can also be found in the storms and in the tempests, but for the vast majority, the encounter with their God comes first in the lull of the gentle coolness. The quiet life breeds piety, peace of mind makes the religious life blossom, and on the other hand, in the midst of the violent turmoil and upheaval of the waters of life, the devil who wants to fly finds no place for the hole of her foot.

Now consider, with this in mind, the face of the world and the image of human life, as it has become through our superiority over the forces of nature, and you will understand the sinking of religious life in the age that lies behind us from this point of view also. We will not speak now of the consciously born again. A higher power

of the Spirit is at work in their lives, one that can withstand any onslaught, even if the souls suffer. But the born-again people are in the Sanctuary, and now we are speaking only of the great multitude that never came any further than the forecourt. That immense multitude was itself religiously affected in earlier centuries, but now, almost over its entire length and breadth, it is estranged from all religious participation. And for them we invoke your compassion, whereas, looking at yourselves, you would probably be inclined to pass a harsh judgment on the piety of the multitude.

What is the difference, the contrast, of this mass of the baptized between then and now; what is it but that the most sharply aroused hypersensitivity of the nervous life replaced the former calm and quiet. Look at our infirmaries, how they are becoming more and more populated; look at the list of suicide bombers, how it is expanding. Restlessness in thought, restlessness in mind, restlessness in home and business, always in a hurry, never having time to finish one's work calmly, always trembling in our blood and nerves of the electric current that puts all of life into overstrained motion. Almost everyone has been chased out of the house since the early morning, even the meals are never enjoyed at the family table, and as a result there is no longer any enjoyment of the homely company, and no more talk of gathering around God's Word, when thanksgiving for the good received will ascend to God. Once a first cordon of quiet around the house, then a second cordon of quiet around the place of one's residence, which one left only a few times in the year, and, also where one moved away from home, at least the patriotic border for almost everyone a final cordon, a cordon of national quiet. And now all cordon of peace is broken. Town and village, country and country are connected by electric wires. Rails running through a continent. The mail ship traversing all seas. No local market anymore except as a help, no market in the country even more than as an auxiliary link, and all pulled together in a world market encompassing the whole of our earth, with which every man of business or profession has to reckon. Even to a single continent the action can no longer be limited. Europe and America form a single whole of action, and Africa and Australia and Asia join in the turmoil that drives and sucks everything along. In a village one has no idea of this, but come to a metropolis and see how thousands and thousands of people keep on going, all day long, all evening in glittering light, and even adding a bit of night to the turbulent day. In the past, there was only one post in the whole day, now there are up to eight or ten in a 24-hour period, always flooded with new messages and new questions. The telegraph that overloads you with quick messages. The

telephone that calls you from work to listen. No more leisurely strolls through the large cities, but electric streetcars that await you and take you from one end of the city to the other in a jiffy. Everything in a hurry, without giving you time to think; quickly grasping what is being presented to you and deciding immediately. Then those meetings and gatherings and associations without end. All the interests that count on your support and cooperation. Involvement in business, involvement in the stock market, involvement in science, involvement in literature, involvement in art, involvement in politics. Celebrated in all your existence every day. No division of your labour is possible anymore. All jumbled up, seizing you with three, four things at the same time. And then you leave home again, go to a meeting elsewhere, and when you are finished and can't do any more, travel to seek restoration of strength. Like the leaves that fall from the branches in autumn and are propelled restlessly by the autumn wind, so whirling and full of unrest and in endless haste, the life of men of business in those great world cities goes on and on, not just for a few days, but year in year out. For a while they sought peace in the intoxication of drink, but this did not satisfy them either, and now the avoidance of wine and drink has become a matter of life and death. Still, people hunger for muscle power in order to keep their nerves tensed. Sport must provide this additional strength. But this too increases the unrest. Bicycles, motor-engines, automobiles, and soon balloons and aeroplanes will increase the tension in life. And even in the field of land and sea warfare, life in the past cannot be compared to the awesome development of power today. What a crew on board a battleship goes through in the heat of battle is not even remotely imaginable to anyone with ordinary nerves. It is described to you as a precursor to hell.

Now there is a difference between nerves and nervousness. A people like that of Japan possess a nervous life that hardly ever shakes or is shaken. It is the opposite of the Negro, whose nerves tremble much more than ours. And it is precisely this hardening of the nerves which makes the Japanese soldier and sailor so unusually strong in the present war. We, Europeans, take our place between the two extremes. Not as irritable as the Negro, but three times more sensitive in our nervous lives than the Mongol. And in the middle and west of Europe we suffer much more from our nervous life than in the East. It has also been observed that this sensitivity and irritability of the nerves increases with generation in the sexes. Born of parents who were already victims of this high nervous tension, the child is already potentially more sensitive. If this continues, in the next two or three generations the excitability of life will reach an alarming level. This is something

that prompted a French writer to prophesy that the world will end up inhabited only by madmen.

We therefore make no apology for the lack of religious feeling among the great majority. Everyone, whoever he may be, who does not live piously before his God, is guilty. But looked at from the human side, it may be asked whether you yourself do not feel how this overstrained condition of the brain and nervous life impedes the cultivation of a religious sense and general piety in an unbelievable way.

People live small; there is no longer an inner room for quiet prayer. Home religious exercises are no longer available or there is no time to attend them. On Sundays one wants to catch up on what was left unfinished, or seeks relief and relaxation in nature. The vibrations of the nervous system are too strong to allow us to sit quietly under the preaching of the Word. One never comes to rest. There is no place, no time for retreat. One cannot think of retreating into oneself. Everything rushes and storms through the head and heart. From all sides, every faculty of our feeling and thinking is so unceasingly seized upon that there is not a moment left to lift the soul to God. All the denser mists rise before the world of the eternal. The light on earth shines so brightly that looking up to God's starry heavens in the firmament becomes obsolete. Nothing impresses anymore. One is so powerful oneself, and the world around us is so full of power, that the Almighty Origin of all things is no longer asked for. The conscience still speaks, but in the noise of the world its whispering is drowned out. And then comes as a reaction to the overexcitement the wild, bewildering laughter, and with the laughter the ridicule, and when one dies, well, then that restless chasing will be over. And therefore, a death without eternity that follows seems almost desirable. Then the sinking into eternity does not come. And that is what one, half-Buddhist, yearns for.

Just notice the three generations that in succession of years surround you, and you see the ever-increasing destruction of religion. Among all three of these generations, as before, and through all ages, a multitude of utterly indifferent, lowly characters, concerned only with money and pleasure. They do not count. They have never set the tone, and still do not. But now take the higher, the better families, the people of nobler sense, and what do you see? This, that among the older generation, which is now on its way to the grave, a certain remnant of an earlier religious sense still lives on. Among those older people one is no longer as orthodox as before, but they are still not completely detached from the Word. They still pray in their homes. They still instill respect for the sacred in their children. God's blessing is still indispensable to them. They still believe in His Providential

Order. They still have religious ideals. Weakened, faded, waning, but still there is a certain life of religion in such families. But already in the second generation, which now blossoms into manhood, this was different. No more Bible, no more going to church, no sacrament sought, no more prayer at the table. All that has been done away with. Some reverence for the sacred is still detectable, but this dissolves almost entirely in ideal morality. And then, at most, something mystical. Also, spiritualism, or theosophy, but in the vast majority of cases cold, cold, numbness. There is no longer any thought of practicing religion, of seeking God's hidden intercourse. And in clear indifference everyone looks ahead on the road, without ever raising an eye to the sky. And even more fearful is the situation with the third generation, with the young people who are just becoming men. For them, all religion is a strange property of a small group of retards. Interesting though, those strange, single-minded people with their going to church and their praying. They no longer make fun of it. It is simply an interesting, never-ending phenomenon of life. But they themselves have done away with it. For them, science is everything. Science is the end of it. We will walk by its light. It will show us the ideal. The old times with their legends, and mysteries, and dreaming are over. Before us is modern life. And modern man does have a feeling for a nobler meaning, does want to elevate the human being, to live for an ideal goal, but they no longer know religion. It is an extinguished glow for them. An antiquity, which modern man looks back on with nostalgia of curiosity.

Thus, life around you unfolds in ever clearer form. Lord and Master instead of slave and victim of the forces of nature, he no longer feels dependent, but supreme, and it is precisely this power over nature that has transformed all human life, has stimulated it from its former rest into nerve-racking activity, and by doing so has removed from life precisely that quiet, that peaceful, that conciliatory, that calming which formerly led to seclusion, to reflection on one's situation and to introspection. And the evil consequence is that religion, which cannot do without peace and quiet, is increasingly losing the ground on which it used to be able to flourish among the unconverted. The mighty current of the modern life of the world has uprooted, dislocated and lifted up all the roots of religion, and is taking them with it as an uprooted tree on the bank.

VII. - The scattering of thoughts.

To make many books is no end, and to read many is fatigue. PRED. 12:12.

Religion no longer occupies the place in social and public life it once did. In the 16th century Religion was almost alone, now it casts a dark shadow. The atmosphere, then favorable to religion, now rather depresses it. The words of Religion in the court are muffled. The waters in the holy stream are at a lower level. Modern life as a whole does not work on the holy ground, but rather against it. In what our century may be great, it is not the century of religion. As a result, from among those who merely walked along in the sacred, more and more abandon their purely historical and handed-down faith and go over to the apostasy, while those whose faith is personally rooted in the rebirth, feel to their own degree that life no longer carries them, but that they have to row against the tide of life in an ever more debilitating manner.

To explain this change in the state of affairs, reference was first made to the rapid and unparalleled power which the last century gave us over the forces of nature; something which caused the feeling of dependence on a higher power among the ignorant masses to diminish noticeably. And then attention was focused on the restlessness of modern times, which over-stimulates the nervous life and thus disturbs the quiet in which God-fearing contemplation used to germinate. To this must now be added a third cause of the general sluggishness in the life of Religion, which might be called the fact that the human spirit is occupied by all kinds of other things.

The human spirit has a wonderfully versatile disposition, and there have always been a few persons who possessed the ability to let their minds run wild in almost all directions, to occupy themselves with anything and everything at almost the same time, and yet to direct their minds so intensely to each thing that occupied them that the one almost never distracted them from the other. But this is not how most people, especially the great masses, exist. On the contrary. The vast majority are only very limited in the range of their human mind. They do not survey a continent or a country, not even a region or a metropolis; they live, if we may express it this way, with their minds in a spot, if not in an even smaller hamlet. Their horizon does not extend any further. It is true that in their minds too lie the seeds for all kinds of other development, but these seeds do not sprout. They can only be occupied with very few things at once, and if they scatter their minds too much, they end up being nothing. Their spirit sometimes expresses itself in an

exceptionally powerful manner, and not infrequently reveals itself with surprising resilience, but to do so they must also gather all their resilience in one single point. They are strong, at least they can be, but only through concentration, through the gathering of all their strength, in order to make it work in one particular direction. And what they can't do is that there is too much that pulls them off. If this happens, then they become scattered in their minds, and with that the secret of their power is gone. What for Samson was his Nazirite crown, is for them that concentration of their spiritual power, and when Delilah comes to take away that main source of their power, then their power is, often irrevocably, broken. As I said, there are some who do not suffer at all, but these form a very high exception, and even if among the others there are often not a few who, at least to a certain extent, manage to avoid the threatening weakening of their spirit, for the great, great mass the rule that lack of concentration cuts the cord of their strength continues in all circles of society.

Reading the history of your country, you are amazed that in earlier times not only the heroes, who are in the foreground, but also the wider class of the bourgeoisie manifest such a powerful character, such wonderful energy, such manly power in every field. And that almost without any aid, with inadequate schools, with instruments that are no longer worthy of respect. When men were asked to undertake a difficult task, they were never shy. It is as if they were sprung from the ground. And - you can see it on the history page - everything they take on, they handle with great care, and they hit the mark. An image of living boldness, against which our constant lack of men, worthy of the name, contrasts so gloomily. Our men know more, encompass more, do more, but the spring vein of their personal power drips, where it then jumped, splashed and flowed. England has, of all nations, maintained its method of concentrated education the longest, and therefore, comparatively speaking, still has the most male, personal power. Elsewhere there is more than enough power, but the band around the bundle of arrows is gone, and the overwhelming expression of power of the past is no longer possible due to a lack of cohesion. That which, taken together, could still exert extraordinary power lies scattered and has therefore been weakened. The concentration of the mind in itself, which created miracles in the past, is no longer there, and that lack of concentration avenges itself in weary stumbling.

Yet for the time being nothing can be done about it. The spirit of the times, the standpoint on which our current development stands, the factors that govern our lives, do not permit a different outcome. In the past, knowledge was extremely

limited, the area over which human knowledge extended was narrowly circumscribed. And even in the period of the polyhistor, i.e., of the men of science, who attempted to encompass the whole of science, the field of knowledge they surveyed was still quite surveyable without a telescope. But we are no longer in that situation. Human knowledge has been broadened, widened and extended in such an unbelievable manner that the law of division of labor has become self-evident. General knowledge and general development are now the exception. The entire body of spiritual workers has divided itself into all kinds of groups of specialties, and each group is dedicated to the study of one particular field of the immeasurable. All study in that particular field has therefore become almost infinitely deeper. One chooses one particular object of research and study, but then gives oneself completely to it, and looks at it from all sides for so long that it finally reveals all its secrets to us. A polyhistor, i.e., a man who embraces all science, is completely unthinkable in our time. Even in his own field, each of us knows only a single part of it, and most have to content themselves with absorbing the more general data for the other subjects. But precisely because the body of spiritual workers, who are engaged in this way, is now ten times larger than it was in the past, the sum of knowledge gained is so immeasurably large, and extends so unutterably far into the field, and so unutterably deep into the foundations, that the capital of knowledge gained has washed over our heads.

As a result, the education and training of the rising generation took on a completely different form than before. It was no longer possible to limit oneself to passing on a few skills. The field in which our young man and young woman now have to feel at home to some extent is becoming ever broader. Thus, the subjects of education are constantly increasing in number and scope. More and more is demanded of the newly awakened brain. And the unfortunate exams, through which one wants to test whether one's education was right, have for not a few become tortures that dull the mind more than they enlighten it. What can be asked at an examination is so unlimited and unforeseeable that the old-fashioned examination, which referred to general development, is still only known from delivery. As a result, almost every examiner has so-called loops, which young people who are to be examined listen to and hand over to each other; something that is, of course, the deathblow to proper study. In this way the mind of man is scattered and divided among all kinds of things from an early age. It has become impossible to immerse oneself deeply in any kind of study. The mind itself is not formed. The mind does not learn to assemble and collect itself. The concentration of spiritual resilience is becoming

rarer and rarer. *Multa non multum* is what we call this in Latin, i.e., it becomes a lot of verbiage without proper science. And yet we must go with the flow. One would remain a stranger in life, if one could not speak about the most general data in every field. Even in England, where the old method was adhered to the longest, people are beginning to give in. The formerly oh, so small world has now become so immeasurably large, and of that large world one should at least know the major roads, or one cannot go on.

If this has resulted in the mind at all kinds of schools not only being overloaded but also top-heavy, and lacking all formation for powerful concentration, then the Droipers will come after us throughout our lives, to thwart every first even attempt at concentration.

In itself, the printing press is one of the greatest blessings we have received. It is the one that has opened up the field of knowledge, previously open to only a few, to the wider circles of society. It is the great means of spreading the light of knowledge into the most hidden circles of society as a whole. But it should therefore not be forgotten that the same printing press places a very heavy burden on our minds.

Think first of all of the daily press. Every morning, and often every evening as well, the paper arrives in your home to inform you of everything that is going on in the world. In the old days, when there was even a serious war going on, it was already a lot if, ten or twelve days after a big battle, fought at a great distance, you heard some vague report about it. Now you are inundated with more and more detailed reports every day, and your mind is forced to follow the entire course of the battle in detail. Such a war attracts you. You live with it, and your mind is occupied with it hour after hour, whether you like it or not. And so it is not only with a violent war that is being waged, but literally with everything. You follow closely what happens in the parliaments of other countries. Everything is presented to you in broad terms, with the odds against and for each party. The goings-on in other countries grab you, they interest you, and again a part of your mind is occupied, unwillingly and unnoticed, by something that lies outside your own circle of life. In the same way, you are presented with everything that happens in your own country or in a foreign country in the wide field of crime and human stupidity. The administration of justice in all countries is essentially approached. In the field of art and literature you will be introduced to each new phenomenon. Anything remarkable that happens in the scientific field will be told to you in

summary form. The social question in all its forms throughout the world demands your attention. Sports and competitions occupy you. And what is going on in the field of agriculture, industry, trade and shipping in the world at large is brought to your attention in details. Now, not all are grazing on these fields with equal eagerness. Most of them can't handle it, they can't keep up with it, they skip it, they don't read it anymore, and passing by the common grass, they gorge themselves on what to each of them is the trefoil. But even that forced choice from the many shows the overwhelming magnitude of the stream of reading material. And even though very many of them confine themselves to a cloverleaf, the circle of those who want to peruse everything briefly is very wide, and they are also not a few who have to keep abreast of almost everything and therefore have to toil through the mountain of knitting every morning and every evening.

Then come the magazines. By the week, by the half month, by the month, or by the quarter. You have not even half finished the previous issue when the new one arrives. Increasingly voluminous, with a more mixed content. And so interesting that you have to read it, because everyone talks about it. It's like one big restaurant, where you have lost all freedom of choice of your dishes, and each time you have to content yourself with the dishes from the fixed menu that is presented to you. In this way someone else decides for you, and not you yourself, what you will read. And it is precisely this kind of prescribed reading that is so much to the taste of the mind that has become so helpless, that new magazines or weeklies are added again and again, taking up a few hours of your short week.

This is true of the periodical press; but this, for all its size, is still only a small part of the entire mass of reading material that comes rushing at you. Not only what our own country produces, but the products of all countries, in original or in translation, come to you. Time and again your bookseller overwhelms you with piles of books on sight. In reading societies, the books go around in heaps. Professional books that you must have for your own profession, but above all also books of a more general nature, which everyone must be familiar with. Especially those books which attract general attention and are constantly being discussed. Every year each country publishes a separate catalog of what has been published in this one country in that one year, and for our little country alone this catalog already forms a rather bulky volume. And this continues year after year. The books alone, published during your own lifetime, form, if you are over fifty, already a mighty library.

Now you can stop that flow by not buying and not reading. But you don't want to be backward, you want to be a child of your time. And, what also counts, there are books with a magnet inside that draw you irresistibly to them. Especially the novel-literature is too powerful for many. They can't stay away from it. And once they get into such a novel, they can't get out until the last page has been turned. And such novels also put a strain on their minds, scattering them and drawing them away from the concentration of their own spiritual life. All this, without even mentioning the immoral literature that so easily seduces the younger generation, and not only scatters the mind but also stimulates the passion.

If you compare this situation to the circumstances in which our fathers lived, you can hardly imagine the relative peace and quiet in which they spent their days. Newspapers just emerging. Rare and extremely small in size. So exquisite. No mail, then sometimes in two days. Magazines not on the market. Foreign literature only in very few families. And all that the book market brought in a whole year, a small number of mostly Latin books, and then pamphlets; also, some poems. But never the flood of literature that came crashing down on them like a tidal wave, lifting them up and swallowing them up. One and the same book was sometimes read two or three times, and the small library was limited to very few writings. Thus, man's mind was left to itself for the greater part of the day, or was lost in conversation. And what one would read, one chose, one got hold of with difficulty, and it was usually written in such an unrefined style that one had to want to read it in order to be fascinated by it. One was never overfed. People ate more sparingly, more sparingly and more simply, but in choosing their spiritual food they remained masters of their own table. In this way there was plenty of time to retreat into oneself, to reflect, to reconcile one's mind with itself. The concentration of the mind thus came naturally, and sometimes distraction, diversion and relaxation had to be deliberately sought in order to escape the excessive urge to occupy one's own mind. The mind remained more master of its own house. There was no such restless knocking at the door. It was the exception rather than the rule for another spirit to enter the quiet room of the soul and occupy it. People's minds were busy, active, but they were not as occupied with what the printing press brought to the ordinary citizen. Today it is almost like an order office, where everyone who writes drops off his package, but in those days, people only received what they themselves ordered, and furthermore the mind had its own life process, which formed character and resilience.

To wish for that time back would be to reach for the sky. That is not possible. That is not allowed. It would reek of the soot in the dip. In logical development, what was then has grown up into what is now. It is God's order that life should expand, broaden and expand. And it will eventually become apparent that the human spirit has the latent capacity to regain its freedom of mind even under the overwhelming influence of what is occupying it. We live in an age of transition, and it has happened so fast that our minds are not prepared for it. We have lost our balance, and each of us has to make an effort, on the one hand, to live with the life of the times and yet, on the other, to keep our minds free and to force them to concentrate on themselves.

But this is not possible for the masses, and you will have an open eye for this too when you judge the decline of religion in society. Those who have entered the Sanctuary are now safe, but the multitude who still remain in the forecourt are subject to the damaging influence of the gusts of wind that blow by day. The traditional, historically transmitted faith of the multitude (to be distinguished from the personal faith of God's children) is not able to withstand this upheaval. Among the multitude in the courtroom, people know a great deal, are busy doing much, and are interested in all kinds of things, but their minds are no longer free, their spirits are overwhelmed, and their minds are occupied by the wealth of knowledge and learning about all kinds of things that daily penetrate their consciousness. They themselves feel this pressure and therefore need entertainment and relaxation much more than others; but they do not have the peace, quiet, isolation to withdraw into themselves and concentrate. Their minds are constantly occupied with all kinds of things, not because they seek them and want them, but because everything attacks them, assaults them, overwhelms them, and occupies every place in their hearts and minds uninvited. They are not living, but being lived. They no longer have a choice, but must take what is set before them. This disturbs them, this divides them in their own inner being. They have to think what others think. They have been seized. They are no longer themselves.

If what flows through them as a current to confirm the religion, or at least to draw their attention to the religion, would not be so fatal that the apostasy from the faith of the fathers would also occur among this large group. But just the opposite is the case. By far the greater part, everything that floods them in this tidal wave, goes completely outside of religion. It is all emerging from the world and engaged with the world. The soul does appear in it, even a lot, but the soul as it struggles here on earth, feasts on appearances, and defiles itself. Or also, where one aims higher, and

the nobler things blaze, and the ideal shines forth, yet it remains limited to this life, and one notices nothing of a higher and eternal destination. Religion is also discussed, however little, but when it is, it is mostly in a destructive sense, either the basis of religion itself is undermined, or the professed believers in religion are subjected to ridicule and jeering.

Thus, out of this overwhelming stream there almost never emerges a force either to confirm the transmitted faith or to awaken deep religious thoughts, much less to tempt man to seek and thirst after his God.

They were already alienated from the Church. The Holy Scriptures were put on the bookcase for good. And religious literature is found to be tedious and boring. It does not stimulate or relax. That is why even the female generation, which for a time clung to the old tradition, is turning away from the Christian religion, sometimes to seek a new stimulus in Spiritism or Theosophy, but even more, unfortunately, to turn its back on all religion. And how can this be done? Religion first of all requires concentration of mind. Without concentration of mind, there is no prayer. There may be a short form prayer before meals, or a fragmented "Our Father", but there is no prayer from the heart, from the depths of the soul, no seeking of the Infinite with our finished spirit. One, occupied as one is in one's spirit, no longer returns to oneself. One does not want it anymore. One is afraid of it. And also, one is too absent-minded for it. The mind is always too full, too occupied, too overloaded for it. Already at school one is deprived of concentration. Throughout life one has drifted away from the concentration of one's mind. One is not trained for it. One is no longer capable of it. And where everything is withdrawn from God, and almost nothing is left to lift the heart to God, how will any religion worthy of the name survive in the Garden of Eden?

Do not forget that all religion is an intrusion into the unity of the universe, in order to grasp in that unity the One, from Whom all is, with the hidden of the soul. So, to take pleasure in Godliness, you must climb out of the many, the miscellaneous, the infinitely different, to the coherence of it all, in order to penetrate to the One, from Whom it all is, and it is precisely to that summation, to entering into that unity, to crossing the boundary that separates the finite from the infinite, that the people in the forecourt so seldom come. The mass of things that overwhelms them is too great for that. When you talk to them, you not only feel that they are too absent-minded, too hung up on the few, but also that the inner spring, which should lift the religious life, no longer springs in them.

This does not hinder the gathering of believers in the Sanctuary, but it does indicate that the multitude in the court will almost dwindle away within not so many years. Even from the court they will go forth to what lies beyond it in the life of the world. The faithful will not diminish. Our King will always preserve and protect His people. The Sanctuary will not be empty. But the court, if not emptied, will be depopulated for the greater part. The historical, the bare traditional faith will continually decrease in strength and scope. With the older families you still find this historical faith, but the sons and daughters have turned away from it. And with the grandsons and granddaughters it will be even more bitter. They will be completely alienated, and even the name of Jesus will become a foreign sound to them. There are already such people. Not many yet. But they are increasing in number. And that number will yet grow. There is no power that can stop it. It will be as it was in the days of the apostles. There will be a circle of personal believers in the sanctuary, but this small circle will be placed in the midst of a society that is alienated not only inwardly, but also outwardly from historic Christianity. Such a process proceeds slowly, but once begun it restlessly continues. And in all this the high decision of our God will take place, to make all And in all this there will be a high decision of our God to expose all Christianity in its vanity and defenselessness, and just in contrast to this to make the divine power, which is at work in "the little flock", and which is powerful, yes, only powerful, to make him who fears God, enjoy the spiritual "sameness" of his soul, even in the midst of the endless dispersion of our days.

VIII. - The great cities of the world.

Woe, woe, the great city! REV. 18:16.

UNDER three different points of view the contrast between the earlier and the present mankind appeared before us. Formerly powerless against the forces of nature, now dominating them. Formerly locked up in a small, silent world; now participating in the life of the whole world in a never-ending movement. And likewise, formerly limited in knowledge; now loaded with knowledge. Applied now to the life of religion, it made that powerlessness dependent; made that peace of life retreat into itself; and made the smallness of acquired knowledge eagerly grasp for the knowledge that was revealed. And conversely, the awareness of one's own power has now weakened the feeling of dependence on the Almighty; the restlessness of outward action leaves no time for life in the inner chamber of one's own heart, and the predominance of finite knowledge pushes back nostalgia for the knowledge of the Infinite. As will appear later, this should not be so, and our being created in God's image should rather have led to an opposite result. But the guilt of the past, and the sin of the present generation, will not allow it otherwise. Our power in all areas, our being at home everywhere, and our having knowledge of everything, has put our own self in the glory and made it almost inaccessible to the glory of God and His Christ. Where rebirth intervened, this spell was naturally broken, but the general instinct for faith in the unseen, which had previously been the most powerful lever for our human life, lost its power, and as a result religious life everywhere declined in importance and strength. The religious instinct has therefore not gone. The spark is still there. But the layer of ash that presses the spark prevents the glow from shining.

When the former concentration of life and consciousness in one common worship was lost, the desire and need to find the concentration of life in something else had to arise out of it. However much our lives may have been broken up by excessive individualism, the urge for unity and solidarity cannot be ignored. This urge for unity arises from our own being. However different and sometimes contradictory the inclinations and abilities of our souls may be expressed, in everything our one, own being is expressed. And even if nowadays one prefers not to speak of the soul, the more one gets used to speaking of his I, and again of his I, and that I is and remains the unity in our own existence.

But our human race cannot rest in that unity of the personal I. The ego of one person as opposed to the ego of another has a disconnecting and dissolving effect,

and hence the constant search for an imposing power that unites us in all our differences and all our divergent expressions of life. That power used to be Religion. Not first among Christians, but already very strong in ancient Israel, and even in the world of the pagans. Local idols combined local and national life, but among the Greeks, for instance, the high idea of Jupiter hovered over and above the local idols, giving a certain unity to the whole body of the gods. But this unity reached a higher level when the worship of the one true God entered the world. That worship was brought together in the veneration of Christ, and then a time came when all human life was actually concentrated in the worship of Christ. Not only personal life and the life of family and relatives, but also the life of the schools of science, the guilds of our craftsmen, city life, the life of art and skill, everything was religiously sanctified and found its meeting point in the Christ. Thus, there was unity, thus there was concord, thus there was concentration, and it was this that gave human life its higher harmony, as through a holy glow that radiated from the unseen world to this world of visible things.

Now, on the other hand, that conception has been broken, that unity is gone, that concentration has been lost, that holy harmony has faded. There is too much turbulence in the waters, which pushes up the sludge from below, and therefore there is no longer any reflection in those waters of what shines in the firmament. The clarity was lost. What we see around us has already become murky. It is already one stormy sea, which feels its waves being stirred up by the wind of the day, and cannot come to rest.

And yet, in the midst of this disintegration and fragmentation, the never-dying need for unity and synthesis is once again making itself felt, but it is now working in an entirely different way. Whereas in the past it was a striving for spiritual unity, today that unity must have a visible, a material character. In the past it came to us from the unseen world, now it is fixed in the world before our eyes and seeks its concentration not in the Jerusalem that is above, but in the mighty World City, which encompasses all human life. This striving has also been known in antiquity, on the one hand in Jerusalem and Athens, and on the other hand in Babylon and Rome. But even though there is equality, it was different then than it is now. Jerusalem and Athens were world cities, not because of their huge size, nor because they contained all human life, but because of their spiritual excellence. As cities they were relatively small. But Jerusalem shone through the monotheism on Zion, Athens through its artistic genius. And although Babylon and Rome were already powerful cities, and to a certain extent, prototypes of the world city, yet in

a completely different sense than we see today. The temple, albeit of the idol, always remained the centerpiece. There was power, there was ingrained decay, there was bulging of wealth, there was sinking into sensuality, but, for all the doubt and skepticism, there still remained something sacred that held together. But even in that subdued state the prophet saw the danger that schools such powerful cities. Babylon even remained, in his application to Rome, the evil name of the city that drank the peoples from its poisonous cup; and the contrast between Babylon as the world city and the Jerusalem that is above, inspired the visionary on Pathmos.

Yet antiquity has never known the metropolis as we know it, as the aggregate of all human life and even under the renunciation of all high and holy semblance. In our world cities, the metropolis has automatically become, without anything higher or more ideal, the center, the governing power of human life. There is no question of the smaller cities, as we also know them at home. Urban self-indulgence may also refer to Amsterdam as a world city, but every connoisseur knows that the world cities are Paris, London and Berlin for Europe, and New York for the American world. Concentrations of millions of inhabitants, who draw the action from all over the country, and regard all the rest of the country with its towns and villages as a dependent area over which they hold sway. Yes, even more so, cities that do not respect national borders and try, each in its own field, to subjugate the life of all countries to itself. Paris as the metropolis of wealth, London as the metropolis of trade and commerce, Berlin as the metropolis of human knowledge, and New York as the metropolis of money. People flock to these metropolises from all sides. It is a pilgrimage from all over the world to first feel fully human in those cities. They draw everything to themselves with magnetic force. From them emanates the watchword that must resound throughout the world, and set the tone for life to the most distant regions. Whoever did not make the pilgrimage to those cities does not count as a full human being. There, in those cities, one lives one's own life; everything that flourishes outside merely imitates the life of those cities. They are the mistresses, the rulers in every area of human existence. Wine is poured in those cities, and according to the word of the Seer, they have watered all peoples with their wine. Those who set the tone there are "clad in fine robes of purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls." Still according to the old type, portrayed in such powerful language by the prophets and by the Seer at Pathmos.

Thus, the ancient concentration of human life under the shield of Christ was lost; the concentration that the city of the world gave us in its place could only be an

unholy one. Already the prophet gave the type of such a city the impression that it could not be anything other than a "gathering place of unholy spirits," a "repository of what is unclean and hateful. This could not be more different. The seed of sin is present in the heart of every human being. The more people you bring together in one place, the more you heap up the unholy fuel for the fire of sin into an unholy mountain. The idea that this is only the case in Paris is as inhuman as it is contrary to the facts. In England's capital evil accumulates just as powerfully. Berlin has not been left behind in any respect. And in New York sin, in its shameful forms, celebrates satanic orgies. In each of these cities there is a pool of iniquity in all moral and material areas. Not as if all these cities were like that. In all these cities there is a civilized, very tasteful facade, but behind it evil brews and ferments without bounds and bandits, and the poisonous gases evaporate everywhere in wild rising clouds.

This comes from the hiddenness of impudence. In the countryside and in small towns you are known by reputation and by your name. Self-esteem therefore compels self-restraint. Holy shame is a guardian angel there, keeping wild passion in check. But in those metropolises with their millions and millions, the individual loses himself completely. Nobody knows him. He is left to himself and therefore loses sight of the guardian angel of shame. He sees how others do not bother about anything anymore, and in their bacchanalia he rejoices. Night is turned into day, day is turned into night. One ceases to be a human being with one's own name and esteem, and is absorbed in the bread-drunk crowd. Thus, sin among men and women takes on ever more shocking forms. From whom should one spare oneself? From whom should one hide? It becomes one evil sport in sensual self-degradation, in which one tries to outdo the other. And so, one drinks, one plays, and makes oneself miserable, until all the higher nobility has been trampled upon. Nothing to which one recoils any more. Nothing that wakes up the voice of conscience. One knows about the other and feels safe in one's own guilt because of the other. None of the unholy "brothers" will consider you less. The children know it from their father and mother. The younger brothers and sisters from the older. It is one irresistible train of pleasure and wealth, which lures and pulls everything along. And this in turn has the natural consequence that from all over the country, and even from distant countries, the most wicked and criminal elements crawl and creep towards these world cities. There they find a world to their liking, and, once there, they give vent to their evil passions.

And in those inwardly depraved world cities all the glory of human life is drawn together. All art opens its temple there and gives honor and gold to its priests and priestesses. Artistic entertainment celebrates its highest triumphs there. Singers and singers with the most sonorous voices, players of all musical instruments and of the utmost skill, theatrical performances with the most splendid decor and the most accomplished action delight the listeners and spectators. What is the life of an artist in a provincial town compared to his triumphal march in one of our world cities! In architecture, sculpture and painting, these metropolises surpass everything else in the country with their monumental palaces and richly furnished museums. The forms of life are raised to the highest refinement. The banquets sparkle through the choice of dishes and the finesse of the table settings. In garments and robes a color of cut and harmony of colors and richness of decoration is achieved, as you fruitlessly seek elsewhere. And not only this, but also science flourishes there. Every metropolis smells of its university and displays a series of the best-equipped schools in every field of human activity. There are societies, associations and clubs for all areas of human knowledge. Meetings, lectures and conferences on every area of human science gather a wide range of people in its premises every evening. The government unfolds its power there. An army of police and soldiers guarantees peace and order. The government illuminates canals and streets until deep into the night. For speed of communication she offers you tracks under the ground, streetcars along all lines, carriages under her control. It provides you with drinking water that rivals the water of the mountain stream in purity, and it guards against the consequences of disease, with which filth or poisonous microbes could threaten you. And even without government interference, you are at home in every part of such a metropolis. Taproom on taproom awaits you, to accommodate you. Everything has been taken into account. All of life's necessities are provided for.

The summary of life in such a metropolis therefore far exceeds the concentration of life in your villages and small towns. In those metropolises there is not only a concentration of the life of the whole country and of the whole world, but also a concentration within itself. In the countryside and in our small towns one lives one's own life in one's own home, and in that quiet domestic life a sense of family, devotion and mutual attachment develops. But in such a metropolis, the home is an afterthought. All too many people leave it in the morning and only return to it after midnight. The house is a place to stay if you want to go to bed or if you are ill. But one does not live in the house, but in the city. One has lunch in one's office, one has lunch in one's restaurant, and in the evening one finds one's husband and wife

and their children in the theater, at the concert or in the dining room, and one returns home only to go to sleep. In this way life becomes more and more externalized, transferred to the public domain, and on this public domain the person loses his or her identity, the family spirit loses itself, the family ties are loosened more and more, and ... religion no longer finds a place for the hole of its foot. How, then, could there be any question of a unification of life under Christ as the Head of all of us in all areas of life? Art excludes Him. Science degrades Him to a rabbi of antiquity. And the always evil society in its endless agitation creates for itself a moral standard, which no longer cares about the soul and dares to deny the body anything.

The strong concentration of life in such a metropolis, always going completely beyond the unity in Christ, yes, increasingly deliberately going against the unity of life in Christ, therefore seeks its unity in its own spirit. Not in a spirit of its own, one that comes from on high, nor even in a spirit embodied in a powerful personality, but in a spirit without a name, in a spirit that you cannot portray, yet a spirit whose dominating and compelling power you feel in every sphere of life. No one can resist the power of this spirit. And everyone who wants to participate in it transforms himself according to it. Not only in the large things, but also in the small things, in the fashion of the garment, in the way one presents oneself, in the language one speaks and in the tone in which one expresses oneself. One is addicted to this spirit. No one dares to resist. Like a flock of lambs, one follows the other. Also, in the changes in which that spirit is constantly vermeiling itself. Because what was fashionable ten years ago is now long outdated. Practically every five years or so that same, all-controlling spirit changes into new forms, into forms of how one dresses, what one eats, which room one visits, where one goes in the evening. And so, the form is not changed again until thousands and tens of thousands willingly follow and go along, and no one thinks of continuing to follow what was the rule for ten years. That spirit is different in Paris than in London, different in Berlin than in New York, and whoever comes to Paris from Berlin hastens to abandon his Berlin ways and slavishly blends into the Paris spirit. Who sets this tone can still be said of fashion. It is the man or woman who prescribes the cut and color of your garment every spring and autumn. But for the rest, the trendsetters are unknown persons. No one can tell you for certain why now and in precisely that way our habits and way of life have changed again. But the result remains the same. The spirit haunts and rules, and everyone submits to that spirit, and everyone who lives along follows suit.

And beneath it all, a unity of spirituality swirls and works. All these forms and habits and customs, however diverse and changing they may be, are nevertheless the expression of one and the same intention, one and the same will, one and the same direction, which is unconsciously steered. Nothing stands alone. There is a connection between everything. There is not only external and formal concentration, but also a concentration in unity of mind in everything that steers, directs and leads. This is how philosophers arose who believed they could express this unity of the governing spirit in their system, and these deep thinkers undoubtedly had an influence, but they were nevertheless mistaken when they believed that their thinking created this spirit. Rather, in their system they merely gave expression to what had been awakened in the minds of the people and had gradually become clearer in the minds of a metropolis. Whoever now peeks behind the curtain knows how, in all this, on the one hand the power invested in our human being by God is at work, and on the other all kinds of satanic influences. These two wrestle with one another, and it is from this wrestling that the leading spirit for each new age arises. In the century that now lies behind us this spirit has increasingly deviated from the holy path, and it is more and more clearly engaged in organizing a spiritual human existence that forsakes God in every respect and turns its back on His holy will. We do not know whether this ungodly development will once again be halted, curtailed, defused and subjected to a higher spirit. We may be on the way to the revelation of "the man of sin". It may also be that what is ruling now will be set aside again temporarily. But, whatever the future may bring, one thing is certain: our entire human development is at present marked by the metropolis, and the spirit that emanates from these great metropolises as a guiding and governing force is increasingly leaving its mark on our entire human existence. It is that spirit of the metropolis which, propagated to cities and villages, is increasingly coming to dominate the entire life of our gender. It is that spirit, which imposes its unity, conception and concentration on the sympathetic part of our human race, and seeks to propagate itself in all parts of the world. He, who was once its King, has dethroned Christian Europe, and the metropolis has become its Queen, under whose scepter people willingly bow. What reigns supreme is no longer the spirit from on high that lifts us up with *a sursum corda*, arms us against sin, and unlocks for us the gates of eternity. That spirit of above still rules in the small circle among those who have remained faithful to their King. But the spirit that rules over the masses is a spirit from the world, which, within the confines of this world, shuts off life and, even among the sufferers, takes possession of the human heart more and more. It is of this "spirit of the world" that the "world city"

is the shining temple. And out of that temple of the spirit of the world, one does not even fight against the Kingship of Christ anymore. That would have been the very thing that would have awakened the zealots of Christ's Kingship. No, it would have been better to spiritualize the Kingship of Christ, to leave it undiscussed, and finally to let it be forgotten. Thus, the terrain was cleared. Europe forgot that it had once possessed its harmonious unity for all the expression of life in the Christ, and thus the door of the heart opened to the majesty of the new Queen, to the Babylon which would give us its unity of mind and in its glory the modern summary of our human life.

IX. - The Queen of the world.

Without natural love. 2 TIM. 3 :3.

We drew a sharp line of distinction between the "small flock" and the "wide multitude" which is still to be found in some churches. The fact is that the circle of the personally conceived was always small, compared to the wide circle of those who only nominally participated, without consciously living. Since there is still an ongoing connection between this small and large circle, we spoke of the smaller group in the Holy Place and the wider group in the court. Among those who live in the Holy Place, the religion of course continues to live in unbroken strength, but among those who wander into the Sanctuary, the level of religion declines with each new decade; and for many the time of apostasy has come. They see for themselves that the faith that has been handed down no longer has any hold over them; that therefore, on the face of it, they do not even belong in the court anymore; and one by one they sneak out of the court. A few to look for a new stimulus for higher feelings in a Buddhist chapel or at a spiritualistic séance, but by far the most to do without Religion until their death. And it was pointed out that the steady descent of the stream of religion into the broad bed of life, not to strike hard at those who were cast away, but rather to show how times and circumstances in the great multitude sometimes sharpen the stimulus of religious feeling, and at other times blunt that same religious feeling, without any appreciable difference being noticeable in the condition of the unregenerate heart in the course of the centuries. It is and remains the same person in every nation and in every century, with precious seeds for higher learning, but also with strong seeds for the most fearful sin and for the decay of the poisoned heart. Now times and circumstances used to be favorable for the maintenance of a certain general religiosity; but those same times and circumstances have now become more and more unfavorable for the flourishing of that general religiosity. Hence the sinking of the significance of religion in public life; hence the ever-widening doubt and indifference; and hence, finally, the increasing apostasy, not among the faithful, but among those who followed. A decline, which you sometimes see in the same family, when you see the very old in the family still go to church, the second generation still has a certain respect for the transmitted religion, but the grandchildren grow up completely without religion.

Yet man's higher nature prevents the loss of any higher aspiration, of any search for a common ideal. Christian society once found that higher aspiration, that common ideal, in the Christ; now it seeks and finds it in a more highly strung

world life, which is called modern life. In that modern life a common spirit agitates and reigns, which gives life unity of tone and unity of purpose, and that common spirit rises in the great metropolises, and from those metropolises it draws in land and people, gradually conquering whole nations. Thus, a fashion for life, a tone of life, a view of life, emanates from the metropolises, which nevertheless reunites the damned spirits in a certain unity. It is this modern Babylon that now, as Queen, is increasingly subjugating our modern society and controlling it in every aspect of life. And she does this so tyrannically that no one who wants to keep up with the times and count dares to oppose her order of life. The man of the world slavishly follows her fashion, her tone of life, her usability and her view of life. Thus, powerfully organized, the kingdom of the world rises up against the kingdom of Christ. We feel that what is left of the Church's influence in our lives stands in the way of the pursuit of that kingdom of the world. These are all ties from the past that prevent the modern spirit from spreading its wings freely and joyfully. Hence the gradually rising anti-clericalism, which is anxious to repel these ecclesiastical influences from all quarters and cannot rest until every influence of the former general Christian life has been broken and nullified. Science, art, pleasure-seeking, money-seeking, they must all work together as instruments in the service of that general world spirit which is modernizing all life and all life-existence with ever-increasing vigor and which is celebrating its triumphs over nothing from modern Babylon. It is this spirit that internationally and cosmopolitically unites all compassionate nations under its scepter, gathers the entire civilized world under its scepter, and thus takes the place previously occupied by the reign of Christ, from which the Kingdom of Christ is now increasingly being displaced. Once the Kingdom of Christ had managed to win a place in the hearts of the nations. Even then all sorts of lower passions stirred, but the Gospel managed to remain in control and to unite all the baptized peoples in a higher aspiration. But now this has ended. An entirely different spirit has taken over the hearts of the nations. An entirely different spirit has arisen that binds them together and controls them. At the center of life, it is no longer the spirit that emanates from Christ that is in control, but the modern world spirit. And the focal point of its power is found in the modern Babylon of our cities, which are distinct but nevertheless work together in harmony.

Now, in the past, when the spirit of Christ set the tone in the great world drama, it joined the natural life, as it is given in the nature of our human existence. The single human being lived in natural bonds. In the bond of family life, in the bond

of family life, in the bond of his home life, in the bond of his profession, in the bond of national life. Powerfully he could develop his personality, but never except in these natural ties. These ties were expressed in what is called "the natural love. Certainly, even beyond those natural ties there were ties of friendship and spirit-sympathy, but "the natural love" was and still remained the backbone of all social life. It was the love of parents for their children, of children for their parents, of sisters and brothers among themselves, of members of one and the same family and gender for each other; the love for one's village and town; the love for one's business or profession; the love for one's region and fatherland, in which natural love expressed itself, which bound everyone together, could fill the whole nation with enthusiasm, and gave direction and direction to life.

And in the whole wide field in which this natural love worked and bound and animated, one could not suppress the inner realization that all these ties, in which one felt united with others, had been created by the higher hand. We did not choose our parents, but were born of our parents. Caring for the life and upbringing of one's offspring was a life task imposed by the Almighty. To love and obey one's father and mother was felt to be an obligation imposed by God. His sisters and brothers were placed in the same family as us by a higher order, and the bond of blood was drawn. The "Thou hast, O, All-embracing King, destined the place for each one's dwelling, the circle in which he shall work," lived, especially in the few moving and relocating, in everyone's heart. Father and son usually worked in the same profession, and the guild bond was woven into the family tie. And when peace was disturbed and the homeland threatened, father-country love worked like an electric spark that set the whole nation ablaze. Thus, the whole of human existence was summed up in bonds of natural love, and the whole weave of these bonds presented itself as a consequence of a higher order. We felt that natural love was innate, that it was worked into us by God, and that it lifted us up from worship as a matter of course.

The Christian religion had never questioned these bonds. Certainly, it had always made the unity of our human race prevail over narrow-minded patriotism. It had always extended mercy and compassion to the stranger. And she had never forgotten that there might be cases in which he who loves his father or mother above Christ would be unworthy of him. But in all this there was nothing but a necessary corrective of all the abuses that selfish or sinful views could make of natural love. But, with this reservation, the Christian Religion had always been connected with family life, connected with local, regional and national life, and

had penetrated sanctifyingly into every profession. She did not disrupt natural life, she did not set it aside, she did not regard it as indifferent, but penetrated it with her spirit, brought it back to its original purity, and offered herself to supplement it.

The life of the human being passed over the border of the grave. It could not and should not be understood as exhausted in this brief existence. For some, a period of sixty or seventy years could still be called an existence. But what about the tens of thousands and millions who died young or barely reached manhood? The human heart cried out for eternal existence. Life, with its short duration, with its full measure of human misery, with its overflowing measure of iniquity, could not be life. Thus, our human existence was in the minds of everyone as if it had started here, but as if it had never ended here. Rather, it was seen as having only its beginning and development here, only to reach its full, infinite unfoldment later in an eternal existence. One reckoned with dying, one reckoned with the awesome power of death. And the question of what would be next weighed on everyone's heart and placed each person's inner life before the Judge of the living and the dead. Our entire earthly existence was dwarfed, yes, almost insignificant, compared to that infinite eternity that opened its gates to us in death. And this all-embracing moment of memento mori automatically connected with our appearance before the Almighty, and thus made our stained and sinful existence withdraw before His Holiness. Hence questions and problems to which earthly life did not offer even a hint of a solution. And it is at this point that the Christian Religion offers itself to fill up this gap in our existence with a treasure of divine light and divine mercy. Expectations, which otherwise hovered in vague form, thereby took solid shape. Through the dark shadows of death, it showed us the way. The temporary was connected to the eternal with a firm hand. Our existence broadened, widened. And even standing at the gate of eternity, the heart of man retained its sense of rest. The life here and the life hereafter were united in holy unity. One spirit could penetrate both. And the spirit that was to inspire our human life here now, and later on when we entered eternity, was the spirit of Christ, who, seated at the right hand of the Father, was vested with all power over the living and the dead. Thus unity! The sum total of our existence in one holy harmony, which emerged from Christ as the King of all, and which found its natural point of connection in that "natural love" which God, as the Creator of all, had placed in our hearts and in our human relationships. Thus, Religion sanctified life, and life led to Religion.

But of course, for the modern spirit of the age, this could not stand. That spirit of the world also meant to bind life together. Without fixed ties unity, nor power, nor dominion is conceivable; but natural love could not retain its honor. The modern spirit of the age proceeds rather from the assumption of the free individual, of the equality of individuals, of the mechanical binding together of individuals according to their own choice and will. This spirit of the world cannot take its starting point from something that lies outside our world. In that world itself it seeks and finds the secret of its power. In that world, of course, man is the controlling element, and thus man's choice and will must organize this modern world. That free choice and free will of man is a direct requirement as soon as you take the individual as your starting point. Every bond of birth, family, relatives, place of residence or whatever else, would, if taken more deeply, still be laid by the Higher Power, and thus make the individual unfree, and determine the individual not of himself but by a power from outside. And after all, any recognition of a power that determines us, that lies outside, behind or above us, would not leave the decision about us and our life's destiny in our hands, but would place it in the hands of the Almighty, and thus lead to the help of religion again. And that is exactly what we must not do. This would be a relapse into the error of our ancestors. It would make us dependent again on all kinds of influences that acted upon us from a higher world. And this is now certain, our life must be explained from the world and must merge into the world. It must and will remain a life from and for the Kingdom of the world. Influences may work on us, and if necessary, control us completely, as long as they are and remain influences originating from nature or from man to man. But it must always originate from the world and man, and in the case of an omnipotent man from his own choice and will. Not every one of us, not every human being, can remain master and ruler over himself. The influence of man on man is admitted. But even that influence of man on man must not and may not arise from necessity of the Higher Order, but must find its origin in a human invention, in a human contrivance, in a human choice of will, in a human act. You can go back in history as far as you like; but however far you trace the working of man to man, the impulse, the drive that once went out and is now working in you, must always originate in the individual and reach and affect you as an individual. There is a separate, very complicated pathology also of the multitude, and the mysteries which this pathology of the multitude hides from us have not yet been revealed for a long time. But this is certain, that one can never count with anything but individuals, and furthermore with the coincidental ties that the one individual has made with the other individual.

Thus, the organic bond of life between the sexes is replaced by the mechanical bond of life between the individuals, and in principle natural love is forsaken. The bond of marriage and the bond that binds parents to their offspring become weaker and weaker. That from birth an obligation to respect one's parents would result for the child is no longer admitted. It is considered normal that parents should pay for the pleasure that led to birth by supporting and educating their offspring, but no obligation arises from this for the child. The natural love between parents and children is fundamentally affected by this. Family life loses its nature and character. If necessary, it can be put aside. Where it still survives, it is the fruit of the will of the married or cohabiting couple, but it no longer has any higher order or deeper basis in life. Sisters and brothers can love each other, but they can also leave it at that. The bond that binds them together is entirely accidental, came about without their will, and is the fruit of others' actions for which they are not responsible. In this way the solidity of family life, and with it the basis of all social life, is disrupted; much looser play is being made with the solidarity of the inhabitants of one and the same place or the fellow countrymen of one and the same fatherland. The division into nations and peoples gives false distinctions that have come to us from a wandering past, and everyone's ideal must be the proclamation of the one world republic that will have a general social character and encompass the whole of our human race. Anarchists and Socialists, who present themselves as real *sans patrie's*, certainly go the furthest in this, but still they elaborate in their plan no other ideas than those that are inculcated as basic ideas in all kinds of circles by the modern world spirit. The world city is the ideal. Cosmopolitan in all traffic and trade. International, the ideal of life. And the one spirit of the world breaking through all national walls of division in order to overthrow them. Is not the one world language already in the making?

In this way the old ties are being loosened and their significance diminished, and on the other hand there are all kinds of openings for a completely different, not divinely ordained, not inherent in our nature, but emerging from human choice and will. For the organic union, which God created in life itself, an external, mechanical union, which arises from everyone's submission to the modern world spirit. A bond that is not in the blood, not through the treasure that history has left us, not through local cohabitation, but a bond that is forcibly forged by thinking alike, by following the same customs and ways of life, by being enamored with the same ideals, by being addicted to the same fashion, by adopting the same tone of life, by striving for the same innovations, by allowing oneself to be inspired by the

same spirit, above all by breaking with what was once sacred to all in the Christian religion. - And now this attempt comes up against the natural order of things. The organic connection, laid down by God, cannot be ignored, but it holds firm, and modern world life therefore lacks its natural basis. Just look at the senseless attempt to abolish the difference in principle between man and woman, an attempt which certainly takes its revenge from the earlier underestimation of woman, but which, in denying the inherent nature of woman, makes itself a mockery of the unconditional demands of nature. However, even though the modern spirit of the age is time and again challenged by the nature of things, it does not give up, it ultimately attacks that nature itself, and thus leads to the sad result that in the modern world man's spiritual will and intention increasingly lose their conformity to the natural basis of our existence.

The tenacity with which the Christian tradition still holds firm in the face of this modern spirit (we are not speaking here of believers, but of the great multitude) is primarily due to the fact that the Christian religion coincides with the natural order of life, and that the modern spirit goes against it; that the Christian religion conforms to that natural order, and that the modern spirit breaks with it. Yet the modern spirit is still gaining ground noticeably. This would be inconceivable in an unsanitary society living in accordance with its inherent order. But all sin is loosening of the bonds laid down by God. Again and again the cry of emancipation from the second Psalm: "Let us cast off their bands. And it is on this sinful side of our fallen nature that modern life joins in. Not without the interference of a higher intention, which will once bear its God-given fruit. But the lure for the multitude lies not only in the attractiveness, but also in the sinfulness of the spirit of the age. From the very beginning fallen man also harbors enmity against God, and it is in this spirit of the human heart that the world spirit finds its unsought and powerful ally in a thousand hearts in all parts of the world.

And so, it remains Babylon versus Jerusalem. Both, of course, taken typically. The Queen of the world as opposed to the King anointed by God over His Zion.

X. -The money power.

Thou canst not serve God and Mammon. MATTH. 6:24.

Not the "golden calf", but Mammon is in the Holy Scriptures the brand for Money as an unholy power. The statue of a bull cast from pure gold, which Israel raised to the altar in the wilderness, was intended to be a symbolic representation of the Creator of heaven and earth. People did not expect gold from it, but gave their gold for it. And so, the whole struggle for or against the money power goes beyond the "golden calf". Judging purely by the sound of it, a kind of audience alienated from Scripture brought this talk of the "golden calf" into vogue for the purpose of whipping up money. On the other hand, the darker side of the whole world of money is sharply and deliberately summarized by our Lord Jesus Christ in the word Mammon, and condemned by the sharp contrast: "You cannot serve God and Mammon", and particularly exhibited in its anti-religious tenor.

Money can lure one into all kinds of sin; one might almost say that there is no sin imaginable to which it has not lured one; but all this is only the result of the central corruption which all money brings about as soon as it begins to be that which only its God can and may be for mankind. For a long time, it then struggled in the heart. Our human heart needs a foothold on which it can trust, support, lean and count, and from which it derives the peace, the serenity and the tranquility of life. At first this alternates. Sometimes the heart finds this support in its God, other times in its money or capital. Then there is steady oscillation, depending on the suffering or danger that threatens us. As long as this can be warded off with money, our God takes second place. But when the threatened suffering or danger takes on a character that can no longer be fought against with gold, the name of our God shifts to the forefront for most, and the heart actually looks for comfort in the forgotten God again.

For not a few, however, this clinging to money gradually takes on such power that it begins to dominate one's soul and senses. The more money one has at one's disposal, the more firmly and surely one feels in one's power to dispose of such a treasure. Half-pitying, one begins to look down on the poor wretches who, because they have almost no money, still find their relief in prayer and thanksgiving and in leaning on a purely imaginary God. This is granted to the poor, because they must have something to be able to accept their poor fate. But they themselves, as wealthy people, feel elevated above it. Those toboggans chase a dream; they themselves clasp reality. Gold, that is the real, the essential God, what would one

take for an unreal God of fantasy? And so, the contrast becomes sharper and sharper. Religion for the poor and needy, who have to marvel at appearances, but money and gold, the real power for the owners. Their rock, their support and their strength. And so, money begins by standing beside religion; then comes a period in which money pushes religion out of the heart; and the end is that a mystical veneration of money itself arises in the heart. First, God and Mammon are worshipped. Then the whole soul is purified until all religion seems to be obliterated. And finally, not only does the worship of God disappear forever, but something of the old worship revives in another form, and that then passes into a kind of religious worship of money and Mammon. Just as the Christ indicated. First you try to serve God and Mammon. But that is not possible, that is permanently impossible. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore, there is no other way, if you will not break with Mammon, the religion of your God must die in your metal heart, and in the end, nothing remains but the service of the Money God, of Mammon.

What is now the sad course for the individual addicted to money is equally true for entire social circles and for entire nations. Particularly the peoples who devote themselves to the wholesale trade and the money trade are so continually under the incredible power of money, and are ultimately so impressed by this terrible world power that it is only during periods of high spiritual exaltation that you still see a religious tone prevail in the circles of this powerful trade.

In the 16th and at the beginning of the 17th century this religious tone was high among the merchants, who came in large numbers from Flanders and the Walloon provinces to Amsterdam. But hardly had the high pressure of the Spanish tyranny on the conscience passed, and the gained capital increased in size, when also from our trading circles the love for the religion nearly disappeared. If at first in the *hac nitimur, liane tuemur*, i.e., "To this book we lean, and this book we protect," this book the Bible, soon people began to mock that book as the Bible, and came out smiling, that the book on which they leaned, and for which they stood up, was the book of the Stock Exchange. Mercury, the old idol of trade, went up; the God of the fathers who had made us free was forgotten. Money supplanted the service of the One True. Piety went out of sight, and in the end, there was no circle more fiercely opposed to religion than the powerful trading and stock exchange circle of our first trading city of that time.

From the stock exchange, then, this turnaround in the world of thought and in the aspirations of the mind gradually spread to national life. The prosperity of our country came from sailing. On trade hung our national existence. Commerce was supreme because of its influence on all the colleges of state. From the high circles the spoilsport descended to the lower circles. Soon the large bourgeoisie, then the petty bourgeoisie, were infected, and finally the religious fervor persisted only in the circle of "small people" and in the countryside. Not as if Mammon was being openly exalted. Oh, no. Appearances were saved. It was to be a service both to God and to Mammon. But that was just not possible, and so the times have come that unbelief, atheism, has gained a firmer foothold, and the religious traits that were once so prevalent have been eroded from this part of our people's lives.

In the century that now lies behind us, this disturbing phenomenon has continued to spread more and more widely, and has gradually taken on a worldly character. The whole of world life as such is now dominated by money power. There is hardly any concern for higher interests in the international context anymore. Almost every government openly declares that its sole purpose is to increase the wealth and prosperity of the people. This direction of government policy has pushed material and pecuniary interests to the fore. All struggles between states, with or without war, are aimed at securing the greatest possible financial benefits for their own people. This spirit has penetrated from top to bottom and has affected all classes of society. The struggle, the fierce struggle of the so-called proletariat against capital has arisen for no other reason. And from those broad circles the same thirst for money has penetrated into families and individuals. To make a fortune, to improve one's position, and to get hold of the largest possible amount of money, and more money, is the passion of the present generation.

No longer the man of high birth, no longer the man of character and high intelligence, no longer the nobility of soul, has the front seat at the national table. The merchant, the man of much money, the possessor of millions, has been placed in the seat of honor. And so infectious has this passion proved to be, that even the higher classes, setting aside their higher calling, now compete with the peer to equal him in money power; yea, that even kings and princes strive to gain honor and prestige among the money mongers by attracting equally, or if possible, even greater capital. Without fortune one is nothing. Having immeasurable capital at one's disposal, one sees all doors opened, and one climbs automatically higher on the social ladder. Fortune covers everything, without it one is helpless. And especially in our great world cities it is the disposal of the largest possible capital

by which one establishes one's influence, and in the international struggle of nations assures one's supremacy.

One should keep in mind that capital, by steadily developing the credit system, has grown into a previously unknown giant power. Capital as used to be the sole possession of a country is now in the possession of a single person or house. Millionaires as one now counts by the dozens in America, - and as they are found among the great bankers' houses also in London, Paris and Berlin, were formerly entirely unknown. The sums now scraped together and amassed by a few, exceed the budget as it was drawn up in former days for the whole States. Before half a century ago, our entire national budget in the Netherlands amounted to a good 50 million. Nowadays there are money mongers who spend a higher figure, not on their capital, but on their annual income. In the past, too, money "junked", as interest accrued, but this productive character of an acquired capital has been increased by the credit system in such an incredible way that a house or family, which has once secured possession of, say, 200 million, without anything else but the operation of the credit system, can already predict that in the fourth of a century its huge possession will have doubled. And even if the credit system is so strained by this that every now and then a slump, a bad economic situation, a "Crash" ensues, such a "Crash" in its bad effects usually falls more on the small money-owners than on the big money-magnates. They know all about it, they see the coming of such a craze, and they cover themselves; and although they themselves may have suffered a loss, the loss is soon recouped.

The magnetic force emanating from the money power has therefore become so enchanting that the young man of talent and energy feels increasingly drawn to banking and what institutions the money market has created. It is an exception if a man of the first rank, who feels strength in himself, devotes himself to other national interests. What are the low salaries that await in the service of church or state, if you compare them with the high salaries that are offered in commerce? In this way the high power of the human spirit is drawn together in these business circles. Substantial money lenders are throwing themselves into the gold trade, and the rest of working-class life has to make do with all kinds of second-rate talents that are all too ill-equipped to cope with the influences of high finance.

In fact, money harbors a magical and therefore enchanting power. Practically nothing is left that cannot be converted into money, and almost nothing is conceivable that is not safe for money. Money is the general means of exchange.

Everything that attracts and fascinates and arouses desire can be converted into money, valued and priced. And where in the past this monetary power was still tied to gold as a metal, it has now loosened that tie. The metal has been replaced by valuable paper. The available gold is gathered together in the cellars of the banks, and with the credit based on this accumulated mass of gold, the treasure of paper value is issued, which finally succeeds in making itself so independent of the gold as substance, i.e., of the metal, that a rich man in America or England can create all the money he needs by simply putting his signature on a sheet of his cheque book any time he wants. This has raised human power to its highest level. One no longer pays, but one writes a word, and through that word one creates and calls into being all the treasure one needs at any given moment.

In the service of this money power all new emerging strengths have placed themselves. Has our power over nature increased so miraculously, this great power over nature calls everywhere for capital, in order to exploit discovered lands, to set up railroads and mail services, to promote huge traffic and to give industry the opportunity to flood the world market with its products. The states themselves are forced by this to constantly provide themselves with the funds through new, large-scale loans, to complete the organization of social life on their own territory and in their colonies. The more knowledge we have at our disposal requires ever more expensive facilities in order to continue research in all fields; and each new scientific discovery creates new capital requirements for its practical application. The ease of production raises the standard of living, even creates new needs for civil life, which, once again, call for capital if they are to be fulfilled. Thus, the money power has become a world power, which, respecting no country's or people's boundaries, spreads its wings over all human life, seizes everything, and penetrates ever further into the most unknown regions, makes everything dependent on it, lays down the law for all life, and gathers in the great world cities to add a magic touch to life, to build in those cities the temple of its honor, and from there to rule over the whole world.

How could such a miraculous power have remained without influence on the life of the mind? How would it have been possible for such a power to rise, to exalt itself in a splendor and glory as never before, without poisoning the human heart itself? The public sees before their eyes how this money power flourishes, develops enormously, bends everything, and triumphs over oak opposition. And also, especially in America, one sees how in the palace of the money power there is a throne ready for everyone, even the smallest citizen, if only he is bold, cunning and

resourceful. More than one who now has gold in handfuls was a forgotten citizen ten years ago. There is no hierarchy here. Even those who start from nothing will soon be able to wear the diadem of the prince of finance on their temples. Hence the feverish pursuit in all corners and areas to get ahead, to climb the social ladder, and soon to be counted among the rulers of the earth. Greed pushes and pushes, and after all, all pleasure can be bought for money. Hence the increasing hunger for the game. Or is not speculation on the money market just as much a game? Aren't governments themselves constantly encouraging this game through premium loans and lotteries? Many love sport, but the game is also a sport. And why should only that sport be condemned? And so, the game, the game for money, wins in higher and lower circles, ever wider circles of admirers. It is one of the many ways to become a man of fortune, but the way that requires the least effort. Where there is one who wins, there must always be another who loses. But that's the risk. Financial suicide is inseparable from the service of Mammon. And thus, a magic power acts on the unguarded heart, which more and more lulls the nobler feelings to sleep, and in money lust and in nothing but money lust causes the world to recognize its dominating power, which far exceeds all ordinary dimensions, and which more and more assumes an almost all-powerful, an almost divine character. For this world alone, it is so; with the grave, that power irrevocably vanishes from its possessor. But what would it matter? After all, one wants to live only for this world, to merge into this world. To have been able to shine here, to have enjoyed here, to have been great here, is the only passion. Great not through nobility of soul, not through high devotion, not through sacrificing oneself for an ideal, but great through power, and that power lies in money. Whoever has the money sees everything subjected to his feet. Money is also a hard power for its owner, but it makes you lord and master in all the world's circles.

How could the worship of the One who created heaven and earth stand up in the face of such a gigantic development of monetary power in the unregenerate human heart? The worship of the One True God goes so deep. It does not allow you to put your trust in anything else, in any creature, but Him alone. And now we are faced with a riddle. For it has pleased your God, in His inscrutable order, to grant that money power to erect its throne on earth and to wave its scepter over the whole of this world empire. And in it reigns, let us not disguise it, a power most approaching God's omnipotence, at least as long as it concerns only the fulfillment of the needs and desires of the external life. God Himself brought this power into being in a way that is so mysterious to us, in order to make the choice for Him or against Him

the most difficult. After all, it then comes to pass that you can expect all that you desire from the money power; that you can ask and acquire it from Mammon. And this now leads to your God's question in your conscience: Is it now your determined choice to cast all that aside, to fathom it all in its futility, and then to put your one, your unshakeable, your complete trust in Me as your God? Of course, also our ancestors had to make the same choice. But then the temptation was so much smaller, because, compared to the omnipotence of God, the power of Mammon was so small, so insignificant. The money was there, but it could do so little. Now, on the other hand, it can sometimes do everything. And, provided you know no deeper distress of soul, money, Mammon, provides for all your needs, all your wants; and if everything is provided for, it still allows you the awareness of having an unused, almost superfluous, almost inexhaustible power left over, and that flatters your human vanity. And that is precisely why, as now the struggle began, much stronger spiritual power is needed to throw down that Mammon to the ground, and to kneel before your God alone, to love Him alone, and to trust in His omnipotence.

Shouldn't the King-Dollar thus take the place in many hearts that King Jesus once had in the human heart? The kingship of Jesus was and is the sum total of human life, precisely in its nobler, more noble and higher aspirations. His is the kingdom of heaven, as opposed to the kingdom of the world. Everything external, material and sensual can only occupy a second place in His kingdom. In Jesus' kingdom, the spiritual is always the starting point, the goal and the means to achieve that goal. And against that kingdom the kingdom of the money power stands so diametrically opposed. It is in everything the opposite, the planar contradiction, the counter-image of it, and its negation.

And now very certainly King Jesus is, and remains in all things; the supreme. No power of Mammon will ever prevent him from conquering the hearts of those given to him by the Father. That is why we always, and also here, exclude those who have been reborn by the Spirit. But if we look, with their exception, at the great multitude who have to do battle with nothing but the sinful heart, do you not feel, do you not see, do you not sense, with a compassion which nothing can suppress, how poor mankind no longer has any strength within itself and do you not hear the lamentation of melancholy, the cry of despair, that goes forth from that society, oppressed by Mammon, for deliverance, for salvation, to the High, but also to you?

XI. - The dominion of Art.

The voice of the zither players and of the singers and of the flute players and of the trumpeters shall be heard no more in you, and no artist of any art shall be found in you. REV. 18:22.

Of all the life-governing influence which emanates from the present metropolis to what lies beyond its gates is typified by the book of Revelation in this succinctly summarized expression: "By your witchcraft all nations have been seduced". It is an actual bewitching power, the working of which no one can fully explain. It is a power that has a far deeper impact on life than the power that Babylon, Tyre or imperial Rome ever exerted. It is a power that not only subjects and rules, but at the same time transforms life in its spirit, reshapes mankind according to its own model, and thereby tries to leave its mark on our human development, instead of the mark of nature and history. Her apostles cry out that they have replaced the Christian ideal with the ideal of humanity. It is mankind that is pushed to the fore, mankind with its supremacy over nature, mankind with its almost universal presence, mankind with its ever-pervading knowledge. And this powerful, exalted man created the seat of his glory in the metropolis, loosened the bonds of nature in order to replace them with the new unity of decency, fashion, "high life", or however one wants to refer to the newborn type, This new type of man has its own magic formulas, its own objects of fascination, its own language and art of words, and in part even its own ideals, and among these ideals, it is not becoming like Jesus but like Ceresus that is at the top. Fortune is the silently worshipped goddess. And even if, as a new phenomenon, the organized proletariat rises up against the idol called Capital, child of the goddess Fortune, that proletariat too is driven in its innermost guts by nothing but the thirst for gold. And again, and again it is Man who goes up, Man who presents himself in his royal highness, Man who steps on nature, spans the entire world, and is almost omniscient in knowledge, who thrones in the metropolis as in the seat of his Lordship. Here, too, a king of man, as Christendom worships in her, but before the Jerusalem that is above, a Babylon on earth, before being crowned by God Almighty, the self-crown; and instead of the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of gold and money, which subjugates everything to itself. Not the man-king at God's right hand, through whom and in whom God is great, but the man-king who, satisfied with himself, plays with fortune, and has cut off the ties between himself and the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Thus, the opposition to the Kingship of Christ has become an absolute one. It is not kingship that has been abandoned, but Christ that has been dethroned, and

as a true Jacobin modern man has elevated himself to the throne and pressed the crown upon his head. And this process was not carried out arbitrarily, but with the urge of an inner necessity. Man cannot do without a king, and when once for the glory of Jesus' Kingship the eye was turned, there could be no other result, in consequence of the nature of sin, in connection with the disposition of our human nature, then that man himself, with the aid of purely worldly factors, proclaimed himself king over nature, king over the world, king over the whole of our human life.

Yet he who thinks that all the higher, ideal traits of human life have disappeared with this is mistaken. Our creation in God's image means that this can never happen. It is possible with the lower part of the circle, which is completely absorbed in lower motives, but not with the higher part; and the constitution of our human race is simply laid down by God in such a way that, in addition to a stalk and the chaff on that stalk, there is also always a flower bud sprouting from the top. There always has been and always will be an aristocracy of the mind, an elevated circle that knows finer needs and cannot rest until those finer needs have been satisfied. I am not referring to the mystical absorption which also pervades modern life. This mystical absorption arises from dissatisfaction with what is in front of our eyes. It is in fact a break with the modern principle of life. A return to the connection with the eternal and infinite. And whether this mystical aspiration manifests itself in Spiritism, Theosophy or Buddhism, it is always the expression of an unsatisfied being with the treasure of this earthly life. It is a groping for higher things, an enjoyment of what lies above and beyond our worldly life. This therefore remains an exception. A small mystical oasis in the midst of the arid rationalistic and materialistic wilderness. It never sets the tone. It lurks. It does not control life.

What does set the tone and is an instrument of government for the new king of mankind, however, is found in Art, and it is through Art that modern life tries to satisfy its thirst for the ideal. This is not strange. Rather, it is almost self-evident that where Religion is hidden, Art comes along to take its rightful place. Religion and Art are closely related, and both blossom best where they blossom together in mutual harmony. But if Religion is taken away, Art immediately takes over the whole field, washes up like a miracle tree through hypertrophy, and absorbs all the forces and juices that belong to Religion. After all, Art has this in common with Religion, that it lives by inspiration. Everything we can do through the power of our hands in the practical, or through the power of our minds in the rational, lies

trapped in the finite, and only art, like Religion, has the wings by which it raises itself above the finite. Religion finds its origin in our hearts through a higher purpose, which takes hold of our inner lives. Faith laughs at the bond of the sensible and the finite and, through all the mists, immediately grasps the infinite. And this is precisely what all higher Art does. It does not flourish in its lofty spheres unless there are two things involved: being seized from above, and itself immediately grasping what goes beyond ordinary life. Just as Religion, by faith, gives and possesses certainty on its terrain, so Art finds its strength in this awareness of certainty. It does not hesitate, it does not doubt. It is affected by the higher, it seizes the higher, and shows it or sings it out and plays it, and floats as a royal power over life. Hence all Art arose from the spheres of Religion, and first entered the world from that sacred sphere. First the temple, and then the monument and the palace. First the psalm and the hymn, and then first the anthem and the epic. It is therefore not something strange, but rather something entirely natural and necessary, that in a society that has abandoned religion and turned its back on it, Art takes its place.

Now there is serving and governing Art. One can seize upon art as a means of pleasure, rather than as a means to higher elevation. Already in the discussion of the modern type of Babylon we pointed to the giving in to sensual urges, to revel in what a lower art offered to stimulate the sensual passion. At first this was nothing but a grasping at the stimulus that was available in art. One looked for distraction, one looked for relaxation, one looked for diversion, and took the music as it was, the theatre as it presented itself, the song as it was sung, the novel as it unfolded a scene from life in honour and virtue. But, as goes without saying, this ordinary food could not satisfy the quickly over-stimulated taste. There was still too much high-mindedness and too little sense in it. And then began that reduction of Art, which made her the servant of passion. She did not just have to caress and steal, but to stimulate and excite. It had to perform the same service as alcohol: over-stimulate, and once it had over-stimulated, it had to become even more pungent, to satisfy the stronger passion. And so we arrive at the meanness of the stage, at the dominance of the naked and sensual in painting, at the cynical reduction of sculpture, at that hyper-erotic tone in song, until dirty realism in the novel, to that over-stimulated voluptuousness in the dance, to those excesses in music that shatter all senses, in short, to that bestiality in Art, which far exceeds anything that has ever been sanctioned in this respect in pagan countries. The real priest in the temple of Art covered himself with shame, and Art exchanged her divine nature for

a demonic imitation. And money wielded the scepter over her. Demeaning, demomish Art acquired the highest whore's pay, and, encouraged by this, expanded its circle further and further. A decent theatre doesn't pay. An orderly novel does not sell too widely. Cynical art, on the other hand, brings in treasure.

This is clearly stated, lest the all-sided expansion of the field of art, in its broad dimensions, be taken as proof of a more ideal sense. It is said. One hears it said. But there is nothing to it. The opposite is true. Degraded art degrades man instead of elevating him. Be on your guard. It is said that our time is so much higher because we, much better than an earlier generation, appreciate Art, and because Art has risen among us to become a powerful factor of popular development. Democratically, one wants to bring Art even to the lowest class of people. And all this has a beautiful appearance, but the high claim is belied by the outcome. In all such art that stimulates sensuality, it is not the high in us, but the low, the animal in mankind that seeks entertainment, sensual pleasure, passionate satisfaction and cynical enjoyment and does not think about a higher goal for Art. A realistic novel is devoured, not for its character portrayal, not for its beauty of style, but for the common elements it contains. The pages without the platitudes are flown through, the pages with the platitudes are read and reread. It is for the passion, not the Art, that it is all about. Not the height of the Holy, but the depth of Satan, in which you are allowed to peep. And the blame certainly lies with the public who are consumed with passion, but certainly no less with the artist who dares to display such products to the public out of his own passion in order to stimulate other people's passions, or even better, to usher them into the living room. In this sense, Art is no proof of a higher sense and more ideal intentions, but on the contrary is one more sign of our moral decline and decline in human worth.

And yet - and it is this that we were referring to - this is not where Art rises. On the contrary. There is also a small art circle which does preside over essentially higher intentions. A circle in which one is nostalgic for what wonderful, real Art has come down to us from earlier centuries; for what Art created when the Holy still drove the artist, and the Scriptural scene, the whole holy cycle of the Christ and the Virgin, of the Apostles and the Martyrs, and likewise the inspiration of heroism and chivalry, inspired the singers and sculptors. And although that circle is relatively small, it exerts, through the high position it occupies, an uncommon influence for the better. One wants nothing to do with the low atmosphere of Art, which diminishes itself and therefore the public, in that chosen circle. If one finds our century poor in products of the higher Art to which one refers, one withdraws

to historical territory in order to build oneself up from the products of the past and to derive higher inspiration. But own production is not lacking either. And building art, sculpture, painting and the art of music continue to astonish the world with their beautiful, exalted creations. Unlike their ancestors, they created them, yet very much in the style of their ancestors, adhering to their ancestors, continuing in the line of their ancestors. From our Christian point of view, we must not close our eyes to this. This is something we must warn against all the more because from time immemorial, and by no means wholly unjustly, pious people have always protested against the posturing of art. Criticism, of course, remains inadmissible. But wherever, in the field of human life, a higher drive, a nobler ambition manifests itself, this continues to have a claim on our appreciation. And as rightly as we detest the degraded art, it is equally right and proper for us to appreciate the high development that is expressed in the love for nobler, higher art. For us, love for our human race also goes hand in hand with its furthest derivation. And even though we know, and even though we profess, that only the return of the prodigal son to his Father, who is in heaven, can bring salvation, conclusive salvation, our higher calling commands us to rejoice and be glad about every revelation of a more ideal sense that we are allowed to observe. These phenomena also appear under a higher order, and they are a balm poured by the higher hand into the spiritual wound of the presently living generation. It is true that our eye must remain clearly open for the one-sidedness that prevails in this artistic circle, for the blindness with which the heroes of this circle are often smitten by the Holy Spirit, and for the idolatrous worship of Art, which has become the order of the day with many of these men. But even after deducting everything that is harmful in this movement and which must be condemned without condemnation, the fact remains that the people of this circle do not kneel before Mammon and do not sell their souls to the aroused passion, but that they strive, that they are inspired, and that their never slackening effort is for a higher good, a lofty ideal, an inspiration from above.

Having acknowledged this without reservation, however, it remains a duty to look at this phenomenon in the context of its time; and then, unfortunately, a less favourable judgement cannot be avoided. Art is related to Religion because both live from a higher inspiration. But even though that inspiration for art always comes from Above, and even though it can flow to the artist from no other source, it by no means follows that art itself recognizes and understands this. The opposite is true. Speak to any artist you like, and only very exceptionally will you find an artist who prays for his inspiration and also gives thanks for his inspiration, and

much less an artist who, after the completed expression of his emotions and the successful objectification of his inner vision, publicly pays homage to God as his inspirer, exhorting the public to give glory to God and not to him. On the contrary, complacency and a thirst for the incense of talent are by no means strange phenomena in the circle of artists, even our best men. Altar after altar is erected, bowl after bowl of incense is lit, but almost invariably only for the priest in the temple of art, and not for God, whose humble priest he must be. Now let us not be too hard on our artists. The same phenomenon can be observed among our men of science and our men of action. Vanity and the pursuit of honor lurk in all hearts, and envy of one by another stimulates all to be pleased with themselves. It is precisely for the man who has received rich talent, much genius and abundant gifts that remaining humble takes double trouble. Although we acknowledge that we are dealing with a general phenomenon here, it is hard to deny that especially in the circle of artists this glorification of themselves and each other is particularly present, and that especially in this circle the homage to Him, from whom the inspiration came to the artist, is almost always lacking.

If this is already worrying for the builder, sculptor, painter and artist, it is doubly worrying for the poet and for the man of letters in prose. For him it is necessary to pour his inspiration into images, those images into words, and those words into a conscious art form. His is the world of thoughts, and in that world of thoughts one has to account for what one experiences, finds inside oneself, absorbs and produces. That is why, precisely in this circle, the question: Where did my inspiration come from? cannot remain unanswered, and why the artist in this field, who has renounced all belief in the living God, needs a substitute for the renounced God. This is sought mystically in Pantheism, and in the slogan that in fact everything is divine and God. All of nature, all of the world, all of mankind, and all expressions of human life. But one cannot stop at this mystical general feeling. The builder and the artist of music, but not the artist of words. An inspiration that will lead to conscious art in words must itself start from something that is conscious of itself. The all-God must therefore be specified. And since the inspiration, which animates the artist, pushes and drives him towards the beautiful, he can come to no other conclusion than that in the all-Godly of the universe the Beautiful, the Beauty is the fundamentally Divine. Thus, one arrives at the idea of Beauty, of the Beautiful as the Divine, later as its God, and the worship of Beauty passes automatically into the worship of Beauty. But that too remains vague and uncertain, as long as the conscious life has not been concretely discovered in that

Beauty. Beauty without more has no I, and yet, only from a conscious I can higher, inspiring inspiration emanate. And so, it cannot be otherwise, then that the artist must look for this conscious revelation of Beauty in a human being, and then of course in the artist, in the artist himself. He who does not recognise a master above him who formed him, ends up worshipping himself, and sees in himself the self-revelation of Beauty, of the God of Beauty, while a lesser and lower artist finally finds his God in the more powerful artist who formed and animated him.

Thus, here too the King of kings in the field of art, "the Supreme Master Builder and Artist", is dethroned, and the artist-man establishes a throne for himself, from which, as a higher spirit, he wants to reign.

Will the artist, who has become an idol himself, now recognize a higher law? Perhaps in his art products themselves, in so far as he tries to conform to the law of the beautiful, which forces itself upon him from the art schools of the past. Yet also to that law never completely. This would be to acknowledge a power over him and above him, to which he had to submit, and this precisely conflicts with the basic idea of the self-inspiring artist-god, who wants to be god and priest at the same time. But above all he can never and will never acknowledge that there is a law of the Holy One, which also has to govern his art or at least set a limit to his art or direct it in the choice of its goal and the use of its means. And here is the point, where even the more ideal art reaches out to the self-defeating art. Everything, including the law of the Holy, must recede before Art. Art must rule, rule over all areas of our human life.

Now consider how widely this veneration of art has taken hold of hearts, minds and souls, even in our best circles. So much so, that those who frolic with art, cry out for art, sacrifice for art, are the select few in the highest circles. And how could it be otherwise than that this one-sided elevation of an art thus understood and thus practiced must increasingly loosen the threads of the transmitted faith, weaken the respect for the Holy One, and thus also in this way undermine the Christian foundations on which the building of state and society has rested for more than a thousand years.

The pretended royal rule of Art, too, in its most ideal conception, is increasingly detracting from the Kingship of Christ.

PRO REGE.

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

PART ONE - THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN HIS HIGHNESS II.

The subversion of Christ's Kingship.

I. - By the grace of God.

Power against me. JOH. 19:11.

Must among the powers, which may repress the Kingship of Christ in order to put themselves in its place, ought governmental power also to be counted among those which, according to the Scriptures, can overthrow the Kingship of Christ and replace it with their own? Many, more or less thoughtfully, imagine this to be the case, but completely wrongly. For the Governmental power is not included in the Kingship of Christ. As is obvious, governmental power may turn against His Kingship and indirectly attempt to undermine it, while, conversely, governmental power is called upon to serve the glory of Christ.

But all this does not alter the fact that the distinction between the Kingship of Christ and the Governmental power on earth must be sharply discerned from the outset. This will be explained in more detail in the course of our remarks, but we must guard against misunderstandings already, and at least outline the main line that marks the boundary.

Jesus' statement that "he is given all power in heaven and on earth" has often been understood to mean that the kings and princes of the earth derived their governmental authority from Christ.

This has often been elaborated in the Roman Catholic sense, as if all Sovereignty could be derived from the Christ, and thus the Sovereign of Christ on earth also had to forgive and take away the Crown and the Scepter. This was not to deny that the Government ruled by the grace of God, but that the assignment and transfer of authority was understood in an indirect sense. Government power was indeed a power from God, but it came to the magistrate in the name of the Father through Christ and thus indirectly. The Reformed, on the other hand, have always emphasized that the assignment of authority to the government was of an immediate nature, and that Christ was not to be thought of as an intermediary. Our Reformed theologians have not elaborated on this point. Only in two respects has it come up for discussion. First, in their struggle with the Roman theologians

concerning the authority of the Pope over the princes; and second, in their opposition to the Remonstrants, who, conversely, wanted to attribute to the Government an authority in the church, a *jus in sacra*, and tried to derive this from the power that descended upon it from Christ. Only insofar as this subject was included in the spiritual struggle of the day did they explore it, but they did not fathom it in its depths. This was reserved for our time, now that the contrast between the direct and indirect nature of governmental authority has itself come up for discussion in the struggle against the modern spirit of the age. In so far, however, they drew the line of opposition correctly, that they took up and maintained the plea for the immediate, the immediate character of the State authority, as directly derived from God. The starting point and basis for this was the Apostolic Declaration in Rom. XIII. No apostle has made the power of Christ shine in all its glory with greater emphasis than the man of Tarsus. And yet, where in Rom. XIII it came down to establishing the right relationship between the believer in Christ and the authorities, he did so in terms that completely excluded Christ, and in which at no time and with not one letter was there any mention of the origin of the authority of the authorities other than in God Triune. Christ is not even mentioned in this context, while the name of God is emphasized five times in these short verses: "There is no power but from God. The powers that be are ordained of God". "Who opposes Government power resists the order of God". "The Government is God's servant, for your good". And finally, she "is God's servant, as an avenger to punish the one who does evil". And in the whole of this chapter of Rom. XIII the name of the Lord Jesus Christ only appears again at the very end in the last verse, where there is no longer any mention of governmental authority, but rather of spiritual influence on the life of the people, when it says: "So do ye therefore unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and lead not the flesh into lust.

What Jesus Himself spoke to Pilate confirms this. As John 18:36 shows, Jesus confronted Pilate, not as the Redeemer of sin, nor as the Finisher of prophecy, but as King. The Prophet and High Priest stepped down to face the Emperor's Councillor as King. That Pilate gave occasion for this by his question: "Are you then a King? Jesus answered that question. His answer was decidedly: "I am not only a King, but to this end I was born and came into the world." And not only did Jesus emphasize His Kingship, but He spoke with equal emphasis of His Kingdom. But in such a way that he described the nature of that Kingship and that Kingdom in its own special character. The strength of his Kingship lay in the fact that he had come "to bear witness to the truth", and his Kingdom was different from the

Kingdom of earthly princes in that theirs was the Kingdom of the world, and that they maintained an armed force to defend their Kingdom; whereas Jesus' Kingdom "was not of this world", and that, although he had servants, his servants were not allowed to fight for him with the sword. A characteristic of his Kingship and Kingdom, which he further confirmed by his closing words: "My Kingdom is not of this world". That of the Kings and Emperors was here, but not his.

But there is more. Jesus had not told Pilate that he was about to become King; that he would only acquire his Kingdom through his resurrection and ascension, and only then be crowned. No, as King he set himself opposite the Emperor's Councillor. As King, anointed by God, he set himself against the Kingdom of the world. And yet, standing before Pilate in the full majesty of his Kingship, he acknowledged that the Emperor of Rome had power over him, power from above, power from God. And such power that Pilate, in the name of the Emperor, could capture him and release him, and could also subject him to the law of Rome's Emperor to the point of death. That Pilate, by condemning Jesus to death, would be sinning, was obvious, but only insofar as he, in his capacity of judge, would pronounce the death sentence on Jesus, not according to the law, but against the law. That is why Jesus added: "But those who delivered me to you are more guilty, committed greater sins. It was a mixed jurisdiction in Jerusalem. On the one hand it was the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin, and on the other hand it was the jurisdiction according to Roman law. And in so far as the Roman judge could not entirely ignore the verdict of the Sanhedrin, a double responsibility rested on the Jewish court that brought Jesus to its seat as the Sanhedrin had ordained him to death. Hence the sin of Pilate, but the even greater sin of the Sanhedrin. But even though the law was mixed up and the law was interfered with by two sins that were different in degree, - this did not prevent Jesus from acknowledging without reservation that Pilate, as the city councilor of the Emperor of Rome, had power over him.

This did not prevent Jesus from acknowledging without reservation that Pilate, as the Emperor of Rome, had power over him, and that this power over him was given to the Emperor of Rome by God. Of course, Pilate remained responsible for his verdict, and he had to know whether his verdict was lawful or unlawful. But if in actuality he saw in Jesus a pretender to nullify the Emperor's authority in Palestine, then his was the power to break this resistance to the imperial authority. Jesus expresses two things here. On the one hand, that he himself is King, and on

the other hand, that he, also as King of the Kingdom of God, is subject to a power of government, which it did not receive of itself, but from God, also over him.

This can lead to no other conclusion than that there are two kinds of Kingship; that both emanate directly from God Triune, and that these two run parallel to one another. On the one hand, there is the Kingship of the world, which emanates directly from God, and establishes governmental power on earth. On the other hand, there is the Kingship of Christ, which is not from here, not from the world, and which rules on another terrain, but which emanates directly from God on this terrain. The governmental power is ordained by God, and next to it we read that to Jesus as King of the Kingdom of God "all power in heaven and on earth is given." Both of these kingships will one day come to an end. The earthly kingship with the destruction of the world, because it is of the world and belongs to the sphere of the world; but also, the spiritual kingship, when after the judgment "the Son Himself will give the kingdom over to the Father, that God may be all and in all. So, there are two kinds of derived Sovereignty here. The original Sovereignty, the primordial Supremacy, rests in God Triune, and in Him alone, because He is the Creator of heaven and earth. But from this original sovereignty resting in God alone, two kinds of sovereignty are derived. First, the sovereignty of the government, which is God's servant, rules by His grace, and as His servant even has the right over life and death for its subjects. And secondly, the Sovereignty of Christ in His Kingdom, so that in His Kingdom all souls are subject to Him by God's will; not only those who acknowledge Him as King, but also those who deny Him, or have never even heard of His Kingship. Jesus, as a citizen of Palestine, as a citizen of Israel, was subject to Pilate and the Emperor of Rome, and they could and could judge him according to worldly law; but also, Pilate and the Emperor of Rome were subject to Jesus as King of the Kingdom of God, and, when his day will come, Jesus will judge them. But the governmental power itself, and as such, does not belong to the Kingdom of Christ. It stands independently beside it. Hence the independence of the State from the Church, but also the independence of the Church from the State. State and Church are two spheres, both ordained of God, but in such a way that the one sphere, that of the world, is and remains subject to the State for the organisation of the State, and on the other hand, the other sphere, the spiritual sphere, is and remains subject to Christ for all human coexistence.

A reflection on this could be derived from Jesus' Kingship over Zion. In the days when Psalm 2 was sung, Zion represented a people's power, a national sphere, the chosen people of Israel. The battle in this Psalm is between Israel and the peoples

of the Gentiles. The surrounding peoples want to destroy Israel, and in the face of this mass of peoples, Israel, as the people of God, must remain intact nationally. And now the Psalm tells us that God has anointed his Messiah "over Zion, the mountain of his holiness", and that the nations will not be able to do anything against Zion. Rather, it is said to them: "Kiss the Son, lest He anger you and you perish in the way if His anger should be kindled even a little". If we understand Zion to be the type of every nation and people that will give God their due, as has happened all too often, this would lead to the conclusion that Jesus is anointed king over every nation individually, and that what applied to Israel under the Old Covenant would apply to every kingdom or to every republic. And from that would then be deduced that the Christ, therefore, would still be honored as the sole governing power over the Netherlands, England, and whatever other countries there are. It hardly needs saying, however, that this view completely misunderstands the significance of Israel, of Zion, of the Messiah, and of the order established by God in the land of the patriarchs. Israel is an imaginary appearance. In an imaginary sense it was and remained "God's people", even in the days when idols were being sacrificed in every street of Jerusalem. But this imaginary people would not be replaced by the real people until Messiah had come, and the true Israel, not of the circumcision of the flesh, but of the circumcision of the heart, would be gathered from all the people. The apostles therefore clearly expressed that the real, actual Zion is the Zion above, the Jerusalem in the heavens; that the people of Messiah are those purchased by His blood, and that not the children of Abraham, but those born of the spirit are the Israel of God.

There are thus two kinds of dispensation. The symbolic dispensation, in which only shadows and images were seen, and which lasted until the Messiah came. Then there was the actual dispensation, when the shadows and images disappeared and the spiritual kingdom made its entrance. Hence the completely exceptional situation of earthly government in Israel, with which the governmental authority among no other nation can be compared. In Israel the theocracy. The immediate government of God. The Lord is our King, the Lord Himself is our legislator, the Lord Himself is our judge. And from there also in Israel the indispensability of the permanent miracle, as a direct revelation of the theocratic power that governed Israel. In contrast, among the other peoples there was no theocracy, but a derived and upright sovereignty, the legislation emanating from the princes themselves, and the administration of justice initiated and sealed by the government. Not those other nations, therefore; only Israel could be a type and symbol of the Kingdom of

Christ; Israel alone could be a type and symbol of the people of the Lord. And only in Israel's nation-state could the state of the spiritual Kingdom be foreshadowed. It is therefore impossible to draw a direct conclusion from what existed in Israel to the life of the nations and peoples. This is not to say that the theocratic law of Israel does not have much in it that applies to all nations, but the difference must be made clear, lest either the theocratic and symbolic character of Israel be nullified, or that what cannot apply to us be transferred to our national life, so that there is neither a theocratic nor a symbolic nation here.

Still from another point of view this must be seen.

Art. 36 of our Confession rightly says, that the institution of governmental power on earth serves to restrain sin. We believe and confess that our good God, because of the depravity of the human race, has ordained kings, princes and governments, desiring that the world should be governed by laws and police, that the unruliness of mankind should be restrained, and that all things should be done with good order among men. You need only imagine the state the world would be in if sin had not wrought its destruction, and you will be convinced that there would then have been no place for government action. In the absence of all sin, all legislation would have been entirely superfluous, since everyone would have written the law in his or her heart and would never have meant or done anything other than God's will. There would be no point in a court of law where no transgression existed and no dispute could arise. Without sin there would be no curse, and therefore no sickness or desolation caused by the elements of nature, and therefore all the measures that the government must now take to ensure our health and safety would be out of the question. War among nations would be unthinkable where all would live together in peace. Division and splitting among the peoples would never have occurred. No fleet or army would be equipped. From what is called the private initiative, which nowadays is still so much hampered in its functioning by unfair competition, full and sufficient power would have emanated to organize all necessary business data for life. The domestic society, continued in the family, would have automatically brought with it the patriarchal regulation of society. And if, therefore, one examines all our departments of general government in succession, one can come to no other conclusion than that, in a state without sin, they would be perfectly superfluous. The earthly endowment of government power thus refers to an unspiritual situation in which the consequences of sin for public life must be overcome, and the spread of evil must be checked, and that by force.

For force is the very nature of this earthly dispensation. It goes against sin with the strong arm, if necessary, with the sword.

But what does all this have in common with the kingship of Christ, with the spiritual kingdom, with the kingdom of heaven? That this should not be understood as if the Kingdom of Christ were to evaporate into vague ideas and spiritual feelings will prove otherwise later on. But the fundamental difference between the worldly power that exercises compulsion by the sword and the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of Christ, which has no servants who fight for it with the sword, which is not of this world, nor does it come with an outward appearance, but is within you, must not be lost sight of for a moment. To be sure, this Kingdom of Christ also goes against sin, but it does not attack sin from the outside in the wildly growing shoots of transgression, but in the core and root. It does not prune the tree, but heals the cancer of the root. And also, it does not go down before sin is conquered, but shines forth in fuller splendor just then.

Both Kingdoms thus diverge completely in origin, nature, instrument, and purpose. They are each in their own field and in their own sphere of power of completely different predispositions. They are not of the same kind, but each represents a different species. How, then, can governmental authority be derived from the Kingship of Jesus?

It is true that the spirit that goes against what is holy also tries to undermine the earthly institution of government power, to tear it away from God and to turn it against Him. The cry that to speak of a "king by the grace of God" is a relic of worn-out and obsolete concepts is loud. The conviction that it is man himself who, in his own wise order, sets up a state and appoints governments over him, is gaining ground. There is a growing awareness that the people lay down the law and that the will of the people is the highest expression of will on earth. The law is what the people stamp as law. There can no longer be any question of an eternally valid principle of law. To want to avenge a violation of the right, as Rom. 13 intends, is called committing a new injustice, since the criminal is not the guilty party but the victim of someone else's guilt. In short, "Let us break their bonds" is the tone in which the desire for emancipation among all people begins its song. And of course, this disruption of all ties also turns against the Holy One, and ends up by attacking the kingship of Christ threefold. But it never follows that this action of popular sovereignty is fundamentally opposed to Christ. It is not directly directed against the Christ, but against the Supreme Sovereignty of God, and only

in its effect and consequences against the Kingship of the Christ. In the context of our study, therefore, the frenzy of popular sovereignty must not be seen as one of the fundamental forms in which the spirit of the age acts to substitute its own kingship for the Kingship of Christ. From this form of evil comes not the denial of the Kingship of Christ, but the direct denial of God, atheism. Popular sovereignty does not say in its heart: I will replace the Christ, but quite differently: I will set my heart as God's heart. I will make myself God. A people who acknowledge "Our king rules over us by the grace of God" is therefore by no means a Christian nation, and a people who cry out "Get rid of the king by the grace of God" do not thereby throw off their Christian garment, but become godless.

II. - The man lord over nature.

Thou hast crowned him with honor and glory. PSALM VIII:6.

HANS follows up the question, whether the gigantic height of development, to which man gradually ascended, was a bold and overconfident grasping for the forbidden, and therefore to be disapproved of; or whether the possession of this power lay in the calling given to him by God, and thus the acquisition of it deserves acclaim.

Jesus' kingship, it was impossible to conceal, was forced back into the lives of the nations. The shepherds of the nations, the leaders who set the tone among them, no longer derive any inspiration from calling for Jesus. And even within the walls of the Church, singing the praises of Christ as the King of Glory has declined in tone and hue. To explain this disappointing phenomenon, we pointed to the undeniable fact that, for whatever reason, the stream of Godly life, the stream of Religion, has everywhere sunk into its bed. And in order to prevent the believers from exalting themselves too proudly above the doubters and unbelievers in this respect, we stated unequivocally that among us, too, there is a decline in grace, and that particularly among us, the enthusiasm for Jesus' royal honor has been all too much tempered. The distinction between the believers in the Holy Place, the name believers in the forecourt, and the unbelievers, who even retreated beyond the forecourt, indicated the difference between what we observe in our narrow circle and in our broader national environment. And in order to warn against self-aggrandizement and to dissuade us from passing too harsh a judgement on the downtrodden and the doubting, we tried to give an explanation derived from reality of the general error in the stream of religious consciousness. If we are to be able to work for the good in our national environment again, and if the wider public is to understand something, at least, of the honor of Jesus' Kingship, it does not matter whether you denounce all the evil of the human heart in them. Exercise of influence requires sympathy, and sympathy for those who have perished will only arise in you if you understand clearly and unambiguously that the current of general human consciousness in every area is controlled by times and circumstances, and that those times and circumstances in the days of our fathers were just as extraordinarily favourable for interest in religion as they have become extremely unfavourable at present; and if you, recognizing how you yourself share in that unfavorable time, feel yourself in common with your down-trodden people, and therefore let the anger, but even more the searching love towards the people

who are in the court, and towards those, whom you already see wandering around outside the court, speak in your heart.

To explain this fate that is common to us all, we have emphasized three facts that cannot be denied. First of all, the supremacy that mankind was able to conquer over nature in such a short period of time. A power, in the one century that lies behind us, more strongly increased than in the eighteen centuries of Christian life that lay behind it. Something which caused the feeling of dependence, that broad framework for the general piety of God, to fade so remarkably. In the second place, we pointed to the widening of the horizon, which, having previously been confined mostly within national boundaries, now encompasses, spans and joins together the whole world under a single view. And thirdly, the astonishing increase in our human knowledge, not so much in depth and height, but in the width and length of things. Furthermore, we showed how from these three factors a restless movement had arisen, which broke the silence, to which the pious heart aspires, and disturbed the quiet, hidden intercourse with the world above. And where, in this way, man's high sense of self was eroded, and the data for religious life became more and more unfavorable, we showed how unnoticed a kingship of man himself came to the fore, leaving no room for the Kingship of Christ. That kingship of man himself established his throne of honor in the great cities of the world and, from there, controlled entire nations and peoples through what is called the modern spirit of the age. That modern spirit drove back the workings of the Holy Spirit, like the kingship of man, the Kingship of Christ. But deceived by that high delusion, the king-man himself became the slave of King-Mammon. And although modern man then turned to art in order to satisfy his more ideal needs, the love of art soon turned into worship of art, and the king-man knelt down before the god of beauty, in order to lose himself once again in this idolatrous worship of the idol of beauty.

This now places us before the quite different question of whether mankind, by aspiring to that higher power over nature, has sinned in itself, or whether he has fulfilled his God-given calling. And the answer to that question can only be that God Himself has called man to subjugate nature to Himself; that Christianity, in the days of its unlimited rule, has neglected that calling all too much; and that to that extent it is to blame, that today, in the acquired supremacy over nature, a power has arisen which is hostile to God and His anointed King.

Look up the story of the Creation and you will see that man is called to rule. God said: "Let us make men in our image and after our likeness, and let them have

dominion." And not only over the animal world, which comes first, no, it says explicitly: dominion over the whole earth. That the animals came first was self-evident. Before the appearance of man, the animal world was the highest and most powerful expression of creature life. The plant world already stood high above the elements and the dust of the earth. But how much higher was not the lion above the lily of the field, in its abundance of power and freedom of movement. Thus, it had to be made clear in the first place that man would also be the king of Creation over the animal world. The lion was the king of the forest, but man was also the ruler over the most powerful and beautiful appearance in the animal world. Something which was all the more important because, measured by physical strength and greatness of appearance, the lion won so far from man, and the animal world as a whole rallied around the one, comparatively speaking, so weak pair of men. The high idea of God to create man after plants and animals, to create man in his own image and likeness, thus pervaded the coming course of the whole history of this world, when the high command went out, that this seemingly so small and so insignificant man should be clothed with dominion over the whole earth. Herein lay the all-important contrast between spirit and matter. In the higher animal world, yes, even in insects such as the ant and the bee, a spiritual element is undoubtedly present, but it is weak, does not develop, remains in the earth, is bound by instinct, and operates only to a very weak degree by the free choice of will. In the animal as such, the material still prevails. But it was different, completely different, in man. In man, the spiritual element is the controlling element. He can also exercise physical power, but this is of secondary importance, and the higher a man climbs, the more he even renounces the use of physical power in order to gather all his strength in his spirit. The Divine order to give man dominion over all the earth thus rested on the irrefutable notion, embedded in the whole plan of creation, that spirit would rule over matter. In him the spirit would rule over the flesh, and through that rule of the spirit over the flesh he would exercise that spiritual supremacy which, as a spiritual being, gave him dominion over the whole earth, over all of God's creation here below, over all of this world.

This basic idea goes even deeper, since the word spoken by God places this dominion of the spirit in man in direct connection with his having been created in God's image and after God's likeness. Spirit in itself, as we noted, is also present in the animal. Scripture always states that not only man but also animals have a soul. This is already evident in the Creation story. It even begins with the fish. God," we read in Genesis 1:21, "created every living, wriggling soul, which the waters

brought forth in abundance. And likewise, we read in vs. 24, when it comes to the creation of the land animals: "The earth bringeth forth living souls according to its nature, cattle, and creeping and wild beasts. And so, it was". Even stronger in vs. 30: "All the beasts of the earth, and all the fowl of the air, and all the creeping beasts of the earth, in which there is a living soul'. The difference between man and animal is not that we have a soul and animals do not. On the contrary, we have a soul in common with the animals, and our great excellence does not lie in the fact that we also have a soul, but that God Himself breathed into us the breath of life, and created us to bear His divine image. Spirit is a general term, soul is a general expression, but what impresses upon us as human beings is not that we have a spirit or a soul, but that our spiritual soul life reflects God's own image. There is an ascension in creation from dust to plant, from plant to animal, and from animal to man. All this emanates from God and is effected by His word of power, but it is only in man that the chain is closed, because in man God Himself prints His own image.

This high calling of mankind is not only expressed in the inner counsel of God, when God spoke: Let us make man in this way, - but is also proclaimed as a holy ordinance to man himself, and given to him as a high commandment on his wanderings on earth. The newly created human being had to feel small and almost powerless in the face of the power of nature and the animal world that surrounded him. Even though the destructive powers of nature were not yet absent in paradise, the majesty of creation had to impress him and he had to feel deserted and small compared to the countless hosts of the animal world. Even assuming that the tearing element did not yet speak to him from the sight of the mightier animals, man nevertheless saw creatures before and around him of far greater size and number. The question of what his rank and place would be in that world and in relation to that world, therefore immediately came to mind. And to that question God the Lord immediately gives man this answer: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion." (Gen. 1:28). Thus, mankind was crowned by God Himself as king over His creation, over all this world, over all this earth. Man did not yet understand the how. It was a completely unsolved mystery that came to him in this ordinance of God. He, the physically weaker man, frail, slender and small in his appearance, who could only move from step to step, and had no more than his two hands at his disposal, would not only possess and walk the entire earth, the entire world, no, he would have to submit to it. That indicated resistance, opposition. It pointed to an effort of strength that would have to break

that resistance. As dependent as he felt on nature, the whole of nature had to become dependent on him. Not only was she not allowed to dominate him, but he had to control all of nature. Manage it in such a way that it was finally completely subject to him and so subdued that his rule, his royal supremacy and his spiritual domination would become an absolute fact.

In the 8th Psalm, David sang of man's dominion over nature, as also applying to our fallen, sinful state. His song does not jubilate about man in paradise in his unbroken state, but about man as he was in his days, and as he knew himself to be. Hence his deep amazement. He feels within himself, sees before him man in his fallen state, man in his brokenness and misery. In all its depths he therefore feels the contrast between the void, sinful man and the majesty of the Lord. And now he sings about it, how God has prepared praise even from the mouths of infants and children, and how He, by His power over the hearts of His own, casts back the enemy and the wrathful. This mention of "the enemy and the wrathful" proves that he is speaking of man in his days, not of man in paradise. Hence his exclamation: "What is man that thou hast remembered him, and the child of man that thou hast visited him? It is precisely because of the sinfulness of fallen man that the contrast between what he is inwardly and what God calls him to is so sharply defined. And of that man David now rejoices: "You have made him a little less than the angels, and have crowned him with honor and glory." Once again, the crowning of mankind. The crowning of man with royal dominion; something that comes out even more strongly in vs. 7: "You make him ruler over the works of your hands, You have put everything under his feet". Putting everything under his feet" is the fixed Eastern expression for the power and dominion of the King, just as it is written of the Christ that he will "subdue all his enemies at his feet". Even more than one interpreter, including Calvin, wants to understand the expression: "a little less than the angels," as if it would read: "You have made him a little less than a God. In the Hebrew language this is the word Elohim, which is usually used for God. And it cannot be denied that this interpretation is poetically more beautiful, and that on the other hand the comparison with the angels in this place has something unusual. However, since both translations can be defended, we will not go into this further. What is certain, and this is the main point here, is that in the 8th psalm a dominion, as granted by God to man, is also sung about, which presses the crown of kings on man's head.

However, it goes without saying that this cannot mean that each individual person is called to exercise this rule to the full extent. The child cannot handle the lion.

The weak woman cannot wrestle with the Behemoth. Not one man alone can rule over all the works of creation. What is granted here to mankind is granted to humanity, is entrusted to our human race. Man must be fruitful and multiply. From the first pair of human beings the multitude of human armies must develop. Not so on the It is not a single human being, but the multitude of the children of humanity that is referred to here. Not in one generation, but in the generations that follow one another, will the dominion over nature be established. And it is only in this sense that mankind will prove to be more powerful than all the powers and forces of nature around him. Not every man in himself will be king, but man, taken as an expression of the whole species, will be vested with dominion. Time and again a man will fall victim to the fury of the elements, killed by lion or tiger or swallowed by the waves; but man, as an expression of the whole, will have the upper hand in the struggle against the wild beasts, and will triumph over all forces and elements. Hence, in the New Testament this song of David's jubilation is transferred to Christ, because in him, the real king of mankind has first appeared. But it is precisely this that shows that the Kingship of Christ is not to be honoured in him as the Son of God, but in him as the Son of Man, and that it springs from the royal rule with which God Himself had clothed man in paradise. And this dominion is not attached to his physical strength, for one bull can throw a strong man into the air or run him over. Nor does it reside in his soul, for the courage of the lion also comes from his lion's soul, and not from his mouth or claw. No, it is in our being created after the image of God. It is a divine dominion placed upon man, in which God, through man, glorifies Himself.

Thus, according to the ordinance of creation, there is no hint of conflict between the high dominion of our God and the derived and imposed dominion of man. Rather, the one flows from the other. Dominion is so much an indispensable feature of the image of our God, and so much the high sign of His sovereignty, that a creature created in His image would be utterly inconceivable without such derived dominion. This dominion over nature does not come with man, no, it lies within his own being as man. Without this dominion he could not be a bearer of God's image. If he did not rule over nature, nature would rule over him. Not he, the creature with the spirit, but the brute substance, the wild, savage creature without spirit would be master of him. The highest creature would be subject to the lower, and the image of God would be distorted in man and turned into its opposite. This is precisely what has been lost sight of. The image of God has been sought far too unilaterally in the spiritual and religious fields. It is only in the sacred that attempts

have been made to discover the expression of the likeness of God in the reborn human being. And yet, this is possible, this is not allowed. Our confession of our God is, first of all, that we believe "in God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth'. His omnipotence and sovereignty are in the foreground. Whoever loses sight of this, runs into mysticism or, before he knows it, loses himself in the abyssal depths of pantheism. The Almighty is his name, the Most High his honorary title, and that Almightyness is his dominion, his supremacy over all creatures, his royal-sovereign majesty, with which he subjects all creatures to his feet. And how do you want a creature to appear, to be "bearer of His image and likeness', if you take from that creature image the main feature, the basic feature of the Divine being, and withdraw into the moral and religious sphere. And for this very reason it must be emphasized that in the ordinance on Creation and in the account of Creation, in the characterization of the image of God according to which we were created, not even a word is mentioned about the moral or religious life, but that all the emphasis in the characterization of the image of God in us falls on our royal dominion over all this earth.

III. - No more paradise.

And God said unto them, Fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion.

GEN. 1:28.

In order to gain a clear insight into the reign of Jesus our King, we must go back to the Kingdom granted to man by God when He created him.

The creation of man in the image of God involved the anointment of man as Lord and King over this entire earth, with all that was in it. And it is this absolute and all-encompassing dominion, which is not added to the creation in God's image, but which flows directly from it, and which in God's creation order is even the only specifically named consequence of man's conformation to God's image.

But this ordinance is not limited to this. It does not merely state that man is the most powerful spirit among all the creatures below and that he therefore excels all other creatures. No, a commandment is also given to man immediately after his creation, and that commandment serves to impose on man the obligation to exercise, maintain and extend the dominion granted to him. Not even the smallest beginning of the Law on Sinai appears at the beginning of Genesis. There was as yet no sin, not even a tendency to sin, and it was only by means of the trial commandment that the direction in which man's development would take place could be revealed. But what is immediately imposed as a commandment on mankind is that he shall fulfill the earth, subdue the earth and exercise dominion over everything on it. It says so majestically: "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; and God blessed him, and said to him: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion."

This shows how man was destined to grow into a generation of a thousand and more millions. Already the earth is inhabited by one and a half thousand million people, and still half of the earth is empty or only sparsely inhabited. And this gigantic growth of our race would not only come when sin broke out and death set in, but lay, entirely apart from sin, in man's destiny. It was with that purpose that God the Lord gave him birth on this earth, and placed him at the top of the ladder of this earthly creation. However, this could be interpreted as a blessing pronounced on mankind, in so far as the intention to avoid marriage and prevent the birth of children only comes to mind after the occurrence of sin. But even if one interprets this exclusively as a blessing, the commandment, the ordinance of the Lord remains clearly expressed in the imposed obligation to subdue the earth to oneself: "Fill the earth and subdue it" is a commandment that places a demand on

mankind, designates a field of activity, and calls upon him to exert the powers granted to him. According to this word, the dominion over this earth was something that belonged to man by nature", according to God's order, but still something that would not fall into his lap by itself, but on the contrary had to be grasped, held and realized by him. No divine service is prescribed for mankind. His life in communion with his God should be a matter of course in his unsaved state. But it is imposed upon him that he should work out the dominion over nature, which had been given to him in his creation in the image of God, in its full length and breadth, in its full depth and height.

Now notice that this task was laid on man's shoulder before the curse came upon this earth. His would be the rule over the creation in its original purity. So, we must not think here of a struggle with the animals that were torn apart, nor of a struggle against the elements; all this came about later, but of a reign through spiritual supremacy and majority, and through the exertion of the normal powers granted to man. Something of this is still to be found in the animal trainer and the snake charmer. The tamer rules over his tigers and lions by impressing them and mesmerizing them. The taming itself does take place through discipline, confinement and food abstinence, but still, whoever does not possess the peculiar biologizing power of the tamer, cannot subject a wild animal to himself by these means. The ability to tame a wild animal is now no longer a general human trait, but a special characteristic of a very few individuals. It is an ability that is on a par with the ability of some to biologize and hypnotize a human being. This ability is a kind of mystery, which has by no means been explained, but still shows all the signs of a weak after-effect, a sporadic remnant of the spiritual majority over the animal world, which was originally given to man in general. That originally the animals were not wild, ferocious and tearing, it is hereby admitted. But a single human being, with his small physique, still stood in contrast to the countless animals with their gigantic stature. And now Scripture tells us that in Paradise the whole host of animals came to Adam; that Adam stood as lord and king among them, without any animal harming him, and that he gave them names, not at random, but according to their nature. This points to the high superiority of man over all creation, and also to a now lost ability to understand the nature of each species. An entirely different zoology than that possessed by zoologists today, but of still greater value.

As speaks for itself, the multiform nature of animals is not accidental. Each of their many species has its own reason for existence. With that reason for existence

depends the construction of their bodies and the sphere in which they will live. The waters, the earth's soil, and the air are the three spheres of this earthly creation, and each of these spheres has its own ground type of animals. But also, in each sphere that type of soil of the swimming, walking, crawling or flying animal is again separated into numerous subspecies, and also each of these subspecies has its own form of appearance and this with its own purpose. There is no capricious play in God's creation, no random creation of creatures at random. No, each species of animal is the peculiar expression of God's own thought. Each species has its own calling to glorify its God. A sacred order also prevails in the animal world. We know almost nothing about this now. We can make certain distinctions with regard to size, shape, means of weathering and clothing, but we can no longer fathom the real reason why these different species were created in this way, and not otherwise, each in its particular idiosyncrasy. Yet it is still clear from the creation story that the purpose lay precisely in that species distinction. Why else would there be such a broad description of the animals in the water, the animals that fly in the air and the animals that move on the earth itself? Our animal scholars, however, know nothing of this higher knowledge. The relationship which exists between the various forms of the many species of animals and the idea of God eludes them completely. It is precisely this knowledge, however, that was innate to the first man. He looked at the different kinds of animals according to their essence, and gave a name to each species accordingly. Thus, Adam's dominion over the animals originated not in the strength of his hand, nor in the cleverness with which he was able to master the animal, but in the supremacy of his mind.

That only the animals are now mentioned as separate objects of his dominion cannot be surprising. Of course, Adam, in the same way, also stood with a spiritual majority against the plant world and against organic nature. But in these there was no action. The plant is idle. The plant does not move. There can be no question of resistance and struggle, in the truest sense of the word, with the plant. In the fact that man possessed the power to pick flowers to adorn himself or fruits to feed himself, no dominion could emerge. That was custom. A taking of what happened to him. But the absence of all resistance and struggle did not make a dominion emerge. And so it was with the mineral kingdom. Later, when after and through the curse the elemental forces of nature arose to destroy by storm and hurricane, by lightning, fire and flooding, by earthquake and landslide, by heat and frost, powers also arose in these spheres against mankind, threatening him with destruction. But in paradise all this was still unthinkable. In this sphere of creation, there was no

question of struggle, opposition or imminent danger. It was therefore perfectly natural, and spoke for itself, that only the animal world could make an impression on Adam as if it were a military force standing against him, and it is therefore entirely in keeping with the situation that existed then that the conflict with the animal world is made more widely known in the Creation Order, and that nothing is said about the plant world, the mineral kingdom or the elemental forces of nature. Or rather, they are not kept silent, but they are all summed up in the one broad concept of the earth. Besides the animals, the first man also had the dominion "over the whole earth", and it is explicitly stated: "Fill the earth, and subdue it." Where the animals are mentioned separately, this could only refer to the other realms and forces of nature, and thus the dominion over the world of plants, the world of inorganic nature, and the world of elementary forces was actually entrusted to man. The "subjugation of the earth" does not refer to the difficult cultivation of the soil. It is not mentioned until after the fall, when it is said: "You shall eat bread in the sweat of your brow". Here, too, it refers to the rule of the majority of the spirit. It is man, created in God's image, who is appointed viceroy under God over all the visible creation here below. A dominion which he exercised through a knowledge of all of nature imbued in him, and which has now been almost entirely lost.

But not entirely. Reference has already been made to the animal trainer and snake charmer. But there is more. From ancient times we have received reports, e.g., about the wisdom of the Egyptians, which, however vague and uncertain, still indicate that in some circles a certain mysterious knowledge lived on, which has since been completely lost, but which at the time still represented a real power. This mysterious knowledge, which lived on in tradition, may have been mixed up with a lot of superstition and conjuring tricks, and thus may have degenerated completely, but this does not alter the fact that it still points to something instinctive, which worked long after the demise of paradise. And we find something similar, though of an entirely different nature, in the poetry of nature. The nature poet lives with nature as no other does. It is as if the distance between human nature and the nature around him has been reduced to much smaller dimensions for such a poet. He feels with and for nature. He listens to and experiences her speech. He lives with nature in a mysterious, often very intimate relationship, and knows how to elicit beauty in it, which we ourselves would never have found. Thanks to this poetry of nature, life with nature is also maintained for us, within certain limits, more for some, less for others. But even so, to no small

degree, the beneficial influence that nature's life and words have on us is still alive. It hardly needs reminding, how in the book of Proverbs and in more than one prophet, and how above all in our Lord Jesus Christ, this living together with nature and receiving the speech of nature, more than once, is expressed in a most impressive way, and, thanks to the influence of the Holy Scriptures, has been passed on to the whole of Christendom.

After the fall, on the other hand, the relationship between man and nature, in which the kingdom of his dominion had been established, changed fundamentally. His peerage was not taken away from him. He has not been stripped of his dominion. He remained king over nature. But now he was faced with this completely different situation, that he himself was weakened in spirit power and that all of nature rebelled against him. A weakening of man as man, and a rebellion of nature against man, which went so far that his kingship over nature only lasted nominally, and only remained true in an ideal sense. The spiritual weakening was the result of his break with his God. Mankind's only strength lies in his close attachment to his God. As long as the bond between his inner being and his God remained undisturbed and unbroken, the power and might, the strength and instinctive knowledge flowed to him undisturbed from his God. For as long as he had spiritual supremacy over nature, it was a matter of course. But when man turned away from his God, and removed himself from his God, he also removed himself from the source of his strength. Now what used to flow through his inner being as a never-ending stream of holy power no longer flowed to him. From being strong in unbroken strength, he now became weak, brittle and self-absorbed. He no longer ruled by virtue of his nature. The spiritual supremacy that used to work automatically eluded him, and with this collapse of strength came fear, anxiety and worry. Man in Paradise was like an oak tree with firm roots; after the fall he became like a trembling reed. Weak not only against the temptations of sin, but weak in his sense of self, weak in his inner consciousness, weak in strength and instinctive knowledge, weak in the sensations he receives from the nature surrounding him.

And at the same time as this slump in his sense of his strength and power, a sensation came over him as if all of nature, having escaped his dominion and now disputing it, wanted to throw itself upon him to destroy him. We are used to the voice of thunder, but can you imagine what it must have been like for Adam, when for the first time the sky combined in darkness above him, when the thunderous rolling of the clouds started, and when for the first time the flame from heaven

struck the earth like a bolt of lightning? We usually form far too limited an idea of the curse that came upon the earth. It was nothing less than a complete reversal of the order of nature. The solemn peace of paradise passed into unrest, disturbance and endless turmoil. Thorns and thistles emerged in the plant kingdom. Poison got into plants and animals. Devastating wildness began to show in the faces of many of the most powerful animals. The wind of the day in paradise changed into stormy winds and into the roaring of hurricanes. The same temperature changed into a mighty change of cold and heat. The streams overflowed their banks and flooded the land. Weeds and vermin were devastating. Toxic bacteria began to threaten the lives of man and beast. The earth itself in its hidden depths stirred, trembled and quivered, and vomited up streams of glowing lava and fire. It was as if hell broke out of the abyss and wanted to wrap itself with giant arms around all of nature, and in nature around all of mankind, in order to destroy and pulverize everything.

And in the face of that power of destruction which had broken loose, there stood a single pair of human beings, wracked with guilt, forsaken of God, small, broken and despondent. With rapid fingers he had played the whole organ of nature in paradise, in a masterly spirit, and now the bellows of that organ were torn, and his fingers trembled like paralyzed over the rattling keys, from which no melodious heavenly tone could be extracted. We, who have never known his reign in paradise, cannot even begin to imagine the terror, the dismay, the bewilderment that must have seized Adam at that moment. All we learn is that he fled, fled from his God, who came to call him in His mercy, to outline the way of grace as in silver dots before his half-sleeping eye. And at the end of that mapped-out path of grace the Kingship of the Son of Man shone from afar. One day, one born of Eve would nullify the power of Satan, and thus restore the Kingship of man over nature that had now rebelled, and establish it forever. But even though the star of hope lit up at the dark horizon, for Adam this was largely misunderstood language. He was threatened with sickness and death. The whole of God's creation seemed to be in rebellion against him. Not deposed, but actually dethroned was the king whom God had ordered for his creation down here. Suffering for dominion had become his portion. The struggle, which had just begun, would take on ever-widening proportions. And then, on the one hand, stood the mighty, the all-pervading nature, with its gigantic powers, and on the other hand, in contrast, the stooped, the 'dislocated', the human being reduced to a mere mortal.

And yet: in this way also the ordinance of creation retained its unimpaired power. However, much man seemed destroyed, the high command remained unchanged:

"Your is the dominion over all this earth. Get ready, multiply, fill the whole earth and subdue it." This is the tremendous significance that nature has for mankind. This wild, powerful nature throws itself upon him to destroy him. He tries to cover himself, to protect himself, to defend himself against her anger. But this is not enough. No, he must not only resist her attack, but also attack her, throw himself upon her, and he must not rest until he has regained his supremacy over her. He, as a human being, remains the bearer of the spirit. This spirit must triumph over the material and must not be inferior to the material. That spirit is God's, and God's honor depends on the spirit triumphing. No one person can accomplish this. All mankind sees this giant struggle as its task in life, and one day the Son of Man will appear at the head of this mankind, who will gain the central triumph and will pour out his forces to it in order to regain its dominion. But the struggle will be a struggle of centuries. And during those ages sickness and death, destruction and dismemberment, destruction will rage among the children of men. That cruel, savage nature will spare no effort to make it impossible for man to regain his dominion. Weeping will multiply on earth, there will be no end to the sorrows and sufferings. Nature will choose her victims from among us. Time and again it will be as if nature and not man triumphs. Despair and despondency will shrivel the heart of man. And yet, through it all, God's care will see to it that the spark of hope in the human heart will not be extinguished, that the core of its power will never be completely broken. The spirit will continue to fight against the power of nature. Not the tiger and the leopard, but mankind will keep the field. Though the streams seem to swallow him, in the end man will also control the flood. And the day will come when mankind will regain the glorious awareness that, although not a king, he has once again become master of nature and its awesome powers.

IV. - The miracle.

Praised be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone performs miracles.

Psalm 72:18.

ERST when you seriously contemplate the painful struggle in which man, weakened by sin, found himself engaged with nature, strengthened by the curse, you can understand the significance of the miracle. Without the miracle, Nature soon gave the impression of being more powerful, more superior and higher than the spirit, something that naturally led to fearful, idolatrous worship of Nature. Nature imperceptibly took the place in the estimation of the trembling man, which was reserved for the living God, and it was entirely indifferent to this whether the fear hit the heart because of what nature itself had done to one, or whether one looked for the workings of evil spirits behind it. What frightened me was not Nature at rest, but Nature in action, and in principle it made no difference whether that action arose from Nature itself or was brought about in it by evil spirits. The fearful question remained: "How can we escape the supremacy of Nature when it is in operation? Image here was the great sea. Magnificent to gaze upon from the beach or to sail in fragile hulk, as long as its waters are at rest, but to threaten the helpless with death and destruction, when its waves are thrust up high and crash onto the beach. Silent Nature refreshed, appealed to and was beneficent, but Nature in action, when the elements were in turmoil, provoked terror and dismay. Against this fearful terror man found no help in himself; it seemed as if his God, like him, was inferior to Nature. This led from the worship of his God to the worship of Nature in its power and dismay, or, animistically, to fear of the spirits that wickedly conjured up Nature. And that fear was not of Nature or of evil spirits, but of God, could only hold sway or return if the miracle intervened and God demonstrated before the eyes of mankind his supremacy over the power of Nature. - Only in this light is both the indispensability and the high significance of the miracle expressed. Outside this connection with sin and curse the miracle cannot be understood. And it may safely be said that the refusal to believe in the miracle always had its basis in the fact that people did not understand or did not want to understand the highly sacred meaning of the miracle.

Man, desecrated by sin, was left weakened in the face of Nature's power, both in body and in soul. It was not as if his physical strength suddenly diminished, but gradually and gradually it did. Just look at his life span. At first a life span of centuries, up to almost ten centuries, but that life span is already descending and

sinking, until in the days of the Patriarchs it almost equals our short life span, and with Moses in his song it already

Moses in his song, it came down to 70 and 80 years. Illness in all its forms crept in. In the successive series of generations, fatal illness and also poison of all kinds undermined the resistance that life could offer. And among many peoples you will find the recollection of a much stronger, much more powerful ancestry, of Nimrods and Herculesees, of giants and Enaks children, whose descendants were only the degenerate and sunken aftermath. And still more serious nature carried the weakening to the soul. Instead of all together throwing themselves at Nature, one man throws themselves at another. Cain beats Abel to death. Murder is rampant among the children of man. Conscience is stained, and stained conscience kills courage. The high feeling, the proud consciousness of standing as a human being high above Nature, sinks in. Fear replaces courage. Fear diminishes the inner resilience of the soul. He who is tortured by fear, loses his strength of mind. And so, it was perfectly natural that mankind gradually felt weaker and weaker, more and more powerless in the face of Nature, which controls all life and threatens all life.

And that weakened man now stood opposite a Nature that was strengthened in power. It is extremely difficult to form a correct image of the curse that came upon the earth. You may succeed best if you think of Nature as having been driven insane by the curse. It is well known how insanity sometimes miraculously increases the physical power of the unfortunate. In order to master one insane person, sometimes three strong men were not enough. Sometimes the same thing happens to a drunkard. During riots or fights it is not uncommon for ferocious people to get drunk beforehand in order to be more reckless, more courageous, and even overpowering a drunken brute sometimes requires extraordinary effort. But with the insane the increase in strength is sometimes much stronger. Not usually happy, but far from rare, the rage of insanity lends its victim a muscular strength that far exceeds the normal measure of human strength. In such an insane savage a complete transformation of his nature takes place. The same person, who at first was calm and quiet and filled with tenderness for his own, suddenly attacks his wife and children, assaults his father and mother, wants to violate and kill them. His whole mood, his whole expression, the whole expression of his being has changed. As a destructive force he acts towards his entire environment, and whoever grabs hold of him or wants to tame him, suffers the fury of his miraculously increased power.

It is in such an image that Nature appears after the curse has set in. As with a madman, she has times of calm and quiet, but these are followed by times of wildness and fury, when the elements rush in and destruction threatens from all sides. Then the earth shakes, the hurricanes begin to roar, the storm winds stir up the waters, the rivers burst their banks, and it seems as if everything is going down. And as with the madman, so with Nature the whole being is changed by the curse. Toxic became what was once beneficial. The plant shows thorns and thistles. In the animals there is wildness and tearing. Anger and pestilence emanate. The whole of Nature forms one coherent organic whole, and in the very essence of that whole corruption has crept into all its realms and spheres. Destruction penetrates her to her marrow, and from that marrow the poison of destruction spreads through all her members. And, in actuality, she acts like a madwoman towards mankind. And where that same Nature in paradise embraced the first man with affectionate love, it seems as if, seized by the curse, she throws herself upon the man of her former love, to tease him, to torment him, to do violence to him and to destroy him; and she has become so much stronger, so much more powerful. From the plant kingdom with poison and thorns, from the animal kingdom with claws and maws, from the spheres with tempests and stormy winds, from the depths with fire-breathing and earth trembling, she prepares herself against him. She presents herself as one raging colossus who wants to throw mankind down with all her might. In that rage her strength is tenfold. It is as if she howls and roars to frighten mankind. And by that fear, that dismay overcome, the weakened man shrinks, crawls away and withdraws like the snail in his shell, trembling and shuddering with fear.

Fear has become religion. The word "fear" bothers us if we want to express in it our tender and deep feeling of love for our God. Ours is the religion which inspires in us a Spirit, "not again to fear", but an emotion which makes us whisper, whisper, in holy adoration: Abba, dear Father! But look at the books of the Old Covenant, look at the patriarchs and Moses, at the psalmist and prophet, and it is always the fear of God that comes to the fore; it is and remains the first, the predominant form in which Godliness is expressed. Even in the last book of the prophets, in Malachi, the Lord asks: "Am I a Lord, where is my fear? And this could not be more different. We, in our present lives, can no longer imagine the fear and the anxiety, in which mankind has been after the fall amidst Nature poisoned by the curse. Dependence is far too weak a word to express the fearful realization to which the then human race was prey when faced with Nature in its unbounded power,

unrestrained by anything. It was fear, it was anxiety, it was fear of death, it was dismay, it was fear, fear in the full sense of the word, which gripped the spirit of man. Whoever, in the midst of this fear, went wild and fell away from his God, began as a matter of course to see in that overpowering nature the highest, the all-powerful, and so out of this fear arose the service of nature, or the service of the evil spirits, which were thought to misuse nature in order to threaten mankind with destruction. And vice versa, where faith persisted and one did not let go of the conviction that our God was even more powerful than Nature and that she served Him as an instrument, there man transferred his fear to his God, and the fear of God became the very essence of religion. A word, an expression, which we can still keep and use, but whose meaning has completely changed for us. The word devout, the word fruit of God still means someone who fears God, just think of the German word *Furcht* for fear; thus, devotion to God is literally still fear of God. But for us, the idea of fear and anxiety, of dismay, has completely disappeared from this. To fear God and not man has become the antithesis for us, and now it implies nothing more than a silent reverence for our God and His holy ordinances, to submit to Him as His creature.

But it was precisely here that the need for the miracle arose.

It arose from the contrast between the weak human being and Nature, which had become wild and therefore had increased in strength and destructive power. God was not seen. He was the Unseen One. But always they had that awful Nature around them, in front of them, behind them, and over them. The impression made by Nature was therefore so overwhelming and crushed man's spirit. Who could stand up to Nature? Who could stand against it? Who could conquer and control it? Oh, it is so, one still believed. The Creator of the heavens and the earth had to be more powerful, and sometimes, in the way of ordinary means, there was a decree from Him for salvation. But still the question: Is God, our God, really too strong in nature, the master of nature? was irresistibly raised again and again. And if one then begged and prayed, afflicted and sacrificed, and Nature still prevailed, then finally one's faith sank in. No, not God, Nature was the supreme one. And this frightened, from all belief, awareness could only be broken by the miracle. If God performed miracles and signs, which made his supremacy over nature shine before all eyes, then yes, but only then, did fear of Nature subside, and did God become a refuge and a rock, a high room for His own. Revelation, through participation, through speech preceded this. The fear of Nature, which caused doubts about God's supremacy, was even to raise doubts about the existence of God. The Unseen One

was not seen. Was He there? Where to discover Him? How to find Him? And now Revelation came to the rescue. Right from the start in paradise. God does not show Himself, no, He reveals Himself. He speaks into the soul and to mankind. Later He gives promises, and those promises are fulfilled. He announces the judgment in the flood and the flood comes. He deals with the patriarchs as a man deals with his friend. In the circle in which Revelation makes itself felt, the belief in God's existence persists. But this circle was small. There are very few who are thus gifted. Among the nations, belief in God is declining. Almost all of them are falling back into nature worship or spirit worship. And now the people must be called, the people must be formed, in whom faith in God will become the foundation of all the people's existence. To this end, the descendants of the patriarchs went into the crucible of Egypt. And when, therein forged into one nation, they are called to go out of Egypt and enter Canaan, and thus become the people of the Lord, the miracle occurs in a grand scale, in an overwhelming manner, precisely here, and that miracle will remain for all ages, in all memory, the foundation of Israel's faith and hope.

First come the miracles before Pharaoh's eye in his palace; then the miracles of judgment upon him and his people; and finally, the mighty miracle when Israel crosses the Red Sea dry-footed. The aim here is clearly to gain power. It is a demonstration of power to inspire awe in Egypt and its Pharaohs, and a demonstration of power to rescue Israel and bind it to the faith of its father God. Here, too, Revelation precedes Moses. Deeply and powerfully the impression of God's holy existence must be impressed upon Moses. And now comes the competition with the wise men of Egypt. Note also this. There is no doubt that antiquity had been handed down a knowledge, an instinctive knowledge of Nature, and that secrets were known which at that time still left man with a certain power over Nature. Frivolous mockery may well explain all that as imagination. But Scripture teaches us otherwise. The wise men in Egypt, it tells us, actually did things which we could not imitate, and which can only be explained by a certain mysterious, instinctive knowledge of the power over Nature which has since been lost. But as readily as we acknowledge this, it is equally certain that all manner of deception and misrepresentation had gradually crept in beneath this, and that the wise men of Egypt presented as magic what was in fact no more than the product of traditional knowledge of nature. And although this mysterious knowledge had served the people of Pharaoh well for a time, and had raised them to a higher level of culture through the efforts of the priests and wise men of Egypt, this had now

come to an end, and that is why Moses and Aaron now appear before them, in order to present them with an entirely different power, namely the winning power of God, in a form which may seem strange to us, but which had to appear in precisely this way in order to demonstrate the mysteries of Egypt in their vanity. This first cycle of miracles runs counter to the mystery that was still blooming in Egypt.

But then things become more serious and the miracles of judgment come. Medium-sized miracles, if you will, because they are mostly natural forces used to execute God's judgment on Pharaoh's pride. The Nile was the Egyptians' fame and idol. And now the Nile itself becomes the instrument of the Lord to smite Egypt's pride. And then come the plagues, which arise from the wilderness, and are all to be explained by increased natural effects; but so increased, and so employed, that even the Egyptian guesses a higher power in them, though, when the first fear has passed, he sinks back again and again into unbelief. Until it comes to the firstborn and later Israel crosses the Red Sea, and now all the people see the power of the Lord over all the forces of nature, and Miriam bursts into jubilation with her choirs, and Moses cries out: "O Lord, who is like You among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorified in holiness, fearful in songs of praise, doing wonders?". One must read the neat work of Dr. Wright, a thoroughly knowledgeable geologist, to understand all the significance of that mighty miracle. He is the author of: "The Ice Period in America and its Significance to Human Life;" of: "The ice fields in Greenland and the North Atlantic" of: "Asiatic Russia" etc., works which for their scientific character are appreciated by all. Now he gave from his work: "Scientific Confirmation of the History of the Old Testament" (Oberlin Ohio 1906.) On pages 83-115 herein he discusses as a geologist and paleontologist the exodus from Egypt, and makes us feel its significance for the first time. And nothing stands out more than that it is this majestic miracle, placed at the beginning of Israel's history, that once and for all has laid the foundation of all Israel's religion on the supremacy of Jehovah over Nature and its power. It is to this that godliness in Israel altogether returns. From this fact she always derives strength again. Jehovah, a God who works miracles, is the cry that precedes their entry into Canaan. The fear of that power of Israel's God had fallen upon all the inhabitants of Canaan. It is this miracle power of the Lord that unseated these peoples, and it is also this miracle power and its after-effects on the minds, through which Israel has prevailed in Canaan.

The miracle has thus saved our human race's faith in the living God. The miracle is not secondary in the history of religion. It is not a part of history. Something one can also imagine doing away with. Rather, the miracle comes first, from the miracle comes the revival and the confirmation of faith, and the fact that after so many centuries we can and may believe in the living God, is due to the entrance of the miracle in Israel's beginning and in Israel's history. And it is not possible to fathom this entirely unique significance of the miracle, unless you go back to God's decree to man that he must subdue all of Nature and all of the earth to himself. Through sin and in the fall the crown of honour fell from man's head. Standing powerless and helpless before the unleashed fury of Nature, he was left with only this question: whether the God whom he worshipped, like himself, succumbed to that wild power of Nature, or whether, where he succumbed, his God remained lord and master over Nature, and could cover and protect him against that wild power of Nature. And now this could not be shown except by the miracle. It had to become apparent and public that a power even higher than Nature's could reveal itself in Nature, work in it, exorcise it, and make it subservient to a higher purpose. Revelation, speech, and participation in the soul were not enough. It came down to power. On demonstration of power, of superiority, and of supremacy over the terrible powers of Nature, against which the weakened man found himself placed. And it was precisely this that the miracle, and particularly the miracle at the birth of Israel as a people, brought to us. And that is why our Reformed fathers did not make the Old Covenant, only to strengthen themselves spiritually in the New Covenant. No, they went back to Israel and its emergence as a people, to honor the mighty revelation of the miracle in the birth of Israel. They understood that the miracle, for which there would have been no room in Paradise, could not fail to come, but had to come, and did come, when the tradition of Paradise had worked itself out, and the new life of faith had to be awakened in Israel, in order that one day all the nations of the earth might be blessed through Israel.

V. - Miracles of the Christ.

Now the multitudes, seeing this, marveled, and glorified God, who had given such power to man. MATTHEW 9:8.

Yet, this has not exhausted the meaning of the miracle in Scripture. For so far we have discussed only those miracles which are performed directly and immediately by God Himself. Miracles whose purpose it was to show that the omnipotence of God went far beyond the awesome power of Nature itself. Whoever believed that Nature was the strongest, fell into the idolatrous service of Nature. Only those who saw and confessed that the power of Jehovah far exceeded the power of Nature, bowed down in adoration before the Unseen One. Fear filled everyone's heart, but that fear remained with the servant of Nature, and only passed into the fear of God with those who believed in Jehovah's miraculous power. But this is not enough. We still fail to see the connection between man's calling to royal rule and the miracle power of which Scripture tells us. Therefore, in order to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of miracles, our attention must now be drawn to two other series of miracles, namely 1°. the miracles performed by the men of God, and 2°. the miracles and signs of Christ.

As to the miracles performed by the men of God, only those miracles and signs are considered here which they themselves performed by a power granted to them. Thus, the signs of competition with the wise men of Egypt are left out of consideration, as are the signs in which the men of God only play an external role. When Moses stretches out his staff over the Nile or over the Red Sea, it is not to be interpreted as if Moses achieved the miracle by that stretching of his staff. Moses himself emphatically cuts off this representation. He gives glory to God and God alone, and he sings it in his song of jubilation: "o, God, by the blowing of your nose the waters have risen, the streams have stood up like a heap. Even when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it, his own selfishness showed how he had to make the indication that the miracle would come, but that the power by which it came did not emanate from Moses himself. Even though it is sometimes difficult to draw a clear line between the miracles that God performs Himself, and those other miracles which do emanate from God, but in which man acts as a vehicle, or rather as a channel through which the power of God works, it is beyond all doubt that such a line exists. In the Flood we are faced with a miracle-working, to which no man has contributed, and which comes about entirely without human interference, whereas, conversely, the raising of the child of the Sunamite widow is effected indirectly by Elisha. The conception of the Christ in Mary's womb is an immediate

Divine miracle; the signs done by the disciples when they were sent out among Israel were miracles for which Jesus had given the disciples the power to perform. And it is precisely these miracles performed by God's men indirectly that are more directly related to the royal rule of man. It is in these miracles that power is given to man to triumph over Nature and over the consequences of the curse.

Here we are faced with a mystery that always boils down to the power that spirit possesses over matter. In nothing, even now, is that power so clearly discernible as in the power we possess over our own bodies. In all that we do with and through our bodies, it is not the body that works, but the spirit in us. It is our spirit that moves our body and causes it to perform all kinds of deeds. If one person holds another with his hand or squeezes with his arm, both hand and arm are only doing indirect work, and the real worker is the spirit within us. However, as soon as the spirit in us wants to let go of the man we are holding, the hand and arm will lose their power to hold. In all the work we perform, our limbs and senses alone serve us. They serve our spirit, and it is the spirit within us that accomplishes the work through our limbs and senses. What we now lack, however, is the immediate effect of our spirit on what is outside our body. Such power remains with us in the words we speak and, in the case of some people, in the biologic power which they sometimes exert over other people through their glance, through touch, or through the action of spirit upon spirit. But man can no longer act directly on the material nature that surrounds us. The guiding thread through which this effect could come about has been severed, and we are powerless against Nature. The fact that the supernatural spirit world exerts its effects on our earth, for the good of God's angels and for the evil of demons, is shown repeatedly in the Scriptures, but fallen man was powerless to resist these demonic effects either. He saw before him a man possessed, a man made unhappy by a demon, but he could not deliver him from the demon. That such instinctive power was originally man's is shown by the faint after-effects of this instinctive power, even after paradise, in the pagan world. Whoever does not accept this, for him what is reported to us from all sides from that pagan world remains inexplicable. But the instinctive aftereffects of man's original capacities gradually wore off, became more and more dilapidated, and in the end, man was completely powerless. His spirit could only work on his body, and also through spirit to spirit in speech and personal influence. The king of creation lay sunk in incapacity, and though he remained king for God's sake, scepter and crown were lost to him.

In this context the miracles which God gave to some of the men of God have a peculiar meaning. For although they usually had the power to save, to end misery, this was not their real purpose. Misery was common in Israel, and more terrible still among other peoples. Had salvation from misery been the immediate object of these miracles, they would have had to be revealed everywhere. But they were not. They were limited in number. They all took place in a small area, among one people. They did not go on steadily, but only happened now and then. They were performed by a few persons only, and all these persons were in higher service, and were interpreters of God's revelation. Thus, they served to support faith in this Revelation, to imprint a seal on it, and to arouse the conviction that a higher power had come down to the people. Now this could just as well have happened, if all these miracles had been wrought directly by God Himself. But it did not work out that way. In addition to the many miracles performed immediately by God Himself, there were others which were performed through the intermediary of these men of God, partly in order to legitimize these witnesses of God as such, but partly also, prophetically, to restore mankind, or rather man's spirit, to its royal power over nature and over the evil spirit world. They were a prelude to the triumph that would one day make mankind regain what it had lost. They made something glimmer again of the power and majesty with which mankind was clothed in his creation. They showed mankind's susceptibility to a higher revelation of power from his spirit, as soon as that "spirit in him" was raised in power by a higher Spirit. These were not miracles created by magic. Rather, the Scriptures are always sharp in their condemnation of this miracle-working. All hypocrisy was to be banished from Israel. The demonic element, which had mixed with it, was to be opposed in every way. And it is against this half-demonic miracle that the miracle performed by man's spirit in Israel is now revealed, thanks to the increase in power that God's spirit bestowed upon mankind. And this is not magic, but in the line of man's original supremacy over nature. For a moment and in a few holy persons of man's original nobility, and precisely because of this, prophecy of the glory that would one day come. Breakthrough of the spell that, since the curse, had, and still partly has, effect on our entire family, but that would one day be lifted. Even Daniel in the lion's den reminds you of Adam in Paradise. For it is and always will be God's power that restrained these wild animals, but that is and always will be the case in everything we do. He who as a hero defeats his enemy and returns home victorious, gives glory to God, but it was he through whom God revealed this power. That of which we still see a faint after-effect in the animal tamer, and which Adam possessed to the full in Paradise, the coercion of the spirit in the face

of the mighty animal, has suddenly shone forth in Daniel through God's miraculous act. As the king of man, he stood in the lion's den among the kings of the forest.

But in full, unbroken majesty it first shines forth in the Son of Man. The miracles of the Old Covenant are connected with the appearance of Messiah. From afar they were the indication of what was to come in Christ; but they were no more than a pretext. They reminded us of man's highness in the Garden of Eden, they showed that the restoration of the original power was possible, they prophesied that that power would one day return, but they could not reveal that power in its fullness. This could, should and would only happen when the Christ Himself appeared, and when in the Son of Man, man without sin and thus man in his original unbroken power appeared again.

It is important not to mistake the miracles of the Son of Man for miracles of the Son of God. One is inclined to do so. God is omnipotence, and where he appears, before whom we kneel with Thomas as "our Lord and our God", we easily arrive at seeing in his miracles and signs nothing but revelations of his divine omnipotence, in order to find in them precisely the proof of his divinity. And yet, it is precisely this idea that leads us astray from the right path. Jesus himself never pointed to his miracles as proof of his divinity. They were intended to show that the Father had sent him, that he was performing a service on earth, carrying out a task assigned to him. He never separated his own miracles from the miracles he would train his apostles to perform. He once spoke to them the remarkable word that those who believed in him would do greater works than these. Even about the forgiveness of sins, in connection with the miracle of healing, the Lord said: "That you may know that the Son of Man (not the Son of God) has power on earth to forgive sins, you sick person, arise, take up your bed and walk". And Matthew, the Evangelist and Apostle, adds that the crowds were amazed that such power had been given to man. You will lose sight of the whole of Jesus' work if you do not keep in mind that he acts as a man, in our nature, as the Son of Man, and that he, acting among us, had humbled himself, indeed destroyed himself, and was among us in the form of a man, yes, taking the form of a servant. On this earth the Christ did not reign as the Son of God, did not display his majesty as God, but acted as a man, as our one, and did not manifest any power other than that which could be manifested in man. He has learned obedience. He came to accomplish the work to which the Father had called him. All his power was in his spirit. The Holy Spirit was not given to him in measure. But it was and remained to the end a power of the spirit, working in, out of and through him within the confines of our human nature, bound by the

ordinances that God Himself had given for our human nature in the Creation. And even when Jesus said: -Do you not know that I can pray to my Father, and He will send me more than twelve legions of angels||, he was not speaking as God's Son, because he who reveals himself as God does not need the help of angels, but as the Son of Man, who would be saved from death and distress by the invincible army of angels.

In Jesus there appears before us the restored man, and in him the power, raised to its highest expression, of which the spirit of man is capable in its consummation over against Nature, matter and demons. You must not say that Jesus was like Adam, for in Adam man's development only began, and in Jesus that development appears as completed. He was not just man, but the Son of man. The central man. Man in his perfection, man in the richest and highest of his strength and ability. And even where Adam's power over creation sank and gave way at the very moment when the curse, as we have expressed it, drove the whole of this creation insane, the Son of Man possessed that heightened and brought to its highest zenith the power of man's spirit, by which he was also able to subdue Nature, which had been shattered by the curse. But also, in this way his miracle power remains to the end a human power, i.e., a power falling within the framework of our human nature; provided that you do not take this framework as it is now, but as it was in Adam, and then think of this framework, which was in Adam, as raised to its highest completion. He speaks, in his miracles and signs he works a power that goes far beyond our power, but it is and remains a power that he received, a power that was given to him; and you err by seeing in that power a power that he, as self-God, possessed of himself. He revealed himself by his miracles and signs not in his divinity, but as the Son of Man. Even in his glorification he is and remains the glorified Head of his congregation, that is, the glorified Son of man, for as God he could not, of course, be glorified; and also of that glory which is his due the Apostle declares that his redeemed shall one day reign with him as Kings, and that our now humiliated body shall be made like his glorified body. The connection and conjunction of His divine and human natures cannot be gone into here, but it must be emphasized that whoever sees in the miracles and signs of our Savior immediate divine miracles is mistaken, and does not recognize that all too soon they were one miraculous revelation of power by the man Jesus Christ, or more correctly, by the Son of Man. Just as Adam, clothed with majesty, stood in paradise, but then that majesty was raised to its full height in Jesus, and applied to the creation that had been spoiled by the curse, so Jesus stood over against the demon world and against

all the realms of Nature. In him the rule, the royal rule, which was lost in Paradise, has returned. In Jesus' miracle power shines forth the glory of the king of man.

When "the wild beasts" surround Jesus in the desert of temptation (see Mark 1:13), the glorious scene from Paradise, when Adam gave names to the beasts, revives. The temptation itself brings back the temptation of Adam and Eve in Paradise, but in such a way that, where Adam succumbed, the Son of Man triumphed. His battle is therefore first of all against the demons. The casting out of devils breaks the demonic power, and when Jesus sends out his disciples, it is especially the "power to cast out devils" that he attributes to them. The demonic power is the power, which lies behind Nature, as well as the working of the forces of angels. In the woefully possessed this demonic power came out most strongly. And Jesus breaks this power with a power that falls within the realm of the human, because His disciples do the same. And furthermore, the power of the Son of Man is constantly expanding. If the animals were subject to him in the desert, the fish in the waters also obey him. He demonstrates his power over the vegetation by the miracle at Cana and by the miracle of the multiplication of the bread, as well as by the withering of the fig tree. And over inorganic nature he reveals his supremacy by his walking on the waters and by his stilling of the storm. But this revelation of power over the realms of Nature is not the end of it. He also takes hold of the consequences of the Curse. He releases the blind, deaf and dumb from their bonds. Sick people of all kinds find mercy and healing of their illnesses. And finally, three times over, temporarily and for a time, he nullifies the separation of soul and body in death. In the servant of the high priest Jesus does not even cure a sick person, but a wounded one. All of Jesus' miracles together form a whole. One might almost say that there was a plan in it for the power of the human spirit, restored and perfected in Messiah, to emerge triumphant in every way, in all the realms of demons, nature and misery. And it is only then that you get the right perspective on this holy cycle, if in all of this you see the Son of Man as the King over all opposition that opposes him and over all opposition that rises up against mankind.

This does not deny that you can also look at each miracle in its own right; that you can also admire Jesus' compassion for the unfortunate, his love for the suffering. Jesus' miracles form a sacred cord, in which each pearl is of great value. Yet, it is only when the chain is taken as a whole that you can understand the basic meaning of the miracles of Jesus, and comprehend their deep significance. And in order to arrive at this, you must not start from the wicked man, not from the sinner, but from the man, as God created him in His image, crowned him with honor and

glory, clothed him with power and majesty, and anointed him king over His creation.

That man had perished. That man was found no more. But even though he was buried under curse and sin in human nature, the seed of all that was still laid in our human nature. And now Jesus took on that nature. He is the seed promised to Eve. From Adam's loins He is as far as the flesh will go. And now the spirit receives in him a disposition of power, which returns all the glory of paradise to him; makes that glory shine forth in its full brilliance; and in that light makes the turmoil of curse and sin pale, even in triumph over death. Thus, the kingship of Christ in this first revelation is not a garment that is put on him, not an authority that is imposed on him from without. It is from human nature, under the highest and richest spiritual constraint, that this kingship arises in him. It is the human king from paradise, who is revived in Jesus and goes beyond his original measure.

VI. - The power given to us.

Calling His disciples to Himself, He gave them power. MATT. X:1.

So then the immediate Divine miracle has restored faith in the supremacy of God's omnipotence over the power of Nature gone mad. And likewise, in the miracles of Christ, man's dominion over Nature. The significance of both of these series of miracles must be sharply distinguished. From Horeb the majesty of the Lord is revealed, but when Jesus conjures up the hurricane on the lake of Gennesareth, it is the Son of Man, who, as king over Nature, subjects her to his will. A peculiar meaning of the miracles performed by Jesus, which is especially evident in the fact that he gave his disciples power to do likewise, yes, he even gave them the promise that they would do "greater things than these things than these."

We first hear about this at the moment that Jesus leaves his disciples and sends them out to the various parts of the Holy Land to announce the coming of his kingdom to the children of Israel. At that time, as we read in Matthew, Jesus "gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all sickness and all disease. Jesus himself called it "his journey through the cities of Israel." Truly then the disciples passed through Israel, and they returned to Jesus in holy rapture, rejoicing that the spirits had been subdued to them, and that they too had been able to perform miracles. They themselves seemed to be too attached to this, so that Jesus had to warn them not to see the highest in this, but rather to rejoice that their names were written in the Book of Life." This statement clearly shows that the miracles they performed betrayed a power that belongs to the sphere of earthly life, and that their highest ideal should always be sought, not in this state of our earthly life, but in the coming state of human glory.

We receive a further explanation of this miraculous power given to the young people after Jesus' descent from Mount Tabor, on whose summit he experienced his Glorification. Only three of His disciples were present at that Glorification, the others Jesus had left at the foot of the mountain. It was just then that an unhappy father had turned to the latter, with his moonstruck boy who was violently possessed, and had prayed to Jesus' disciples to deliver this poor child from the demon. They had tried, but they had not succeeded. When Jesus himself came down from the Mount, the disappointed father went up to Jesus and cried out: Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is sick with the moon and suffering greatly, and I have brought him to your disciples, but they have not been able to heal him." Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and he left the boy, and the child was healed from

that hour on. But Jesus does not stop there. He also rebuked his disciples, and then spoke this wonderful word to them: "For the sake of your unbelief you were not able to cast him out. Verily I say unto you, if ye had faith like a mustard seed, ye might say unto this mountain, be taken up and cast into the sea, and it shall be so done". And finally, Jesus added this: This generation - that is, this type of devil - does not come out except through prayer and fasting. Jesus thus clearly expresses three things: 1°. That this miracle power given to them was not a magical power, but a power arising from faith; 2°. That this power arising from faith was an exercise of the power of the spirit over the power of matter, in its demonic substrate; and 3°. That this power could be increased by fasting and prayer. The ability to perform these miracles was therefore not an outflow of Divine power, for which they merely served as a funnel. Rather, it was a power that worked out of human nature, provided that nature had been sanctified by faith, and that faith had been strengthened by fasting and prayer.

Jesus' strong statement that young people, provided their faith was like a mustard seed, could even uproot a mountain, should not be overlooked. Mostly this statement of Jesus has been interpreted in a moral sense, of what was then called "the mountain shifting faith". By this they meant only this: that faith ultimately triumphs over all the difficulties of life, even if those difficulties were to rise high as a mountain for us. But this interpretation does not fit into the context. This interpretation would be audible if there had been any mention of the struggle the young people would be facing when Jesus was taken from them and they had to carry his Gospel into the world. But there is no such thing here. We are dealing here with a concrete case; of a moon sick child, who was demonically seized, and whom the youth had tried in vain to free from this demonic power. In this Jesus saw their failure of faith. For the sake of your unbelief you were not able to cast him out." In contrast, Jesus pointed out what faith and what power of faith had to work in them if they were to be able to heal such sick people and perform such miracles. And this power of faith, which is capable not of overcoming moral difficulties, but of miraculously curing the sick, Jesus showed them by saying: "If you had a faith like that of a mustard seed, you would say to this mountain, "Be lifted up and thrown into the sea, and it will be done. The ordinary interpretation cannot be the true one. There is talk here of miracle power, of a limitless power over sickness, and thus to perform a miracle.

Nor is it possible to interpret "a faith like a mustard seed" as meaning an extremely small, just beginning faith. The grain of the mustard seed is one of the smallest

among the seeds, but there is no question of a very small, fledgling faith. Jesus does not deny in the least that the disciples had faith. This was not the case with so many miracles they had actually performed. No, Jesus is punishing them because their faith was not great enough; not great enough against this particular kind of demon. Here it was a very powerful demon that did not come to pass, unless the power of faith had been especially increased by fasting and prayer. The mustard seed should not be seen here in its smallness among the seeds, but in a completely different capacity; in the capacity namely, that from such a seemingly insignificant grain such a great power can develop, that from that small grain a whole tree grows. That it was this that Jesus found interesting in the mustard seed appears from Matthew 13:31. There Jesus also referred to the mustard seed and said of it, that it is the smallest of all seeds, but that once it has grown up, it "becomes a tree, so that the birds of the heavens can nest in its branches'. Thus, Jesus had taught His disciples to look upon the mustard seed, and it is this same understanding that is perfectly appropriate here. The disciples had faith, but not enough power; and what they had to become was that their faith, like the mustard seed, was extremely small in germ, but that from that germ an incredible power developed, and became like a tree in whose branches the birds could nest. Thus, the emphasis is on the surprising power, beyond all expectation, that develops from the mustard seed, and must likewise develop from the seed of faith. They had fallen short in power, not because they did not have a grain of faith. They certainly had that. But because the sprouting of the stem from the seed of their faith had not been powerful enough. If Jesus applies this to the mountain that could be thrown into the sea, it certainly does not refer to magical experiments, but to the fact that the power that could develop from the seed of their faith would prove to be a power that would defy the resistance of matter and the demonic effect that lurked behind it. This power that Jesus gave to his young men to perform miracles was thus the power of the spirit that was laid down in our nature, which collapsed through sin, but was restored through faith, and could be raised to a higher power through that faith. And it also appears that Jesus directs their power first and foremost to removing the consequences of the curse. They will cast out demons and heal the sick. All sickness, all disease. The spiritual character of their power of faith is so much in the foreground that Jesus, who penetrates the demonic influence of the curse in all illness, also makes the holy triumph over the demonic in their spiritual power.

In connection with this, we should also consider Jesus' completely different statement in John 14: 13. He who does not believe in him for his words, believe in

him for his works. Something which, of course, can refer to nothing else but his miraculous works. And now Jesus adds: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do, and shall do more than these. This also shows that Jesus does not place his own miracles outside his human nature, in order to derive them from his divine nature. Then there would be no question of the miracle power that resides in Him also revealing itself in the disciples, who of course were only partakers of human nature. He does not separate himself from his disciples, nor does he reject them, but chooses a domain where he and his disciples form a unity; he as the Son of Man, they as the children of Man. But this also shows that the works that his faithful were to accomplish were also intended to be a spiritual power over nature, to free it from the curse, and likewise over the demonic activity that manifests itself in the curse, and that they were to exercise this power by virtue of their faith.

However, there is something else here. Jesus says that this power will come from his disciples "because he is going to the Father". Thus, the believers, in doing similar or greater works, were not on their own, separate from Jesus. On the contrary, they are thought of as being one with Jesus, as being in His mystical body, as working from Him as their Head. This situation would only come about after Jesus had died and been resurrected and ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of God. And yet, he continues: Whatever you desire in my name, I will do,' and in vs. 14 Jesus repeats this again: 'If you desire something in my name, I will do it. He does not say: God will do it; but I, the Son of Man, your Head and Lord, will work it in the members of my spiritual body. Thus, there is no question of a power or capability over which they themselves had free control. It will be a royal-manual power that resides in the Son of Man and that, emanating from him, will be manifested in the believers as members of the spiritual body. It is the Kingship of man over Nature under the curse, which, now that sinful mankind has lost it, was resurrected in Jesus as the Son of man, and which radiates from him, as also in this respect our King, into his faithful, and manifests itself through them.

This convincingly shows how borderline superficial is the widely held idea that Jesus' words had no other meaning or purpose than to reveal his divine power to us. It would make no sense that his disciples also received power to perform miracles, since they were ordinary human children; and it is even less understandable that they would do greater works than Jesus himself. All this can only be understood, if you understand the miracles of Jesus Himself as miracles performed by the Messiah, i.e., by the promised one of the Fathers, who had come

from God, and who, as one of us, sharing human nature, and as the Son of Man, revealed that restored and increased power which, in accordance with the creative order, had been placed in man by God Triune. Only thus understood are the miracles of Jesus directly related to Creation, to the fall, to the curse, and to the effect of demonic power on this world, and do they form an indispensable link in the great work of Redemption. Only in this way do the miracles of Jesus come to stand in the context of sacred history. And, only thus understood, do they govern the further development of man's dominion over matter, over Nature, over the curse, and over the demonic power working in and through the curse.

Immediately after their appearance as the Witnesses of the Whore, the Apostles show how the same kind of miracle power as that of Jesus now works in them; and already at the first miracle, the healing of the lame man, it becomes clear how they were clearly aware that they were performing such a miracle, not by virtue of some magical miracle ability, but by virtue of their communion with Christ their King. Peter asked, "What is it that you look upon us as if we had done this by our own power? No, the God of the fathers had glorified Jesus and crowned him in majesty. They had believed in that Jesus, and it was the Name of that Jesus, i.e. His exalted majesty, that had saved and healed the lame man. And that miracle, too, had come about through faith. Faith" is the restoration of the spiritual powers of our human nature, not in itself, but in communion with the Son of Man, and that faith worked here in two ways: both in Peter and in the lame-born man. This faith, which breaks the power of demons and reconnects us to God in Christ, was given of Christ and through Christ to the apostles and to the lame man, and that is why Peter adds: "the faith which is through him (i.e., through Christ) has given to the lame man this perfect health, in all your counter- words." The revelation of this miraculous power in the apostles made such an impression that they carried the sick on bed blankets as the apostles passed by; and even though Paul had not been in the circle of Jesus' disciples, it soon became clear that this miraculous power was also at work in him. For that power did not come from his relationship with Jesus, but was granted by him, and could only flow in its fullness after his exaltation at God's right hand, from him as the Head of the Body, from him as the King of the new humanity. What James tells us, that the elders also anointed the sick and prayed with them and thus tried to heal their infirmities, is along the same lines, and up to our days this healing by prayer tries to maintain itself.

It is not acceptable to dismiss all that is said about this as mere fabrication and deliberate deception. If no real healing took place, especially the alleged healings

of the sick that are linked to a certain place or a certain person could not possibly have lasted for such a number of years. Therefore, without further investigation or proof, no one has the right to deny the possibility that the same miracle power that worked so frequently in the days of the Revelation could not also work today. The only thing that must be denied is the assertion that they must still be working today in the same way as in the days of the Revelation, in order to deduce from this assertion that what no longer occurs to the same extent did not really take place then either. Whoever sees it this way completely misses the unique and unique character of Revelation. From the fact that Israel, as a people, could only be formed into God's people through the mighty miracles at the Red Sea and at Horeb, it by no means follows that every people today needs to have a similar origin. The faith first had to be established in Israel as a people; the other nations have taken over from Israel. Also, in nature there are what are called climactic periods. A seed that sprouts and later becomes a tree, lives through forms in its first emergence, which later disappear and do not return. A child has completely different characteristics than an adult man, and what would have been unthinkable with a child is revealed in an adult man. Old age brings other information that did not occur to the adult man. That is how it is in all history. In all history there is a succession of very distinct periods, each of which has its own character, requires different information, and has a different purpose. And so, it is also in the history of Revelation. Here, too, the tree arises and grows, and later it bears fruit. For this first period in the history of Revelation, the miracle has a wholly peculiar significance, but it must never be inferred from this that in the second period of Revelation, i.e., when it enters among the nations, the same phenomena must be repeated in the same way. Nor should it be overlooked that, according to the clear verdict of Scripture, the seducers will also make signs, even to the Antichrist himself. Therefore, when miracles occur among us, we must always pay close attention to the source of the power that is said to appear here.

But provided that both the special character of the first period of the history of Revelation and the danger of monstrous miracles are carefully observed, there is not the least reason to regard the revelation of a spiritual healing power in our days as impossible. We must not deny the possibility that God still delights in working miracles today, nor that through faith in Christ a power can still be exerted to heal the sick. It is not as if, for that reason, we should take everything that is told to us for granted. The facts must show it, and those facts must be under strict control. Credulity does not help here at all. On the contrary, everything depends on two

questions: 1°. what power can emanate from our soul to our body, and 2°. what power can be awakened in our soul by faith. The relationship between our soul and our body has not yet been sufficiently explored. We have already pointed out in another connection the doubling of muscular strength that sometimes sails from the mind into the body of a madman. There is, of course, somewhere in our being, hidden from us, a point at which the soul has its connection with our nervous system. By means of that nerve touch, the soul acts on the muscle tissue. It is not the body which sees, hears, moves and lifts or drops something, but it is the soul which does all this through the body as a means. In the sleepwalker it is the soul, which unconsciously guides the whole body. Courage is a quality of the soul, and history shows us how often courage performed greater miracles than the muscular strength of the giant. Seven times Joshua and his people are told: "Be strong and have good courage", of course on the assumption that increased strength could emanate from the soul to the body. Who then would say that the soul lacks the capacity to transmit a higher power to the body under certain circumstances? Even doctors attach more importance than one would think to what they call the patient's morale when it comes to healing. In itself, therefore, it is by no means impossible that the soul should undergo an intense process by which it can exert its healing influence on the body. The soul may undergo this intense process through faith, which is limited to faith in its own healing, and faith in healing may be inspired in the sick person by what he hears or sees from others, and by the urge to pray in the soul that he, too, may partake of this healing. The spiritual influence exerted by one person on the soul of another may also be taken into account. It is not true that we can only approach someone's soul by touching his body. Napoleon inspired his armies miles away by his name alone, and biology and hypnosis show convincingly what a direct influence the mind can have on the spirit. Belief in one can thereby directly awaken and strengthen belief in another.

We do not mean a mere psychic explanation. Belief in healing must always be based on faith in Christ, and this faith, which transforms the soul, comes only from above. It is always in fellowship with Christ and through His Name, as Peter expressed it, that the healing we are referring to here is effected. Although we are opposed to any attempt to declare that healing by the spiritual power of faith is inconceivable in our day and that it is based solely on deception, we do not deny that it is often accompanied by deception and fabrication, and that there have never been any shortage of peculiar individuals, who, possessing a strong biologic power, have mixed it with spiritual perception, and in this way have come to

regard themselves as a kind of do-gooder, abusing the credulity of the superstitious crowd for their own glory and benefit. In any case, as will further appear, it is not in these spiritual healings that we have to look for the further development of Jesus' Kingship over the powers of Nature. This lies elsewhere.

VII. - Our elevation of power.

Until it was wholly leavened. Matthew 13:33.

It has thus been recognized: 1°. that the miracle in the days of Jesus and His apostles had a significance which ceased after the consummation of Revelation; and 2°. that therefore no one may say that the possibility of the miracle is now removed. Christ our King lives at the right hand of God as the Head of the Church and as the Head of mankind; powers emanate from Him; and there is no reason why this power should not still be able to triumph over the opposition of Nature.

But even though we therefore maintain the possibility of the miracle for the present, we readily admit that neither the miracles performed by the apostles, nor those recorded in later times, can be said to have exceeded or surpassed the miracles performed by Jesus himself. We have only to recall the miracle in Canaan and that of the feeding, the miracle on Galilee's lake and the three resurrections from the dead, to make it clear that the glory of the apostolic miracle is by no means beyond them. We do not, therefore, diminish the apostolic miracle; we do not diminish it; we do not deny its significance; but what we do deny is, that the miracles of the apostles rank above the miracles of Jesus Himself. Now that Christ has explicitly declared that a greater and higher thing would emanate from His Church than was shown in His works, the question arises, where do we have to look for this "greater" and what would constitute this "greater".

What our Kant interpreters give here is not satisfactory. They refer to four things. They refer to the fact that the apostles communicated the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands; to the speaking in unusual languages; to the spreading of the Gospel throughout the Roman empire; and finally to what we read in Mark 16:17, 18, where it says: "Those who have believed will follow these signs: In my name they will cast out devils, with new tongues they will speak, serpents they will take up, and though they will drink something deadly, it will not harm them; on the sick they will lay their hands and they will be healed." It is obvious that this cannot be the intention of every believer. It can only mean that in the course of the centuries such things would occur. However, we do not want to believe that there is anything "more important" in the things listed than what was revealed in Jesus' own miracles. This can in no way refer to contradictions. That the preaching of Jesus himself was confined to Palestine, and that Paul brought the Gospel to Spain, Peter to Babylon, is no "more work for the apostles." It is nothing but the extension and reproduction of what Jesus called to existence. The apostles are no more than

epigones here. Just because there are Christian teachers today who spread the Gospel as far away as China and Japan, it cannot be said that they are doing "more" than Jesus did. Nor can the laying on of hands be anything more than when Jesus blew on the young people, saying: "receive the Holy Spirit." The speaking of unusual languages or words is not even a miracle that can be said to have been performed by the apostles; rather, it was an expression of the soul that came naturally to their lips, without any intention on their part, more in a moment of higher ecstasy. Moreover, who will say that speaking in other languages is something "more serious" than conjuring up the storm on Genesareth's lake or the feeding of the five thousand? And as for the stoical miracles, to which, with reference to Mark 16:17, 18, attention is drawn, the taking up of snakes, the not succumbing to poisonous liquor, and the healing of the sick, all this is rather of a lower order than the miracles performed by Jesus. In no way does it exceed them. Snake charms are still practiced in India. If we do not want to be fobbed off with general words, or skim over the surface, we cannot but say that this explanation by our Kant scholars does not do sufficient justice to the word of Jesus, and cannot in any way satisfy the serious reader of Scripture.

Let us therefore recommend an entirely different approach. Here we start from a contrast in history which no one can deny; we mean the difference, the contradiction, between the instinctive unconscious and the conscious action acquired by practice in our contact with the things of Nature. In order to make this distinction immediately obvious, we will deliberately use a somewhat commonplace and flat example, but one that is within everyone's reach for that very reason. In previous centuries our Dutch cuisine was revered throughout Europe, but there were no cooking schools. Our house mothers and their helpers cooked exquisitely tasty food, but they learned this themselves; instinctively they discovered how the food had to be treated in order to deliver the best dish. Dutch cuisine revealed its own character, in that it showed the natural products of the field and of the slaughterhouse in their natural excellence much more strongly than foreign kitchens. In France, "la Hollandaise" is still called the preparation of a dish without forcing and without pouring all kinds of foreign sauces on it. Fish "à la Hollandaise" is the pure boiled fish with butter, and not the fish made unrecognizable by all kinds of foreign sauces. This way of preparing food was found by instinct by our house mothers. They did not realise how to do it and why they did it this way and not the other way around. What they did, they did instinctively, and they did it well. Today, however, this instinctive talent has been

largely lost, and the daughters who are ready to marry and the future kitchen helpers are sent to a cooking school. There they have to learn it. There it is all explained to them. Good cooking is now the result, not of a natural talent to find the right thing instinctively, but of a kind of school-based study. What used to be done unconsciously and of its own accord, is now consciously mastered.

And this same distinction applies to all of life. Look at agriculture. Isaiah speaks of agriculture: Listen and hear my voice, observe and hear my speech. Does the ploughman plough all day long in order to sow? Does he open and cultivate his land all day long? Is it not so? Where he has made the upper level, there he scatters vetches, and spreads cumin, or barley and spelt, each to his place. And his God instructeth him in the way. He teaches him.28:23) "v.v.) Here, then, is a farming, which proceeds by experiment, entirely instinctively. It is a talent, a gift, a practical way of doing things, which God Himself teaches the farmer. There is no question of an agricultural school. Nor of intensive agriculture. But how completely different all this has become now. Here, too, unconscious actions have completely changed into conscious, learned actions, in which one takes account of one's actions. One has penetrated into the chemical knowledge of the soil, into the knowledge of the seed and into the knowledge of all the influences that influence the growth of the crop. The earlier instinctive cultivation of the field and the instinctive treatment of the dairy and of the livestock have now been replaced by a reasoned and very different way of doing things.

And as it is with agriculture, so it is with all areas of human life. In the past, people were brought up, and really not that badly, without any study in pedagogy; now one sees a newly married woman, in view of the mother's blessing, reaching for a pedagogical handbook, to learn the art of parenting from that book. All kinds of industry used to flourish here on an uncommon scale, and established our industrial fame throughout Europe, that in more than one subject we were the teachers of the whole civilized world. But there were no trade schools, industry schools, factory schools. Nowadays, on the other hand, all study for our poor industry must be taught at school, and without a whole series of schools one does not get there. Formerly, all higher expression, in whatever field, arose from life itself, of its own accord and from instinctive urges; now that instinct has been blunted and conscious learning has taken its place. Even in the field of Art one notices something similar. In the past, the great artists would unexpectedly emerge from their tents, build, chisel, paint, make their tones heard, and sing from their own spirit; and what they created is still stared at as the highest that has been bestowed

in the field of art. But they had seldom read books on art, had rarely attended art schools, and had almost no history of art at their disposal. It came to them instinctively out of holy inspiration. Now, on the other hand, our art schools and art academies have sprung up, writings on real and fake art try to explain everything, art criticism is the order of the day, entire libraries could be filled with the books on aesthetics alone. Now this turnaround in the field of art has not been able to transform the order of Nature. One never learns art. Art can only emerge instinctively from inspiration. Art is a given or it is not art. But that is precisely why it speaks so strongly here, that even in this field the conscious life always tries to suppress the unconscious and instinctive. And all this together now points out the extremely important evolution of our life, which in the years and centuries of our unconsciousness blossomed richly out of the instinctive, and now, with the decline of the instinctive factor, is trying to raise us by a conscious penetration into the composition of the laws of nature, to a higher, more collective and much more powerful expression of life. This conscious part of our present life expression lacks the charm which was so powerfully inherent in the earlier instinctive life, but it places us on a higher plane, multiplies our strength, and enables us as reasonable beings to achieve higher things. Whereas in the past every triumph over the power of Nature was an isolated event, now our power over Nature has become a commonplace; an expression of power over all of Nature as such. We have penetrated her mysteries. We have discovered the order of its composition, the movement of its factors and the laws which govern this movement. In the transition from the instinctive to the conscious handling of Nature there is thus an uncommon advance; it places man in opposition to Nature as vested with much higher power.

Likewise, it was in the nature of things that our human life began not with conscious but with instinctive expression. Instinctive is the expression when God Himself, directly without interference, shows man his way and makes his inner strength manifest. It is precisely what Isaiah says, that in this first period God Himself teaches and instructs the farmer. It could not begin with conscious life, because the conscious knowledge of nature was still completely lacking. Had it waited for this, there would never have been any human development, because no one had the dissecting knowledge of nature, and so there was no one who could teach others. Precisely for that reason it was a wonderful grace that God the Lord enabled mankind in this first period to achieve so much greatness by instinct. The original mastery mankind had over Nature was broken by sin and the curse. Yet it

did not disappear completely at once. It worked in a weakened measure among all the people for a while, but that after-effects finally degenerated into magic and the art of witchcraft, and thus came to an end. But what remained then, and for centuries has carried our entire human development, was the inspiration of the instinctive life, which very soon brought our human life to a high level of prosperity. What we have learned from ancient Egypt and Canaan in the days of Abraham in the past century surprises us because of the high point of development at which our human life stood then. This is not to say that certain studies were not already being done at that time. Imitation began immediately, and all imitation remains study. But still, the peculiar character of our human development came then rather from genius, from the innate talent, from the instinctive urge, and study remained superficial and was of secondary importance. But it could not remain so permanently. And much greater power over Nature would be ours as soon as mankind with its research and reflection penetrated into the very essence of Nature, and thus learned to dissect the forces that lie within her, in order to make them subservient to her. It is of no avail, then, if we lament the demise of poetry, which once made our whole life shine, to make way for much cold and dry prose. This prosaic evolution was bound to happen. It could not fail to happen. The siege could not be beaten permanently at Nature's outer gate; through that gate man had to penetrate her fortress, track down her hidden powers, and thus establish our dominion over her from within.

And so, it came to pass. Whereas there was a period of the aftereffects of the forces of paradise, and then came the second period of the flowering of instinctive life, we have now entered the third period, which extends our dominion over Nature much further and establishes it in our human research and in the knowledge obtained from that research. It is like the difference between the way in which the Asian in Thibet tries to cure his patients with amulets and incantations, and the diagnosis and

medicine of today's learned physician, who has observed the body in its composition from within, and through that greater and more complete knowledge knows how to discover the seat of evil in the sick life. This is not to say that the sick are not also cured in Thibet. Even it is not denied that there were means of diagnosis and medication known in the past that are neglected nowadays. Our medicine still ignores the history of medication far too much. But everyone is aware that the knowledge of diseases and the knowledge of healing methods are nowadays, thanks to the anatomy and physiology of the human body, at a much,

much higher level, and that we therefore have a much stronger position with regard to illnesses, in this period of conscious research, than in the days when tradition and instinct were the driving force. We must not, therefore, return to the period of instinctive life, although we should honor its relative excellence. Not in the unconscious, but in the conscious life, lies our reasonable power. Only he who throws himself upon Nature with conscious knowledge possesses over that Nature a dominion, which reminds us again of our royal calling, to subject her to us. There is in that conscious doing with actuality a more, compared to before.

In this context, notice Jesus' parables of the mustard seed and the leaven.

We are used to understanding these parables exclusively in terms of spiritual effects. But do we have the right to do so? Does not the whole of Jesus' teaching show that he always gathers body and soul, matter and spirit, the visible and invisible world as one whole, in its indispensable coherence. And what right would we have to simply exclude all that which is tangible in the body, matter and visible life from Jesus' prophecy, which speaks in these parables, in order to confine ourselves to the spiritual? When Jesus speaks of the "Greater One" that would one day come, he speaks precisely of his "works", and among these "works", miracles were naturally the most prominent; miracles that revealed his power over visible Nature. So let us not separate what for Jesus was always one. He took the whole of mankind, both with his soul's needs and with his external misery, and in the face of both he acted as Saviour and Redeemer. Savior from sin, but also Savior from the misery that haunts us. In this context Jesus refers to the mustard seed. A very, very small seed. But this seed germinates, it grows up, it goes through a process, and the end of that process is an extensive tree, which offers shade and protection to the birds of the sky. And so, says Jesus, it will also be with the seed of the Kingdom. First it will germinate, seemingly small and insignificant. But then it will expand. It will go through a regular organic process, and one day the outcome will be that there will be a widespread tree in the midst of the world, to offer help and protection to mankind in his sin and misery. This does not indicate an everlasting situation, but a passing through of a series of periods, an expansion of influence, a penetration with this influence of our whole life, and a future in which the spiritually and temporally blessing effect of the seed of the Kingdom will be manifest for everyone. An ever greater one.

In the parable of the leaven Jesus then shows us that same process in its hidden operation. The miracle here is that the sourdough starter is placed in the flour and

that, once it comes into contact with the flour, it starts a powerful process. And now Jesus points us not to an external act or instinctive action of the woman, but to what happens to the flour, completely independently of her, only through the forces contained in Nature. Jesus penetrates into the secret of Nature and shows how there are forces hidden in that Nature which automatically set the process in motion and, according to the laws governing this operation, complete it.

What right would one have to limit the meaningful prophecy of this process here again to the spiritual? Is it not rather a requirement to apply this process of the Kingdom's forces to the whole of our human society here as well? Has not the power of the Kingdom made itself felt in every sphere of our lives, spiritual, social and material? And has not this working in all areas been the working of the leaven? Christianity, carried into the world, came into contact with the factors and laws of our human life and thus through that contact completely transformed and changed the face of life. Compare our human life in Christian Europe and America with the human life in Asia and Africa, and it will be preached to you from the rooftops that the leaven of the Christian religion has penetrated into the three measures of our human life, and by doing so has raised our spiritual, social and material life to a higher level, just as the flour rises through the action of the leaven that is hidden in it.

History and the present demonstrate that only in these Christian countries has that liberation and elevation of the mind come about which, in the end, also turned to the research and knowledge of Nature, has so wonderfully increased our power over Nature. Certainly, the Greeks and Romans also studied Nature, and the Arabs also made progress in this area, but science, and the study of Nature with it, only attained its highest level in those countries where the Christian principle had set the human spirit free. And even though this study of nature now turns against the Christian religion in such a reprehensible way, it is and remains no less a plant that only flourished and could flourish on the Christian soil. Think away Jesus' appearance and the entrance of Christianity into Europe, and we would still be as powerless against Nature as the Chinese in the East, or the Indians in the South of Asia. To say that Jesus would not have foreknown, guessed or known about this course of things, this coming process, would be to disregard his greatness. He would be our Cookie, he has been given all power in heaven and on earth, and when Jesus says to his disciples that the leaven, which he came to put in the three bars, would one day lift up our whole human life, did it not already appear to be fully true what he prophesied to his disciples, that however high his miracles stood,

the fruit of his entrance into the world would one day bring forth an even greater, an even more marvellous work, when the reign which we now possess over Nature would come about through the unveiling of her mysteries and the knowledge of her hidden powers?

VIII. - Wiser in their generation.

The children of the world are far-standing in their generation than the children of light. LUK. 16:8.

AN man thus in paradise was given dominion over Nature. Through the fall into sin and the curse that came from it, weakened mankind redeemed this dominion over Nature.

But in Christ as the Son of Man this dominion returns, and the Christ restores this dominion in three ways. First, immediately by the direct miracle, a power that continues in His apostles. Second, indirectly, by the high development of spiritual factors in our generation, in all lands where the Christian religion triumphs. And thirdly, in the finale at his return, something that is part of this, and which the New Testament repeatedly points out, as an indispensable part of the great work of redemption. This is how it reads: 10. Jesus restores man's power over Nature by the miracle. Jesus restores man's power over Nature on a much broader scale and permanently, by the light that rises over the nations, when the Gospel transforms people's lives; and 30. This third point, the finale at Jesus' return, can only be referred to briefly here. To go into it at greater length would distract us from our subject. Suffice it, therefore, to refer to what Isaiah already prophesied with an apparent reference to paradise, that one day "the wolf will walk with the lamb and the lion will eat straw like the ox" (11:7), yes, that "a child will amuse himself over the den of a viper, and will stretch out his hand in the pit of the basilisk" (vs. 8). An Eastern poem, but for that reason no less powerful, way of expressing the complete restoration of the power of man over Nature; a restoration that will only be completed when Jesus, at His return, and forever, has nullified the power of Satan and broken all opposition of the evil spirit. This, however, will not happen until the end of days, when the work will be completed and the kingdom of glory will triumph.

What is already working, however, is the restoration of man's indirect power over Nature. This power over Nature in the second period of its restoration is the power which now serves us, and which has made such a surprising breakthrough, especially in the last century. This is not the immediate miraculous power that Jesus exercised when he was on earth. It is a power of an entirely different order, of an entirely different kind, of an entirely different effect. And in the miraculous power, as well as in the indirect power that Jesus now exercises over Nature, it is spirit that rules over matter in both instances, but that spirit ruled over matter

directly in the miracle, while the same spirit now rules over matter in the medium way through the development of man's spirit. Although less correct, for the sake of brevity we may call this the power of the spirit over matter by means of science and the technical arts. Less correct, because next to science stands invention, the stroke of genius, energy and talent, perseverance and will. But the result of all this is then dissected, thought through, explained and expounded in science and in the technical art. That technical art is mankind's ability, his ability to subdue Nature; something which of course includes medicine and so many other skills. This, our indirect power over Nature, also a miraculous power, but not a miracle power, has come to us through and from Christ. His Gospel has called forth an entirely different, much higher development of mankind's spiritual life. Only in Christianity has this greater light been clearly seen, and from this newer, richer, higher development of our spiritual life has naturally arisen our greater power over Nature through our knowledge and ability. We owe this too to Christ. It emanated from Him. He has wrought it in us and through us. And it is equally clear that this second indirect restoration of power over Nature, which we owe to Christ, is a greater thing, if you compare it to what Jesus accomplished directly through His miraculous power. Not a greater thing, as if it revealed a higher power. Nothing is better than commanding the wind and storm on the lake of Genesaret, multiplying the bread and raising the dead. But this power given to us now is a greater thing, if you look at its size, scope and durability. Everything that Jesus did through his miracle power was for one specific case, a single sick person, a single possessed person, was limited to one specific area. This second indirect power over Nature, which has now been placed in our hands, on the other hand exercises its equal effect and influence among all countries and peoples, century after century, and blesses thousands at a time in all distress and sickness. While it in itself sounds mysterious to our ears that our power over Nature would exceed the miraculous power of Jesus, it is nevertheless perfectly understandable how Jesus, knowing what he would work and accomplish in and through us in later development, could prophesy to his disciples that they would accomplish a greater work than was seen in his miraculous work.

The error in which they fell, and which caused them not to see this, lay in the fact that they attributed power to Christ, which remained foreign to his faithful. They imagined that what went on outside faith was also outside the sphere of Jesus' action. What unbelieving science or art achieved was regarded as evil and as the work of evil. Jesus was excluded from this. His kingship was limited to that which

pertained to the salvation of the soul for eternal life. The "world" was regarded, not only in its unholy spirituality, but also in its ordinary human life, as lying outside the realm in which the Christ exercised His royal power and dignity. The fact that God so loved the world that He gave it His only begotten Son, not in order to destroy it, but in order to save it, was understood to apply only to the elect. The world was given up, and salvation was only seen in Jesus' coming for the eternal salvation of the elect. That this was in direct conflict with what Scripture reveals about the restoration of paradise, about the new earth under the new heaven, and about the glorification of our bodies, was not understood. And so we have ended up in the false position of not denying, on the one hand, that we in the Christian country have come to a much higher development of our human earthly life, but on the other hand, of conceiving of all this as going beyond Jesus' Kingship, as having no causal connection with the Christ, and thus taking an attitude hostile to the Christ. The full, rich, comprehensive meaning of the words: "I have been given all power in heaven and on earth" was neither seen nor understood. If, on the other hand, one widens one's view and recognizes that Jesus, as our King, has dominion over our entire human life, then it cannot be otherwise than that both, our spiritual development for eternal life as well as the general human development, which has increased our power over Nature and has expanded our knowledge and abilities so incredibly, fall under his dominion, are due to him and have come to us from him. A comparison of the human development in the pagan and Maho-mediterranean life with that which came about in the Christian country provides conclusive proof of this assertion. The two, our spiritual awakening to salvation and our general human development for this life, do not stand apart. They are two activities in the same organism, which have influenced each other mutually. And you would be doing the honor of Jesus' Kingship a disservice if you refused to honor His majesty in both.

Yet it is not difficult to see how this disregard of Jesus' Kingship in this general human development has come about. The fact cannot be denied that the general human development has as a rule been carried more by the unbelievers than by the believers. What we see today, that those who practice natural science and the technical arts only exceptionally worship their Savior and God in Christ, is not an isolated event. Almost throughout history the same phenomenon has occurred, which in the Gospel of Luke is expressed in these words, that "the children of the world in their generation tend to be wiser than the children of light". Because in our Staten-translation it says: "be more careful than the children of light", this

statement has been taken rather loosely. This is because in our ancient language the word caution had two meanings. Firstly, the meaning of caution, which it still has today, is that of being cautious, of paying attention to the consequences, of thinking about the dangers to which one can expose oneself. Along a dangerous, steep mountain path one climbs carefully down. But on the other hand, careful meant something completely different and was used for skillful, shrewd, intelligent and clever. To an eminent person one sometimes wrote on the address: "To the prudent Lord." A French proverb says : "*prévoir c'est gouverner*," i.e. the art of governing lies in foresight. And so, a "prudent man" was a good regent, an able judge, an eminent scholar. And this is expressed in Luke 16:10 by the Greek word *phronimos*, the very same word used of the "wise virgins" in the parable. Wiser, more clever, would therefore certainly be a better translation in modern Dutch. And if these words are interpreted in this way, it is then expressed that in their area the children of the world are spiritually more clever than the Children of Light, i.e. that in worldly matters, in everything relating to the life of Nature and visible things, the people of the world generally know how to exercise greater power than the faithful, here referred to as the Children of Light. Something condemnable is meant here at the very least, because it is written: Jesus praised the judge who acted so sagaciously. The fact was only established that it is so; that in the area of general human life the non-believers usually show more resilience than the believers. It is not discussed any further; it is not stated that it could and should be different; nor is the cause traced, why it is so; but from life itself, from practice, from experience, the rule is established, that it appeared to be so and not otherwise. In the area of general human life in this world, the unbelievers usually outshine the believers.

Already in the Old Testament the young people found this confirmed. Abel prefers to walk thoughtfully before his lambs, and Cain is the man who strives and puts the spade in the ground. It is said of Cain that he "built a city"; something which, of course, can only be understood as a poor interior design, with a certain palliative against wild animals, but which nevertheless points to a first revelation of technical art. And when later Seth stands opposite Cain and his line, it is not in the believing lineage of Seth, but in the unbelieving lineage of Cain, that Jabal, Jubal and Tubal appear to Cain, who are mentioned as the great inventors of the working of metals, of musical instruments, and of the weaving of cloth for the tent. So now 't all goes on. Egypt is a pagan land, and Moses must learn from the Egyptians their wisdom, and in Egypt Israel is formed into a nation. The gifts of Bezaleel and Aholiab were

a special talent, given to them for the construction of the Tabernacle, but still in connection with what Egypt already knew in this field of fabrication. When the temple on Zion will arise, there will be no master builder in Israel, but the great architect Hiram from Tyre will have to come to Jerusalem to build the House of the Lord. Even in the days of Saul we read that at a certain time there was no blacksmith in Israel, something that probably means that the Israelites themselves did not care about metalworking, and that as blacksmiths among them there were men from those dissolute groups of boilermakers, as we still know them in the Gypsies, and that the Philistines, to weaken Israel, chased these dissolute men out of Israel's land posts. Israel did not excel in any field of science or art in the days of the glory of its nation-state. Trade was mostly in the hands of the Canaanites, Israel's shipping was insignificant compared to that of Tyre and Sidon. And not only Egypt, but also Assyria, Babylon and Persia were higher than Israel in every field of science and technology, not to mention the Greeks and Romans. The richest antiquities museums in Israel contain almost nothing of ancient Israel. Under Solomon an extraordinary wealth must have reigned in the palaces in Jerusalem for a moment, but everything leads to the suspicion that foreign art was called in to help here as well. And also, in Jesus' days the newly built cities of Caesarea and Tiberias are of foreign origin, while Jesus gathered around him a few simple fishermen from Galilee's lake, and there is no mention at all of intellectually or artistically high standing persons in his circle. Only with Paul, Apollos and Luke does the higher intellect enter the holy circle. With the exception of Paul's writings, the splendor of Gospel and Apostolic literature is not the fruit of scholarly learning, but the spark of holy inspiration.

This phenomenon is not accidental, but has its well-founded explanation in the spiritual fact that our spiritual power is as a rule too weak to encompass both spheres at once: that of the kingdom of heaven and that of general human life. If the mind focuses too much on general human development, then the acquired science and art will stimulate the self-concept of the individual in such a one-sided manner that becoming a "child of God" through one's own sense of superiority is almost impossible. Newton and Agassiz continue to testify how even this pitfall can be avoided, but they remain exclusions, and, as a rule, study and art seem to heighten one's own sense of power so much that becoming small and humble before God is only rarely accompanied by it. The doubt, thrown into the heart by this study and art, brings with it a real confusion and temptation, of which the ordinary confessant can hardly conceive. It makes man stand too high and the

worship of the Lord's glory suffers. Even at our colleges today we still see how young men who went there with a sincere confession of Christ go home at the end of their studies as unbelievers. Life in this field occupies too much of the whole person to leave a good chance for looking upwards.

And conversely, among the "Children of Light" as the Gospel calls them, one finds too often a tendency to flee from life out of fear and anxiety that one would finally succumb and lose one's faith if one were to enter into the fullness of human life. The hermit, the saint of the pillars, the man who locks himself up in his cell are the most telling examples of this. One seeks one's God, one wants to enjoy one's community, the world distracts from that community, and now one flees the world, flees all temptation, and withdraws from full human life "alone but in communion with God". And even though this does not take on such a scary form in the wider circle of believers, the tendency to avoid the world and to separate oneself from the world within one's own circle still prevails, as it has in almost all centuries. What the Baptists are held to be, "t "with a little book in a corner," may be exaggerated, but there is truth in it; And although the Calvinists have always understood things differently, and although they cannot be denied the praise for having excelled in the field of general human life, thanks to the profession of Common Grace, it can hardly be denied that after their decline, at the end of the 17th and 18th centuries, the tendency among them to isolate themselves in groups and to withdraw from the general human field again gained ground. Things are improving, but the tendency is still there. And even if one looks down on it from on high, there is still a sacred principle involved in this desire for avoidance and seclusion. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and to suffer damage to his soul? Entering the world, one immediately encounters what is called "the world" in an evil sense, its unholy spirit, its luxuriant guidance, the demonic background of its life. Now it is true that faith also conquers this "world", but whoever feels too weak for it would do better to withdraw into the light than to wander off the path of life in the darkness of the world.

This can now be counted on in the course of history. For the spiritual battle all power must continually be drawn to the spiritual. The world, in order to advance, must continually concentrate all its spiritual power on the material and visual. Both currents continue to follow their own course. That is how it was, how it is, and how it will remain. On the one hand, there is a powerful development of human knowledge and ability, which is mainly promoted by men who concentrate all their mental power on this, but precisely because of this they remain alien to the

mysteries of the higher life. And on the other hand, a powerful development of the spiritual life, which is carried and promoted above all by men who, as Children of Light, concentrate all the tension of their spiritual power on that eternal light.

There is even much to be said for recognizing that this and no other is the order of our God. And does not history show us how He pleased to bestow on the heathen nations, and not on His Israel, the gifts and talents of our human knowledge and ability? Did not Egypt and Babylon, Greece and pagan Rome possess gifts of science and art which were denied to Israel? Does not the contrast between the sons of Seth and the sons of Cain run through all history? And as we descend into our own days, do you not see how the same rule continues in the distribution of gifts in this field? You would like to pray time and again that those eminent men in every field of science and art would fall under Jesus' feet, and you lament: why don't we have such men. And yet it remains so. The gifts and talents for the general development of mankind are distributed to a far greater extent to the children of the world than to the Children of Light. Calvinism alone has broken this rule in its heyday, and what we recently remembered of Rembrandt's bibles and De Ruyter's heroism and of Bilderdijk's poetry has enlivened our awareness that exceptions are possible, not only in a single person, but also in a whole group that follows a different school of thought, but without overturning the basic rule. It is only that we should never lose sight of the fact that, even where this basic rule continues to apply, the higher and richer light that has been kindled in the human sphere, and the higher power over Nature that has thereby become ours, even if it turns against the Kingdom of Christ in persons, never leaves its order, so that even in this general human development, now that we have dispensed with its sinful admixture, we have to honor a gift that came to us from the Cross.

IX. - The spirit world.

All these things I will give you. MATTH. 4:3.

Thus, it appeared to us, how the resumption by the Son of the kingship over Nature in two ways. Firstly, immediately by His miraculous power, and secondly, indirectly through the miraculous Christ, in the knowledge and ability of mankind, through the course of the centuries, in the Christian world. And we also saw how Jesus calls this last "the more work", that thanks to his action would be accomplished by the believers. Thanks to Jesus' intervention, because Jesus not only stated that his own would do more than he had done, but also added as a fundamental statement: "For I am going to the Father.

Yet this important point requires further explanation. For although the fact is indisputably established that our greater knowledge and ability with regard to Nature found its rise exclusively in those countries that came under the influence of the Christian religion, this does not yet explain in what way our richer knowledge of Nature is related to the effect of Jesus on the hearts. This would explain itself if the men who brought us this knowledge had been, almost without exception, believers; but it seems to suffer from inner contradiction, since, as we saw, the study of Nature and the spirit of invention to study it, remained rather strange to the believers, and as a rule was found rather among the unbelievers. An inner contradiction, which is all the more striking because Jesus just said: "He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also, yea, he shall do more. It is therefore not acceptable to want to explain this our higher power over Nature from Jesus' royal rule, and yet to separate it from faith. Thus, we are faced with the question of how to reconcile the two, i.e., whether Jesus binds our superior power to faith, or whether the study of nature is, as a rule, alien to faith, and even opposed to it. It is clear that there must be an intermediate link here that unites the two conflicting data, and the question is where that intermediate link lies.

In order to trace this, we have to go back to the temptation in the desert. The Messiah appeared in order to take back the kingdom of this earth for us men as the Son of man; but before Jesus makes a public appearance among Israel for this purpose, a demonic spirit, indeed the chief of demons, appears to him in the wilderness and says that he is in possession of this kingdom and that he is powerful and inclined to hand it over to Jesus, provided that he, falling down, worships him. It is not acceptable to take Satan's words for an idle pretense, because Jesus Himself has called him the ruler of the world, a title that is on a par with the royal

title in authority, even though the title of king is too beautiful and too noble to apply to Satan. Superior is the title of the man of violence, and that is why Jesus does not say "the king", but "the ruler of the world comes, but has nothing on me." And not only did Jesus wrestle in the desert with this ruler of the world for kingship, and going to Gethsemane he confessed how this wrestling with Satan would first be completed on the cross, but during the three years of His wanderings on earth we see Jesus continually working to break the works of the devil. The casting out of the devils is at the forefront of Jesus' daily task, and the power he granted his disciples also serves, yes, to heal the sick, but primarily to cast out the devils. In a moment of holy ecstasy Jesus said that he saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. And so much is in the foreground of Jesus' struggle against Satan that he explicitly included the words: - Deliver us from evil in the short prayer that he inspired in us. It is therefore a distortion of Jesus' action if one singles out that struggle of Jesus with the devil from the history of his life, and explains his powerful work, so called spiritual, from what Jesus did not say, leaving out what was always the background of his holy struggle. His apostles, therefore, are constantly expressing that struggle between the Spirit that Jesus poured out and the spirit of the satanic world. They resist every attempt to turn the believers' struggle into a mere moral struggle. No, as the redeemed of the Lord we do not fight with flesh and blood, but with "the spiritual evils in the air. Satan still walks about like a bristling lion looking for whom he can devour. And when the final triumph of the church is portrayed in Pathos, the unfolding of the spiritual drama comes together in a new release of Satan, and then, in his being thrown into the lake of fire, the complete defeat of the anti-Christian and anti-Godly being comes to an end. The man of sin described by Paul in 2 Thess. 2:3 will be "according to the working of Satan" (see vs. 9). An attempt by Satan to find his own human incarnation, just as the Son of God became flesh in Jesus and the eternal Word, but also to perish in this extreme of sacrilege forever. Luther expressed this by saying that Satan was God's ape in so far as, in his struggle against God for the possession of this earth and of our human race, he hijacks what God Triune in His mercy had ordered for our salvation.

From this extremely important demonic background, which is visible behind Jesus' entire appearance, later study has completely detached Jesus' appearance. Everything that appears in the Gospels and in the apostolic writings on this subject is now explained as imagination and falsehood, and people maintain that there was nothing wrong with it. They are said to have been the superstitious ideas of the

times in which Jesus was raised and brought up, and that is how he finally came to imagine that there was in fact a demonic spirit world. We know better, and we must therefore interpret the Gospel in such a way that everything it tells us about Satan and the demons is explained to us psychologically. That this is so among those scholars who honor in Jesus no other than a high Rabbi and religious genius, cannot surprise us. They do not accept the Savior as the Gospel offers and presents him to us, but appropriate a Jesus to their own taste and needs. But what we do not understand, and what goes against all right and reason, is that there are also scholars who call themselves "believers", who claim to honor the Christ in His Godhead, and who nevertheless go along with such untenable assertions, as if Jesus was caught in the errors of His time. The one completely rules out the other. One cannot, on the one hand, maintain that Jesus was a partaker of the divine nature and, on the other hand, find error in him. And what some of them, in order to save themselves from this inopportune situation, argue, namely that Jesus knew that all this was madness of his time, but out of love, and in order to have access to the hearts, conformed to these errors, is a pure fabrication that falls short of the facts.

The temptation in the wilderness was a battle he fought himself, without one of his young people getting involved, and he was led to fight it by the Holy Spirit in the wilderness. The casting out of devils in Jesus' action is not a compliance with incorrect propositions, but a struggle against the demons, in which they themselves speak to Jesus. Completely unprovoked by his disciples, Jesus said on his way to Gethsemane that the ruler of the world was now going to make his final attack. And how would Jesus have inserted into the prayer the prayer: - Deliver us from evil, if Jesus had not known that Satan was present and working on the hearts? All such statements are therefore to be rejected without prejudice. The struggle with Satan to save the sheep of His pasture from the clutches of the wolf is not an afterthought but the main issue in Jesus' performance, and the sacred history from Paradise to the end of the centuries remains inexplicable, unless Satan's struggle against God for mankind's sake is the all-important motive. This is so much the case that, during Jesus' time on earth, the demonic influence was even more pronounced than usual. The influence of the spirit world on this earth may be weaker or stronger, on the part of both the good angels and the fallen angels. And so, we see that when, in principle, the spiritual struggle is about to be decided with Jesus' coming to earth, both the angels and the devils will make themselves known

more than in the past, and that the whole of Jesus' appearance will be lifted out of its natural frame of reference if the effect of the demons is not done full justice.

On closer inspection, the question is even more far-reaching, relating not only to angels and devils, but to spiritual life in general. The result shows that those who began by regarding demons as a product of false imagination, and who subsequently repudiated belief in the existence of angels, did not stop at this, but, under logical pressure, also began to deny the existence of the soul, gave up belief in immortality, and finally advanced to the denial of the existence of God, leaving in the end nothing but nature, body and matter. In fact, the one and the other are connected.

Whoever imprisons himself in this finite world, concludes his finite thinking, derives his criterion from it and now uses the criterion thus obtained to decide what is or is not possible and what can or cannot exist, shuts the shutter on the window that gave us an insight into the spiritual world and sees nothing more of that spiritual world. The standard of visible things does not fit spiritual things. The latter, of an entirely different nature, operate by entirely different forces and follow entirely different laws. It is therefore inevitable that the scientist who wants to evaluate spiritual things according to the nature, forces and laws that apply in the material and visible world, can, if he is consistent, arrive at no other conclusion than that there are neither miracles nor spirits, and that there is no soul nor God either. Just as a fish discovers nothing of the splendor of the cedar forest because its water world is all its own, so too does a scientist bound by sight discern nothing of the splendor and glory of the spirit world, because the world he can measure, weigh and reckon is for him all the world he is absorbed in. And even if such a person assumes that there is a world of the beautiful and the good, and even if he finds his ideal in it, in the end he must always try to explain those ideals from the visible, as having arisen from the material, or more correctly, from the cell or from what gave birth to the cell. He does not know or recognize a separate, distinct world of its own, which as a spiritual world cannot be measured against our visible world. If that were the case, then the monopoly of his highly sensitive science would be over. Science, which as a mistress places itself above and in opposition to faith, is a complete negation of the very existence of a spiritual world. The two are mutually exclusive, and a quasi-faith that began to bend and conform to such a one-sided science forfeited its honorific name.

This tense relationship was only eased, at least to a certain extent, by the impartial recording of a series of phenomena associated with spiritism, telepathy, clairvoyance and so much more. Dr. Mijers in his *Human Personality*, and only recently Flammarion in his *Forccs naturelles inconnues*, to mention only these two, have, by rigorous research, recorded all those strange phenomena which in their opinion were abundantly covered by sufficiently reliable testimony; and in our own country too, writings of a similar nature have appeared. In not so small circles one now hears the admission that apparently certain mysterious things exist and certain mysterious forces work, and that it is good to study these, but that it will most likely lead to nothing, since our knowing mind cannot penetrate the shifting world. However, so much has been gained that scholars outside the circle of faith are beginning to admit that, completely apart from this earthly world, there must be such a thing as another spiritual world, and that certain forces from this mysterious world have an effect on ours, which appear not to be without influence on many a soul's condition and life. Even with this, not much has been gained, but still something. That this finite earthly existence is not yet all existence is then admitted. People get used to the idea that, apart from this order of things, there is another order of things. It is recognized that we are connected with this other world in a completely different way than we are connected with the ordinary world around us. It is recognized that there are people who do not notice this other order of things at all and laugh about it, while there are other people who practice communion with it and firmly believe in it. And one can no longer hide the fact that there is a certain similarity here with what has been revealed by prophets and apostles concerning the existence of a higher, spiritual world order. It is not as if the Prophetic and Apostolic Revelation were the same as what appears in this spiritism, in this clairvoyance, in this mediumistic system and so much more. It is rather the profound differences that stand out. But the common factor is that both Revelation and the spiritistic phenomena presuppose the existence of a world order other than the one in which our earthly life is conducted, and that there is a definite means by which the forces and effects of this other world make themselves known to us in our earthly existence. There have even been those among the semi-believers who were on the verge of losing their faith, and who now confessed with delight that these phenomena had clearly shown them to be immortal after death. The poltergeists at the table dance seemed to them to be as reliable a witness to immortality as the Resurrection of Jesus on the third day. Of course, a true believer will never fall into such a tangible error. He has an entirely different fellowship

with the real world than the medium has with the spirit world, and his firm faith rests not on spiritistic testimony but on his spiritual bond of faith with his God.

But although believers have quite rightly never attached to these phenomena the special importance that others have attached to them, in the great struggle between faith and science the study of these phenomena nonetheless provides the indisputable advantage of dealing a heavy blow to the short-sighted pretensions of exact science, which even denied the possibility of the existence of an order of things other than that in which our ordinary lives revolve. The possibility of the existence of a different order of things is now admitted, and it is also admitted that forces can act from this different order of things that cannot be explained by ordinary data. The spirit world, with which one comes into contact, automatically opens the way for believing in the existence of a spiritual world, and this, of necessity, raises the question of how we should think about this spiritual world and how it affects our visible world, and especially mankind.

In spiritual science the same process can be observed. Modern spiritual science is no longer at peace with the vague data on which it used to rely. It proceeds from the assumption that what we call psychic phenomena must somehow reveal themselves to the outside world through the body or in the body. Insofar as these healthy or sick, normal or abnormal phenomena are visible or audible, they can be observed, touched, compared, related and some data can be deduced from them. But even though many people would prefer to explain all these phenomena by physical means, and even though not a few people deny that there is a separate soul, it appears time and again that physical data are completely inadequate to explain what we observe. Thus, one is forced to assume that there is something else in man than what emanates from matter and also to recognize that this spirit in man forms its own sphere of life, in which quite peculiar activities take place and to which the ordinary laws of nature do not apply. Even in man's thinking life, in his imagination, in his dream world, in his artistic creations, in his sense of beauty, in his moral motives, yes, even in the regulation of his law and power, one encounters phenomena that are shrouded in mystery. And when one approaches the power of religion, the mystery of love, heroism and so much more, one finds oneself confronted with phenomena that have a profound effect on life and which, in short, without the influence of a spiritual world on mankind, defy all explanation. Materialism therefore gradually lost ground among the finer and deeper thinkers. A more ideal view of life is breaking ground. One feels and recognizes that there is a my- tical world, with which one oneself has been put in a

certain connection. The *ignoramus* (we will be at peace with our ignorance) gives way to the tendency to seek a certain mystical communion with this world, Oh, yes, there really is such another sphere of spiritual life, for whose knowledge our heart thirsts, and we even open wide the gates of our heart to see if the influences from this mystical world may penetrate us. This is the prevailing mood among the nobler scholars today, and only among the semiotics, the business people, and the revolutionary elements among the lower classes can you still find the obtuse materialism that ruled almost without exception in the circles of the scholars half a century ago.

But - and this is the characteristic feature of our time - the Revelation which has come to us from this mystical-spiritual world in God's Word is still unknown in those circles. They cling to what has come to us from Buddhism, they immerse themselves in Theosophy, they try to raise the spirit of Hegel to power again. One lends an ear to everything. Only the special revelation of God in prophecy, in Christ and in his Apostles, remains opposed. There is indeed a spiritual world, and it is true that we are connected with it, and that it is of the utmost importance to know this connection; but that knowledge must come from us, from mankind, from our own guesses and inventions, from our own thinking and meditating. We must owe all knowledge of this to ourselves. What is not allowed and what is not wanted is for this knowledge to be mysteriously revealed to us by God.

Certainly, the believers themselves are also to blame for this. Not as if they would deny this Revelation. On the contrary. But it is precisely the broad, mysterious background of Revelation that has been overshadowed by them. Just ask yourself what significance the company of angels still has for most people, and especially what significance they still have for the actions of demons and Satan. How many of the faithful no longer count as angels? Not that they deny their existence, but for most they have become meaningless figures. Take them away, and their shrunken faith remains what it was. The effect of the Holy Spirit on their souls, oh yes, of course. But the casting out of devils by Jesus and his apostles, what else has it become for many than a spiritual healing of the mentally ill and insane? Also, from the preaching so much of the rich content that Revelation gave us about that spiritual world has disappeared without trace. And if, in order to understand Jesus' Kingship, you refer to Satan as the ruler of the world, who took by stealing what belonged to the Son of Man, and who had to relinquish this stolen dominion to its righteous possessor on Golgotha and at the opened tomb, you lure your listeners to a terrain that has become completely alien to them. They have never conceived of

Satan's power over this world and over the spirits as real power. They could not, therefore, see the greatness of Jesus' victory over Satan. And for this very reason they were unable to grasp how the Christ, by bringing his church into the world, broke Satan's spiritual power in that world, set man's spirit free, and only thereby made possible the subjection of Nature to man's spirit.

What is so painful among idealistic scholars, their grasping at the mystical in their rejection of the Revelation of God, is prepared by the fault of the Church itself.

X. - Intervention of the spirit world.

Are they not all ministering spirits? HEBR. 1:14.

If, therefore, the fact of the action of the spirit world on our earth is to be upheld, just as it was declared by Christ, and if, consequently, the fact of the action of Satan and his demons on our world is to be accepted as having taken place, the question immediately arises of how and in what manner we are to conceive of such action. However, as soon as we leave the field of Scripture, we know absolutely nothing about it. Here we are faced with a mystery. But neither experience nor science can give us an answer to the question of how one spirit interacts with another or how our spirits interact with our bodies. The action of our minds on the minds of others and on our own bodies takes place in a field in which our perception leaves us in the lurch. We are dealing here with feelings, with impressions, with disorders, with sensations, and about the fact that our minds act on other minds and on our own bodies we are in no doubt at all; but we cannot ascertain or investigate how this works, because we can spy on the effect but not on the working itself, and so any attempt to analyze this working fails. We see clearly that sometimes the spirit of a single individual makes a much larger and more rapid impression on the minds of others than is usually the case; we also see that some are much more susceptible and receptive to such effects than others; and we can even see that it is easier to produce an effect with the mind on a whole crowd gathered together than on the same individuals separately; but how this hypnosis or suggestive effect begins, by what force it works, and how it achieves its goal, is hidden in obscurity. Even in the game of love we are faced with an unsolved mystery, at least in the most eloquent cases, when one look appeared to be unforgettable and irresistible, and that one encounter made such a deep impression on the courage of the young man or young woman that they felt irresistibly drawn to each other and linked soul to soul by a magnetic attraction. We ourselves carry a spirit within us, we daily come into contact with other people's spirits, and yet no one knows how to analyze what the spirit really is. A spirit is something, a spirit is somewhere, but it is immortal and therefore unseen. All description and all description fails here. One can say what a spirit is not, but not what it is. We also know that a spirit produces force, but how that force is located in the spirit, and in what way it comes into action, and to what law that action is subject, remains a mystery to us. We can deduce that our soul must come into contact somewhere with the finest extremities of our nervous tissue, because it is through our nerves that we take in the sensations of our existence and of our

senses, but we do not even know where in our body that point of departure is. Some say that the soul is spread throughout the body, others say that it has its seat in the heart, and others in the brain. Whole parts of our body can be removed by means of an operation without the spirit in us suffering any damage, and there are other parts of our body which cannot sustain any significant damage, or the consciousness escapes us immediately. One can guess, one can suspect, one can formulate a theory, but there is no certainty.

And yet, even though almost every how remains unanswered, and even though we are completely unable to clearly account for the way in which our mind may act on our body, the fact that that action takes place is not for a moment in doubt. Our daily and hourly lives confirm and demonstrate this to us.

If we now apply this to the spirit world outside our human circle and proceed on the basis of the fact, revealed to us, that such a world of spirits does in fact exist, it is reasonable to assume that the spirits of the world beyond this earth will have a certain affinity with the spirits of mankind. That they, too, are spirits, and that therefore the basic feature of our own spiritual existence, which distinguishes the soul in us from all that is visible, must also be found in these other spirits. But we must go no further. Our human spirit may have peculiarities which these other spirits lack, and conversely, these other spirits may have characteristics which are entirely alien to us. But whatever the differences, we must think of them as spirits and, to that extent, as a type of being whose fundamental existence is similar to our own.

There is therefore nothing improper or unnatural in the fact that these spirits could remain holy or fall into unholiness, and that we can thus speak of good angels and fallen angels, of spirits that have remained holy and spirits that have become demons. With these spirits, too, it may be assumed that one spirit is able to act upon another, and that in this sense one of the demonic spirits, as Satan, exerts a controlling influence over the other demonic spirits. It is also quite plausible that spirits, both good and bad, should act upon the spirit of man, and that influences for good or ill, from the bad and the good angels, should be exerted upon us.

Finally, it is hard to imagine that, just as our spirit acts upon the body, and therefore upon matter, so too can these good and evil spirits act upon the visible world. The Scriptures raise this possibility to the level of certainty. It tells us that all spirits are ministering spirits, that is, that they have a service to perform, that they have been called to perform a service, and that they have therefore been given

the qualities and powers necessary to perform that service, and that the service of the angels is not limited to the spheres of heaven, but extends also to this earth and to the world of the children of man. In this way the good spirits have an influence on our lives, they have an effect on us, and they participate in the great battle for the kingdom of the Lord. They rejoice in the fields of Ephrata, they are eager to see the work of Redemption, they are sent out "to serve those who will inherit salvation", and in the Last Day they will triumph with Christ and His redeemed. Not so, they a separated life up there, and we a separated life down here, but they share in what befalls us, rejoicing with us or weeping for us, and performing God's service for us. The fact that poor Lazarus in the parable is carried by the angels into Abraham's womb is only an imaginary expression of this compassion of the angels for us.

The same is true of the angels who remained standing; the same effect on our lives, but then of course in the opposite sense, is equally attributed by Scripture to the angels who have fallen and now, as demonic spirits, seek our destruction. Not as if their purpose and intention was to destroy us, but because Satan begrudges us God and tries to draw us into His kingdom. Satan has been called "Christ's brother" in order to emphasize his great excellence as a spirit among spirits. It is precisely this creaturely excellence that has led him to rebel against God, and since then all his efforts have been directed toward preventing God's kingdom from coming into being and to establishing his own kingdom, and to this end he has also attempted to lay claim to the world of man. And of course, unusually strong powers are at his disposal in this endeavour. Because of his excellence he naturally possesses great gifts, outstanding powers. Gifts and powers which he was called and intended to use in the service of the Lord, but which he nevertheless retained in his apostasy and now uses against God and His Anointed. In paradise this unholy power of Satan manifested itself in the fall to which he enticed our generation, and since then the Holy Scriptures show him restlessly working to sow spiritual corruption among the children of man, to thwart God's work of grace for our salvation, and to maintain his own dominion on earth. He has now become "the ruler of the world". The kingship over this earth, which God had sealed for mankind, has now passed over to him, and Satan, through all kinds of unholy, mysterious powers, keeps the children of mankind and of the nations captive in his snares. Sorcery and guile are the unholy powers with which he holds the souls. And this reign of the demonic lasted indefinitely until the Christ appeared. And then he doubled his power and

prepared for a personal battle to maintain his rule as the ruler of the world against his God-anointed King and to thwart the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

In this development of power, Satan acts on the other demonical spirits by subjecting them to his will and making them subservient to his purposes. Likewise, Satan acts on the spirits of men to seduce them, to trap them in his snares, and to destroy the seed of piety in them. And he also acts on the physical and material, as is so clearly shown by the possessed in Jesus' day. Even in Jesus' own circle he brings Judas to ruin, and endangers Peter, and soon this temptation and temptation will continue so unrelentingly that Jesus will put the "deliver us from evil" on the lips of all Christians. Now Satan's attack is alternately strong and weak. In the days of Jesus' appearing, that attack took on particularly strong proportions, and in the madmen and lunatics of those days the demonic influence was so overwhelming that the demons themselves spoke to Jesus, saying: "I know who you are, the Holy One of God, and that you have come to destroy us" - until Jesus cast them out and once even drove them into a herd of swine, which, driven mad, crashed down from the precipice into the lake. Spiritual influence, therefore, turned back and exorcised by spiritual supremacy; but a spiritual influence that here also penetrates the body, and is by no means confined exclusively to the human spirit, but affects the whole of the human personality, even drawing the animal kingdom into its circle through Jesus' act of power.

Those who regard this effect of spirits on our lives as a mere exception will get nowhere; it explains nothing. But the Scriptures give no reason for this. On the contrary. The Scriptures portray Satan as "a roaring lion that goes out every morning to see whom it can devour. The spiritual evils" in the air are a power with which we must fight relentlessly. Every morning and every evening we must call upon our God to "deliver us from evil. And not only our spiritual life is exposed to these unholy influences, but the whole of nature "is subject to vanity, not willingly, but for his sake, who subjected it to vanity. Subjected to "a servitude of perdition, so that the whole creature groans and is in want until now," in the hope that one day it will be "redeemed unto the freedom, and therefore unto the glory, of the children of God. Here, then, we are not talking about something that takes place as an exception, but about a diurnal situation, of a calamitous effect on the whole of this earthly sphere of life, of a demonic pressure that is exercised on the whole of our human race and on the whole of our earthly kingdom. That pressure came with the curse; that pressure grew among the peoples who had been turned away from God; that pressure was broken at one point in its core by the appearance of the

Messiah; that pressure will be tempered by the action of the Church of God, thanks to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; But it will not be entirely relieved until Satan is bound for all eternity and the glory of God's children, and with it the glorification of this earth as a "new earth" under a "new heaven", begins with the return of Christ.

It is not the spirit that rests in the dust, but the spirit that carries the dust. It is the omnipotence of God, which, by the majesty of His will, preserves the whole of this universe. This omnipotence of God is omnipresent. There is not one creature spirit, or one material atom, that is maintained by anything other than the omnipotence of God. Everything in the creature is supported, sustained and enabled to function at every point and time by the indwelling, omnipotent and omnipresent power of God. But God is a Spirit; nothing visible, nothing material, is in Him. It is therefore the Almighty Quest, who gave birth to and sustains not only the creaturely spirit, but also the visible shell, and thus also this visible world; and however deeply natural science may penetrate into the essence and into the forces and into the laws of Nature, it never reaches that spiritual substratum which carries and upon which everything rests. Even if, in the final analysis, everything in the material world seems to dissolve into movement and power, its arm can never reach further than that movement is perceptible. How God, who is a Spirit, works His omnipotence in that material or makes it vibrate in that movement is beyond her reach. No one knows anything about this unless God reveals it to us, and that is why anyone who feels the need to form even a vague idea of this must always go back to Revelation.

This has also been tried outside of Revelation, but only to lapse from error into error. The more superficial then sought refuge in the so-called Deism. That is to say, they imagined that God once created this universe as an

created this universe as an eternally running clock, and that now this clock always ran by itself, without God and without Him. Others, however, not satisfied with such a superficial, meaningless idea, sought salvation in Pantheism. Just as we are a body with a soul inside, which fills everything with life, so the universe was thought of as one immeasurable body, and the all-soul of that immeasurable body was then called God. A God who rises in the universe, only to become conscious in mankind, a God without independence, without holiness, without self-consciousness; a dreaming spirit bound to the universe. This was the wisdom of the world, and to this kind of wisdom now returns those who reject God's holy Revelation; and it was against this delusion that Jesus and his Apostles set forth the

divine wisdom which is hidden from the wise of this age, and which God has revealed to the children. But it is precisely in this revealed wisdom that the spirit world appears. It is not this small earth, high above us, our God, and in between nothing but the emptiness of death, but the whole of God's creation, filled with a rich and glorious life. Ten thousand times ten thousand angels, the thousands multiplied, as the seer of Pathmos expressed it, and even the omnipotence of God represented in the four cherubs. And that infinite number of spirits is not merely a jubilant and praising host, they are not extras in the great drama of the universe, but they are "powerful heroes" who carry out God's Word. "All his hosts are his servants, doing his will". They have a service, a calling, a task, which always consists in this, that "they obey the voice of his Word." They do not slumber or rest, but are always busy, and always "performing their service". God's Omnipotence also carries them, but acts in them as a personal power. He makes His angels spirits, His servants a flaming fire", i.e., a center of ever vibrating, ever outgoing power, and over all these hosts Christ is head, and under Him are the good angels of God, who form the host that confronts all demonic influences, tries to overcome them, and will one day overthrow them.

To say this only applies to the spiritual is absurd. In the visible world there is no line anywhere that would prevent any contact between the spiritual and the visible. It must be possible for the angels to have an effect on the visible world as well, as the Scriptures repeatedly show us, and this is especially true of the evil, the demonic spirits. It is precisely through what is visible that they seek to seduce and topple us. Apparently the least of these is the sin of pride, which is purely spiritual and satanic in nature, but even that sin always clings to money or goods, to honor and dominion in the visible. In contrast to the good angels, who restlessly perform their service for their God, are the fallen angels, who did give up their God's service, and now know no other purpose than to break the rule of their God, but who nevertheless kept the powers and gifts with which God once provided them for His service in their creation. They thus retain the ability to approach souls, to entice souls, to seduce souls, to influence our minds; And likewise, to exert influence on the sensible and material, this may have manifested itself more strongly in the possessed than we now perceive, but the "servitude of perdition" of which the apostle speaks nevertheless persists, and all wrongdoing in life that is incompatible with God's love and holiness must be explained by these demonic influences. A veil hangs over life, and behind this impenetrable veil the workings of the spirits take place, which completely escape us and of which we can only

observe the effects in our lives. It was from this mysterious background of our lives that all superstition arose. People felt that a mysterious power was working on our lives, and they felt the need to combat that mysterious power. But instead of seeking help and relief from their God and good spirits in the face of this oppressive power, they tried to obtain counsel for themselves and to ward off evil through sorcery and witchcraft. In fact, this ultimately amounted to serving and worshipping the demon spirits themselves. People feared the power of these spirits and tried to make them favorable to themselves. There are circles in which this has come to the point of openly serving and worshipping the Evil One, an Arhiman or whatever. But whatever form it took, this superstition and devilry always sought to ward off demonic influence by means of the demonic. As a result, the spirit of the nations was increasingly caught up in the snares of demonism. There was fear, but no release of the spirit. We felt the net that was tightening about us and did not know how to cast it off. We felt surrounded by a demonized nature.

Moses then said to them: "All these peoples listen to hypocrites and soothsayers, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so. A prophet of your brethren, like me, will the Lord your God raise up for you; him you shall hear." Thus, among all nations, only for Israel had this demonic power already been broken at first, and when at last the promised Prophet appeared, and it had resounded at his Baptism in the Jordan: Then immediately thereafter in the wilderness the struggle between Christ and Satan began, then Satan's head was crushed on the Cross, and then in the hour of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that new power entered the world through the congregation of the living God, creating an atmosphere in which the spirit of man was once again set free, and the freedom of God's children began to unfold. From that moment on, therefore, the free development of the human spirit became evident; gradually, all superstition was repressed; and no longer by grasping at magic powers, but by research, by study in the sweat of his brow, man could prepare himself the bread of science, and thus regain his power over the power of Nature.

XI. - Christ and Satan.

And he said unto them, I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Luke 10:18.

If anyone stands up to you and refuses to believe in the existence of Satan and his demons, you can usually say that such a person is caught up in Satan's snares. The Christ does not leave any key unused in order to reveal His Name and to save through this revelation, while Satan, on the other hand, is always trying to hide from you and to destroy you through the mysterious influences he exerts over you. Light and darkness are opposites here. Christ is the Light that spreads its rays ever farther; Satan is the Darkness that withdraws ever more into the dark and shadowy, in order to lose itself and the whole earth in gloomy night. Not believing in the existence of Satan and his workings is therefore so extremely dangerous, because it gives Satan the best chances to win your heart, and it is certainly a deterioration and a sign of a weakening faith that in the church of Christ and in its preaching less and less account is taken of the demonic power. The test of this is easy to take. When the Lord's Prayer is recited, everyone still prays: Deliver us from evil. But notice now how in free prayer our God is almost never invoked to cover us with His shield against the poisonous arrows of Satan. It was therefore imperative, if Christ's kingship was to regain its glory in our eyes in this respect as well, that we should make it clear that Jesus himself understood his struggle through life as one mighty battle against Satan, and that this understanding of Jesus himself is decisive for us. As it was for him, so it must be for us, because it is like that and not like that. From ourselves we know nothing of the spirit world that is certain. He, on the other hand, who descended to us from heaven, from the spirit realm, has the fullest authority in the matter. What came to us from his lips was revelation, and everyone who professes that the Christ is the way, the truth and the life, must obey that revelation. To say, however, that belief itself in the existence of a demonic world is nothing but the fruit and invention of superstition is tantamount to short-sighted superficiality. It was precisely the most deeply disposed spirits that throughout the ages have felt themselves caught in one mighty struggle with the demonic world.

We therefore proceed on the basis of the certainty of Revelation: 1°. that there is a world of spirits outside our human race; 2°. that these spirits form two hosts, one of angels, the other of demons; 3°. that the demon hosts are temporally under the dominion of Satan; 4°. that both these angels and demons received powers, gifts and talents from their Creator; 5°. that they are called to spend these powers, gifts and talents in the service of their God, not only to praise Him but also to be instruments of His Kingdom's reign; 6°. that, consequently, all kinds of effects are

also exerted by these spirits on our earth, not only in the spiritual life of this earth but also in the physical, material and spiritual spheres; 7°. that the demons, after their fall, were able to use these powers, gifts and talents to bring about a change in the world. That after their fall the demons abused these powers and workings to destroy this earth and especially our human race; 8°. That these demonic influences until Jesus' coming had brought about, with the exception of Israel's nation-state, a reign of Satan over the peoples and nations, which made Satan at their head the ruler of the world; 9°. That it was then that the Christ came to break the works of the devil and to become himself, not the ruler, but the head and king of this world; 10°. That this explains the temptation in the wilderness and the constant casting out of the devils; 11°. That through this the power of the ruler of the world was broken so fundamentally before nineteen centuries that Jesus could exclaim: I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning; and 12°. that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, after Jesus' Ascension, brought about the penetration into this world of a holy spiritual atmosphere, destined to repress without restraint the demonic atmosphere that was weighing heavily on the lives of the people.

The Scriptures tell us that Satan was imprisoned from that hour onward. In the end of days he will once again be "unbound" and released with his full demonic power (Rev. 20: 7). But it is precisely this important prophecy that establishes that Satan, in the period in which we live today, does not have his full effect. Not only in the sense that Satan never achieved anything, nor is he able to do anything, except under God's permission, but in the further sense that the Kingship of Christ is increasingly undermining Satan's kingdom and that the spiritual atmosphere which prevails in the congregations of the living God through the Holy Spirit and which radiates from him into the world is restraining the working of Satan's power. Not as if it were already destroyed by this and doomed to utter powerlessness. The Lord's Prayer teaches us that the evil one's struggle to destroy us is unceasing, and the Apostle expressly teaches us that behind flesh and blood lies the fearful struggle with spiritual wickedness in the air. But after Christ's coming and after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit this great change has been accomplished, that there are now two very distinct areas of demonic influence on earth: on the one hand, the area of unbelieving nations, where the old power of Satan still operates as it did in the past; and on the other hand, and in contrast to this, an entirely different area, which is covered by the Holy Baptism, and where the power is not the spirit of Satan, but the Holy Spirit.

In the Baptism itself this is what lies behind it.

Baptism originated in the ancient idea that just as water removes impurity from the body, clothing and household effects, so also religious cleansing came about through sprinkling or immersion. Almost all peoples have incorporated such cleansing into their religious practices. Israel was fully aware that its land and property were consecrated, holy and pure, compared to the land and property of the heathen. If a Gentile was to be accepted into Israel's nation-state, he had to undergo the so-called proselyte baptism, i.e., before being accepted into Israel's nation-state he had to be purified figuratively from the contamination that clung to him because of his Gentile origin. And the symbolic meaning of proselyte baptism made all the more impression, not only because the person to be baptized had to break all ties and relationships with his home and family, but also because Israel carried the stain of sin not only in the soul, but also in the body and in the outside. Between the pure and the impure the Law of Moses draws a deep distinction, and that impure and unholy thing is also attached to the animals, to the sick, to the corpse, to the dead carrion, and each time ablutions, purifications and sprinklings are performed to make it clear that the demonic action affects not only the soul and the invisible, but also the body and the visible. Hence the Baptism of John and the Baptism of Jesus and his Apostles had such a tremendous impact on Israel's pride. This new baptism included Israel itself among the unclean and unholy, and prophesied the coming of a new Kingdom, of the Kingdom of Heaven, from which by nature both Jew and Gentile were excluded, so that only through this new baptism could both undergo that high purification by which they were transferred to the holy precincts of the spiritual Kingdom. In the early days of the Christian Church, the so-called Exorcism was therefore linked to Holy Baptism. Before being baptized, the person to be baptized had to renounce Satan and detach himself from his service and workings. For the child to be baptized this vow was made by its godparents. In itself there was nothing against this, it made a rich sense and kept the meaning of Baptism alive in the consciousness. This only became misplaced when the Church entered the second generation and children born of Christian parents were also offered baptism. However, these children were by no means on a par with the Jews and pagans. Born of Christian parents, these children were pure and holy. They were not born on the demonic terrain, but on the terrain where the Holy Spirit rules, and therefore the Exorcism had no meaning for these children. That is why our Reformed Churches did not adopt this Exorcism.

However, not enough consideration has been given to the question whether the old practice should still be applied to the Baptism of converts from the Gentiles, Jews

and Mohamedans. Such converts do not come from the holy grounds, but from the as yet unholy grounds, and only pass into the holy grounds through Baptism. In a literal sense, they are still being transferred "from the power of the evil ones into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). It seems to us, therefore, that with a more serious understanding of the fundamental distinction between the holy and unholy realms, it may be advisable to include the element of devil worship in the Baptism of converts who are in the same condition as the first baptized in the days of the Apostles. At the time of the first Baptism the difference between the Baptism of John and the Christian Baptism was precisely that the Christian Baptism was baptized with the Holy Spirit. Something from which two things follow: first, that whoever is born of Christian parents does not first have to be transferred to the new terrain, but rises from it, so that there can be no question of an Exorcism here; but also, that whoever is born on the unholy terrain and only transfers to the holy terrain through Baptism, has to break with the ruler of the world, in order to honor Christ as his King instead. The whole doctrine of the Covenant of Grace rests on this distinction; a distinction in which it is always necessary to understand the working of the Holy Spirit in its broadest sense. Those who think only of the personal action of the Holy Spirit in reawakening the soul fail to see how the Holy Spirit radiates from the center of the spirit to all sides of our lives, creating in them a completely different atmosphere of human existence. It is already true, in part, of Satan that he created such a demonic atmosphere in the lives of the heathen peoples through his workings on their souls; it is even more true of the Holy Spirit, who with divine omnipotence permeates the whole field of human life as soon as he has chosen his own center of radiation in the congregation.

This is by no means to say, however, that the dividing line between the consecrated domain of the Holy Spirit and the unholy domain of the ruler of the world has been drawn cleanly and sharply from the beginning, and has always been kept clear. Wherever Christ's Church appeared in a flourishing pagan city like Corinth, it was of course initially no more than a very small oasis in the moral wilderness. It was not those few Christians who dominated city life. City life initially remained pagan, and there was rather a danger that from the center of this pagan life the demonic influences would penetrate into Jesus' church. Hence Paul's sharp and earnest admonition in his two letters to this church. Only gradually, as more and more people were baptized, and finally the whole population, with a few exceptions, joined the Christian church, could that church also encompass public

life. And this process took place even more slowly in the countries of central and northern Europe, when the conversion of individuals was replaced by the Christianization of entire tribes and nations. With such massive conversions it was inevitable that Christian life would initially be no more than outward show, and under the Christian name the old pagan life with its inherited demonic influences would continue. This continuation of the old pagan life manifested itself not only in the persistence of pagan customs and a lower moral standard, but also in a determined effort to perpetuate the reign of the demonic being through superstition. Sometimes this was done so crudely and ruthlessly that a kind of satanic worship was established. Asian influences in particular were shocking, but European tradition also constantly nourished certain attempts and striving to seek out the demonic powers, to reconcile with them, to place themselves in their service, and sometimes to celebrate their services in shameful orgies. This tradition appeared under all kinds of superstitious forms, and it left the most frightening memories in the so-called witch trials.

The Church, and the authorities at its behest, were clearly aware of the serious danger posed to Christianity by these demonic activities. Nowadays it is often presented as if all this superstitious phenomenon arose from ignorance and false delusion, and so must be judged by anyone who does not believe in the existence and operation of unholy spiritual powers. But the Christian church never took that stand. She knew from the Gospel, she knew from her Lord and King, that these demonic workings were all too real, and there is no doubt that in the wide-spread manifestation of such unholy phenomena at the time, there was an attempt by Satan to disrupt the Kingdom of Christ, to maintain his own influence, and to thwart the progress and expansion of the holy field of the Holy Spirit. The mistake made by the Church and the authorities at that time was not that they knew and felt they were dealing with an unholy demonic power, but that, instead of fighting it spiritually, they were fighting it with the sword and with the stake. This makes the struggle of the Christian Church against this demonic power a very somber and dark page in the history of the Christian Church. It was not merely a casting out of devils, as in the days of the Apostles, by high spiritual supremacy, but a pursuit by fire and sword of what could only be undermined and overcome by spiritual means. Our sacrament meeting form has chosen the better path. In this form the demonic evil in the heart vein is seriously attacked, and it is recognized that even in Christ's congregation traces of this evil were still perceptible, but the resistance to the evil is sought in church discipline and in not allowing the Sacrament of the

Lord's Supper. And it is precisely this spiritual fight which has had such an excellent effect, that superstition has never been rooted out more than in the circles of Calvinism. It is not as if the government therefore immediately refrained from violent repression, but the main movement emanated from the churches, and that action was purely spiritual.

The dangerous side of the persistent demonic influence was that people thought they could break the power of demonism by magical means. This meant that people looked to Satan himself for the means to counteract his fatal effects. This is what superstition is all about. It is the conviction that mysterious means exist to break the evil effects of a demonic influence, both where that demonic influence leads us to sin and in cases where an illness or evil in man or beast or a frightening appearance disturbs life. Salvation was then sought in an amulet, a talisman, a spell or an incantation. Satan bewitched evil, and superstition tried to outdo him with even stronger sorcery. People fought the demonic with demonic means, and in doing so they strengthened the reign of the demonic in their hearts. This received a different look when the saving magic was attributed to a relic or to a sign that was derived from Christian worship, but in the attempt to remove demonic evil not spiritually, through the Holy Spirit, but magically through an external secret means, this remained fundamentally one with the old intention of all sorcery.

It has taken centuries for this superstition to be eradicated from our public life in the Christian countries. In the pagan and Mohammedan lands all kinds of mysterious workings of demonic origin still take place, which no longer occur among us, and the superstition to exorcise these demonic workings through sorcery still exists everywhere among these unbaptized peoples. Nevertheless, it should not be thought that for this reason superstition has already been completely driven out of the Christian countries. The winning game stiffens the belief in a mysterious effect of fortune on our lives. Card readers and fortune tellers can be found in all large cities, and they are consulted even by the highest social classes. Superstitious traditions concerning the number of persons with whom one may be seated, and the day on which a ship may set sail, still hold good throughout Europe, and in highly cultivated circles, where the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is no longer felt, one gives oneself over to spiritism and clairvoyance, as if through these phenomena a light above that of the Gospel had risen upon us. We do not dispute that there is truth in these phenomena, nor that they deserve attention; but evil creeps in when, setting aside the Gospel of Christ, one seeks in these phenomena a higher revelation than is given us in Christ. Do not forget that the Scriptures teach

us that Satan will also perform signs and wonders, and that it is therefore always a requirement of the Christian conscience to test the spirits in this regard also.

Only the more powerful action that emanates from the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit in our private and public lives can relieve us of the dominion of these demonic and superstitious powers in a lasting way. Christ, as our King seated at God's right hand, has poured out the Holy Spirit in our midst. Through this, a spiritual power has been ordained on earth in the congregation, of which He is the Head, whose action and influence always serves His reign instrumentally. These influences of the Holy Spirit have also extended beyond the limited circle of His living congregation. They have affected the life of the people, public opinion, legislation, morals and customs. And it is these influences of the Holy Spirit that have created a barrier against the demonic current. Thus, thanks to the constant work of Christ, through His Holy Spirit, we have gradually been freed from the demonic powers in public life. The superstitious idea of combating the effects of the curse by means of magic has left us. Our spirit has become free, and it is this liberated spirit that has felt the power awaken within it to penetrate the mysteries of nature through our research, our thinking and our ingenuity, and thus to subdue the mysterious powers of nature to us in the way ordained by God.

This is not understood by those who honor in Christ nothing but the Savior of the souls of the elect, but who understand that all power in heaven and earth, spiritual and material, has been given to Christ, as an epic of Christ, the Lion of Judah, and that his divine heroic struggle was, is, and will remain until the end, the fundamental struggle to make Satan fall like lightning from heaven, to strip this world, which is God's, of its power, and to bring God's holy order over this world, despite Satan, to its completion.

The dethronement of the ruler of the world and, in return, the glorious unfolding of Jesus' kingship over this world, is the inclusive and guiding idea of sacred history.

XII. - The wisdom of the world.

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 1 COR. 1:20.

The whole now stands before us in close connection. It is the spirit that controls the material. Of all the creatures on earth, man was the strongest spirit. As such, God had intended him in His creation to be king of the earth and to rule all of nature. Satan has disturbed this. As an even more powerful spirit, he influenced man's spirit, led him to the fall and, with his action, penetrated into all of man's life and into the affairs of this earth. Thus, man lost his kingship and Satan took his place. He pushed man away from the throne of honor and sat on it himself. As such he was called the ruler of the world by Jesus himself. Against the "ruler of the world" came first the prophecy that one day the "seed of the woman" would crush his head; then the foundation of the people of Israel, who were placed in safety against his demonic power; and finally, the Christ Himself. This Christ was the Son of God and the Son of Man, and it is as a man that He wrestled with Satan to depose and dethrone him as "Ruler of the world" and Himself as Head of mankind to regain the kingship over this earth that had been lost in paradise. That struggle between the God-anointed King and the ruler of the world began in the desert at the temptation, continued until Gethsemane and Golgotha, and was resolved in the resurrection of the Prince of Life.

The turmoil of the demonic world during Jesus' appearance was great. The land was full of possessed people. The most hellish thoughts took possession of a Judas, Israel's high priest, Rome's governor. But against the power of Satan and his demons Jesus acts with royal supremacy of spirit. He casts out the demons and gives His disciples power to cast them out, not indirectly, but immediately, by the direct power of His spirit. And it does not stop there. Even in the curse, and in the misery that the curse brought upon Nature and upon mankind, the demonic power of the ruler of the world is at work. He not only casts out demons, but also heals the sick, and demonstrates the power of his spirit over material nature. And this too directly, immediately. He even subdues the storm of the elements by nothing more than his word of power on Gennesareth's lake. Finally, Jesus even touches death; most powerfully in the recall of Lazarus from the grave. He called the little daughter of Jairus to life from her deathbed, the boy of Naïn from the bier. Lazarus from the grave. And this power of the immediate working of the spirit he also lays upon his young people, and throughout the apostolic century these miracles continue. And all this is only the beginning, and in that beginning the prophecy of what awaits in the end of the ages. One day the Christ will return, and then the

power of Satan will be completely destroyed, paradise and more than paradise will return, and the great miracle of the world will come, when this earth will be transformed into a new earth, which under a new heaven will flourish forever before God.

But between that beginning and that end lies a long interim period of centuries. In that interim period, Satan has been conquered in principle, but his power is still raging and working, especially among the peoples of the Gentiles. And that is why Jesus is now ascending, assuming His royal rule at God's right hand, and forming a new humanity in this world, which is His body, living out of Him as the Head. This congregation of the living God receives the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and this in the sense that it itself lives from the spirit, and at the same time spreads an atmosphere of higher, holier human life around it. It is the city on the mountain, which not only enjoys the light itself but also radiates it to the outside world. This atmosphere of the Holy Spirit pushes back the atmosphere of Satan's spirit. Especially in Europe, a Christian human life is developing in the political, social, scientific and artistic fields. Worship and guile are withdrawn from this Christian circle. The spirit of mankind is set free. And this liberated spirit of mankind also begins to eat the bread of knowledge in the sweat of its brow, and thus regains the power over Nature by scientific means to which we have now arrived.

But, lo and behold, instead of giving the Christ the credit for this regained power, it is this very science that now more and more submits, as if its supremacy were rooted in its own strength, to our King. And, unfortunately, the Christian world itself is by no means innocent in this. It has bound itself far too narrowly to the direct spiritual power that works by miracle, and has closed its eyes too much to the development of other spiritual powers that have been given to mankind over a period of twenty centuries through ingenuity, the use of talents, and the application of serious research into Nature. She has not believed in the liberation of spirits, she has distrusted experimental research, she has always wanted to grasp by special dispensation miraculous powers that could only be acquired by the sweat of the brow. They understood this work in the sweat of the face only from agriculture, and did not realize that it referred to the application and exertion of all human strength, body and spirit. It was then that the unbelievers in particular threw themselves into the field they had neglected, and the tendency arose to be hostile towards natural science. This created the deep rift that now separates science from faith. And then the church of Christ withdrew in powerlessness. It no longer possessed the power of miracles, and left the power of knowledge to the

unbelievers, while, on the other hand, the men of knowledge broke with the faith and set their science as a strength of man against the Kingship of Christ.

Gradually, however, this is changing. Spiritual Israel is coming out of its tether. It sees its error. It breaks with its former narrow-mindedness and narrow-mindedness. It no longer repudiates, but thankfully receives the victory of power, which has once again been won over Nature. Something is felt, at least, of the fact that Christ as our King is busy reestablishing the "kingdom of man" over the earth as well. The guilt of the past is recognized. A new light is being shed. People themselves are now grasping for the power of science. People are beginning to feel that the power of Christ is at work in science too, and they are preparing to glorify Christ as our King in science too. A new danger lurks here. Once reconciled to science, many circles go to the opposite extreme, and now imagine that they have to take over their theory from natural science, and already there are those who have gone over from the mystery of creation to the hypothesis of evolution. But all this is a state of transition, which only makes victims among the spiritually superficial. The true believers refuse to fall into this snare, and draw a sharp line between the true results of natural science, which are based on strict research, and between its theories, which are the imaginations of the erring mind of researchers.

This brings us to the second point which we have mentioned. Besides the regained power over Nature, it is especially the steady increase of our knowledge that has stimulated man's pride in being creaturely, to rise above the humble sense of the Gospel. You will recall our statement how the halt in the flow of religious life was due, not only to our control over Nature, but also, and in particular, to the increase in human knowledge and the rapid advance of science in almost every field. We must therefore examine whether Christianity opposes and is hostile to this rapid advance of science in principle, or whether it is also a blessing that comes from Christ, even though the men of science are trying to take it away from Christ, indeed to play it off against His Kingship.

In the course of this investigation, it seems at first as if Christianity is actually attacking science and wants to banish it. The Apostle Paul in particular is not outspoken about the foolishness of the wisdom of the world. "God has made the wisdom of this world to be foolishness." The "philosophy" is put to shame. It is not the noble and wise of the world who strengthen the congregation, but it is the simple, the meager, the people who are nothing in the eyes of the world, who constitute the congregation. It is the "searchers of this age," whom the apostle

exhibits. "Because in the wisdom of God the world has not known God through wisdom, so it has pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe." It is the Greeks who seek wisdom, and Christ is not only "an annoyance to the Jews, but also foolishness to the Greeks." Precisely "to shame the wise, God has chosen the foolish of the world." We are called "not to let ourselves be carried away by philosophy, by the persuasion of men, and by the first principles of the world." And Christ Himself had offered praise and thanksgiving to God, that it had pleased God to hide the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven "from the wise and prudent and to reveal them to the children." And this in so emphatic a sense that Jesus himself added: "Yes, Father, for so it has been well pleasing to you."

This attack on the "wisdom of the world" is so strong and persistent throughout Scripture that it is easy to see how those who relied on sound and considered all such statements out of context have become haters of all human science and opponents of the higher flight of human knowledge. Only sound preaching could have averted this evil, but it was precisely this sound preaching that fell so far short. Theology withdrew into its own territory, lost its connection with other sciences, and presented itself as a mistress who had to prevent other sciences from making their unwelcome progress! progress. Far too much was forgotten by her, that we, according to our beautiful confession, know God from two books; from the book of Scripture, but also from the book of Nature, in which, as if in golden letters, the majesty of the Lord is drawn before us. It wanted to rule all too much by coercion, coercion of the Church, supported by coercion of the State, and precisely this caused it to become impoverished, emaciated, petrified, and, in the face of the vigorously advancing science of nature, increasingly uneasy.

This view was totally wrong. Not according to the Scriptures, but completely at odds with them. Scripture does not say that from it alone you should derive all your knowledge of Nature and the world. What Scripture says is that there are things which you can only know from Nature and from the world and its course, and others for which Nature gives you nothing, and which you can only know from Revelation. But so little does it diminish the knowledge of Nature, that it rather shows you how God's great power and divinity can be understood and seen through the creatures from the beginning. It is therefore the utmost folly to imagine that, with the Scriptures before you, you should know from them Nature and the life of the world, also in its historical course, and now have no further examination of Nature and of the life and constitution of the world. Your body can only be known

by examining your body. The earth's crust can only be explored by digging into it. The plant kingdom must be known from the plant kingdom, the animal world from the life of animals, and likewise the history of the human world from its past. Scripture is at the forefront, of course, but next to it the whole realm of Nature, the whole course of history, the whole development of our human life in every field, lie open to us as the sources of our knowledge. And he does not honor his God, who turns to this second book of Nature, only to ponder over the Scriptures, but rather he, who, in silent obedience, diligently examines both the book of Scripture and the book of Nature. In Nature and in the life of mankind in our world lies a treasure of data for us, which God Himself lays bare for us, and it is a sin of inertia if, believing in Scripture, we set aside that other book, the book of Nature and of our human life, unread. Yet this is what we have done all too often, and thus those two currents have naturally arisen in our contemporary life, the one of which maintains: I have enough Scripture and do not care about the book of Nature, while the other, just as unilaterally, casts Scripture aside and considers that it can draw all its knowledge from the book of Nature and Life.

The same contrast existed in the days of the Apostles. In the Roman and Greek world people knew nothing of the Scriptures and sought salvation in the science of the day, whereas for Israel the Old Testament was practically the only source of knowledge, and science in the narrow sense was virtually non-existent. There were many learned schools among the Jews, but all these schools were schools of scholars, who devoted themselves to the interpretation of the books of the Old Testament and studied a scholarly series of theses based thereon. Then, as now, it was only Scripture (that is, the Old Testament) on the one hand and philosophy, science and the wisdom of the Greeks on the other. Since neither the interpretation of the Old Testament by the scribal Rabbis nor the wisdom of the Greeks was feasible with the Gospel, the Apostle opposes both, and declares that his Gospel can only be an annoyance to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. For the Jewish scribes it was a reproach, because it brought down their pride in their people. They understood the Old Testament as if the destiny of Israel were not prophetic and figurative, and therefore transitory and ending with Christ, but permanent and lasting. A Messiah would come, but he would be the earthly King on David's throne in Jerusalem. They were therefore to be annoyed and remain annoyed that Christ, by his coming, and the Apostles, by their preaching, overthrew the whole edifice of their national pride, acknowledged Israel only as the people preparing for salvation, and called upon it to enter the Kingdom of Heaven at the same time as

all other nations. But the Gospel of Christ must have been equally foolish to the learned Greeks. They had thought that they could build a system of their own concerning the origin and nature of things, and they felt themselves hurt and insulted when the Apostle of Christ overturned their structure and allowed the light of divine revelation to shine into the darkness of paganism. The wise and educated men among the Greeks looked down disdainfully on the idolatrous worship services in their cities and villages, which the country people and the less educated bourgeoisie imitated. They, as educated, learned, and developed men, felt themselves far above that idolatrous folly, and judged it foolishness. And now that Christianity presented itself as a new religion, they saw in it nothing but a counterpart to the religions of their own people, which they had come to respect, and they therefore applied the brand of foolishness to the Gospel as well. Paul heard this, and far from shrinking from it, he accepted this brand, but in order to turn it against the wise men of the day. It is not the Gospel, but your wisdom that is foolishness. Thou hast by thy imagined wisdom closed thyself to the Gospel. And yet in that Gospel is the only true, the essential wisdom, for in that Gospel, not the wisdom of man, but the wisdom of God comes to you; and to make this clear, it pleased God to shut the hearts of the Jewish scholars and the Greek sages to it, and to call to it all that was considered the foolishness of the world, all that was considered weak and base and insignificant in the world.

Is this wisdom of the world, rejected by Christ and his apostles and branded as foolish, the same as what we call the science of nature, the science of history and the science of the wonderful tapestry of human life? Such is the question that matters. And to that question the answer is in the most definite sense negative, and to understand this you only have to grasp the difference between what all these sciences have to offer as the result of strict research, and between what they build up as a system from themselves and rest on guesses and suppositions. The results of experimental research are certain and must be accepted by everyone, because they can show us that it is like this and no other, and that it works in this way and no other. That a lightning rod can attract and deflect a lightning bolt and thus save the house is a fact that everyone must acknowledge, and those who refuse to install a lightning rod on the ridge of their roof do so not because they do not accept the fact, but because they are under the impression that they cannot protect themselves against lightning. Such religious timidity, however, does not in the least diminish or add to the recognition of the truth of well-researched facts. And so little do we think of dismissing these well-substantiated facts that we make use of railroads and

electric tramways, telegraphs and telephones without the slightest hesitation, and gratefully accept the help of the physician, as often as he can alleviate our sorrows or heal our wounds in case of illness or accident. In Paul's day the wise men of Greece had not yet come far in this study of nature and history, which does not alter the fact that they too had made far from insignificant discoveries in the field of nature, and had also made considerable progress in their knowledge of the human body and in the methods of curing illnesses. So little, however, did the Apostle think of rejecting these achievements that he rather allowed himself to be hired as a personal physician by Luke on the second leg of his journey through the pagan land. There is not a single word in any of his letters that would suggest that the Apostle was opposed to science, or even the science of nature. Anyone who derives this from his words does not understand the Apostle. Rather, his spiritual admonition: "Examine all things, hold fast to what is good" is also applicable here without limitation. The study of nature and history and of the entire condition of this world and of human life is not only not to be rejected, but is to be praised and encouraged. Provided, and this should never be lost sight of, that one approves of preserving only what is good and rejecting what is evil.

And this was then, and still is, the duty of every Christian in the examination of everything that presents itself as science. In those days, too, the science or wisdom of the Greeks mixed in what it offered two entirely different fruits of their labors. On the one hand, the results of rigorous research and, on the other, the systems of the world and life, which were wrongly founded on conjecture, and it was precisely the latter that they presented as their wisdom and their philosophy. The Apostle, turning against the highly elevated wisdom of the Greeks, does not, therefore, say a word against what is strict science, but only bans what men of science have marketed concerning things of which they know nothing.

XIII. - Science in the Christian Country.

In Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. COL. 2:3.

BET difference between true natural science and "the wisdom of the Greeks", which the apostle disputes in his letters, is expressed in French and English even in the language. In France, those sciences which are concerned with the study of Nature in the strict sense are called "*les Sciences exactes*", and in England one is accustomed to include only these subjects among the "Sciences". Therefore, neither in France nor in England is it denied that the historical and spiritual sciences can also have a high value, but it is opposed to putting them on a par with the strict natural sciences. What makes the results of scientific research so valuable is that they repeatedly arrive at results which, once found, are forever and for everyone fixed and can no longer be doubted by anyone. This should not be exaggerated either, because time and again, statements have been made in this field as well, which were believed to be based directly on the facts, statements which for that reason were widely believed to be correct, but which nevertheless turned out to be based on either too cursory perception or incorrect generalization. We know how, according to many people, the new electron theory is even in the process of dismantling the foundations of statics, and especially in the field of medicine we constantly notice how a method of treatment that is popular in one quarter of a century is generally abandoned in the second quarter. A certain boundary must therefore be marked out here too; but with this reservation we must gratefully acknowledge that in the field of physics, now taken in its broadest sense, a number of facts have been established through accurate imaginative observation, and behind these facts an action of forces has been discovered, and in the action of these forces a regularity as of a natural law has been found, which has given us absolutely solid ground under foot, and has extraordinarily increased our power of disposition over Nature. To this, of course, these exact scientists owe a high call of certainty. The research of these sciences is limited to the sphere of finite things; they do not concern themselves with the spiritual and with what exceeds the finite scope. The subjective part of the researcher, which plays such a large role in the historical and spiritual sciences, is hardly considered in these exact sciences. They therefore give the spiritually dead the impression of being of much higher value than sciences which deal with the sphere of faith. Many of the difficulties that stand in the way of unity of belief in the spiritual realm do not arise here. If the observation is correct and the conclusion drawn from it sharply worded, everyone immediately agrees with that conclusion. There is even no room for doubt, and as

soon as the result is found, everyone applies it and benefits from it. Precise observation and conclusions drawn from it in a strict and logical way, which can also be tested for correctness, provide us with a certainty and certainty in this area, which falls entirely within the framework of our finite thinking, and which therefore clarifies and defines the matter in question for everyone. We are not saying, therefore, that the certainty of faith is less solid; but in the spiritual sphere, and especially in the sphere of faith, this certainty and solidity is of an entirely different nature. Here the certainty rests in an inner condition of the investigator, which was present in him but not in all other persons. Whoever possesses this spiritual certainty can therefore stand firm in it for himself, but he cannot prove it to others, except to those in whose inner life the same condition was created. On the one hand we are dealing with the exact sciences that can be proven to everyone and that fall within the framework of our finite thinking, and on the other with the spiritual sciences, the results of which can only be understood by those who spiritually possess the organ for it. Just as a blind man cannot judge the colors or a deaf man the theory of sound, no researcher lacking the spiritual organ can judge or accept the results of spiritual research. And this has caused the exact sciences to present themselves more and more as science, and science, as the only true means of arriving at the truth, to oppose faith.

So far as this was concerned, there was nothing to be said against science, provided it was strictly confined to visible things and had nothing else in view but the truth of visible things. But these conditions have not been met. The men of exact science have constantly ventured into areas which were not theirs, and have ventured to construct all sorts of systems for which they lacked any foundation. And on the other hand, those who devoted themselves to the historical and spiritual sciences also quite unjustly demanded for their science the same recognition of certainty as they did for the physical sciences. Thus, they confused two very different fields, combined them under one name of science, and now took pride in the fact that also in spiritual matters science had the right to oppose faith and to determine and declare, as surely and as firmly as the natural sciences, what was truth and what was delusion. This was even less of a risk for the distinguished scholars of the first rank. Such scholars are always characterized by a certain modesty, but this boasting about "science" soon turned out to be a disaster for the men of the second and third rank, and especially for those who did not investigate themselves but relied on the results of other research. Especially among the unbelieving teaching profession and in the second-ranking press, this veneration of so-called science

became an annoying tendency, and it is especially from these lower spheres that this glorification of "science" as opposed to "faith" arose. And, conversely, it was natural for anyone whose inner state, whose subjective existence had been elevated by the organ of faith, to gratefully and unhesitatingly accept the irrefutable results of exact science as new discoveries, but to criticize everything that, in the spiritual sphere as well, presented itself as the leading and controlling theory under the high but stolen honorific name of "science."

It was precisely this way with the emergence of the Christian religion in the pagan world of Greece and Rome. Never, in a word, did any of the apostles question the results already obtained in the field of exact science. No thought was given to that *. There is not a trace of it in any apostolic writing. What Scripture does attack and denounce as false "science", "guided wisdom," and "fake philosophy," is the imaginary security which unbelieving thinkers already felt they could claim for their systems based on guesses, conjecture and supposition. Exact science has as the object of its investigation the world of visible, audible and tangible things. In that field it is strong, and as long as it limits itself to that, it deserves, provided that the research is accurate, trust, applause and thanks. But exact science knows nothing about the origin of things, nothing about the spirit, nothing about a spiritual world beyond our earth, and likewise nothing about the effect that the spirit can have on matter. The entire spiritual sphere, which is so much higher and so much more complex and delicate than the sphere of material things, escapes its notice and lies beyond the scope of its investigation. She can tell you nothing about the unity of purpose in the course and history of this world; man's destiny after death, and the eternal things that come after it, are hidden from her behind an impenetrable veil. Even the moral struggle between the sacred and the unholy, the origin of this struggle, the governing power which leads this struggle, and what the end of this struggle will be, escapes exact science completely. It knows nothing of the government of God which governs all things. And when she comes at last to the highest, to religion, and to the sacred object of worship of this religion, she speaks like a blind man about the colors, and has, if she wishes to be sincere and honest, to confess her utter ignorance.

But it was precisely to this that the men of this science could not come. They were well aware that all these spiritual questions were intrinsically of much greater importance than the problems of the visible which they knew to be certain, and therefore they could not bring themselves to confess their ignorance in this much higher field. That is why they claimed the right to speak highly in this spiritual

field as well. With their phantasy, from guesswork and conjecture or by unbelievable mental gymnastics, they then formed an artfully constructed conception of the spiritual and of all spiritual questions, called it their system, and presented this lightly constructed system, lacking any foundation, as truth, wisdom, science and philosophy. The very fact, however, that philosopher after philosopher stood up to demolish the system of his predecessor and to set up another system in its place, proved the fragility and unreliability of their construction. Thus, school came to be opposed to school. Each school gave a different view of life and a different view of the world. And by these false systems they smothered the real thirst for God in the human heart, and drew the spirits to haughtiness or singing or eternal doubt. And the end was that, for all their exalted wisdom, the finest seeds of the human heart withered, and the soul could find no peace in its endless struggle. When Christianity stepped in to revive that very germ of the human heart and to bring to the endlessly agitated soul the peace from above that surpasses all understanding, it could not fail to do so, unless the Christian religion should take a firm stand against all this imaginary wisdom, which distracts from God, subvert it, expose it in its vanity, wipe it out of the minds of men, and thus clear the ground for what Scripture calls "the foundation" of the Christian frame of mind. It must never be inferred, therefore, that Christianity was hostile to true science. It only follows that Christianity, in order not to be blocked in its way to the human heart, broke away and nullified what was not science and yet presented itself as such on completely false grounds. It stood then as it stands now. We too welcome real science, but we maintain the rule of thumb: And as often as we now encounter systems built on conjecture and assumption that attempt to explain or eliminate spiritual things about which one knows nothing apart from faith, we will call these systems the "scientific" ones, we shall strip these systems of the label of "science" which they have been given, and try to contrast them with the Christian view of life and the world which rests on what God has revealed to us.

You cannot know anything about Australia unless you go there yourself, or someone who has been there tells you what it is like. And that is exactly how it is for us with the unseen world. We will see what it is like when we get there, and until then we know nothing about it, unless a revelation comes to us from that unseen world, or someone who was there comes down to us. Even of what goes on in the inner life of the spiritual world we know almost nothing. The Apostle so rightly says that only the spirit of man knows what is in man; and even every personality of significance is such a mystery to us that it has been said, not

unjustly, that our lives are too short to know one single person. It would therefore have been quite conceivable that man as a creature could know as little about what and who God is as a thrush, hanging in the cage on the front of Gladstone's house, could grasp, feel or understand what was going on in the head and heart of the great statesman. But it is not like that. Man, created in God's image, is gifted with religious feeling and with the ability to serve his God. And it is entirely consistent with this that God does not allow him to wander in darkness, but irradiates him with revelatory light, and allows himself to be known by man. This revelation was raised in Christ, who was in heaven, and who came down to us from heaven, to that highest perfection for which it was amenable in this sinful world, and only in this way have we been provided with the data from which we can build up our knowledge in the spiritual sphere, concerning the greatness of God, the origin of things, the government of the world, our inner life, our calling, our destiny and our own future. And thus, also this revelation of Christ did not enter the world, or paganism fell into all regions where the Christian religion penetrated, and the wisdom of imagination, in which the scholars of the day had amused themselves, was destroyed. It was the little people of the world, the simple people, the weak and feeble, who first seized upon this high revelation, but the higher classes followed suit; and it was not long before, after a fearful, hard struggle, the power of Revelation, and with it Christianity, triumphed over the highly developed wisdom of the Greeks.

Then, as we have already explained, a certain tendency crept in during the first approach to withdraw unilaterally into the field of Revelation and to underestimate the significance of exact science. This was not unnatural. At that time, exact science had not yet conquered its own terrain, and was almost universally mixed up with and dissolved in what presented itself as "wisdom", as a system, as a conception of life. As a result, everything that was called scientific at the time reacted sharply against the Christian religion, and it was in the nature of things that Christian study endeavored first and foremost to repel this attack by the intellectualism of the time. In addition, great upheavals were causing the society of that time to collapse and the once so high civilization of the Greco-Roman world to be swept away. The stream of the Christian religion flowed primarily to the still uncivilized peoples of Central and Western Europe, and in this new world everything had to be rebuilt from the ground up. In that first period of the rebirth of these newly converted peoples, there was not even any thought of the development of science. But hardly has this first period been overcome, or the school takes off

again, the scientific study is taken up again, and not long before the Universities appear on the scene, wide spread study begins to spread its wings, and more and more the day approaches when also the exact science begins to take root. Also in the days of the Reformation you see, how under the Christian regime of our then Republic, the foundation of Leiden Academy is one of the first acts of government. If one compares what the heathen academies of Athens and

If one compares the pagan academies of Athens and Alexandria, and after that the Mohamedan schools of Ispahan and Bagdad, or the Jewish schools of Pumpeditae and Tiberias as a lasting result for science, yes, what the great Mohammedan university in Cairo, with its 10. 000 students, is even now, with what in Christian Europe has become the glory of university life, not only now, but also in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, then the fact cannot be denied that, better than anywhere else, it is precisely in Christian lands that science has flourished and developed. A foundation such as that of the Calvinist University in Amsterdam provides ample proof of the importance attached to scientific development, not least in Calvinist circles. And truly, whoever is aware of the scientific literature that was created by the Roman Catholic side, cannot, if he wants to be correct, deny that science also flourishes among them.

Yet this evidence from history is not enough for us. Here too we must go back to Christ and to the Scriptures themselves. What, you may ask, has the plant kingdom, for example, to do with Christ? Those who ask this question are answered that the Christ is the eternal Word, and that through this eternal Word all things, and therefore also the plant and animal kingdoms, were created. The eternal thoughts of God, which found their embodiment in all creation and thus also in the plant and animal kingdom, only came to be embodied in all creatures through the eternal Word. There is not a flower or a songbird that does not represent something specific from the thoughts of God, and what they represent was instilled and incarnated in all creatures by the eternal Word. The Scriptures do not confine Christ to the realm of grace or to the world of human children, but place all creation, both the visible and the invisible, here on this earth and below it in direct dependence on Christ. Already in the Old Testament, Wisdom is glorified, not as a human invention, but as with God from eternity. I have been anointed from eternity, from the beginning, from the antiquities of the earth. I was born when the abysses were not yet, before the mountains were established. He had not yet made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the fabric of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there." (Proverbs VIII :23-27). Nothing is thus

excluded from the Son. Whatever kingdom of nature, whatever star or comet you wish to take, yea, if you wish to descend to the first principles and the dust of the earth, it is all with the eternal Word, it is all with the Christ, not in an oblique, but in a direct connection, and there is no power at work in Nature, and there is no law which governs the operation of this power, but it has already proceeded from that eternal Word. It is therefore preposterous to say that although the Christ is in spiritual things, the physical sciences are outside of Him and have no point of contact with Him. In a certain sense it must rather be said that every deeper penetration of knowledge into the nature of Nature glorifies the majesty of the eternal Word.

And this is not a twisted combination. The Apostle himself expresses it as clearly and unequivocally as he can when he tells us that "in Christ are hidden all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom". Notice, not just wisdom, but also knowledge, and not just some of that knowledge, but all the treasures of that knowledge and of that wisdom hidden in the Christ. And how could it be otherwise? He, by whom all things were created, who created in all creatures, high or low, the thoughts of God which they were to express, and who therefore created in each creature the powers, laws and functions which make them what they are, how could He be foreign to anything in the material or spiritual nature? How could there be anything in the creature, or work, that he did not bring to consciousness and operation in it? He not only knows and fathoms all of Nature, but what is in it, he himself has deliberately put into it. And what would the knowledge of a Linnaeus in the realm of plants be compared to the knowledge that the Christ possesses of them by virtue of the Creation? All the study of nature, like all the study of spiritual science, anthropology, ethnology or whatever you like, is the radiance of a new glory which is hidden in Christ. And therefore, even if the mighty increase in knowledge brought to us by the last century has alienated the spiritually defenseless in their pride in their own wisdom, we, as professors of Christ, accept with thanks whatever new knowledge is offered us, especially about Nature, because we see the holy mark of origin shining on it, and know that it is only a piece of "all those treasures of knowledge and wisdom which are hidden in Christ."

XIV. - Universalism.

And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness all full; and then shall the end come. MATTH. 24:14.

The peculiar mark on our time has been left, firstly, by the surprising power which man has acquired over Nature, secondly, by the admirable extension of our knowledge, but also, as we saw, thirdly, by the almost miraculous appearance of ever new means of connection and traffic, through which gradually the whole world, with all lands and peoples, has been incorporated into the one great complex of man's dominion. The latter was also to impair the flowering of religious life, the flowering of the Christian religion, and thus the recognition of the Kingship of Christ. We now add that the faster traffic gave greater mobility to life, broke the silence of the Sabbath, caused church attendance to decline, and for those who became acquainted with the countries of Islam and with the peoples of paganism, led to a comparison of our Christian religion with these false religions, This led to a comparison of our Christian religion with these false religions, which resulted in the complete contradiction being reduced to a relative difference, in Christianity and all other religions being regarded as only partially different manifestations of the one religious idea, and finally, albeit in a much smaller circle, in praising these other religions as superior to Christianity. In the so-called religious world congresses this view has been expressed in a way that is offensive to Christians. The priests of Buddha were not guilty of grandstanding when they professed to have found more love for Buddhism in the Christian world than for Christ in the land of Buddha. Persians thirsted to assure that their Sufism spoke to modern Europe, while conversely virtually no Persian Christian is found in Persia. And how Islam is often exalted above the Gospel by baptized Christians, everyone heard who listened to our colonial magnates or to English rulers in the East Indies and Egypt. This reversal has understandably aroused annoyance among the faithful professors of Christ's kingship, and on this point, too, the question should be seriously considered whether this inclusion of the whole world in our human development is to be judged as something to be deplored from a Christian point of view, or whether it should be applauded as a characteristic of the Christian religion itself, in such a way that not the fact itself, but only the misuse made of it, is to be condemned.

This question, too, must be keenly examined. Without clearly understanding the relation in which the Christian religion places itself to this enclosure of the whole world in the sphere of our human action by virtue of the Scriptures themselves, the

professed believer in the Christian religion is powerless in the face of the religious destruction also wrought by this new order of things. We see the material interests of the people taking first place. The so-called world power begins to suppress all specific national life. A cosmopolitan condition is developing that leaves no room for the true patriotic feeling for the native soil. Even the power of the historical languages of the country is being crushed by a mechanically deployed world language. All that is special and peculiar dissolves into the general and common to all peoples. The core and spirit that lies precisely in the special life is weakened and lost. And all over the world a circle of modern life is forming, presenting itself under the honorific name of civilization and humanity, in order to fundamentally renounce all religion, but especially the Christian religion. Already this movement under the name of anticlericalism has developed quite strongly in most countries of Europe. This anticlericalism is developing in Italy and Spain, in France and Austria, in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, with the aim of pushing back Christianity. And finally, all this amounts to an ever more determined, ever more hostile attempt to destroy the kingship of Christ.

In its deepest sense, there is no other opposition than that between the God of Israel and the idols. Nowhere in Scripture is there the slightest trace of the idea that the Jehovah of the fathers was higher than the other gods, but that the idols were also to be honored as real gods, albeit of lower rank. There is no mention in Scripture of a comparative value between the idols of the heathen and the one true God of Israel. The conviction is always expressed that there is only one God, and that everything that attempts to exalt itself as a god apart from or in opposition to Jehovah must be counted as idols and rejected as such. It is neither disputed nor denied that there is something common to all religions, but this is explained not from the fact that idolatry has a relative right, but quite differently from the double fact, firstly, that God Himself put into our human nature the *semen religionis*, i.e., a religious seed, and secondly, that from paradise the whole of our human race took certain religious deliveries with it. It is always the work of God that is referred to, what God put in man by virtue of his creation in the image of God, and what God had revealed to man before and immediately after the fall. On the other hand, idolatry is never seen in any other light than that of a lie. It is pseudo-religion, i.e., false religion, and it robs the living God of the honor which is His alone. All idolatry is therefore destined to be destroyed and eradicated, and the end must be that all idols fall and, finally, that only the King, anointed of God, takes dominion over the spirits.

Thus, the fundamental opposition between God and the idols is necessarily transferred to the opposition between the Christian religion and the false religions, and, taken more deeply, between Christ, as the God-anointed King, and the unholy spirits that were able to conquer the dominion of the nations. Thus, idolatry appears in its demonic character. It is the unholy spirit that has taken up residence in these religions, and it is only the Jewish and Mohammedan religions that hold fast, albeit with much dilution, to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The question whether these heathen religions do not also contain certain germs of truth, does not add or detract from this. Likewise, in the most wretched criminal you sometimes discover traits of character that take you in. All this emerges from what God has implanted in human nature and in no way excuses the crime of the criminal or the unholy spirit that spoke in these idolatries. Moreover, a distinction must be made between the philosophical ideas that developed in the heathen country, and which in many cases blended with the idolatrous religion, and the idolatrous worship itself, which is governed by a spirit of its own. The essence of idolatry is a surrender of man in the wrong sense, as the Apostle tells us; hence it always ended up in doing things that are not right, and in giving to these things a holy appearance. Basically, therefore, in all idolatry there is a satanic motive. Just as Satan himself emancipated himself from the living God and set himself up as the false ruler of the world, so he wants false gods to arise everywhere in order to dispute his power, majesty and honor; and precisely because not one idol, but numerous idols were set up everywhere, Satan retained the power of unity and he applies the "divide and rule".

From this, however, follows for the Christian religion what has been called its universalism. Only this has been misunderstood in so far that theologians have interpreted it almost exclusively in opposition to the particularism of the Jews in the days of the Apostles. One is familiar with the dispute conducted by Paul, especially against those Christians among the Jews who judged that in order to become Christians, one had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. Those who held this view locked the Christian religion into Judaism, considered that Christianity should enter the world as a Jewish religion, that Judaism should penetrate the world in order to incorporate many Gentiles into its people, and thus that, as Israelite in origin, it was destined to remain Israelite and national Jewish throughout its further course. This is the particularism, the conception of Christianity as a special Jewish religion. Paul stated on the other hand that Christianity had to break the ties of the special national Jewish life; that it was not

those born of Abraham who constituted the true Israel, but those who believed in Christ; and that this spiritual Israel should not be attached to the one Jewish nation, but should include all the nations of the earth. The Christian religion was never Jewish, even though it arose from Israel; it was the religion of mankind, it had a general human character, it aimed to win the whole of our human race, the whole of mankind to the Christ, and thus to be the religion of the world in its own sense, without any national limitation. This is what has been called universalism, which in principle was diametrically opposed to Jewish particularism.

This view was not a particular one of Paul's, but was taken from the heart of the Old Testament, which is why he constantly refers to the Old Testament. It was always preached in the Old Covenant, that Jehovah is not the national particular God of Israel, but from Zion controls all peoples and all nations. Not the small inheritance of Israel, but the whole world is the bearer of His rule. He rules not only over the Jewish people in a special sense, but also in a general sense over all the nations of the earth. He is the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and all peoples are his property and subject to his divine power and rule. The keynote of the Old Covenant is and always will be: "Give God, all the earth. All the earth hath worshipped thee, and hath praised thee, and hath praised thy name. He ruleth with his might forever; his eyes are upon the heathen. Praise be to all the nations our God, and let the voice of His glory be heard. (Psalm 66: 1-8). Or another time: "That thy way may be known upon the earth, thy salvation among all the heathen. The nations shall praise thee, O God, the nations all too time shall praise thee. The nations shall rejoice and be glad, because thou shalt judge all nations, and the nations of the earth thou shalt lead" (Psalm 67:3-5). And elsewhere: "The Lord reigns, that the nations tremble. The Lord is great in Zion and He is high above all nations. Thou whole earth rejoice unto the Lord". (Psalm 99:1, 2, and 100:1). And when "the kings of the earth and the nations of the heathen rise up against God and His anointed King, saying: Let us tear their bands and cast their ropes from us, then He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh, He shall mock them, and shall speak in His wrath, Surely I have anointed my King over Zion, the mountain of my holiness," and it is shouted to the kings of nations and peoples: "Now then, ye kings, act wisely, be disciplined, ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest He anger you, and you perish in the way" (Psalm 2). And to make it clear that what is meant here is not the earthly dominion of Israel over the nations, but the dominion of Christ as our King over all nations and peoples, the Holy Spirit declares in the same Old Covenant that Lo-ammi will become Ammi, i.e. that God will call nations that

were not His people to become His spiritual people, spiritual Israel, and this with the temporary rejection of fleshly Israel.

When the Christ appeared, immediately after his birth Simeon confessed him in the temple as being, in the first place, "a light for the enlightenment of the Gentiles", and Jesus himself in his preaching concurred fully with this. He was the good Shepherd not only of the sheepfold of Israel, no, He had other sheep which were not of this stable, and He had to bring them also. And what is much more, when he was about to part with his disciples, he pronounced that they should be his witnesses "not only in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, but to the uttermost parts of the earth," partly by their spoken word, partly by their written word and by the after-effects of their preaching. Jesus explicitly declared in the Baptismal Commandment: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost". And already beforehand he had said that "his Gospel should be preached to the whole world, for a witness to all nations", and that then the end would come. (Matt. 24:14). When he ascended into heaven and sat down at God's right hand, God highly exalted him, "so that all the knees of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth, may bow in the name of Jesus, and so that all tongues may confess that Jesus is the Christ, for the glory of God the Father. In the revelations of Pathmos, therefore, the song of praise is sung by all, "those who have been bought by the blood of the Lamb, from all nations, peoples and tongues", and it is God's anointed King who is glorified as the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords.

Herein lies something much higher than Universalism, which protests against the narrow-minded view that the Christ is only the Messiah of the Jews. Therein lies the great, the powerful, the all-embracing idea that the world, to the uttermost ends of the earth, including all peoples and nations, constitutes one and the same human race; that the whole of this world must be drawn together in the same bond of life; and that it is our entire human race which God is calling upon in His anointed King to fulfill our high destiny. In order to grasp the very far-reaching scope of this thought, you have to imagine how the world was conceived in Jesus' day. When we read in Luke 2 that a commandment went out from Emperor Augustus that the whole world should be described, this refers only to a very small part of Africa, a somewhat larger part of Asia, and not even half of present-day Europe. This is how far the reign of Rome's emperor extended, and the empire of the Roman emperor was taken for the whole world. People did have a vague notion that barbarians also lived or roamed outside the borders of that empire, but they did not count. They

formed the wilderness of the peoples that surrounded the empire at its borders. There was no knowledge of a unity of all mankind, no idea of an all-encompassing human race. The world, as we know and understand it, sank into mystery. And "the world" was only called that small part of our earth which was subject to the scepter of Rome's emperor.

It is precisely because of this that it is so important that Scripture should always have in view the unity of the whole human race. Jesus tells us that His Gospel is to be taken not only to the peoples of the Roman Empire, but to "all nations", and that His Kingdom is to be extended to "the ends of the earth". Thus, Jesus rejects the narrow view, as if the empire of Rome's emperor were the whole world, and opposes it with his empire, which will extend far beyond the borders of that Roman empire to all peoples, yes, to the uttermost ends of the earth. Thus, it is only here that the cosmopolitan idea emerges, that grandiose idea of the world which is now in the process of being realized. And it is in this light that we must understand it when it is testified to us in the Gospel of John that God so loved "the world" that He gave it His only begotten Son for its salvation; or what is testified to us in the Epistle of John, that the Christ is an atonement "not only for our sin, but for the sin of the whole world. And that the Apostle Paul saw and understood this with perfect clarity is evident from what he wrote in Col. 3: 4, that there is "in Christ no Jew and Greek, Barbarian and Scyth, but that it is Christ all in all". It is precisely by the name of Barbarian and Scyth that he meant those groups of remote or wandering peoples who were to complete the concept of humanity as a whole. In connection with this, it is of great significance that the Scriptures of the Old Testament teach us that the whole human race originated from one human couple; that after the Flood it was divided into three families; that after this the peoples were divided at Babylon; and that they even present us with tables of families, in order to show the unity of all nations in the progenitor of the whole human race. *

There is thus no question of the inclusion, by means of rapid connection and better transportation, of all parts of the earth and of all peoples and nations in one comprehensive human action, going against the basic idea of Christianity, and should be regretted by us Christians. That this all-embracing development of our human life has also been and is being misused, and is now increasingly turning against Christianity in no small measure, cannot be denied, but it must never lead us astray. On the contrary, the incorporation of the whole world into a single context and into a single traffic on earth is the realization of an idea which, although alien to Paganism, arose from the Christian root, and is most intimately

connected with the confession of true modernity and of Christ as the King of the world. When this powerful idea had not yet arisen outside Israel, and was rather thwarted by the idolatrous division of the peoples, the awareness of the unity of our human race had already germinated in Israel to the very ends of the earth; And in so far as it was still oppressed by national narrow-mindedness in Israel, especially after the Maccabees, it was brought to the fore by no one less than Christ Himself as the glorious idea of unity that was to lead the peoples, as surely as it could. The conception of the whole world, of our human race, and thus also of all nations, peoples and tongues, as one inseparable organic whole called into being by God, and thus also the calling to express this unity of our human race through connection and intercourse, is a fundamentally Christian idea, and one that would never have been realized without Christianity. Far from deploring the mighty events that led up to it, because of its dark side, it suits us to greet this turn in the history of this world with joy, and to see in it a reversal of events that could not fail to occur if the Kingship of Christ were to unfold in its full splendor. That we, Christians, are not ready to take full advantage of this at once, that this reversal overwhelmed and divided us and thus found us powerless, we have to lament before God as our own fault. Wailing is of no avail here. Only repentance within ourselves and an awakening of Christian energy can be the medicine that promises better days. Even the mission, which in this context has already accomplished such a great task, but which, compared to its high calling, is still too absorbed in the limited and small, it adds to its calling to reconsider. But above all, this self-examination adds to the need of the Christian churches in our European and American States to return to Christ as their God-anointed King, so that the Church which sends out its Mission to the foreign peoples is not itself flooded with heathen ideas, loses its influence over its own people, and is not ashamed when Buddhists or Mohamedans from a distant land come to see Christ's Church in the midst of the Christian nations.

XV. - Spiritual Unity.

It shall be one flock and one shepherd. JOHNNES 10:16.

The Mission has grasped the high idea that it is about the world, about humanity, about all people and nation in the Christian dispensation, from the beginning and has never lost sight of it.

It never lost sight of it. It has gone to the most remote regions, and has sought out countries where there was nothing to be gained and only the Gospel to be brought. It did not do so only in the 19th and 20th centuries, but from the very beginning, and the further one penetrates into the interior of Asia, the more one encounters historical data that bear witness to the mission previously carried out. In the middle ages, that great work did not stand still at all. After the discovery of America, they threw themselves into the new world. At the end of the 18th century, love for the natural peoples came to the fore alongside the Mission, especially in England, and for a short time it rivalled it in the Aboriginal Societies, but without being able to match it, and soon it was completely overshadowed by it. It was especially in the 19th century that the Mission of all churches reached its zenith, and at least as much as better communication and more frequent trade, it is the Mission that has broadened our understanding of the world and revived the sense of unity of the whole human race among us. The whole of this missionary activity is the result of Jesus' command to teach all nations and of his ordinance that his Gospel should be preached to the ends of the earth, but even more so from the powerful action that flowed from that word, how the inclusion of the whole world and of our entire family in our human endeavors, far from standing in opposition to the basic idea of Christianity, arose from it and was powerfully confirmed by it. What is now being done out of material interest, as a result of the ever-expanding commercial movement to open up the entire world through traffic, amounts to nothing more than the continuation of what Christianity had begun for centuries with the spiritual intention of hearing psalms, ascending from the ends of the earth, giving praise and worship to the One who called this entire earth into existence from nothing, and who created mankind as a unity on its soil. Yet more than once the Missionary movement and the trade movement have led to conscious or unconscious cooperation. Sometimes the Mission led the way and trade followed, other times the trade movement led the way and it was she who promoted the preaching of the Gospel. English missionaries in particular have more than once entered unknown regions, especially Africa, to open the way for England's political influence. At home the trade may have looked down on the Mission for a time, but now this has

changed, and here as well as almost everywhere else the Mission is now highly esteemed by the trade and even by the government, not of course for its results in the spiritual field, but because it opens up access to the lives of tribes still alien to us, makes contact with these tribes easier for commerce and for the government, and isolates in the converts a group of natives on whom the government can rely in moments of tension. Our East India Company has from time immemorial seriously promoted not only the preaching of the Gospel but also the Christianization of the natives in our Archipelago. Now the population of Amboina is, as a result of that old preaching, almost entirely Christian, and even for the army our government takes sides with these Christian natives, because they are men one can count on. Had this preaching been carried on more forcefully, and also in the 19th century maintained with more solidity especially on the Outer Islands, Islam would probably never have penetrated there, and our government would now be much more firmly rooted. On New Guinea, Sumba and other islands the mission is still the pioneer who establishes the influence of the Netherlands, and even in the political field all parties here at home agree more and more on the high value of the mission. Not least through the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of these peoples, access to these nations has been made easier and the unity of our human race has also been better expressed in the genealogy of languages.

Just as the Christian religion joyfully welcomes our increased power over Nature as a fulfillment of a divine ordinance, and the extension of our knowledge in all spheres of life is desired by Christianity and Christianity is flattered, so too, and even more strongly, may it be said of the incorporation of the whole world into our human action, It is no other than the working out of a lofty idea, which first came to the fore through the Christian religion, and which, in connection with trade and colonization, is still continuing to elucidate the true insight into the unity of our human race and into the regiment of the Lord of our God on all this earth.

On the other hand, it was different with the Church of Christ itself. In her a unity was announced that would rise high above the division and splitting of humanity into races, nations and peoples. Babel's confusion of tongues had brought about that division and splitting, as if by God's will. Gods would be the unity of the regiment over all the earth, and never could the unity of that regiment rest with a human ruler. Babel's confusion of tongues was an intervention of God to prevent the political unity of the world empire. Nevertheless, the ruler of the world has always sought to restore the unity of the world regiment under one human ruler. Time and again mighty rulers have risen up, who with fire and sword drove out the

surrounding nations, rendered them powerless and incorporated them into their empire, in order to establish one mighty world empire. This idea had already been put forward by the kings of Persia; under Alexander the Great the Greeks adopted it from the Asiatic; and finally, the emperors of Rome succeeded in temporarily establishing it over the more familiar part of the world. Imperial Rome lived in the conviction that the whole world was subject to Rome. From Imperial Rome this idea was taken up again by Charles the Great, and after him the old German emperors tried again to realize this comprehensive idea. Napoleon, too, was pregnant with the same idea. In three parts of the world, this unique general had fought with his troops. Even today, the idea of a world empire is not foreign to British imperialist politicians. And to add to this, at present the same idea is revived in an entirely different form, now that many people cosmopolitically dream of uniting all peoples and nations in one large world republic. All these attempts to oppose the divine decree that humanity should live on dividedly in nations and peoples with the proud idea that we humans are eminently capable of bringing the entire human race to its highest power under one rule and one right.

On the other hand, the unity of mankind, already willed by God, is a spiritual unity, the one holy, universal Church of Christ, which, acting in all nations and among all peoples, would express a limited, a different, a spiritual, but precisely because of that, a higher unity. And if one imagines for a moment that this ideal had been realized, and that all those who profess Christ as King could act as one, under one Council, over all the earth and among all peoples, one can hardly imagine the influence and power in the spiritual sphere that would emanate from this one Church of Christ. To think only of the Mission, it is clear as day how nothing breaks down the influence of the Mission as much as the appearance in the heathen country of the Mission of three or four Churches, which deny each other the light in their eyes, and precisely because of that make a very unappetizing impression on the indigenous population. At the unhappy hour, however, the realization of this high and beautiful ideal was broken by the fact that the first Christian emperor declared the Christian religion to be a state religion, made the Church a state church, and thus bound the freedom of Christ's Church in state bonds. It is Byzantineism that by this means broke the unity of the Church once for all, and in an almost irreparable way. The Church was destined, as a spiritual unity, to stand high above the divisions of our gender into nations and peoples, but it had to remain free from the narrow confines which the state system maintained among these different peoples. The Church had to remain universal, and precisely because

of this it had to bind the national diversities together in higher unity. By locking up the Churches themselves in the State and making them a national asset, which was entirely contrary to this, Byzantineism deprived the Church of Christ of its high ideal in its position independent of the national community. This broke its power, and however much one may avenge in Rome the desire, as a spiritual power, to make national life and government in the various States dependent on itself, it is to be commended that the Bishops of Rome have always endeavoured to prevent the nationalization of the Church and to maintain the inspiration of a Church which, as a world Church, would guarantee spiritual unity to all nations. This did not succeed, because only the smaller part of Christendom remained in Rome's unity. First the Greek Church fell away, then in the 16th century the Churches of the Reformation left Rome's unity; entirely apart from the small groups that lead a zealous existence in Abyssinia, Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor. Whether this could have been prevented cannot be examined in this paper. Perhaps the unity would have been maintained if the Bishops of Rome had taken a purer spiritual view of it, but in any case, it must be acknowledged without question that it was above all the Byzantine idea of Caesaropapy which, reviving among the Eastern and Slavic peoples, gave new strength to the idea of Emperor Constantine, contrary to the basic principle of the Gospel, and once again brought it to power. It was certainly like that in Russia, in Turkey and in Greece, but also the Churches of the Reformation are far from free in this respect.

In the 16th century it was not least the princes of Germany who promoted the Reformation in their countries and Luther, grateful for that support, did not see clearly enough the danger for the purified Churches. It was the Byzantine idea of Emperor Constantine which had become powerful again due to the influence of the jurists in Germany, especially in the courts. The German princes, brought up in these ideas, felt impeded by the influence of the Bishop of Rome on their subjects. They wished to free themselves from this influence and knew no better than to take the place of the Chief Bishop in the manner of Emperor Constantine. The title of Chief Bishop was even adopted, and to this day the German princes are still *summus episcopus* in their national church. This naturally led to the Church becoming a separate church in each country, to its being nationalized again and to its being confined within the narrow confines of national life. Any attempt to have the Churches of the various States regain their unity and regiment in one common Council was soon abandoned. Thus, the regiment of the Church became a branch of state service, its own spiritual character was ignored, its independence was lost.

The rule of *cuius regio eius religio* was adopted, which means that whoever gave orders in the country actually had to decide to which religion the people should belong. Every subject had to practice the religion of the Sovereign. The idea of the Church merged into the idea of the people. And finally, not even the faintest trace remained of the powerful idea in Scripture to embody, in the midst of the division of the peoples, the unity of our gender in the one, universal, Christian Church of Christ. And it is true that one has felt the error of this school and that later, under the power of the so-called Irenicism, numerous attempts have been made to restore the unity of the Churches, but, without distinction, all these attempts failed. The Churches were incorporated into the State, nationalized in the Byzantine sense, and the princes did not let go of the spoils they had taken. The Caesarian therapy retained the upper hand.

At home the Remonstrant group tried the same thing, but the Calvinist spirit resisted. Not enough, it is so. The coincidence of our liberation war against Spain and the Reformation movement has also resulted in our resigning ourselves to too narrow a national band, has perpetuated the State Church and has made the spiritual character of the Churches non-existent. But even though we also suffered damage, the worldly character that the Synod of Dordrecht bore shows how the spiritual worldly unity of Christ's Church at home was not abandoned. It was deeply felt that the truth was all-embracing, and that therefore the churches in the Netherlands had neither alone nor in their own power to decide about the truth. All the foreign Churches of the Reformed confession therefore appeared at the Synod of Dordrecht together with the Dutch Churches, and although here too not everything was golden, the idea of the unity of the Church in the midst of the diversity of nations was nevertheless maintained; and had it been possible to give expression to this lofty idea in the future, the course of our history would have been very different. Soon, however, the States regained supremacy, no general Synod was allowed to convene, and thus our Churches also crumbled from the world Church and became increasingly nationalized. Not in the good sense, that our national life was more and more permeated by the spirit of Christ's Church, but, quite differently, in the harmful sense that even the connection with the foreign Reformed Churches was more and more loosened, that we formed a Church group on our own, and that we no longer felt that we were a link in the great chain of Churches, with which Christ surrounded the whole of Europe. From this it must also be explained, that king William I, with the best intentions, as Sovereign, arrogated to himself the authority to lay down the law to the Reformed

Churches, and created the state creativity of the synodal system, under which so many Churches still suffer.

All this now hangs together. According to God's will and ordinance, the division of mankind into nations and peoples must continue to exist and is intended to enable the peoples to lead their own national existence, and to have them develop in that own national existence those qualities and gifts for the benefit of the whole human race which God has especially entrusted to each of those nations and to each of those peoples who have become historical. But precisely in this sharing the need remained to give a higher expression to the unity of mankind. This was then tried in a counter-productive way in the various empires, which were founded by world conquerors, but which disappeared just as quickly. And then the Christ appeared, in order to give visible expression to that much-needed spiritual unity for our human race, in the midst of national divisions, through the foundation of His one Church. Under the Apostolate, and as long as the persecutions continued, this spiritual unity also prevailed in three parts of the world, but at an unhappy hour the Emperor Constantine destroyed Jesus' high and holy idea by confining religion to the State again, and binding it to the authority of the sovereign of the country. The nationalization of the various Churches pushed back the high idea of Christ, and even now we sometimes hear cries that the title of "Father Church" could ever be a title of honor for the Body of Christ. It is this which has led the world, without the Church of Christ, to try again to seize the lost unity of our lineage, and it is the faster communication and the network of trade movements through which one now, eager for internationalism, tries to realize this unity in the material field. It is a disgrace to the Church of Christ that what it was called to accomplish, but only on the spiritual plane, is now being tried without her, and this on the material plane. But even this humiliation can bring healing, on the condition that the Church humbles herself, does not oppose what is happening outside of her, and pursues the unity of the Church of Christ throughout the world as a holy ideal. And pursuing it, not by pulling Christ down to the lower rank of religious genius or moral leader, but by standing up again with united strength for the spiritual Kingship of Christ.

XVI. - The Course of the Centuries.

You yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come upon us like a thief in the night.

We pray you not to be moved hastily, as if the day of Christ were at hand.

1 THESS. 5:2 and 2 THESS. 2:2.

In conclusion to the first part of our appeal for the Kingship of Christ, there remains for us the one question to be answered, whether in fact the Scriptures give us the right to make such a long period of time for the working out of the Kingship of Christ.

Scripture gives us the right to presuppose such a lengthy historical process for the working out of the Kingship of Christ, which is already running over twenty centuries, and which can still be fulfilled centuries from now.

We showed that the honoring of Christ's Kingship, especially in our civilized circles, suffered damage and painfully declined, so much so that in our leading circles hardly anyone cares about that Kingship anymore, and it lost its high significance even in Christian circles. We then traced the reasons for this renunciation of the Kingship of Christ, pointing successively to the decline of the sense of dependence due to the power mankind had won over Nature, and to the enormous increase and expansion of our knowledge. We pointed out how the stream of religious life itself, on the whole, rippled feebly and, in part, even got bogged down by the overstrained restlessness of life, as a result of faster communication and the drawing of the whole world into the circle of our human action. And in the end, we emphasized how, at this lowering of the stream of the life of piety, the spirit emerged from the depths to take possession of the leadership of the spirits, to establish a throne in the great cities of the world, to establish the worship of Mammon, and to cover the inner emptiness of the soul that resulted from this under the glory of Art.

As was only natural, the Christian people, faced with this unholy development of life, have been extremely hostile to it. Deploring the diminution of our dependence on the power of Nature, it tried to banish science and withdrew from the great life movement in order to continue its devout life in isolation and quietness. Thus, it seemed as if the power of Nature, the power of science, the richer economic development and the treasures of art were to be left to the world that lies in evil, and as if Christendom had nothing else to do but to lament on the ruins of Zion's

walls and to await the return of Christ and the end of things. In this way they thought they could go about freely, and lay all the blame for the course of things on the evil world. But it was precisely in this respect that our attempt was made to expose the untenability. We showed how we should rather have compassion on those many wretched people who, having drifted with the tide, were no longer able to grasp faith. We showed how Christianity in our own circle was also guilty of a loss of faith, and how the high and all-embracing significance of the Kingship of Christ had sunk to far too low a level among us. In order to make us understand this, we went back to man's kingship, which, instituted by Divine creation, had been lost in the fall, but was destined to be resurrected in the kingship of the Son of Man, and showed how Satan had meanwhile set himself up as the ruler of the world, in order to thwart Christ's kingship by the resurrection of man's false kingship. But also, how the Christ had dethroned the ruler of this world in His death and resurrection, and now, seated at God's right hand, had assumed the reign not only over His Church and over His elect, but also over the peoples and nations, over the whole development of human life, both spiritual and material; And how, as a result, in the increase of our power over Nature and in the wonderful blossoming of science, a result had to be greeted, not only by His will, but also by His work and brought about under His rule. We have already explained this by pointing out the spiritual effect which, although hidden behind all things visible, nevertheless governs the course of things.

This implies, hence the last question which remained to be answered in this connection, that a long historical process, far from falling away from Christianity, is rather demanded by it. The awareness of this, however, has reached professing Christendom only very faintly. The idea that the history of the world stands on its own, and that in the midst of this strange history of the world, the Church of Christ was continuing her pilgrimage, constantly persecuted, threatened and hindered by the world, and at times lured into infidelity by her wealth, was all too prevalent, and therefore yearned in her spiritual heart for the final salvation that will come only with the return of Christ to judgment. This longing is then continually manifested in the appearance of eschatological sects, i.e., groups that make the doctrine of Jesus' Second Coming the chapter of their creed, while the Church in her wider dimensions does not deny this Second Coming, but, in her satisfaction with her present state, almost completely loses sight of it and forgets it.

In view of this it must be acknowledged that in Scripture two apparently mutually exclusive conceptions run parallel. On the one hand there is the idea that the

generation then still alive was already awaiting the return of Christ, and on the other hand there is the entirely different idea of a lengthy historical process that must precede the coming of Christ in judgment. Even among the Apostles, both ideas ran side by side. The Apostle Paul in particular had a premonition that he himself would experience the return of the Lord. From 1 Cor. 15:51, 52 it appears that for a moment he counted himself among those who would not see death, but who at the moment of Jesus' return would enter into glory without dying. And what is even more evident is that in the revelations that were given to the apostle John on the island of Pathmos, the Christ himself speaks out: Behold, I come quickly, to the church in Philadelphia, adding: Keep what ye have, lest any man take your crown. And what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians to Thessalonica: "You yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night," may not be an indication of time, yet it could hardly make any other impression than that the return of Christ was very near. It is impossible to dismiss this proposition from apostolic literature. It is clear, in more than one way, that in the early years of the Church's rise people often imagined no other way than that Christ would return from heaven and settle the final struggle, and it is equally clear that more than one apostle cherished the same expectation.

But just as surely as we say this, just as surely is it counterbalanced by the fact that alongside this expectation there is a constantly breaking one, a completely different conception, which, without specifying a number of centuries, very clearly demands a lengthy historical process that will have to precede Jesus' return. It is already remarkable that Jesus himself, as soon as the young people wanted to press him to give some more details about the glorious establishment of his Kingdom, always refused them. The Father has placed the times and occasions in his own power," and neither the angels nor the Son know anything about this. The Lord even explicitly warns that false Christs will arise after his passing, claiming that the day of Christ has already come, and in connection with this Christ exhorts his Church not to listen to these false rumors, pointing out that great world events must still precede before the end of days can come. His parable of the leaven even points to a long process. The leaven is placed in the three measures of puree; then the process of leavening begins; and this process must take its historical course until the leavening of the three measures of puree is complete. In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul, who at first had a premonition that he was yet to experience the great day, has a premonition of his approaching dissolution; he even longs for it. For me," he writes, "this would be the best thing in the world. And he

hopes for a short continuation of his life only for the sake of the Church. Already in 2 Cor. 5:1 he expresses it: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle is broken, we have a building of God eternal in the heavens," and he adds: Sighing within ourselves, we desire to be clothed with our dwelling place from heaven." There are no more than three years between them. The first letter to the church in Corinth dates from no earlier than 54, the second from no later than 57. It is therefore not acceptable to imagine that the apostle passed from one presentation to the other during this interval, precisely in the years of his most vigorous activity. To his mind the two stood side by side with equal justice. And, what is especially remarkable, to the Church of Thessalonica, which he had just founded on his return from his prison at Philippi, he writes in one letter: The coming of Christ will be like a thief in the night," and in the other, that a whole historical process will have to precede Christ's return; that the struggle between Christ and Satan will have to be fought out beforehand over its whole length and breadth, until finally, in the last attempt of despair, Satan will embody himself in the "man of sin", and that this is not possible for the time being, since there is a power that prevents it. On this basis he expressly warns against the expectation that we should regard the Lord's return as imminent. Whoever says and pretends that, is misleading the congregation. First the apostasy must come, and before that the man of sin must be revealed. Already when he was in Thessalonica, he had warned the believers there against this false expectation. There is a hidden iniquity. There is a hidden demonic power working against Christ's Church to destroy it. But the full revelation of this demonic power has yet to come. This can only come later. There is an irresistible power that will prevent it from fully breaking through and make it impossible.

It is thus clearly evident that the two motives worked in tandem in Christ's church from the very beginning. On the one hand, there was a sense of the immediacy of Jesus' return and, on the other, a clear understanding that, oh, so much would have to precede that day of days; that a historical process of struggle between Christ and Satan had begun; and that the Last Day could not come until that process was completely over.

To those who live in time, and measure everything according to time-space, this seems contradictory; but this contradiction is naturally given by the contrast between time and eternity. The psalmist expressed this contradiction in the significant words: "A thousand years are with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years"; and in the Revelation that fell upon John at Pathmos, time and eternity stand side by side and opposite one another in the same way, when on the

one hand it is said: "Behold, I am coming quickly", and when on the other hand the historical process that was about to take place, is rescinded.

on the other hand, the historical process that was about to take place is represented in a book with seven seals, which contains the things to come, the fullness of which will only be able to unfold itself successively in the course of centuries. In eternity, and in everything that expresses eternity, there is no time and no measure of time. In the eternal everything is immediately present. It is, as the name Jehovah indicates, something that is, was and will be. All distinctions of time-space fall away here. The past, the present and the future merge into the one eternal. That is why in Revelation the scenes that will take place in the course of history are summarized in groups, according to their different types, as meaningful representations of what will not occur only once, but will be repeated over and over again in the course of centuries, each time in a different form, but in one fundamental type, until the end comes and the final act is accomplished. Therefore, although one had the perfect right to see the fulfilment of one of these seven seals in every major period of history, one would be mistaken to limit these seven seals to this one period, as if everything had ended with it. The whole of the Revelations of John is dioramic, as it is called. There is an undulation of history in these seven seals, but an undulation that continues through the centuries, and each time returns to the same basis, be it also under a changed light effect.

We stand here before the mystery, because everything that withdraws into the eternal, presents itself as the eternal, and lifts us up into the eternal, can make no other impression than that of the mystery on those who live in time and calculate according to time. We cannot detach ourselves from the idea of time. This follows naturally from our finite existence. But too often we imagine our immortal existence hereafter as an existence that will extend over an endless number of centuries. Even to the Lord our God we convey this idea of time, as often as we think of His counsel as having been established for a whole series of centuries, and now being fulfilled in bits and pieces. And yet we know that this cannot be right, because it amounts to an attribution to the Eternal of something that belongs only to our human existence. Every attempt to free ourselves from this concept of time and this awareness of the finite, fails, and only in moments of holy tension and in the glow of soul-strengthening prayer can we experience sensations that tear us away from the power of time and raise us up as if in higher consciousness.

Since Christ is now enthroned as our King in the eternal, and we are still living in time, it cannot and must not be the case that His return will also keep alive in us the longing for the unravelling of things, that it must at one time shine upon us in the light of the eternal, and then appear to us as if it were imminent: And yet another time, engaged in the course of time, presents itself to us as the great historical process, which the struggle between Christ and Satan, and thus also the development of the Church, and the liberation of the whole life of mankind through the influence of the Gospel, will pass through. The return of Christ raises an expectation that glimmers in the present with the brilliance of the eternal, and yet at the same time sends its sparks of fire into the distant future, across a history of centuries. Practically speaking, this means that a Church of Christ that distances itself from the day of the Lord, and empathizes with the thought that that day will only come after centuries have passed, completely lapses into the that emanates from the promise of the Lord's return, slackens inwardly, and starts to imagine that their future lies here on earth

But also, conversely, that a Church of Christ, which expects the coming of the Lord to come every morning and evening, gives up all quiet action and ceases to be active, renounces its duty and calling, and ends up burying itself under overwrought reflections. One can see this in the powerful popular churches in all countries, in whose preaching even the return of the Lord no longer constitutes a fixed ingredient, and among whose members the hope of Jesus' return no longer kindles a spark of inspiration. And the other is to be found in all eschatological sects and fanatics who join together in small groups, and among whom the strength for the struggle of the Christian principle against the demonic power of the world has been completely lost. First, they live in excitement. They wait, they yearn. If not this year, the year after that will be the end. And when every expectation is disappointed, and it still takes years and years, and still nothing comes, then the overexcitement gives way to despondency, and their entire faith expires. The holy art of preaching and the holy art of the personal soul life therefore remains now, as it was in the days of the Apostles, to do justice to both in the mystery of the Word and in the mystery of the soul: On the one hand, the words: Behold, I come quickly; on the other hand, the words: First the apostasy must come and the man of sin be revealed.

To this end the false separation must fall, as if the Kingship of Christ only concerned His Church and not likewise the life and historical course of the life of the world. Only in a later series of these Articles will it be possible to draw the line

between Providence and the Kingship of Christ. The only thing that now provokes protest is the idea that has had such a pernicious effect on the honoring of Christ as our God-anointed King, as if Christ, seated at God's right hand, were the powerful protector of his Church, but as if the historical process of the life of the world took place outside of him. His statement: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth" contradicts this idea and is, historically and practically, absurd. The Church and the world are not two hermetically sealed spheres of life. The Church is in the world. It has an influence on the world and, conversely, the world has an influence on it. Every century changes the face of human life, and with every new form in which human life appears, the Church has the vocation to understand how to reckon with this changed situation, to direct its word accordingly, to change its action accordingly. Always the one unchanging Evangélie, always the one selfsame Body of Christ, but speaking for each century the language that this new century needs. Therefore, the reign of King Jesus over His Church is inconceivable, unless His royal rule also extends over the life of the world, inasmuch as a spiritual power is at work in that life of the world, which allows itself partly to be illuminated by the light emanating from God's Church, and partly -subjects itself as a demonic power against Christ. In connection with this it has now been demonstrated that the new form in which world life now appears, insofar as it contains good precious elements, is due to the reign of King Jesus, and insofar as unholy powers are at work in it, it is kept in check by King Jesus and fought against. That is why the Church of Christ has nothing to fear, no matter how much modern development may oppose the faith. Provided that it understands the signs of the times, repents its own guilt, and raises the honour of Jesus' Kingship again, the developments of our time will not harm God's cause, but serve the honour of our King.

PRO REGE.

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

PART ONE - THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN HIS HIGHNESS III.

The Kingship of Christ according to the Scriptures.

I. - The Idea of the King.

And he wrote on (his) robe and on his thigh this name: King of kings, and Lord of lords.

REV. 19:16.

Everything in the Christian land, especially in the baptized parts of Europe and America, should, it would be well, be constantly filled with honour for Christ as its King; the authority of His Majesty should dominate all spiritual relations of life; and no name could be more highly esteemed at its first sound in all walks of life, among all peoples and nations, than the name of Christ as our God-anointed King. In the centuries that lie behind us, there have been times when this was so. Now it is no longer so. In the wider field of national life, the glory of Jesus' crown has died out, and while in the much smaller circle of faithful believers no name rises above that of Jesus, in this narrow circle it is more the Savior and Redeemer who receives honor and thanks, than the King given to us by God, to whom all homage and loyalty is devoted.

The general cause of this lack of homage and holy enthusiasm appeared to be found in the general decline of the stream of religious life. Religion and all that is sacred to it used to be at the forefront of everyone's estimation and esteem, even that of the princes and peoples. Not as if even then unholiness did not creep in and poison life, but this unholiness was still generally felt to be sin, and in the public estimation the holy, and thus also the majesty of the Christ, retained its honor. Nowadays it is no longer so. The most that can be said is that in a few ceremonial acts religion is more nominally than actually recognized in its great significance; and what actually came to the fore in the public estimation was material interest, public welfare, and besides science and art, honor and philanthropy, but also the latter as arising solely from man and glorifying only man. This change in the public esteem appeared to us to be explained above all by the fact that man's power over Nature had increased in the 19th century in such a marvelous manner, and that, as a result of this acquired power over Nature, man felt liberated from the fear of the elementary powers, which had been the root of their "fear of God for the vast majority of people. The fact that the ever-increasing power over Nature fostered unconcern and destroyed the "freedom of God" in ever-widening circles, at first brought about a hostile relationship between faith, which held fast to the freedom of God, and science, which continued to celebrate its triumphs over the power of Nature. Thus, in religious circles the increasing power over Nature was attributed

to the working of a demonic power. More and more people in religious circles took an unfriendly stand against Nature-science. They looked upon its steady victories with dismay. And they refused to understand that this triumph over Nature was nothing more than the fulfillment of a holy prophecy, and that it could be explained by the reign of Christ's spirit over the lives of the nations. Thus, two distinct and separate circles began to form. The one that increasingly deviated from the faith and gloried in its scientific success, in order to organize its life according to the nature of that success. And on the other hand, the circle that stuck to its beliefs, and regretted this increasing power over Nature, wanted it gone, and could only think of it as a hostile power.

But however sharp the separation between these two circles, the influence of the unbelievers on the believers steadily increased. Even in the circle of believers one could not escape the benefits of life, which the science community was constantly bringing about. They themselves also sought the benefit and the enjoyment of it. And while one underwent the influence of scientific development unnoticed, one's own faith slackened, one felt the flow of religious life in one's own circle decrease, and one wondered, not without fear, where this time in public opinion, especially among the younger generation, would end up. All sorts of divisions arose; there were those who sought salvation in half admitting to scientific success and who believed they could best save their faith by also seeking a scientific basis for their faith; while others, with even more vehement hostility to all science, retreated into mystical isolation. For more than half a century people in the circle of believers thus laboured, weakened themselves and withdrew from public life, until finally, out of friction, the reaction was born which led to a new, resilient revival of the faith. It is only through this that the happy moment has come when people in the believing community have once again started to develop independently and have a clear idea of the position faith has to occupy vis-à-vis the all-conquering power of natural science. It is only through this that the Kingship of Christ has again come to the fore among us. The realization dawned on us that those who in Christ alone honored the Redeemer and Guardian for eternal salvation, were in fact pushing back the majesty of our King. Not only in the limited field of spiritual salvation, but in the whole wide field of human life, the honor of Christ's Kingship had to come into its own again. It had to be realized that in Christ we were actually dealing with a "King to whom all power in heaven and on earth was given'.

So far, we have proceeded in the first and second series of these Articles Pro Rege; now, in the third series, it will come down to building up this Kingship of Christ

from the basis of life itself, by the light that Revelation lets shine for us. And then we will begin with the remark that the Christ is always presented to us as the King, and never as the Emperor. A seemingly insignificant remark and yet in which the essence of His Majesty lies expressed. The rulers of the earth have always been aware that in their high titles they have been. In Turkey, the Sovereign calls himself the Sultan, in Persia the Shach, in Japan the Mikado, Tenno or Tenshi. And when these Oriental Princes came into contact with Europe, none of them presented themselves as Kings but rather as Emperors. Sultan means commander of force, Shach means ruler, Mikado means high door, Tenshi means son of heaven, and precisely because of these high titles that they held in their own country, they did not want to be placed on a par with the kings of the small countries in international relations either, but they all grabbed what in Europe is the highest title, the honorary title of Emperor. A king was also a prince to them, but of a lower order. In Austria, Germany and Russia there is no such thing as a king, because even the title Czar is only a Slavic form for our word Emperor. The desire to gain influence through the high title of Emperor sometimes even turned into the ridiculous. We know the sad fate that befell the royal family in Korea, but even the monarch of that small, barely populous country called himself the proud and high Emperor of Korea. Brazil, too, had an Imperial crown before it became a republic, and when European influence tried to establish itself in Mexico, the Imperial crown was transferred to that republic as well. Thus, it may be said that once the title of Emperor had become established, it was in the nature of things that whoever would choose a high title for the Sovereign of a powerful empire, would automatically have to choose the Imperial title. In the days of Jesus, the high title of Emperor was also known and common in Palestine. The story of the birth of Christ begins by saying that a commandment emanated from Emperor Augustus, Jesus himself spoke the famous words: "Give the Emperor what is the Emperor's", and before Gabbatha's court it was said: "If you let go of this, you are not the Emperor's friend. It is also reported of Paul that, in the face of the fury of Jewish fanaticism, he appealed to the Emperor. And yet, despite the fact that the title of Emperor was already in use in Jesus' day as the highest title of rule and power, neither Jesus himself, nor his Apostles, nor the Evangelists ever applied the title of Emperor, but always and exclusively the honorary title of King to Jesus' Messianic Majesty. Even today it would be offensive to any of us to speak of the Emperor Jesus. We all automatically feel that it is only the title of King that Jesus honors in His Majesty.

This attracts all the more attention, because in itself the imperial title would express the nature and extent of Jesus' reign much more accurately than the title of King. King is the title exclusively reserved for the ruler of a single nation, whereas Emperor is the title of a ruler whose territory and dominion extend over many countries and nations, and thus also over many kings. In England, this was very recently felt when the title of Empress of India was conferred upon Victoria. In England, Scotland and Ireland Victoria remained the Queen, but in Asia she ruled over all kinds of peoples, nations and princes, and thus the title of Empress was adopted for India. Since Jesus' reign is by no means limited to a single nation or a single people, but extends over all peoples and nations, it would in itself have made sense to choose the title of Emperor for Jesus' reign as well; however, this has never happened. He is not only called King, but the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, and even the Chief of the Kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5), but he is never called Emperor.

Emperor is the same as Caesar, which was pronounced Kaisar in Greek, and thus passed into the form of Kaiser in German, and into the form of Emperor in Dutch. Gaius Julius Caesar was the first to bear this honorary title and the word Emperor is derived from his personal name. The Romans themselves usually called him Imperator or Augustus, whence the French form Empereur, and the English Emperor. But in whatever form, this expression always indicates that the bearer of this title is the head of an empire, not the ruler of a specific people. In their own bosom the Romans possessed a republic, and it was the head of this republic who, as ruler over peoples in Europe, Asia and Africa, i.e., over the entire known world at that time, made himself known by the imperial title as Commander or Lord of the whole world. There were still wild peoples wandering around outside the borders of the Roman Empire, but they did not count. Over all that counted as a sympathetic part of the world the chief of the Roman Republic was Lord and Bidder, and this expressed the title of Emperor. For this reason, divine honors were soon bestowed on the Emperor as well, and he was given the title of Dominus et Deus, i.e. Lord and God. The title of Emperor thus contained a completely different meaning than that of ruler over a particular country. It was world domination, which the bearer of this title claimed for himself, and for centuries, even in the Middle Ages, the general conviction held that for that reason only one Emperor was conceivable. There is only one world, therefore only one world government, and therefore only one Emperor. When the great Roman Empire split into an Eastern part with Constantinople and a Western part with Rome as its

capital, this was an anomaly. And when the Byzantine Empire sank more and more under the pressure of Islam, the Roman Empire was restored by Charles the Great, because he too took the title of Emperor in addition to that of Frankish King. As such he called himself Roman Emperor, a title which the old German emperors always kept. It was not until later that this significance of being the ruler of the entire known world weakened. Napoleon tried to revive it. But even now the title of Emperor, which was adopted in Russia, Austria and again in Germany, has become the honorary title of the sovereign over a very powerful empire, which stood out in strength and power far above the ordinary kingdoms. For such a powerful empire the title of King soon seemed too low, and the title of Emperor was demanded, and that is why the Eastern princes did not content themselves with the title of King, but, as often as they would speak in European forms, they honoured themselves with the title of Emperor. This has also resulted in the title of Emperor now sounding much higher to everyone's ears, and representing the expression of a much greater power.

If one takes this development of the name of Emperor into account, then everyone feels how, in itself, there was a strong case for also expressing Jesus' Majesty with the title of Emperor. His was also the reign, not over a single country, but over all the countries of the world. The Emperor of Rome was honored as Dominus et Deus, i.e., as Lord and God, Jesus was Lord and God. If the Emperor of Rome was the ruler of many kings, Jesus was King of kings and Lord of lords. This supremacy, which the Emperor of Rome had only pretended to have, actually came to Him. His was not a national, but a worldly dominion. And if anyone could be said to be Emperor in a full and literal sense, then this applied to Jesus, and to no one else. What the apostles claimed for Jesus was precisely what the ruler of Rome thought he could claim for himself. And so, in itself, nothing was more obvious than that the apostles, in the homage they paid to Jesus, had taken the stand that Jesus could not be compared to any of the kings subordinate to the Emperor, but only to the Emperor himself. If one asks oneself what princely power on earth could be the right image and the right representation of the power and majesty of the Christ, then the image of this in itself could not be found among the Kings of the Gauls or Greeks, Persians or Dacians, but only and exclusively in Rome in the Imperial Palace.

The fact that, in spite of this, the title of King was never applied to Jesus, can be explained by the very different meaning of the terms Emperor and King. The Emperor is the embodiment of rule by force and domination. From Rome the

legions had come out, who had subjugated one people in front of the other by force of arms to the rulers in Rome. Between the conquered peoples and the Emperor in Rome there was no other relationship than that of supremacy resting on the majority of the Imperial army. All these peoples spoke a language foreign to them; they had a religion foreign to them; they lived according to customs and habits that were completely at odds with the way of life in Rome. And it was not the happiness of these peoples, but only the glitter of imperial power, that was the aim of the administration. Undoubtedly Rome brought better order, more equitable administration of justice, and sometimes more prosperity and improved culture to these countries, but the main objective was and remained that the treasures from these countries should flow to Rome, and that they, kept in check by force of arms, should enhance the glory of the imperial crown. It was a dominion over the world, but also, as Jesus put it before Pilate, a dominion of this world, that is to say, created out of this world, and for which they fought by force of arms. And in contrast He set His rule as if it were of the world, but not of the world, and therefore His servants could not, like the servants of Rome's Emperor, fight for their Lord with the sword. It was the very nature of Jesus' reign that was diametrically opposed to the nature of the imperial reign. The Imperial rule was not the image, but the mockery of the rule over the world that had been given to Jesus. The nature of the world dominion of Rome's Emperor and the nature of the world dominion of Jesus were directly mutually exclusive. At Rome there was only a semblance of the true nature of that world dominion, which was about to be realized in Jesus. There the violence of arms, here the power of the Spirit. There the sacrifice of all things to one's own honor and greatness, here in Christ the giving, the devotion, the self-sacrifice, the self-humiliation, and the self-destruction, in order to save a people for eternal life and to enrich them with treasures of grace. This was the reason why not the idea of an emperor but only the idea of a king is applied to Jesus in Scripture, even though it goes without saying that no earthly title, not even that of king, can adequately express the actual and special nature of his majesty and power. Everything, including the idea of the King, has become counterfeit and unnatural on earth. Hence the contrast in Samuel's days between the true King of Israel, that is Jehovah himself, and "the kings like other nations had'. The Messianic idea of kingship is therefore sharply distinguished from the kings of other peoples, and not Saul, but first David became the type of the Messianic King. It does not matter whether one goes back to the derivation of the words with which the King is mentioned in the original text of the Old or New Testament to explain Jesus' Kingship. Old dogmatists have tried to

explain the Greek word Basileus by a false derivation, in such a way that it would mean: he is the basis, the foundation, the support of the people, but better derivation has already shown that such an explanation is out of the question, and that Basileus only means: one who goes out on behalf of the people, about the same as duke. Nor does the Hebrew Mélek, from Melchi-Zedek, the King of Righteousness, also known to the resident Bible reader, get any further. Even if we assumed that this word means counsellor because of its origin, we would not have made any progress with this either. The word Mélek is the word the ancient Canaanites already used, without any evidence that it is of holy origin. The Holy Scriptures use the words they find in the languages of the nations, and do not take the meaning they wish to express from them, but put it into them. Not linguistically, but factually, the right track of interpretation must be found here. And even though it can be said that our word King, which is associated with knowledge, seems to refer to unity of lineage and thus to obedience to the people, even more than the Greek or Hebrew word, approaches the deeper meaning of kingship, here too the word as such cannot be used any further. This word 'King' also originated outside of Revelation, it lacks the holy stamp, and it is entirely coincidental that it approaches the essence of Kingship more correctly than the Greek or Hebrew words.

II. - The Lordship.

Thou art thyself my King, O God; command the deliverances of Jacobs.

PSALM 44:5.

In the appearance of the King embodies the idea of dominion. Not of a reign which, as in the Emperor idea, is exerted by force of arms, but of a supreme power. This concept of power is even the defining feature of the King idea, that which distinguishes the King from the Prophet and the Priest. Among us this idea of rule is often expressed by speaking of sovereignty, also of supremacy; but apart from the manner of expression, with the King it is always in the first place about power, about high power, about the highest power. It is the possession of this power that first makes him King. It is not as if there were not all kinds of other things in the King idea, but that other thing must never push aside the main issue, and so wherever Jesus is mentioned as our King, the celebration of that power must always be in the foreground.

It is not the Christ who exists for us, but we exist for and with the Christ. It is most certainly true of earthly government that the government is there for the people, and not the people for the government. And at least as long as we take this earthly government for its own sake, and do not take it to be the bearer of the Lord's authority, this statement is valid everywhere else. But in the case of Christ as our King, this statement does not apply, precisely because of His divine dignity. We are his property. We do not belong to ourselves, but to Christ. We are his servants and handmaidens. And it is precisely in this relationship that the royal honor of Christ first comes into its own.

But it must not be denied that in the circle of the faithful, the opposite idea all too often comes to the fore, through a one-sided emphasis on Christ's love, which speaks to us from the work of Redemption. In the work of Redemption, however, power is hidden behind the voluntary humiliation and self-surrender of Christ in death. Here the Christ gives Himself for us, and so for a moment it may give the impression that our salvation was the only goal envisaged in the work of Redemption. Of course, this is not so. The main thing was the restoration of the right and honor of God, and only insofar as we are creatures of that God, the power and dominion over this world also had to be withheld from Satan and given back to God. Even when it is written that God so loved this world that He gave us His one-born Son to save it, this must never be interpreted as if our excellence made God's compassion on us, and therein lies nothing else than that God could tolerate the

disruption of His work, the profanation of His world, temporarily, but not permanently, and therefore seized the highest means to restore His power and right over this world, and precisely by this to save this world from eternal destruction. It is for this reason that the apostle solemnly declares: "We beseech you for the sake of Christ, let yourselves be reconciled to God" Not: Accept the salvation offered. Do not let the opportunity that is being offered to you, to assure you a blessed future, pass you by. For all this may well be said, but it does not penetrate to the bottom, to the basis of the work of Redemption, and precisely this does the Apostolic Word: Be reconciled to God!

In the beginning, however, the preaching of the Gospel lingers more on the surface, and places man's salvation in the foreground. And this is natural. The Gospel is preached to those who are estranged from God and who live on most thoughtlessly in their sins. With such people, a call to the glory of God would have no effect. They do not understand what the honor of God demands, and they do not yet have a heart for it. Often these people do not feel unhappy at all in their worldly life, and they are often overcome with a certain fear that they will have to renounce the joy that the world offers them by going over to the service of Jesus. Especially in its lower forms, therefore, the Gospel is addressed almost exclusively to those who live a less than happy life in this world and suffer from the corruption that emanates from their inner sins. There are few Evangelizations so resolute in character as that which emanates from the Salvation Army, but it, too, addresses itself first and foremost to the lost in the lower classes of society. In America, and to some extent also in England, Evangelicalism sometimes still dares to call men and women of the middle and upper classes to conversion, but on the continent of Europe, and so also among us, after the partial disappointment of Revelation, Evangelicalism among the more highly educated, finely civilized and more scientifically trained has almost come to a standstill. It does occur, thank God, that even from these circles a young man or an elderly person is converted to Christ, but this is a great exception, and almost never the fruit of ordinary evangelization. It can be said of almost all evangelization that it is directed almost exclusively to the poorer and least fortunate class of society, and especially to such as these, whose sinful life is evident, and who can be spoken to about the life of their souls without encountering any imagined pride. We also know from the Apostolic Writings how this was actually the case at the time of the emergence of the Christian Church. Not many nobles, not many prominent men, not many wise men, but that which is nothing. It naturally follows that evangelization tends to

emphasize the terrible fate that awaits the sinner after death. There is not much to offer for this life, at least not to people who do not yet understand the enjoyment of a higher spiritual life and almost exclusively ask what can improve and enrich their earthly existence. The question: "What must I do to be saved?" is therefore automatically on everyone's lips, and it is neither reprehensible nor unnatural that those who go out among the lost in order to save souls should seek their strength first of all in the answer to this question. "Life in this world already gives you so little: see to it that you do not also forfeit your eternal life. Come to Jesus, and through faith in Him at least find your entrance into eternal salvation."

The consequence of this way of evangelizing is that the salvation of the soul comes to the fore, and that one is inclined to do with Jesus as one does with a physician who saves us from mortal illness. One is grateful to such a physician; at first one submits to what he prescribes; one willingly takes the bitter medicine he administers; but once the mortal danger has passed, we gain in strength and begin to move more freely again, then one leaves the physician for what he is, pays him back, and leaves him alone. Hence the infertility of more than one evangelization if, after having led to conversion, it loses sight of the converted and leaves them to themselves. The Evangelization then sets itself too high, because it looks down upon the Church with a certain contempt, and does not understand that it is precisely the admission to the Church that must be the rule, so that the converted and admitted, taken up into the bosom of the Church, may now be initiated from the superficial idea of being saved to that deeper life which leads the saved to their right standing before Christ. If not, Jesus is honored as the Savior, as the Reconciler, as the Redeemer, but there is no question of His dominion over us and of our being taken in among His own people, and it is precisely because of this that the idea arises that the Christ is there for our sake, and the much richer idea that we are there for Christ's sake does not arise. The man sunk in sin is lost; now he wants to enter into eternal life; and it is Jesus who opens the way for him. This goal has now been reached. The Master Physician has fulfilled his task for the sick person. The thanks that the saved person gives him for this remain highly valued. But if such a person, after his death, is actually allowed to enter God's paradise, then Christ's work for him is finished, his task is complete, and he ceases to be the controlling element in life.

It is precisely this that the Church must combat. As the Church, it may not be content with spreading the Gospel to the lost, but first and foremost it has the calling to introduce the Lord's called people more deeply into the divine reasons

from which the whole work of Redemption arose, and to establish that firm bond between Jesus and His redeemed, which is not finished but only begins with conversion. And this depends almost exclusively on a preaching that, after having demonstrated the Prophet and the High Priest to our hearts, now also makes the glory of the King shine in our soul's eye, and causes the entirely new relationship that must arise between the saved, as incorporated in the people of God, and the King whom God has placed in charge of them, to permeate the mysticism of the heart. In this the Church has fallen far short. It made the mistake of remaining in its lower form when it came to evangelization, and this is the main reason why the awareness of the high significance of the Kingship of Christ has been as good as lost among a substantial part of the congregation. That Jesus is our highest Prophet, in so far as he has revealed the truth of eternal things to us completely, and that he is our eternal High Priest, who offered the sacrifice of reconciliation for us, everyone knows, confesses and understands; but that in the confession of the Kingship of Christ the highest thing still has to come first, most people understand as good as nothing of that. They still honor in Jesus a patron who prays for them and offers them a certain guarantee that the salvation they have acquired will not escape them. They see in Jesus' sitting at God's right hand the reward after the struggle, the honour of elevation given to him by his Father. They also confess that in the end of days the Christ will come in judgment. Yes, and those who live a little deeper, also feel that Jesus curbs demonic activity. But of a royal power with which Jesus is clothed, of a royal majesty in which he is enthroned, and of a royal rule exercised by him on earth and in heaven, little more than the sound of the name remained, and the full reality of it is no longer felt, enjoyed or experienced. Something that is now said not of each and every one, head by head, but as a rule of the great multitude, and so as the soul existence of that broad multitude is expressed in song and word. This is not to say that Jesus is not held in high regard by all, very high indeed, and that Jesus is not always thought of and spoken of with the greatest reverence; nor that a warm, tender, heartfelt love for Jesus does not live in most hearts, a love that is expressed through sacrifice and thanks and thus in devotion; But what is meant is that the very special enthusiasm that takes hold of a faithful people when they are allowed to applaud their King - an enthusiasm that, when applauding the King of kings, far exceeds all earthly enthusiasm - is no longer what it was among us in earlier centuries, and that it certainly falls short of the standard set by the Scriptures. The feeling, the realization that we are there for Christ and for Christ, and not He for us, no longer permeates the ranks. There is no longer a marching band behind the one and only Lord Commander, no longer a

feeling of being enclosed within the people who are devoted to him in life and in death.

A very shallow, unspiritual conception of the Kingship of Christ has of itself led to this weakening of enthusiasm. The highest power is embodied in the King, but that highest power must, in our view, also show and assert itself. If, therefore, there is a King among the earthly monarchs who remains hidden, and in whose realm order and peace are continually disturbed by invading enemies; whose people cannot defend themselves; whose army is retreating; and whose country is being burned to the ground, - then all authority and respect for such a King is gradually lost, and as people in France in earlier centuries spoke of a *roi fainéant*, i.e. of a King who does not show himself to be a king, so that the country is not subject to the temptations of the people. i. a King who does not stir, so throughout the ages and in all countries the majesty of the kingship has faded, as soon as the King was not able to maintain himself by a triumphant display of power, internally and externally. And where earthly kings were concerned, this could not be otherwise. The power on which earthly authority is based and through which earthly kingship is displayed cannot be wielded without the strong arm and is inconceivable without coercion. A Sovereign without a police force to deal with the evils at home, and without an army to deal with the enemy that comes from abroad, is unthinkable among the Kings of this earth. But if we now apply the same or similar ideas to the Kingship of Jesus, if we demand that it, if it exists, should also manifest itself in display and demonstration of a power that rests in the strong arm, then it needs no further indication how, measured by this standard, the high Kingship of Christ is steadily losing its honor. Christ's Church lies divided and split, sect after sect, heresy after heresy. Sin and transgression rage on. Even the priests of the sanctuary fall short in loyalty and holy earnestness. And where, for that reason, order is continually being disturbed in the spiritual realm, without Christ revealing His power to restore spiritual order, there is so often no sign of a beating back by the enemy who is threatening the holy place from without, and it seems rather as if the flock of the Lord has been delivered into the hands of the unbelievers and the scoffers, yea, as if it were not Christ who was victorious over the world, but the world that was victorious over the cause of the Lord. Habituated as it is to the notion that a kingship can only maintain itself in its splendor if it throws down all opposition at once and is able to inspire awe in everyone for its own law and rule, the impression has increasingly been created that the kingship of Christ was more a

nominal title of honor with which the Savior was adorned than a really existing power with which we must reckon in our entire lives.

But it is precisely this standard that is wrong and must not be applied. All earthly kingship is mechanically instituted, Jesus' kingship is organic, and it is the difference arising from this that must govern our entire consideration of Jesus' kingship. Properly understood, there is only one who has power, and that one is the Triune God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and what the psalmist sang in the 44th song: Thou art my King O God! expresses this principle in a tone of jubilant adoration. The power is God's, because God is all creature. His is a supreme power, founded in the very existence of things. He who gives birth to anything or person is, of course, master of that thing or person in the fullest sense. This is never fully true when we humans are supposed to give birth to something. Even the singer who sings a song spontaneously from his heart is never a creator in the full sense of the word. He uses thoughts and images, which he derives from what exists outside him; he sings in tones that are related to the poetry of all ages; and he expresses himself in a language, which he did not create, but which he found in his people. When, therefore, we speak of mankind's creative thoughts or products which they have brought into being, this is always meant to be transitive and relative, and there is never any question of an absolute creative power; in God, on the other hand, and in God alone, this creative power is absolute. There is nothing among the existing which He did not bring into being, without being bound to anything but Himself, and without there ever being a factor used by Him which does not owe its creation equally and equally to Him, and to Him alone. In us, too, God created not only the being, but also our nature, and likewise all the powers, gifts, talents and skills that distinguish one man from another. Therefore, there is nothing in the creature, whether star or sun, whether substance or spirit, whether plant or animal, man or angel, which, when it came forth from His hand, did not wholly and uniquely owe its being and its being so to God the Lord. And on this now rests the Divine Sovereignty. God could not create the creature in bondage to a law existing outside Him, for that law did not exist. Nor could God create the creature with a view to anything else but Himself, for apart from the Triune God there was nothing. All creation is therefore itself in a state of complete and utter dependence, and can exist for no other purpose than to glorify God and to serve as a means or a factor in the execution of His counsel. Something from which it also follows that there can be no other power besides God to which the creature would be subject in a similar sense. There is but one dominion, and that is the dominion

of God Triune, and likewise there is but one Power and Majesty, and that is the Power and Majesty of Godhead. And this power cannot be mechanical, it must by its very nature be organic, since it finds its basis in the very creation and existence of the creature.

It is therefore that the Scriptures always glorify God Triune as the LORD. The name Jehovah was preferably not pronounced in Israel as being too holy, and in its place, they chose the name of LORD, a name which our translators have also substituted for the name Jehovah throughout the ages. HEERE was then not taken as a form of entitlement, but meant as a title of Majesty, to express the absolute and full sovereignty due to God over all creation. The title "King" or "King of kings" was also substituted for this, but in such a way that LORD always remained the more comprehensive expression, in order to express the full inclusion of the power to rule, the sovereignty and the high authority of God over all things and over all persons. There may be a derived, a commissioned, an imposed authority on earth, and this derived authority may be maintained by force and violence, but all this never becomes anything else than a shadow of that one and supreme Kingship, which belonged to God by virtue of His omnipotence and by virtue of His creation, and rested in Him alone. And it is to this Kingship of God itself, and not to earthly Kingship, that the Kingship of the Son of God must be compared. Not the earthly standard of the princes or rulers of the world, but the standard of the Kingship of the Triune God must be applied here. And only from the fact that this was done the other way around, can it be explained that people saw themselves disappointed in the Kingship of Jesus, missed the overwhelming revelation of the power they had been waiting for, and thus proceeded to conceive of this Kingship as more nominal than real. Yet the apostles have given us ample warning. The name and title of Lord is immediately transferred by them to the exalted Savior, and in the presentation of Christ as the Head of the Body they set forth as clearly as possible the

Body, they emphasize as clearly as possible the organic character of His Kingship.

III. - Derived authority.

Know that the Lord is God; he hath made us (and not we) his people and the sheep of his pasture. PSALM 100:3.

The distinction between an authority of organic and an authority of mechanical character speaks most clearly in the contrast of the authority of a father and a guardian over the same child. The father's authority arose at the same time as the child was born and had its basis in that birth. In and with the life itself of the child the authority of the father was given. Very different is the situation with the guardian's authority. Between him and that child there does not even need to be any relationship of blood relationship or virginity. A guardian of a child can be someone who is wildly alien to that child and had nothing to do with that child. For him the authority over that child is neither born nor given by life itself, but is given to him by family agreement, by law, or by appointment of the judge. The bond of authority between father and child exists by itself; that between guardian and pupil is first established by another authority. Since what emerges from the process of life itself is organic and what is mechanically created by our invention, deed or order is mechanical, the father's authority is organic and the guardian's authority is mechanical. No king on earth rules unless the authority has been conquered by himself, or by his ancestors, or because it has been given to him by others. Neither the existence of his people nor the nature of his people automatically and necessarily gives rise to his royal authority. With the Lord our God, on the other hand, His sovereignty extending over everything is given to the very existence of creatures. The very existence of a creature without an absolute sovereign authority emanating from God over this creature is simply unthinkable. This sovereign supreme authority of the Creator is included in the very concept of creation.

However, according to the nature of the creature, a sharp distinction is made here. A star and an angel are both creatures of God and, consequently, the authority of God is absolute for both. Both belong to God, exist only for God's sake and His honor, and their mode of existence, operation and fate are determined by God. God gives the star its course, and the angel its path, and in the rich language of Scripture this is also applied to the star world in such a vivid sense that He is seen to be calling "the stars by their names/" and that the firmament is also called upon to give glory to God. Thus, in Psalm 103: "Praise Him all ye shining stars." There is no dead nature. All nature is carried from moment to moment by God's spiritual power, and it is God who thus commands supremely in all the realms of nature, enforces His law, and makes all things conform to His holy will. But however

richly this may be in all walks of life, you will nevertheless feel at once that the divine authority over a star has a wholly different character than the divine authority over an angel. With the rigid, and with the whole of the inanimate creation, God enforces His will and law with power, without any question of opposition or resistance. It is quite different, however, when you pass from the inanimate to the animate creation of angel or man.

It does not express itself as a blind force, but calls upon and awakens the spirit in man or angel to cooperate with God's action and to make itself an instrument of divine power. This automatically raises the possibility of resistance or deviation from the divine will, and it is this possibility which gives the government of God over the spirited creation its moral character. And although one can speak poetically and metaphorically of a divine authority over stars and the ocean to which they are subject, everyone feels that in the inanimate creation it is more the exercise of power and might, and that in a real sense authority only exists in the inanimate creation. Only the spirited creation can profess: "The Lord is our King, The Lord is our Lawgiver, The Lord is our Judge! But even though authority in a real sense only arises with animate creation, and therefore kingship can only exist with animate creation, the basis of this authority is and remains entirely the same as the basis of the supreme power over the inanimate creation. Hence Israel sings in its hymns: "For He has made us, and not we ourselves, His people and the sheep of His pasture.

From this distinction between the different character of the Divine Supreme over the inanimate and animate creation, another no less important consequence follows. We mean the possibility of the Divine authority operating by means of a derived authority which is granted by one creature over the other. We will not mention the angels here because so little has been revealed to us of their household, but merely note that the relationship of Satan to the other demons is sufficient proof that in the world of angels, too, there is a control of one more powerful spirit over other less powerful spirits. But leaving the angels aside, it is clear as day that the clearest evidence of such a derived, instrumental authority is to be found among human beings almost everywhere. That man, already by virtue of his existence, has power and authority over matter, plants and animals, is already apparent from the fact that man is fitted out to feed on what the earth produces; and furthermore, it appeared to us in the first series of these articles, how the dominion over Nature has been conferred on man by God, and this in an almost complete sense, and is now becoming more and more apparent through the

discoveries of natural science. But it does not stop there. Man has not only received dominion over the inanimate creation of this earth, but in the world of man there is also dominion of man over man. In itself it would have been quite conceivable that this would have been different. If every human being had been created like Adam, i.e., had come into being in an adult state, and had found everything he needed for life freely available, there would be no reason why one human being should have had any say over the other. There would not have been a family, there would not have been a nation, there would not have been a human race. There would have been no other than independent persons, all of equal right and without a bond that bound them together. There would have been no authority from man over man, and all authority would have been exercised directly, over each individual person, by God Himself.

But the creation of our humanity was not like that. Only the first man, in the full sense of the word, came into existence without the intervention of any other man; and it is remarkable how Scripture emphasizes that this was not already the case with Eve. Furthermore, everything called mankind is born of man, and therefore already in its creation and birth is related to other people. It is not man who stands apart from man, but it is one blood that unites all life. Family ties connect the groups. Not one stands alone as a separate human being, but all together form the one human family, and in that family an inequality comes to light that automatically gives one human being authority over the others. The fact that man comes into the world as a needy child automatically creates a superiority for the father and mother who nurture him. The parents begin to deal with their helpless child in exactly the way they think is right, just like the lioness does with her cubs. But with man, as an animated being, an entirely different element immediately interferes. Not of stronger natural love and care, for the care of a hen for her chicks and even of a tigress for her cubs often exceeds by far the care of a degenerate mother or of a selfish father for his child. No, what is involved is a moral element of authority. Not immediately, because at the beginning the child is not yet susceptible to this, but as soon as it grows up the I in the child gradually awakens to self-awareness. When the young cub is grown up, the old lioness no longer looks after her cubs, and all ties between her and her cubs are broken. But not so with man. When a child grows up, the duty of care and education becomes more and more powerful, and the child responds to this by obeying, i.e., by submitting to the authority placed over him. Thus, we are faced with the situation that God the Lord, in the very way in which He ordained the procreation of the

human race, made the father and the mother instruments through which He would exercise His high and divine authority over the child. The father's authority could not have been original, because even though he was the one who bred the child, the child did not receive life and conception from him, but from his God. Thus, the high and absolute authority over the child belongs to God alone. God can take away the child's father and mother in death without His high authority over the child being lost or diminished in the slightest. But even though God alone has the high command over every child that is born, in the ordinary course of life the birth and growth of that child is so ordained by Him that it begins by honoring its father and mother as bearers of the authority with which God has vested them; and this not first by a separate ordinance in the Fifth Commandment, but by the very manner in which the child was born to its parents in need of help. There are thus two kinds of exercise of divine authority, the first directly and immediately in the inanimate creation, the other through man as an instrument, i.e. derived and imposed, and manifesting itself first in the paternal and maternal authority.

The paternal authority is what one might call an authority, derived and instrumental, but nevertheless of a regulated order. On the other hand, from the inequality between man and man all kinds of other instrumental authority emerges, in which that regulated order is completely absent. The strongest authority of this kind comes from genius, talent and higher spiritual gifts. In this higher sphere of human life, too, a process of blossoming and development takes place, and here, too, laws or standards, forces and motives come to light; and once these have come to light, the less wealthy have no choice but to follow the example and initiative of the richer spirits. Especially in France it is customary to honor such rulers with the title of "master" not unwillingly but willingly; and nothing is more common than for a follower of such a mightier spirit to praise and address him in writings as "*mon maître*". In other ways one expresses the same intention by saying that such men of first rank "make school", which amounts to the same thing. This idea of schooling also implies that there is a master and that the others willingly join him as his students. All the blather about equality among people is bare nonsense. It would be fair to say that no two people are alike, for although the differences between man and man, especially in less developed countries, may sometimes be reduced to a minimum, every mother knows her children well, and the difference in outward appearance is always connected with a difference in character, disposition and disposition.

However, it is not only that there are all kinds of differences between people, there is also a never-ending difference in degree, and it is because of this that persons of a higher degree not only have influence but also authority over persons of a lower degree in the same qualities. This can already be seen among the boys in the street, how with the hope there is always one who gives the lead and is obeyed, because it is only through obedience that the majority acquires the character of authority. It is even like that with a group of thieves or a gang of robbers. There is never equality, always inequality, and from the inequality is always the exercise of authority on the one hand and submission to that authority on the other. This is most obvious at the school, and that is why in the old days the man in charge at the school had the honorary name of master, precisely to express that he did not just come to teach, but to be invested with authority. The newer trend has erroneously made the title of master obsolete and later abolished it, to speak only of teachers, at the most of Head Teachers. At last, however, they themselves have realized the error of this, and have therefore again chosen the name of Head; a new name that does not appeal to anyone, and has only created resistance among the class teachers. The old name of master was by far the best, because it expressed the idea of authority, and it is remarkable that the name of master, which was abolished for the common people's school, is still held in honor of the man of genius and talent in the finer circles of the highly gifted in France. Even a law graduate still writes "master" in front of his name, and the name "master" was also commonly used for doctors in the past. The lawyer exercises authority over his client, the doctor over his patient; authority which the client and the patient seek themselves, and which therefore exists by their own choice, but to which, once they have made that choice, they most willingly submit, and precisely that submission is also the mark of authority here. We speak of a prescription, but in Germany one speaks of an Order of the Doctor, and in France of a prescription.

This kind of irregular instrumental authority too is derived, and flows just as much as parental authority from the source of all authority in God. It is He who wanted the inequality of man and mankind. It is He who gives birth to one poor in spirit and strength of mind and invests the other with the majesty of genius. Genius is not given to oneself, and even talent can be honed and developed, but not given to oneself. And by the simple fact of this very unequal allotment of gifts, God the Lord of His own accord establishes that authority in the spiritual sphere which has a far more far-reaching influence than the regular parental authority. Men like Luther and Calvin in the field of religion, like Vondel, Cats and Bilderdijk in the

field of poetry, did not set themselves up as authoritative spirits, nor were they appointed for that purpose by others, but they were what they were by the grace Qods, gratia Dei. And it is true that also in this field there have always been obstinate spoilers, as you so often find among the children of a family endless rebukers, but the uniqueness of that authority of genius and talent is precisely that the best have always willingly recognized it and that in the end it has triumphed over all opposition.

But of course, it could not stop at this two-fold instrumental authority. The parental authority and the genius authority were not enough. Wider circles were gradually formed. Out of the family came the family, out of the family came the tribe, out of the tribe came the people. This gave rise not only to the family, but also to the family-group, the family-group, the family-group and the people-group, and these groups could not exist without laws, rules and discipline. First this developed patriarchally, according to primogeniture and age, and along that line the formation of the indispensable authority could continue as long as common descent and consanguinity dominated the formation of the association. But this possibility was lost when the separation between the sexes increased, and either necessity or an act of violence forced groups who were strangers to one another to live together in one national community. Initially, these unifications of distinct groups into one nation were small in size, so that upon Israel's arrival in Canaan, we often found kings for a single city and its appurtenances. Thus, Melchizedek was king only of Salem. But the nature of the matter meant that these small formations did not last and gradually dissolved into much larger groups, encompassing millions and millions. Here, too, especially here, a well-ordered relationship was needed; and this relationship was unthinkable without an effective man at the head; and so the kings of the nations arose. These kings, too, exercised exclusively the Divine Authority, but, and this was the fundamental difference from the parental authority, they were also the only ones who could exercise this authority.

difference from the parental authority, their authority was no longer organic in character, it became a mechanical institution. A situation was born out of it, as could not be imagined otherwise for a humanity sunk in sin, but then again, a situation that did not correspond to the ordinances of creation. It was not from the King that the people came forth. He was not the natural organic head of his people, but set up on the body of the people as their head. And it was the contradiction between this actual state and the original ordinance of God, which was expressed with Israel in Samuel's statement that the people sinned and rejected God by

wanting to have a King like the other nations had." God was the Lord over Israel because He had made it a people. That was the organic understanding. The Gentiles had kings, who had not made their people. That was the mechanical deviation.

Something else came with this. The division and splitting of our human race into separate and distinct peoples is the result of sin; but the fact is that in so doing the unity of our human race has been broken. Originally, the first Adam was vested not only with paternal authority over his family, but also with general authority over the whole human race; and after the Flood the same could partially be said of Noah. But since then, the unity of our people has been lost. There was no longer a general union of our whole family, and thus also no King of mankind, who could represent the divine authority over the whole family instrumentally and organically. And although attempts were made later to fill this gap by means of the Empire, which was also to be a world empire, as explained in the first article of this series, this was an act of arbitrariness and violence, which amounted to subjugating the weaker peoples to the dominion of one of the most powerful peoples. It was an absorption of the largest possible part of the peoples into the circle of life of one single people, not with the aim of achieving the harmonious development of the rich treasure of our entire human race, but in order that one single people, whose King possessed the most power, might rule over the other peoples. Even if it pleased God, and even if it still pleased Him, in the division of the peoples and in their development broken by sin, to use the mechanical instrument of an employed Kingship as an instrument of His rule over the peoples, it goes without saying that the high ideal that lay in the creation of our entire family from the same blood, could and can never be realized in this way. It is a deficient state, which derives its right to exist only from the continued existence of sin. This situation will one day come to an end. The ideal must and will be realized. And it is this realization of the ideal of mankind that demands and calls for a King, who is organically linked with his people, and who brings together, from all nations and tongues, that one people that can represent the whole of our human race. And that King is the Christ.

IV. - No spiritualization.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government is upon His shoulder: and His name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Strong God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. ISA. 9:5.

Only in the triune God the origin, supremacy and sovereignty. He, who created and maintains everything, can claim His honor, and has complete control and right of decision over everything that exists. He does with all creatures as He pleases, and no creature, however highly placed, can assert any right which would limit or diminish God's supremacy and right of decision. For this very reason, however, that same God is free to exercise His high authority in such a way, and to let it work, as it pleases Him. It is conceivable that He might have pleased to exercise His divine authority always and everywhere directly, but it is also conceivable that He might have pleased to exercise His high authority indirectly, through one spirit over another, in the realm of spirits, so that the angel or the human being invested with authority might serve as His instrument. God has chosen the latter. He rules the child through its father and mother, the student through his master, the weaker spirits through the geniuses, the tribes through their chiefs, and the nations through their princes.

In the meantime, sin has become the cause that this administration by human instruments has suffered from all kinds of defects. Abuse of authority degenerating into despotism on the one hand, and resistance and disobedience on the other, driven to rebellion, disturb the natural working of this instrumental authority established by God, and cause what should work organically and naturally to degenerate into a relationship of restraint and violence. The instrumental authority is increasingly detaching itself from the bonds of life; it is being put together mechanically and is working more through the strong arm than through spiritual factors. This can already be seen in lower-ranking families, but it is particularly evident in the rule over larger and broader circles, especially in the rule of the princes over the peoples of the earth. Often these Princes and their Houses do not even belong to the people themselves, but came in from outside. Without police power and an army, no dynasty could hold its own over the centuries. And what was even more frightening was the fact that people were pitted against people, nation against nation, and king against king. It ended in a split and fragmentation, which of itself brought about the fear of war, and with it the violence of the strong arm still more to the fore. And no matter what attempts were made to put an end to this division and fragmentation by uniting the many peoples under one emperor,

this never led to anything more than the rule of one people over the other peoples and to the artificial unity of part of the world, crowned by the sword. In contrast to this, the ideal of the original creation remained intact in the human heart, thanks to Revelation. To recognize and honor without any reservation God's supreme power over all our human family as a unity, and over all circles of families, families, genera and tribes in that unity. The Lord is our King, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our Judge. This authority, insofar as it included the right of decision and the administration of providence, was exercised directly by God Triune, but insofar as it had to regulate and govern our human life externally, instrumentally by human persons, whom God had vested with this authority. And they did not exercise this authority by means of a direct and far-reaching appointment, but by the place they occupy in their circle by virtue of life itself. The father, as the founder of the family and the giver of his children; where he was absent, the mother; and where she was absent also, the elder of the brethren over the young. And according to this example, the instrumental authority of God had to be established over the whole of our generation. There had to be a King, who would be the head of the entire human race, but who by virtue of his nature could also be the organic head of the human race. A second Adam, who in an elevated sense would be what the first Adam actually was. And it is from reaching for this ideal that the Messiah ideal also arose in Israel. It did not arise out of the thoughts and ponderings of the Israelite people, who as a people had never been able to raise themselves above their own private jealousy, and who even in Jesus' youth spoke of reestablishing the Kingship in Israel.

Israel's more powerful spirits, and was fulfilled in Christ, as King of the Kingdom of God. In Christ's Kingdom, all national distinctions of Greek, Jew, or barbarian fall away, and only the unity of the reborn humanity remains. In His Kingdom, in this dispensation, there is no longer any outward show of power, but high authority rests exclusively on spiritual foundations. And in Christ's Kingdom, too, there is no longer any question of artificial assembly, but of the formation of a Body, i.e., of a natural, organically constituted whole, of which He Himself, by virtue of His nature, is the all-controlling Head.

The Christ is also the Redeemer, the Reconciler of our sins, our Savior and Redeemer, but all this is only the means to reach the great goal, and that great goal is and remains the foundation of the Kingdom of Heaven, of a Kingdom in which he is the King. His royal honor and dignity is thus not an appendix that comes with his Redeeming Work, but rather the ultimate goal to which it all leads, is directed,

and leads. The one Kingship encompassing all of mankind, which, but for sin, would have arisen naturally in Paradise, but which was disrupted and cut off with the loss of Paradise, returns in Christ along the way of the Redemption and the renewal of life of our generation, thanks to the rebirth. From the very beginning of his appearance, that Kingship is in the foreground, even before the rich treasure of the Redemption Work is unfolded. John the Baptist acts as Jesus' herald and announcer, and his first cry sounds: "repent, for the Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, is at hand. And when Jesus later begins his preaching, he too proclaims first and foremost his Kingship, and like John the Baptist, testifies: "repent, for the Kingdom has come near." And arriving at the end of his career on earth, he pronounces it to the governor of Rome's Emperor unequivocally and solemnly: "You say that I am a King. To this end I have come into the world". Yes, even more so: "To this end I was born." Jesus' entire mission is thus summed up in this one, all-encompassing idea of Kingship. The world lacked its real King. There were Kings of the nations, and even an Emperor in Rome, but in all of them the real idea of the high Kingship had not been realized. And the fulfillment of this high idea He brought. Not as an afterthought, but as the main thing, for in this lay the high purpose of His whole mission. It was for this purpose that He was born, and it was for this purpose that He came into the world. The true, the essential Kingdom, the Kingdom, not as the sinful world had contrived it, but the Kingdom as it had been ordered by God, and was to represent God's high authority. Hence it is alternately called the Kingdom of Christ, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. That Kingdom came to be established by Jesus. That Kingdom would be set in motion by His action. That Kingdom would be brought to its completion through Him. And of that Kingdom John testified that it had come near in Jesus, yea, Jesus Himself testified that He had been sent by the Father, born of Israel, and had come into the world to be King in that Kingdom.

Now all this has been weakened, and its real meaning taken away, by spiritualizing it. In this way Jesus' Kinghood was allowed to sink into his prophetic glory. Jesus has also testified, has also revealed the nature of the spiritual life to us. And following on from that, it was presented as if the Kingdom He had come to establish consisted exclusively in the power of truth, which would gradually defeat the power of lies, and in the power of a holier sense, which would gradually defeat the power of sin. In other words, the words kingdom, kingship and king were not used in a real sense, but only in a figurative sense. Just as we say that truth rules over lies, and virtue over vice, so Jesus also ruled, because he took a higher

spiritual position than all the other godly servants. That may not have been a Kingdom, but it was called that by way of metaphor. And He may not have been a King, but He was given that honorific title in a figurative sense. This, however, is in complete contradiction to all that Scripture presents to us prophetically in the Old Testament and historically in the New, and it is by imperceptibly yielding to this spiritualization that the glory of Jesus' Kingship has faded so much in our circles as well. We will come back to this in more detail.

But this spiritual, transcendental view found its strength above all in what is stated in Scripture itself about this Kingdom and about Jesus' Kingship, in order to combat the national and material view that had taken hold among the Jews. The Jews, especially in Jesus' day, had claimed the great prophecy of the King, on whose "shoulder the rule would rest, and whose name would be Wonderful, Counselor, Strong God, Father of eternity," entirely for themselves as a Jewish nation. Of course, the Messiah would come, but to be King of the Jews, Israel's national King, who would make Israel triumph over the Gentiles. They could not, therefore, imagine the Messiah's kingship except on an elven throne, as Solomon once shone in the palace in Jerusalem, and all Israel would seize the sword to rule over the surrounding peoples under the banner of this King. This narrow-minded, national, and thoroughly false conception of the Messianic Kingship was so deeply ingrained in Israel in Jesus' day that even Jesus' own disciples kept asking until the very end, until after his resurrection, and even on the Mount of Olives just before his ascension: Lord, when will you re-establish the Kingdom in Israel? Motherly tenderness had even led the mother of two of the apostles to ask what high position her children would occupy in that newly established Israelite Kingdom. In the given circumstances it was inevitable that Jesus, in the face of this earthly and worldly conception of his Kingdom, should persistently point out the spiritual character of his Kingship. And it is now by these repeated and strong statements of Jesus that one allowed oneself to be tempted, in the end, to esterify His Kingship completely, and to destroy it, in fact, by a conception of the name King, which was meant only metaphorically.

However, they lacked any right to do so. The mere statement of Jesus: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," completely destroys this conception. What Jesus fought against, and in the given circumstances had to be punished, was two things: 1°. any idea that Israel, and not the world, was the object of God's work of grace, and 2°. as if His kingship would be a kingship similar to the kingship that existed among the nations, resting on external force. Israel was chosen as a people

from among the nations, to be the bearer of divine revelation, to foreshadow and prepare that which was to come, and to see the Messiah born from them. Through this election it was not called to rule, but to serve. God was God over all the world and for all mankind. He did not love Israel, but the world, so much that He gave it His only begotten Son, so that everyone, Jew, Greek or barbarian, who believed in Him would have eternal life. It would have been unthinkable and impossible that the Almighty God, whose is the whole earth, the whole world, and the whole human race, would have set His eyes only on the small, insignificant people of the Jews in His work of mercy. His work of mercy could not have meant anything else than the whole world, and extended to all mankind. And Israel's honor was not that it stood in God's place in the world, but that it was called to minister salvation to the whole world in shadow and in preparation. That it would therefore retain a place of honor among the other nations in the end of things, only applied to the real Israel that was converted to Jesus, and could only find its revelation when the previous nations had first been called to salvation. The Jews' mistake was that they did not want to serve to spread salvation in the world, but wanted to rule over all other peoples, and wanted to bless only those from the rest of humanity who allowed themselves to be incorporated into Israel by the sign of circumcision. Instead of being an instrument for the glory of their Messiah, they wanted the Messiah to use his honor to increase the glory of their people.

This has been Israel's downfall. The fact that the Jews wanted to rule rather than serve was their national sin, and when they finally raised their fierce cry of: Crucify Him, Crucify Him! before Gabbatha, they did nothing else than to impose the logical consequence of this deepest national sin on Jesus. Jesus himself had made it as clear as possible: I, your King, have not come to be served, but to serve. It was precisely this statement that attacked Israel's heart sin. Had Israel been called to rule and not to serve, Israel's King would have been called to rule and not to serve. But even vice versa, since Israel's King stated that he had come not to rule, but to serve, this applied even more to that King's people, who then, like him, had to complete his service under God's order, and could think of no rule over the other nations. What filled the heart of the Jew in Jesus' day was robbery of the sacred. An attempt to claim God's holiness, which had been entrusted to Israel in order to bless the world and make it serve God's glory, for himself as a nation, to exalt himself upon it, to aspire to his own glory through it, and thus to prepare himself to gain dominion over all the peoples of the earth. The Jew had to be great; the Jewish nation had to be great; and all God's orders had to serve, not to carry out

God's will for the whole world, but to raise the Jewish people to the highest honor. Jesus' struggle with this Jewish spirit, which in his days had mastered the hearts of all Israel, was thus a struggle for the Holiness of God, for the high government of the Lord, for the glory of the work of grace, for the salvation of the whole world, and for the establishment of that spiritual Kingdom, which would not be confined within the narrow boundaries of Palestine, but would encompass in holy unity all our human race, insofar as it held fast to its God, among those who were still on earth, those who had already entered into salvation, and those who were yet to be born. His was not a kingdom like those of the nations. On the contrary, in his kingdom all the divisions of the peoples fell away. The division of Babel's tower building was undone in His Kingship. He would not be King over one of the nations, nor over several nations, nor over the people of Israel. His Kingship was meant for undivided mankind, for our entire human race.

And now the second contradiction: Jesus is not King of the Jews, but King over His own people from all nations, and thus extending His Kingdom throughout the world - that was the contradiction with the Jews. But with this came a second opposition, now not to the Jews, but to the other nations, to the earthly Kingdom, to the Kings "as the nations had them." Jesus expressed this contrast in two statements. The first when he said, "My Kingdom does not come with outward appearance. It is within you"; and the second when he testified to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world. Otherwise My servants would have fought for Me". The characteristic feature of royal power, as it had developed among the various peoples, was precisely that the Sovereign on his throne and under his crown had to shine in ostentation, had to announce himself everywhere in external forms, had to be represented externally in banners and shields, and had to make the impression, by this "external face," i.e., by this ostentation, of rising high above the ordinary life of human children. In the earthly kingdom this could not and could not be otherwise. We are therefore not arguing for excessive opulence, nor for the sheer magnificence in which the Kingdom under Louis XIV, and the Empire first in Rome and later under Napoleon, sought their strength; but it is simply necessary that in our earthly situation the person who wears the crown should not live like an ordinary citizen, but in the opulence of the palace should reflect the highness and honour of the Empire. Crown and throne must make an impression, and according to our earthly relations they must do so also by what is in front of the eyes and what fascinates the eye. In rank the Sovereign stands above the highest rank among his subjects, and it is therefore a requirement that his household go above and

beyond the highest level of life. But this necessity is rooted in the nature and character of our earthly society and state. Since Jesus' Kingdom does not derive its stamp from earthly society, but from a higher essence of life, Jesus' disciples had to be deeply convinced of the truth that in Jesus' Kingship there could be no such ostentation, and that they had to be able to recognize the highness of Jesus' Kingship, even if all ostentation fell away. Here an entirely different standard of splendor applied, not to the eye, but to the soul, and it was to that greatness and honor that the young people had to reach.

And it was no different with the other characteristic of earthly kingship: the display of power and violence in arms. In our present situation no kingdom, at least not in a state of greater size, is conceivable without such external power. In our situation every ruling power continually encounters resistance from malice or danger from outside, and to break this resistance and maintain order and safety an armed power is indispensable. Had Jesus accepted the kingship over the one people of the Jews, over the Israelite nation, Jesus would also have had to arm his own people to fight against the power of the Roman Emperor. He says it himself: "If such a kingdom had been mine, my servants would have fought for me (with the sword). But precisely because Jesus' kingship was not of this earthly-kind but of a spiritual-sanctified order, there could be no question of such a system of coercion or violence for Jesus. Had it come to a struggle for power, it would by no means have been a struggle of a new earthly power against the existing earthly power, but a struggle of twelve legions of angels against the legions under the Roman eagle, and we shall see later that such a struggle is by no means excluded in the end. But not so Jesus' Kingdom would appear in its beginning. Jesus' Kingship was not mechanical, but worked from spirit to spirit. Jesus did not enter the battlefield for a flawed earthly Kingdom that would violently encompass all of humanity. He set the ideal and true against the flawed and artificial Kingship of this earth. Hence his saying to Pilate that he was born to be King, in order to give witness to the true.

But precisely because we uphold the universal and ideal character of Jesus' Kingship and make it stand out sharply, we must protest more vehemently against any attempt, on the basis of half-belief or unbelief, to destroy the reality of Jesus' Kingship on the basis of the spiritual character of Jesus' Kingdom, by distilling it into a certain controlling influence which one recognizes as having emanated from Jesus in the religious and ethical fields.

V. - General Human.

And hath made all things subject unto his feet, and hath given him the church for a head above all things, which is his body, and the substance of him that filleth all things in all. EPHEZE 1: 22 and 23.

Jesus is of Israel, but not a Jew-King. Salvation had arisen from the Jews, but at the same time destined to be carried into the world and to bless all nations and peoples. The inscription above the Cross was therefore false. It did not reflect either what Jesus had proclaimed concerning his own Kingship, or what this Kingship was to be prophetically and historically. I have other sheep which are not of this flock; I must bring them also, and they shall become one flock and one shepherd." Behold the key to explaining the mystery in this relationship. In His action, Jesus aligns Himself narrowly with Israel, and commands His disciples to do likewise. He is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and it is not permitted to give the bread of the children to the dogs. This Israelite beginning joined Israel's election and calling. Israel was God's chosen people, but chosen to prepare themselves for the coming of salvation in Christ, to absorb that salvation when it came, but to possess it not for themselves but for the glory of God, and to let it flow out to all peoples and nations.

God's order was clear and transparent. First to form and cause to appear in sinful mankind a special people who were able to make a straight path for our God in the wilderness and to prepare the way of the Lord in the desert of the life of nations. Therefore, at the coming of Christ, all Israel should have applauded him, and also recognized that, with the coming of the Messiah, Israel's special calling had been fulfilled and ended, and that Israel, once separated, should now return to the circle of the nations, to be incorporated, even though it retained a spiritually privileged place within the one body of Christ, with the believers from all nations. The Jewish nation would pass away, and the historical mark of being "God's Israel" would be imprinted on the Body of the Lord from all mankind. But Israel has not fulfilled this. The Jewish nation has refused to disappear so that her King alone could be great. On the contrary, she has prepared herself to make her King disappear, and to keep the place of honor for herself. That is how it came to rupture between the Jewish nation and its King. Jesus himself emphasized this breach in the parable of the countrymen. When the Son, the heir, appeared in the vineyard, they "cast him out of the vineyard and slew him. As a result, the vineyard itself was taken from the farmers and given to other farmers. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. In the vision of Peter at Jaffa, and in the appearance given to Paul near Damascus,

the transfer of Israel's blessing to the Gentile world was solemnly accomplished. Israel refused to become universal-human; yet salvation had to be universal for all God's faithful from all over the world; and thus, the Jewish nation, in clinging to its national particularism, committed spiritual suicide. And then the tendrils and branches, from which the new life was to sprout, were cut from the root and stem of Israel and newly planted in the midst of the nations. Therefore, whoever is of Israel can take part in that salvation, and even in the final scene the beauty of Israel and its highly giftedness can flourish again, but the Kingdom of Heaven has been stripped of its Jewish shell and has taken on its general human character. All knees would bow, and all tongues confess, and before the Lamb of God the song of honor would rise. "Thou hast been slain, and hast bought us unto God with thy blood out of all sex and language, and people, and nation." Wonderful fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

That general human character of the Kingship of Christ must be held fast and unrelentingly, and one must always be on one's guard against the return of Jewish particularism in a modified form, as has actually happened time and again in all kinds of spiritualistic sects. Circles were then formed of devotees and believers who separated themselves completely from the life of mankind, who had no heart for general human life, who also separated Jesus' Kingship from that general human life, and thus caused the old Jewish sourdough to return. Jesus is now the King of a single circle or group, just as the Jews wanted to humiliate him to be King of a single nation instead of King of the world empire. Again and again the sin of particularism, while the Lord our God, who is the Creator of all nations, could not lay claim for His Kingdom to anything less than the whole world and all its branches. By that false particularism one then places oneself outside the stream of life. That flow of life of the world always digs itself a bed from which the Christians then remained outside. Thus, one shrank and grew mouldy. No fresh wind blew through the forest anymore to purify the air. All power of Christian action was broken. Of the royal power of Christ over the world nothing was to be seen. And those who led the way in the life of the world then mocked these hiding and crawling pious folk, and instead of bowing the knee to Jesus' Kingship, had nothing to show for his pretended crown but the glimmer of derision.

It could not be otherwise, and it had to be so, because this revival of the ancient Jewish particularism in the circle of the Christian life is diametrically opposed to the revelation of the Old and New Covenant. The promise of the new life does not

first appear with Abraham, as patriarch of the Jewish nation, but already with Adam and Eve in Paradise. It is the female seed, taken as a whole, and not the seed from a specific people, that will crush the serpent's head. Later on, Abraham receives the promise of salvation not as a separate privilege for the seed grown from him, but for all generations of the earth. In the psalm, the name of the Lord is glorious over the whole earth. "You all the earth," so it rejoices in the last psalm, "you all the earth, rejoice to the Lord. Serve the Lord with gladness, come before His face with joyful singing." And in Psalm 98 it is said: "Go ye to the Lord, ye whole earth, cry out for joy, and sing joyfully, and psalm sing." It is always a cry of God that resounds from Israel, but from Israel it spreads to all nations. In the visions of Daniel, the Savior who rises is not a Jew, but the Son of Man. Likewise, the prophet says: Lo-ammi, i.e., that which was not the Lord's people, will become the Lord's people. It will all end in a new earth under a new heaven. Simeon in the temple prophesies that Mary's child will be a blessing for Israel, but also a light to enlighten the Gentiles. And when the Christ will appear, John the Baptist announces that salvation will not come to Abraham's fleshly offspring, because God could even raise Abraham's children from the stones of the desert. In words that are impossible to interpret in two ways, the Apostle John says that God so loved not the Jewish nation, but the world, that He gave to that world His one-born Son. Paul argues in detail that the true Israel does not arise from the Jewish nation alone, but from all the world. And the outcome confirms it: that when the light of Christ shines out, Palestine is pushed aside into the darkness, and on the other hand, its brilliance rises over the heathen world. After all, Jesus himself had declared that all power was given to him, not especially over Israel, but over heaven and earth, and John the Baptist had already pointed to him as the Lamb of God who did not carry away Israel's sin, but the sin of the world. A broad concept, taken up by the Apostle John when he testified that the Christ is an atonement, not only for our sin, i.e., the sin of the Jews, but for the sin of the whole world.

It is therefore to diminish, to reduce, and to nullify the Kingship of Jesus, if one fearfully confines it to any circle, if one confines it within narrow limits, and if one does not fully acknowledge that His is a Kingship over the whole world. This Kingship certainly has its core in the circle of the reborn, in those who have passed from the world into the higher life. But this circle of the reborn may never be seen as standing outside the world, or as lifted out of the world. On the contrary, this private circle, which forms the center of Jesus' royal rule, is a human circle, not the circle of a special people. Those who are included in that circle not only remain

human beings in the full sense of the word, but even display human nature in a higher quality. Not as spiritual phantoms who do not belong here, but as human beings in a nobler sense, they have to live on earth, and the future of the world, the future of mankind, the future of the human race, does not depend on what is outside this circle, but lies precisely within this sacred circle. With all its threads and fabrics, therefore, that circle remains connected to general human life. It must act on all relationships of that general human life. In a long, anxious struggle, the members of the Body of Christ must conquer that world spiritually for Him. All the treasures, all the talents, which God created in our human race and caused to blossom forth from it, must be sanctified in the name of Christ.

Christ. Man was the highest product in God's creation. Only in man, whom He created in His own image, did the creation of this world find its fulfilment. Out of that world and that man was to rise the highest honor of God, in which the work of Creation would be completed and crowned. And therefore, the Kingship of God's only begotten Son could only be a Kingship in a rich and full sense over the whole realm of mankind, and must include and encompass the whole of this earth, this world, this higher creaturely life. Abraham was for Jews and Gentiles; Moses was the man of God in Israel. Jesus is "Ecce Homo," the Son of God and Son of Man, the King over all human life, which is already revealing itself on this earth and in this world, and will only be fully revealed in the end of days.

However, this does not mean that what applies to humanity here would therefore apply to all human persons, head by head. The world, mankind, are the three measures of leaven in which the leaven is placed, but not immediately does the leaven work on every grain of flour. Thus, also the Gospel has begun to have an effect on only a small part of mankind. Yet this does not change the destiny of the Kingship of Christ. When a drowning person is pulled onto dry land with limbs already stiffened, eyes closed, and almost without respiration, but one feels that his heart is still vibrating, and one now tries to awaken the respiration in the lungs and the vital spirits in the brain, then this does begin in a very small part of the body, but the small heart is not thereby isolated from the body, but on the contrary stimulated to a higher activity in order to preserve the body. And so, it was here. Jesus found the body of mankind as if it were half-dead. In a higher sense it gave almost no sign of life. And when He now revives the spirits of life in a small part of the body of mankind, and pushes back death, this is not done in order to separate that part from the body of mankind, but, on the contrary, to bless the whole body through that reborn part. Precisely for this reason, however, the Kingship of Jesus

had to be organic in nature, i.e., Jesus as our King had to enter into an organic relationship with us, and exercise His power in an organic relation to us. God rules both the domestic family and the greater family of mankind, but God rules the domestic family through the father as the head of that family, and likewise God rules mankind through the Christ as the Head, the natural and organic Head of the greater family of human life. Both times the regiment of God is instrumental. Both times the regiment deals with both the small and the large family through one Head. But also, both times that Head must be in organic relationship with this large as well as with this small family. The father with the small family, in that he cultivated his offspring; Christ with the large family, in that, as the Eternal Word, he created it all and wants to incorporate it into himself as Savior.

It is for this reason that the Christ as our King, under the name of Head, also comes to the fore. In our parlance this name of Head has been stripped of its organic meaning. It has already been pointed out that the name Headmaster lacks an organic sense, because the headmaster at school is not, as such, a father of his pupils and is not related to them in any way by blood or by marriage. The pupils do not form a body with organic parts, and therefore the master cannot be a head, while a head without a body cannot be thought of except by decapitation. "Master" was a natural name, an honorary name, "head" is a meaningless name, taken from the speech, which arose in our unnatural relations. God himself is called Head over all in 1 Chron. 29:11. "Thine, O Lord, is the Kingdom, and Thou hast exalted Thee to be a Head over all." And this was possible because all things owe their origin to God. But the unnatural use of that word head comes out, e.g., when it is mentioned in Num. 14:4, that the rebellious people in the wilderness cried, "Let us raise up a head over us and return to Egypt." This misuse owes its origin to the sad fact that, all over the world, organic ties were weakening, organic relationships were falling away, and that now, in order to restore community and unity, a mechanical relationship was being put in their place. One had lost one's natural head, and now made heads of his own, and thus one got a made head.

In this sense, however, what is said of Christ as our Head must never be understood. All possibility of this is even cut off by the fact that Christ is very circumstantially called the "Head of the Body". God," writes the Apostle to the Church of Ephesus, "has set Christ as King "at His right hand, far above all government, power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in this world and in the next, and has subjected all things to His feet. This is a description of Jesus' Kingship. And of that King we read further: "And has given Him the

church a Head over all things, namely to His church, which is His body, and the fulfillment of the One who fulfills all things in all. This is further developed in the further course of this letter, when the Apostle writes that the members of the congregation must "grow up in Him who is the Head", and when it is stated of this Head that "from Him the whole body, being thus joined and knit together, by all the parts of the administration, according to the working of each in his measure, obtains the growth of the body". Christ is "the head of the church, as the man is the head of the woman", with whom he becomes one flesh. Once again it is repeated in Col. 1:18 that Jesus is the head of the body, and in Col. 2:19 the warning goes out not to lose the organic connection with the head, for our life will inevitably perish if we do not keep the "Head, from which the whole body, through the joints and connections of the body, has been provided and joined, in order to grow up in divine glory.

The organic character of the bond that connects us to our King and our King to us could not be expressed any stronger, and yet all this is only the broader elaboration of what Jesus himself indicated, when he spoke of the vine and the branches. Here the image of the plant, rather than that of the human body, has been taken; but this remains one in both, that the branches and tendrils also shoot organically out of the stem, and arise from the root. In yet another way Jesus expresses this same organic connection when in John 20: 17 Jesus calls his own people "his brothers". This refers to His own Sonship, and to the birth of His own from the same Father, whose only begotten Son He is. Thus, Paul also calls Jesus "the firstborn among many brothers," and the honorific name of brothers, which is further applied to all believers, points to the same organic connection. A connection which the Apostle Paul in particular applied to our relationship to Christ in such a way that he speaks of "having become one with Christ", so that what was sent back to him is sent back to us, and what applied to him is applied to us, both in the likeness of his death and in the likeness of his glorification. The Apostle even goes so far as to state that our life in Christ is hidden with God, and that once he even calls the Body (that mystical Body now imagined with the Head) Christ itself.

There can therefore be not the slightest doubt that Scripture teaches us that the organic connection here dominates everything, and that with Jesus' Kingship no mechanical Kingship may be thought of, as it exists with the kings of the earth, and cannot exist otherwise. Even the organic bond between us and our King is not limited to the spiritual relationship, but includes our human nature and our bodies. The Word has become flesh. John says that anyone who denies that Christ has

come in the flesh is the Antichrist. He has "taken on the flesh and blood of infants." His resurrection affects not only His spirit, but also His body. And now at God's right hand, the Christ is not enthroned as the angels are great, only in a spiritual sense, but as the Son of Man in our nature, and in "that glorified body, to which He will one day make our body conform, by the power with which He subdues all things to Himself." The organic community and connection thus continues in all ways. There is not only the enthronement of this King, not only the appointment of this King, but he is our King because he is our natural, self-realized Head, the head of the Body of reborn humanity. This organic unity between us and our King even goes so far that one day his glory will be shared with us through the development of life itself, and we will be kings with him. This comes to the fore especially in Revelation, when the redeemed sing their new song, in which they proclaim: "Thou hast made us Kings and Priests unto God, and we shall reign as kings upon the earth. Already in the opening words of Revelation it is said: "He who loved us, and washed us of our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." And Peter also professed, "You are a chosen generation, a Royal Priesthood, a holy nation, an obtained people, that you should proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into light." That is why we call this Body the "mystical Body" of Christ, because much more intimately than in the ordinary Body, here the life of the Head and the life of the members are summed up in intimate unity.

What shines in the Head, automatically also communicates itself to the whole Body. There is no shadow here of an artificial union or submission. All the glory of Jesus' Kingship comes from life itself, and it is he who, through the Spirit, instills and sustains that new life. What he feels, he makes his whole mystical body feel. Without the Head the body would not be a body but a corpse, and also as Head the Christ would be inconceivable, if he did not possess that wonderful Body of which he is the Head.

VI. - The second Adam.

Thus it is also written: The first Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a living spirit. 1 COR. 15:45.

If the Kingship of Christ has a general human (and therefore not national Jewish) character on the one hand and an organic character on the other hand, a difficulty arises here which requires further discussion. The organic connection between the Head and the members of the mystical Body exists, as such, only between the Christ and those of the children of mankind, who were given to Him by the Father. Even if one widens this to the circle of believers, all believers in Christ together form less than a quarter of the total population of this world. Thus, however broadly and however mildly conceived, it is no more than a relatively small part of humanity with which the Christ stands in this organic relationship of the mystical body. And so the question cannot be suppressed as to how this limited organic connection can be reconciled with the general human character of his Kingship.

The Apostle Paul has explained this question in the presentation of the first and second Adam. He uses the name Adam in the sense of a head of the family, who lives on in the whole of the family that corresponds to his type. Only hear what the Apostle tells us about this. He mentions two types of head, whom he calls the first and the last Adam, and these two are different in that the first became a living soul and the second a living spirit. And then he adds that he speaks of the first Adam, and in connection with this, of the second Adam, in order to make it clear that he is discussing a holy matter that concerns the entire human race. The reason for the difference between the first and second Adam as the head of the family is that the first man was earthly, and the second man is the Lord from heaven. From both of these Adams, he continues, a human race now arises. Such as the earthly Adam was, such also are the earthly men, and such as the heavenly Adam is, such also are the heavenly men. - Does this apply one time to different people and another time to different people, so that one can say: There are people who belong to Adam I, and there are other people who belong to Adam II? No, not so. No one who has passed from death to life is counted among the second Adam, or by nature he was counted among the first Adam. Paul himself acknowledges that he too first bore the image of the first Adam, he and all Christians with him, but that all those who belong to Jesus will now also bear the image of the second Adam. They already bear this new image in their souls, but one day they will also bear it in their bodies; for the entire account of the second Adam occurs in 1 Cor. 15, and in this rich chapter the resurrection of the dead is the powerful subject. The whole pericope or

phrase reads as follows in context: "Also is written: The first Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a living spirit. But the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven. Such as are earthly, such are earthly men; and such as are heavenly, such are heavenly men. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly. But this I say to you, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and corruption cannot inherit salvation.

What is meant is a transformation in the nature of our human race, which can best be compared to the grafting of a noble shoot onto a wild tree. It is not as if this were the same thing, but insofar as an image can do this, it does clarify the distinction. On a tree that was wild by nature, one carefully grafts a shoot from a nobler stock, and prunes the wild scum. That noble shoot now draws the lifeblood from the wild stem to itself and converts it into noble sap. As a result, the shoot grows and expands, forming new branches and twigs, new leaves, new flowers and new fruit. And the whole of that new crop now bears the character of the nobler shoot, and if the lifeblood of that new outgrowth could speak for the nobler shoot, then it would also say here: I was wild from the wild stock, but the living, ennobling spirit of the noble shoot has meant that I now naturally possess the noble quality of the noble shoot". And so now, the salvation of our human race is not about the few branches or leaves, but about the preservation and salvation of the trunk. In oak autumn the leaves on the branches die away, and the branches themselves are pruned, but the trunk, the tree remains one and the same, the same organism. If we now compare mankind and our human race with such a family tree, then here too it is not a question of what happens to each twig and each leaf and each oak blossom, but only of how the family tree itself fared. And just as it is not the wild branches that still sprout from below but only those that sprout from the noble shoot that decide the nature and type of the tree and its preservation, so too it is not what happens to that which still sprouts from the wild stem below that decides the preservation and eternal future of our human race, but only that which sprouts from the noble shoot. One could therefore say that the Christ, as the second Adam, has been grafted onto the originally good, but now wild, stem of the human race. The fruit and effect of that grafting is that everything that sprouts and blossoms above the point where the grafting took place now displays the character that distinguishes the nobler shoot from the savage stem. Christ is the vivifying spirit, who introduces his spirit into new sprouts. And from the moment that

grafting took place, the heavenly orchardist no longer regards the tree as wild, but as noble, and he no longer looks at the outgrowth of the root, but at the fine sprout from the grafted shoot. Thus, the human race, as it applies to God, no longer looks at the wild stem from the first Adam, but at the noble outgrowth from the second Adam. There has been a transition, a change, a transformation. The old trunk was the human race, but from now on our human race is what grows on the grafted part of the tree. And here it is remarkable that the new life is not planted like a new cutting next to the old, wild tree, but that the new life grows up from the old life and draws the lifeblood of the old trunk to itself, in order to transform it into a new, noble type.

Not a single force from the original creation of our human race is thus surrendered or nullified. Only the character of game, which our entire life had taken on as a result of sin, is destroyed, but life itself, with all its juices and all its powers, remains. The natural life from the first Adam, because it has been corrupted, could no longer control the nature of our life. Everything in our human race that still bears this savage nature, and persists in it, and refuses to be transformed by the graft of the noble shoot into nobler branches and leaves and fruits, is finished, no longer counts, dissolves and is consecrated to death. Thus, from the moment of grafting, the first Adam is no longer the master and representative and determines the nature of the life of our generation, but the second Adam. The first Adam, whose sprout had become wild, has been discarded and his place as the head of the family is now taken by the second Adam. The first Adam, the Christ, as the second head of the family, only enters our family in the middle of our growth. He takes on our nature. He is grafted onto the old Adam tribe. But from the moment that grafting is completed, the new outgrowth no longer grows in the line of the first Adam, but in conformity with the second Adam. At first this is small, hardly noticeable and insignificant. He who has no eye for it and knows nothing about it, does not even notice it, when a sprouted trunk is grafted, so small and unsightly is this graft. But gradually both the noble shoot and what sprouts from it gain strength, and when later the arborist prunes away all the wild branches on the old trunk, the new graft grows wider and wider, and then this new graft becomes the actual tree. Every comparison, and thus also this one, falls short when widened, inasmuch as the pruning away of the stump on the old wild trunk of our human race will not take place in time, but only in the day of judgment. But once this has happened, and the wild branches are cut away for good, then the tree, the trunk, then the human race in its nobler part, born of the graft, remains. The wild

branches, not the tree, are lost. And as many as go to eternal destruction, these are always just loose branches and twigs, and it is never the tree itself. What is lost falls away from the human race, and the human race, God's most noble creation, remains, as a result of grafting, forever preserved.

Even though Christ, as the Head of the mystical Body, is only organically related to those persons who have passed from death to life, in that organic connection to the part of humanity that has come to life He also finds His organic connection to the whole human race, for the decisive reason that only that which comes to life lives. That which does not come to life, but remains in death, passes into a state of decomposition and ultimately no longer counts for the living human race, as it does for God. Yet the noble shoot continues to draw the lifeblood from the wild stem to itself, and so too the Christ does not abandon the stem of our lineage, but draws to himself all the strength and talents that God placed in our lineage at creation. His life-giving spirit does not only pass over the persons who are called, but also over their powers and talents. The result is that the Christ, as the second Adam, is the new head of the family through his life-giving spirit, who preserves and renews our human family, in both its called persons and its powers, gifts and talents, and causes them to blossom into a higher life.

The idea that the Christ takes away a few branches for the preservation of the human race, in order to save them for eternal life as individuals and as persons in their own right, in order to abandon the human race with all its gifts and talents, which God created in our race, and to dedicate it to destruction, is therefore counterproductive and reprehensible. It is not just a few persons, it is a body, an organically linked whole, that is being saved, and that organic body is under Christ, as the new Head of the Family, the actual human race, from which individuals may fall, but which will be preserved as a family, as a unit, as an organic body. An all-embracing fact, which will only be revealed to everyone's eyes at the end of days; a fact that now still seems to contradict what we see before us; but a fact that nevertheless can and may be understood in this way and no other, if we honor the Christ as the second Adam, i.e., as the new Head of the Family, together with the Apostle Paul.

Yet this is not enough. One could certainly compare this effect of Jesus on our human race with the influence exerted by every great and powerful reformer on the course of life. Scripture therefore points out two more things to establish the

organic connection between us and Christ. First, his Resurrection from the dead, and second, his Eternal Sonship.

The Christ is "the firstborn among many brothers," and also in this respect He is called the second Adam. The first Adam brought death to all his descendants, and thus to our entire human race, and in return the second Adam brought life to light, in which the human race must flourish again to the glory of God. And here too there is an organic relationship. The first Adam gives us the life we possess by nature, but the shadow of death hangs over that natural life. The second Adam also gives us life, but a life that is elevated above death, and thus bears the character of being imperishable and immortal. It is this life, triumphant over death, that Christ has brought to light through his resurrection, and that through the power of the Spirit, and it is this same newly-acquired resurrection life that he now communicates to his own through the Spirit. His own do not receive this new life from elsewhere, but from Him. Now, if the first Adam was our Head of Gender because he gave life from his loins to the human race, then likewise, and in a much higher sense, Christ, the second Adam, is now the Head of Gender of renewed humanity because he also gives us life, and this life is given from himself, but it is given as life of an immortal character. Adam lapsed as the Head of the Family because he caused death to creep into the life that was to come from him to his family through his fall, and Christ remains the Head of the human family because he destroyed the seed of death in the natural life and now elevated and renewed life itself, so that it can no longer undergo. Only in this way does one understand the profound meaning of Paul's statement: "Christ has been raised from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as death came into our generation through a man, i.e., by human agency, so also the resurrection of the dead was effected by a man (note that it does not say by one man). For as they all die in Adam, so shall they all be made alive in Christ. That is, all those who turn out to belong to the saved and restored humanity. But for this a rule has been established, viz. each one is made alive in his order, the first of Christ, then those of Christ; but so that this first comes out in his future. Adam the first in the natural life, but then also the first in sin and in death; Christ, the second Adam, the first in the spiritual life and the first in the glory to come. All of which the Apostle summarizes in his letter to the people of Colosse: "He is the head of the body, namely the church, he who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that he may be first in all things. The very moment at which this transformation of our human race took place is thus accurately indicated. It was not yet at Bethlehem, it

was not at Golgotha; it only took place when Christ arose from the grave and triumphed over death. In His resurrection, the new life broke through. First sin had to be destroyed on Golgotha, and only then could Death be conquered at the opened tomb. And now the other members of the Body do not each receive this new life in themselves, as Christ received it, but they receive it from Him. It is His new life, which He communicates to His own, and through this He forms the mystical Body.

Yet the Scriptures allow the seeds and fibers for the organic relationship between Christ and the new humanity to grow from even deeper grounds. He is the second Adam, because He is the originator of the new life in our humanity, just as Adam, expelled from Paradise, later became the originator of the natural life in our entire family; but He is more. He is comparable to Adam as the giver of life, and consequently as the head of the family, but there is something else in addition to this, by which the Christ far surpasses the first Adam. The Apostle expresses it thus: "He is before all things, and all things exist together through Him." He is therefore before Adam, and χ also Adam existed through Him, and through Him became the first head of our generation, "because, - so it is said in Coloss. 1:16, - By Him were all things created, which are in the heavens and which are in the earth, which are visible and invisible, and all these things, and so also our human race, and also the first Adam were created not only by Him, but also for Him." For "it was the Father's good pleasure that in Him should dwell the fullness, i.e., the fullness of all power and might."

This gives the "organic relationship" in which the Christ stands to the reborn humanity a much deeper foundation. All power and control over all creatures is His, because he who creates omnipotently and freely is master and ruler over what he creates, to do with it and act it as he pleases. According to Divine ordinances, the root of the organic relationship between God Triune and Creation lies in the very fact of Creation. What owes its existence and continued existence, its being and suchlike to its Creator, is in its very existence organically linked to its God. Creating is not imitating, creating is not tinkering, just as we humans know how to produce all sorts of things materially and spiritually. To create is to come directly from wisdom, will and power, that is, from the virtues of the Lord. Now these "virtues of the Lord" are all spiritual in nature. In the spirit of God, therefore, lies the root and cause of all creaturely existence, both material and spiritual, and the link here has never been established mechanically, but has arisen out of existence itself, and thus organically.

And entirely this same norma is now applied by Scripture to the bond that binds us eternally to the Christ, as the originator of the new life in our human race, as soon as it has been laid. As far as type is concerned, the Christ is not only a legislator like Moses, not only a prophet like Elijah or Isaiah, and not even a patriarch like Abraham, the father of all believers. He is more. He stands much higher. "As Abraham was, so am I," the Christ Himself testified. He is before all creatures. And if we go back to the deepest root, from which all things, including our human race, have blossomed, then we cannot remain with Adam, but we must go back to the Christ after Adam. Then it is not the Christ, who only later, in the midst of history, is grafted onto the tree of our family, but our human family, already at the time of Creation, was organically connected to the Eternal Word.

The new life is thus grafted, not onto a tree that was foreign to Christ, but onto a tree that He Himself had planted. And it is for this reason that the Apostle John prefaces his Gospel, that is the Good News of Salvation, with the solemn declaration: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and was God. All things were made by this Word, and without this Word nothing was made that was made." And then it is called by name, "In that Word was life, and that life was the light of men." Now that Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And that Word made flesh is the Christ, who later testified: "I am the Vine and you are the branches."

The organic connection of the Kingship of Christ with the reborn humanity and with our human race, as it will one day shine in glory, thus has three gradations. It is most visible in the bond that connects the Head with the members in the mystical Body. More profoundly, that mystical Body finds its origin in the new life, which Jesus brought to light by His resurrection, and has now grafted onto the stem of our family. But 3rd. most profoundly, that organic connection, both as regards the mystical Body and the Resurrection life, finds its basis and explanation in the fact that our King is the Eternal Word, and that, with all things, also our human race, and all that has been entrusted to this human race as spiritual treasure, has been created by Him.

VII. - Head, but also King.

And no man can say that he is Jesus the Lord, save by the Holy Ghost.

1 COR. 12:3b.

So far we took the words: Head and King, as univocal, but to a truer understanding it will be necessary to draw attention to the difference between the two. We immediately feel that the Lord can say to His own "You shall sit with me in my throne, as I sit in the throne of my Father", and "You shall reign with me as kings", but that it would make no sense to say "You shall be head, as I am the Head." In fact, there is between the two expressions is this significant difference, that the name of Head denotes the natural and naturally arising authority over the body and over what belongs to the body as members, whereas the name of King, on the other hand, expresses the possession of power as dignity and dominion. Hence the head remains the head, even if it becomes incapacitated by special circumstances, whereas the King, on the other hand, ceases to be king as soon as his reign is extinguished. A father remains the head of his family even though he is in exile from his family; a king ceases to be king as soon as another power expels him from the country.

This means that Christ is not the head of all people, but only of certain people who have been incorporated into his church through him, who have received the new life through him and who are partakers of the Atonement in him. The Scriptures therefore say that he is the Head of the congregation. That congregation is the core of his reign. For this congregation it is already real, what will only become real for our entire gender and the world at his return and after the judgment day. The congregation, because it is a body, cannot be conceived without a head, and the head of the congregation can be none other than Christ. The head belongs to the congregation as the mystical body. It is inseparable from it. And all that our own Head is to our natural body, all that the Christ is to the body of his Congregation. The congregation has its consciousness from Him alone. He controls and guides the movements of that body. He sees the dangers to which that body is exposed and averts them. He feeds and waters that body with spiritual food and drink. He cares for that body and maintains it. Without him, that body cannot exist for a moment. Between Christ and his congregation, therefore, the organic relationship has the most intimate character. He is to the body of his congregation what he cannot yet be to that which lies outside it.

Nevertheless, it must never be suggested that Christ is the Head for his congregation, but not also the King. His congregation is not outside, but in the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever belongs to Christ and lives as a member in His mystical body has entered the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' royal rule applies to him as well. It can even be said that the Church of the believers is Christ's bodyguard in His Kingdom. They are not only His members, but also His warriors. Each one of them has to fight the Lord's battle in his own way. The church is not a private, individual institution that is added to Jesus' Kingdom, but it is the living center of that Kingdom through which Christ allows the power of the Spirit to flow among the children of mankind throughout the whole world and throughout history. The Church is the indispensable centerpiece of His Kingdom, and it is only in the Church that His Royal honour and majesty not only operates, but is also recognized and honoured.

Let us leave aside for a moment to concentrate on the congregation on this earth; and even though the royal majesty of Christ extends far beyond the congregation, it is only in the congregation as such that people know about this Kingdom, recognize it, understand what it is, and honor and reverence Christ as King. In that congregation His rule is pure and powerful. He rules her by His Word and Spirit. And while outside that congregation all kinds of spirits and people rise up against Christ in order to oppose His royal rule, this royal rule is professed in His congregation, century after century. She honors Him not only as her highest Prophet and her only High Priest, but also as her eternal King. He is her Head by Himself. This does not have to be recognized and confessed first. This is a fact that was given automatically at the foundation of the Church; but that as the Head of the Church he is also her King, and is to be honored as her King, is not a natural fact, but a homage due to him only through acknowledgment and confession. He is and remains its Head, for no one can snatch His gifts out of His hand. But the Church can push Christ's Kingship into the background by wandering, as she is doing now so often. He does not cease to rule her and to be King over her for God's sake, but Kingship presupposes two things: 1°. the rule of the King, and 2°. the recognition and honoring of his rule. Not the former, but the latter can fall short of the heavenly King. A head of the family remains father and head of the family, even if he encounters disobedience and refusal to submit, but his authority is then subverted. And so, Christ remains the Head of His congregation, even if she wanders away from Him; but if the congregation loses herself in the wandering paths, she loses the awareness of His royal rule and lives on as if she had no King.

As a rule, Scripture expresses the Kingship of Christ over and in His congregation by calling Him: her Lord. Throughout apostolic literature this Lord is the fixed and constant expression, by which not the Triune God, but usually the Christ is meant. He is also called its King whenever the Church appears in connection with the world government of Christ, but when the Church is considered in itself, and the believers are taken in isolation, it is always: Our Lord Jesus Christ. So much is the real essence of the mutual relationship expressed in the name of Lord, that the Apostle tells us how "nobody can say Jesus is Lord except through the Holy Spirit". This means that only those who have been incorporated into the body of Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit can acknowledge Him as their Lord, not in words, but in deed and in truth. Another person may speak of "Lord Jesus", but he alone can realize and fathom what this "Lord Jesus" implies, and only he who has become one with Christ can do so. Throughout the apostolic literature, the expression "Lord" is therefore not to be understood as God the Triune and not as the Father, but very specifically and almost exclusively as the Christ. Very occasionally, in quotations from the Old Testament, this highest name is used of Jehovah, but this is a very rare occurrence, and occurs mostly in quotations from the Old Testament; but the rule remains that the name Lord, without anything else and without any further indication, is to be understood of Christ and of no one else. When it says: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty", this refers to the Spirit of Christ. When it says: "Anyone who will call on the name of the Lord," this is transferred to the Christ. If it is stated: "There is a variety of ministries, but it is the same Lord", then, precisely because of the context, this is spoken of Christ. And likewise, when it says: Become strong in the Lord and in the strength of His power," then this too points to the Christ. Yes, the repeated expression: "in the Lord" does not refer to our hidden relationship with the Triune Being, but very specifically to the intimate relationship in which the redeemed stand to Christ.

Now Jehovah asks in Malachi 1:6: Am I a Father, where is my honour, and am I a Lord, where is my fear? The Lord in the Old Testament expressed the dominion that is due to God over all created things, and the same distinction as between the Headship and the Lordship of Christ also comes to the fore here. God is Father, in so far as He gave birth to all creatures; but next to this is a second position, not of Father, but of Lord. Everything belongs to Him. Everything exists only through and for Him. He alone leads the high divine regiment over all creation. A son shall honor his father, and so shall all creatures honor their God, but there is more than that. God is also the Lord, the Giver, the Controller of all creation, and as such all

creation must fear Him. And so, it is with the Christ. Here, too, it is he to whom the mystical Body owes its existence, and this is expressed in the statement that he is the Head of the Body, just as God is the Father of all creation. But just as with Jehovah it is added that he is also the Possessor, the Owner, the absolute Disposer of all creation, so it is also added with the Christ that he is the Lord of his own, over whom he has full control, so that they have to honor him not only as their Head, but also as their Lord.

To the extent that he is their Head, they are his members; to the extent that he is the Lord of all, they are his servants. Existing for his honor, for his glory, and called to consecrate themselves and all that is considered theirs, to give in his service, and to sacrifice for him. The expression Head of the congregation refers more to what belongs and flows from Christ to the congregation; the expression Lord, on the other hand, refers to everything that he, as the Lord, has to expect and demand from his own. A king takes taxes and tribute from his subjects, he demands homage and honor from his people, and he demands that those who can fight, be incorporated in his hosts, in order to throw down oathly resistance for the sake of his name. Now the word subject is not used in Scripture. It has become customary in dogmatics to say that Christ cannot be King without subjects, but Scripture does not know this word. It belongs more to kings, as the nations had, than to the much nobler Kingship of God or of His Christ. It is said that the Church is submissive to Christ, but that only means that she has to obey His high command; but the word 'submissive' is never used as if the whole nature of the believer were to be absorbed into it. On the other hand, the word servant and handmaid and servant of war is used repeatedly, and always in connection with the Lordship of Christ.

The servant of Christ should not be misunderstood. This would have been avoided if our translators had translated the word not as servant, but as slave or serf, because that is what it actually says. The word servant was chosen because the word slave has a vile connotation in our ears and would not be in keeping with our relationship to Christ. But when we read the word "servant" in Apostolic literature, we must always remember that a servant in those days was something quite different than today. Nowadays a servant is a free man, who rents himself out for service by agreement, as was the rule in Israel; which is evident from the parable of the laborers. But Paul's letters were all written to churches in heathen cities, at Rome, at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Colossae, etc., and in that heathen world slavery existed and ruled. One was born as a slave, or bought as a slave. This meant that the owner of the slave had an absolute right of disposition over the slave. He, the

slave, was not a person to his lord, but his possession, his property, belonging to him in body and soul. The slave had no rights in civil society. His lord could discipline him as he pleased, sell him and dispose of him, and to a certain extent he even had the right to decide over the life of his slave. And such a slave was called *doelos* in Greek, whereas a hired servant was called *diakonos*. Now the word *diakonos* is also used for the relationship to Christ, but then in relation to an appointed minister in the church. That is why our caretakers in Christ's church are still called deacons, a name that comes from the word *diakonos*. But if the Apostle does not want to express a ministry, but the relationship of each member of the congregation to Christ as their Lord, then he uses the word *doelos*, which does not indicate a free servant, but a slave, and in that sense could have been translated by what in the Middle Ages was also called a serf. Even though our translators have avoided the word "slave" because of the less noble connotation, and have therefore substituted the word servant and handmaiden, it should never be forgotten that the expression "servant and handmaiden of Christ" has a much deeper meaning than the name of a servant would indicate to our ears.

Our Catechism has sensed this, and has therefore taken up the word serfdom again, even calling the serfdom of Christ our only comfort in life and death. That sole comfort is, according to the Heidelberger, that I am not my own body and soul, both in life and in death, but my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ's. Ownership now refers to possession, to ownership. Christ owns us, we are his property, and in that sense the serf had best expressed the meaning. We did not originally belong to Christ; we were under the power of another lord, who ruled us.

We were under the power of another lord who had dominion over us. But from the power of that former lord and master, Jesus has bought us. As it is written in 1 Cor. 6:20: "You have been bought dearly," and again in 1 Cor. 7:23: "You have been bought dearly; do not become the slaves of men." Jesus paid for that redemption. Paid, as the apostle Peter testifies, not with gold or silver, but with His own precious blood. Through that payment and redemption, we have now been redeemed from our former dependent state and have passed into the possession and property of Christ. The ruler of the world was Satan. His power ruled over us. But from his power we have now been loosed. We are no longer bound to him. As far as he is concerned, we have been made free. But not in order to be our own lord and master now, but to change lord and master. Instead of Satan, the Christ has now become Lord and Master over our hearts. We now belong to Him with body and soul, with our whole person and all our powers and gifts. Not for ourselves,

but for Him we have to exist, to live, to tolerate, to bear and to suffer. And this is the deep meaning and significance that lies in calling the Christ our Lord. We ourselves can therefore not assert any right, because He has all the right over us. We may no longer seek or mean anything of our own apart from what we are of Christ, for we belong to Him completely, with all that is in and of us. His will determines what we must want. Against His will there is no more room for our own will. We are completely absorbed in Him. In Him we lose ourselves. And it is by losing ourselves in Him that we gain the full freedom of the children of God. Not the fish on the beach, but the fish in the water is free, but is also completely and in all parts enclosed by the water. And so it is that only by being incorporated into Christ and merging into Christ have we rediscovered our true element of life, and we continue to enjoy it, as often and as long as we ourselves are nothing and Christ has become everything to us.

Our relationship to Christ as our Lord is thus grounded in the Redemption Work itself, but not as something secondary, but rather as something that flows directly from the appearance of Christ as Messiah. The Lord's Messiahship of Christ goes back to the work of creation itself. By virtue of our creation, we were God's property. Belonging completely to God, and existing only for His honor, respecting no other will but His, and accepting our fate from His high and holy disposition. That was paradise. That was our original condition. But man has broken away from this relationship through sin. He has pushed through his will against God's will. He has tried to exist not for God, but for himself. He strove to become his own lord and his own master. The sinner therefore imagines that he has achieved this goal and become a free man. But this is appearance, not reality. By separating himself from his God, man has become a "slave of sin", and has passed into the service of the Tempter. He does not know it, he does not acknowledge it, he denies it; but the fact is that he has done the deceiver's will and thereby passed into his dominion. What Christ has now accomplished with his self-sacrifice is that the supremacy over our sinful hearts has been broken, and that the bond by which Satan bound us is loosed from our necks. But now man cannot stand like this. He cannot live by himself. A human being is destined to be the vehicle and instrument of a will that stands above him. And that is why the Christ now assumes the sovereignty over His redeemed. He accepts them as His own into His circle of life. He drives them by the Spirit to exist and live for Him alone. E11 this is now expressed by saying that the Christ has become their Lord, and that they are His property and His servants and handmaidens. The word Lord, and not the word King, is most often

used in this sense, because, according to our earthly relationship, a Lord is more than a Viscount. In our earthly household a King does have authority over his subjects, but not in an absolute sense, whereas the lord of a slave cannot encounter any opposition and has absolute authority over him, without dignity and without any condition. The King-ship of Christ over His own is thus included, but the expression the Lord is stronger and implies a more complete right of control. The aim of this Lordship of Christ is indeed to lead us back into the dominion of the Triune God in the end, so that God may be all in all again, but before this ultimate goal is reached, the reign has been given to Christ, and He is "the King of kings and the Lord of lords". For those who have a deeper understanding of the different meaning of a Lord and a King, the title of our Lord is therefore much more penetrating, much more encompassing and all-encompassing; a Kingship, if we may say so, in an elevated degree.

The same thing is expressed when the redeemed is called a warrior servant of Christ. The Christ then appears to us in the image of our Lord Commander, and especially in the days in which Paul wrote this implied that the servant, under the strictest discipline, renounced all self-will and knew no other glory than to carry out the will of his Lord Commander punctually and with absolute submission. Nowadays this relationship has changed a great deal, but whoever reads the Scriptures must of course take such an expression in the sense in which it applied at the time. And then the concept of a servant of Jesus Christ contained two ideas. First, that the servant of war renounced all self-will in order to be guided by nothing but the order and command of his commander. But also in the other place, that the servant of war was bound, all his courage, all his strength, all his enthusiasm and even his life to his commander.

If he had to, he had to die for his commander and for the glory of those who commanded him; something which of course included all lesser suffering and all lesser devotion.

The only difference between the two expressions, that of servant and warrior of Christ, was that in the word *doelos*, or servant, more attention was paid to what Christ did for us, and that in the word warrior more prominently what we have to do for Christ. But both expressions agree in that they express Jesus' rule and Jesus' Kingdom over His redeemed in the most decisive way. Whoever accepts Jesus as his Redeemer and glories in his calling to eternal life, but fails to immediately deduce that the Christ is therefore his Lord, his King, his absolute Commander and

absolute Disposer of his fate and life, of his powers and faculties, runs the serious risk of making his own name illegible in the book of life.

VIII. - The Curse on Capernaum.

And Jesus, coming to them, spake unto them, saying: To me is given all power in heaven and in earth. MATTH. 28:18.

Christ, then, is the King of his own people, the Head of the congregation, which is his body, expressed in figurative speech by himself thus: "I am the Vine, and ye are the branches," or also represented by the image of the Shepherd with the sheep of his flock. In this bond of King and people, of Head and body, of body, of vine and branches, of shepherd and sheep, lies at the center of Jesus' high dignity. Because, however, this bond begins with being purely spiritual, it has happened to more than one that he understood all this in a merely metaphorical sense, as if it did not mean anything else than that the Christ, through his Spirit, exercises a certain influence on the hearts of those who acknowledge him as their Savior. There are even a few who make the meaning of this connection so ordinary that Jesus' influence on the hearts of his own is taken to be almost identical to the influence that one person can exert on another, only slightly higher in degree. The influence of Jesus' Spirit on the spirits of His own is then used to confirm their faith, to brighten their hopes, and to keep the glow of love burning in them. And this spiritual and moral effect, one imagines, is then called "Jesus' Kingship over our hearts," and the richer atmosphere that arises from this is metaphorically presented as "the Kingdom of Heaven. It follows that, from the point of view of those who judge in this way, it is safe to let slip all these transferable titles of King and Head. Seen in this light, they are nothing but meaningless names. They are of no use to the congregation. Why then not abolish these dead-end names and speak clearly, briefly and simply of Jesus' influence, i.e., Jesus' spiritual influence on the hearts of those who profess Him? Then all mysticism falls away. Then you speak of the influence of Jesus' example, of the influence of his word, and of the influence exerted by the organization called the Church, created by him, on the world, and especially on his confessors. But then, you see, the kingship of Jesus has also been fraudulently nullified, and it is precisely against this that our protest stands. That is going against Scripture, that is going against Jesus himself, it is the melting down of the highly sacred in the crucible of the vulgar moral concepts of the rationalizing world.

Not our modern moral teachers, but Jesus himself and his apostles must teach us what understanding we have to form of his Kingship, so that it may correspond to reality; and if we go to school with them, it immediately becomes clear and crystal-clear that in Jesus' Kingship there is something quite different from moral-spiritual

influence, that there is power, authority and supremacy, and that this power even exists to an almost unlimited degree. This first came to light in Jesus' doom judgment on Capernaum. That sentence of doom read: "You Capernaum, who were exalted to heaven, you will be cast down to hell. This is twofold: 1°. that Jesus' three-year stay in Capernaum is indicated by Himself as being "exalted to heaven', and 2°. that Jesus had the authority to pronounce such an irrevocable sentence on this city. A judgment which has already been fulfilled in Capernaum, because it has completely disappeared from the face of the earth. It no longer exists. Such a dreadful statement goes far beyond the scope of what a spiritual leader, moral teacher and religious founder could say. Whoever, as a spiritual leader or moral teacher or religious founder, put himself in the foreground in such a way that he called his residence in this or that city an honor for that place, by which it was "higher to heaven', would show by that very statement that he had lowered himself in moral pride. And he who, because such a city would not acknowledge its highness, pronounced the sentence that it should be cast down to hell because of it, would be considered insane. Therefore, never read over such strong statements of Jesus. They are statements that no one would ever have put on his lips. They are statements which carry the mark of authenticity in their complete deviation from the ordinary. And they are statements in which the self-consciousness of Jesus comes to the fore, as of One clothed with a power and dignity that far surpasses all the highness and majesty of earthly princes. But it did not stop there; Jesus wanted to add: "I say to you that in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the country of Sodom than for you inhabitants of Capernaum. Now the sin of Sodom stands throughout the

Scripture as the greatest abomination, and fortunately it may be added that moral public opinion still points back to Sodom as the city where human self-degradation had gone furthest. But, my dear, what do you want to preach to us about Jesus' royal power as a purely spiritual and moral supremacy? Or what do you think would await the moralist among us, who thirsts to exalt himself so high that his lips would say: Falling into the sin of Sodom is less terrible than daring to reject me. And yet, that, and nothing less, is what Jesus, your holy Jesus, said.

Jesus himself must have been impressed for a moment by the reversal of all proportions that his bold statement about Capernaum had to make on the public among whom he found himself. So strong was the sharp contradiction between the common moral view of those in Israel who set the tone, and between the position taken by him with his statements about Capernaum, forced itself upon him, that,

according to the story, Jesus sought salvation for the distressing, that lay in this, by lifting up his soul to his Father, saying: "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little children, to the simple ones that follow me." Soulfully, the connection of this prayer with His doom sentence on Capernaum explains itself. What Jesus had said about Capernaum was in direct opposition to the accepted moral concepts. It was spoken from a higher order, from that order which does not take earthly life for granted, but embraces earth and heaven, and counts them according to a higher, holier order. The teachings and moral exhortations of the wise and intelligent of this world were diametrically opposed to that order, and it was only the children, i.e., the simple people who adhered to him, who could empathize with these higher orders without being irritated. That's why Jesus here calls his Father "Lord of heaven and earth", which points to this higher order, and then sharply contrasts the moral and spiritual leaders in ordinary life, "the changed and wise", and the bared and therefore open minds that opened up to him, here referred to as "children". In order to make it even clearer that we are talking about higher ordinances here, Jesus even adds: Yes, Father, for so it has been our good pleasure to do.

This exaltation of soul to his Father was evidently not whispered quietly or in secret, but spoken in spiritual ecstasy before the ears of his disciples. How else could it have been reported to us in the Gospel? And now Jesus does not leave it at that, but turning to his disciples, he now comes to this all-embracing statement: "All things have been handed over to me from my Father." His sentence of doom upon Capernaum, because its inhabitants had rejected him, was thus not merely an expectation that it would come to this; not merely a prophecy that it would come to this; but a judicial sentence, spoken by one who had power to judge in this way; for to him was that power, to him all things were given by the Father. And as if to further illustrate the surprise that lay in this for his young people, Jesus now points out his completely unique position. "No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and whomever the Son wishes to reveal." This is the declaration not of the Divine mystery, but of His power, by which He was entitled to pronounce such a sentence of doom. This the people in Capernaum could not understand, not even his disciples. His wonderful power is of such a nature that only the Father knows it, because among men no one understands who the Son is. Not one single creature, only the Father knows the

Son. And it is related that no one knows the Father except the Son, and that only he who has received the Son knows the Father.

That only he who wishes to learn from the Son what the Father and His ordinances are, can be introduced to the mystery of heaven and earth. Jesus returns to this mystery of the ordinances of the higher order, which encompasses heaven and earth, in the conclusion. There are two spiritual yokes. That of the wise and prudent world, which imposes a yoke upon men, which presses them down and under which they bow; and on the other hand, the yoke of the higher ordinances, which brings rest and revives the soul. Hence, right next to the judgment of Capernaum, which rejected him, is to be read this appeal: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest, for my yoke is soft, and my burden is light."

This statement about Capernaum, taken in its context, is therefore one of the most important statements, which the Gospel offers us, for Jesus' Kingship. It does not mention the name or the title of King. One must therefore not take the words: "All things have been handed over to me," in isolation, as is so easily the case when texts are merely learned from outside. This all-decisive statement, that all things have been given to him, must be taken in connection with what precedes and immediately follows about Capernaum and the two yokes. It contains a revelation of royal authority and royal power, which directly binds both the authority and that power to his person in a way that cuts off any comparison of Jesus with other moral teachers, spiritual educators and religious founders. It reveals another world, another and higher order. It is the outline of another kingdom that is entirely different from the kingdom of the world. The door is opened here, which grants you a far-off insight into a kingdom of heaven that stands in opposition to the kingdom of earth, and yet is coming to rule that earth as well, and that kingdom is "the kingdom of heaven", in which, by virtue of what Jesus himself declares here, no one but he is conceivable as the King.

This declaration by Jesus, that all things have been given to him by the Father, does not stand alone. It occurs repeatedly, in modified form and in other contexts. John the Baptist had already declared: "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand" (John 3:35); and Jesus himself repeated what he said on the occasion of the judgment of doom on Capernaum three more times. The first time at Bethesda, when he said: "The Father has given me power to judge also," and this not because he was the Son of God, no, it is expressly stated: "Because he is the

Son of Man. This whole appointment of Jesus as Judge, to judge one day all those who are in the graves, coincides with what he said at Capernaum, that all things have been given over to him. From that given supremacy over all things, flows his judicial power, and it is that judicial power that is most strongly expressed here. Here the power of Jesus' Kingship is extended immediately out of the circle of his own people over all souls. Now we are accustomed to a judicial power that occupies a certain independent place next to the kingship. Unthinking professors of constitutional law have even proclaimed the doctrine that sovereignty is not one but that it falls into three parts, and that one of these three parts is the judiciary. This counter-intuitive doctrine has also penetrated the minds of many Christians, and this means that they no longer see in Jesus the direct connection between his Judicial Power and his Kingship. In the days in which Jesus spoke, and especially in Israel, this was unthinkable. The kings themselves had the judicial power in their hands. Solomon's first judgement gives a hint of this. He who exercised the supreme judicial power was naturally the King, as also among us the better teachers of constitutional law still teach that the judicial power flows from the Crown, and that therefore justice is still administered in the name of the King. It is thus contradictory to recognize Jesus' judicial power, but to see in it something else than an attribute of his Kingship. On the contrary, wherever Jesus is indicated as the Judge who passes sentence without appeal, that judicial power contains the strongest and clearest indication of His Royal Sovereignty.

Jesus Himself is the unvouchable witness here. Nowhere in Scripture is Jesus' majesty, as Judge, more decisively pronounced, than in Matt. 25:31, and, what do we read there? Again that it does not speak of the Son of God, but of the Son of Man. When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory, and all the nations will be gathered before him. And when the verdict, the judgment, comes, it says with so many words: "Then the King will say to those who are at his right hand" and so again in vs. 40: "And the King will answer them and say. Both thus summarized here as well: 1°. Judicial power not only over the professed, but over all the earth, over all peoples; and 2°. expressing His Kingship in that judicial power. King and Judge is one. The King himself is the Judge. The Judge without appeal, and without the right of pardon above him, cannot but be King. This preaching of Jesus' rightful and therefore royal-judicial dignity runs through the entire apocalyptic literature. We must all be revealed before the Judgment Seat of Christ," is the keynote of everything the Apostles reveal to us about the end of days, and in the Revelation to

John at Pathmos it is the same theme over and over again. "I saw heaven opened, so he tells us, and behold a white horse, and he who sat on it was called Faithful and True, and he judges."

Just before Gethsemane, Jesus more solemnly sealed his supremacy over all things, when he said in the supreme prayer, this time not to people, but to the Father:

"Father, the time has come, glorify now your Son, as you have given him power over all flesh. This puts an even holier seal on this piece of our confession.

Sometimes a superficial reader will imagine that what Jesus said earlier about "his power over all things" and about his judicial authority should not be understood so literally. It should be understood more in the sense that, after all, spirit rules over matter, and that therefore Jesus' spirit, as the richest and purest spirit, intimately and automatically decides on judgment for all spiritual life. It hardly needs saying that a serious study of the context in which Jesus made such statements, and the form in which he framed them, would cut off all such interpretations. With Jesus, grandiloquence, even in form, is out of the question. But precisely in order to cut off such claims, it is worth so much to us that Jesus, just before his journey to Gethsemane and Golgotha, in that holy moment when he dedicated his Apostles and his Church to his Father in the High Priestly Prayer, not only retained that same consciousness of power that had been given to him over all flesh, but even placed it in the foreground at the beginning of his prayer as the ground on which his prayer rested.

And even here Jesus does not stop.

In his last word, which he spoke to his disciples on the Mount of Olives before his ascension, he repeated: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. A statement so bold, so revealing, and so strongly telling, that the unbelieving critics were bound to declare this word simply false. The method that is always used. If Jesus speaks about the ordinary spiritual and moral life, then one can rely on what is written. Then what one reads in the Gospels is real. After all, all this is convenient for those who deny Jesus' kingship, and it fits in with their image that Jesus shines as a spiritual leader, moral teacher and founder of religion.

Everything, on the other hand, that in Jesus' statements reveals a much higher, an elevated, a much more majestic self-confidence, contradicts the image that they paint of Jesus, and is therefore first weakened by false interpretations, then stripped of its real meaning by over-conceived interpretations, and finally placed under suspicion and declared to be false; and not a few members of the congregation,

who are not in the know, allow themselves to be taken in by that. However, it is precisely this attempt by the critics to ignore and nullify all such statements by Jesus that increases their significance for us. The last word of Jesus, before he ascended into heaven, had of course to be a word of great and far-reaching significance. It was his testament to his disciples. Those young people were still trapped by the idea that Jesus would indeed be King, but only of Israel, and so we read that even in that last moment they were still asking him: "Here, will you in this time re-establish the Kingdom of Israel? In contrast to this limitation, Jesus immediately gives the commandment to preach His name to the uttermost parts of the earth. In a similar vein to what He had said on the mountain in Galilee: All power in heaven and earth has been given to Me, from which He derives this commandment: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. That all this should now serve to extend His Kingdom spiritually, was self-evident, for only where His Kingdom is extended spiritually can it come to the recognition of its Kingship. Thus Jesus had also said in the High Priestly Prayer: "You have given me power over all flesh, that to whomsoever you have given me I may give them eternal life. And so now also here: I have been given all power in heaven and on earth; go therefore and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and sealing them with my baptism."

But even though the aim must always be to preserve souls, the world, humanity, our human race, and thus to bring about the triumph of the spiritual Kingdom, the expressions that indicate Jesus' royal power are of such far-reaching significance that they imply the right to decide about everything that will decide about the fate of the peoples and humanity. In not one of these statements do we find the slightest limitation. Nowhere do we find a limitation of his power to the spiritual domain. From the beginning to the end, the words are always all-encompassing, all-inclusive. And since it is now certain that the whole course of things, the whole course of history, the whole destiny of peoples in every field, influences their suitability or unsuitability to open their hearts to Jesus; And it is equally certain that the fate of the Church on this earth is continually determined by all kinds of external events, so that there are entire regions, for example in Asia Minor and on the north coast of Africa, where the Church once flourished and later collapsed under the course of events, So it could not be otherwise, that the future of the Church, and also of the Kingdom of Heaven, could only be guaranteed by a King who had power not only in the spiritual sphere, but also over all these events that decided the fate of the nations. To isolate the course of spiritual things from the

course of earthly events is false spiritualism, which is contradicted by the whole course of history. And now, with this undeniable fact of the relationship between spiritual and earthly things in mind, read and reread Jesus' definite statements: "All things have been given to me by the Father. "Thou have given me power over all flesh," and: Then you will have put to rest any interpretation which would make the slightest exception to this, and you will have decided that Jesus presents himself as a Shepherd of the sheep, as the Head of the congregation, but also as the King in his Majesty, who did not receive only a nominal sovereignty, but who is vested with all authority and all power necessary for the preservation and completion of his Kingdom.

IX. - The Spirits Subjected to Him.

And he hath made all things subject unto his feet. EPHEZE 1:22b.

Precisely in Jesus' judgment seat lies the proof that His Kingship is in no way limited to the believers, but extends to all who are human. That the Christ will sit as Judge in the last judgment is a corollary of His royal power, and of His passing of sentence in the last judgment it is expressly stated that it will apply to all who are in the graves; as Jesus elsewhere declared that not only "the sheep" but also "the goats" will appear before His judgment seat. If Jesus' judicial power was only over the believers who are saved for eternal life, there would be almost no judgment, but only acquittal and pardon. It is only the appearance before Christ of those who have not accepted Him and have resisted His cause that makes His final judgment so supremely significant. It is therefore of no avail to the unbelieving world whether it keeps itself distant from Christ in this life, and pretends that the Christ is of no concern to it. It is not for them to decide whether or not to have dealings with the Christ. Christ himself determines this by virtue of the power he has received from the Father. And one day the hour will come when all those thousands and thousands who have refused to acknowledge Jesus' kingship here on earth will appear before him and will themselves be subject to the exercise of his judicial power for all eternity. The misunderstood and rejected or forgotten Savior will be Judge over them, and then also reveal Himself as their King.

This must be emphasized. The idea that the Christ was only the Head of the congregation and only King over His own has gained more and more ground in later years. There could only be talk of a spiritual sovereignty of Christ over the spirits. This spiritual power was only to be seen in those who came to faith in Christ. And it was precisely this that showed that this kingship could only consist in exerting influence to lead a holier life. Thus, by limiting the Kingship to the believers, the Kingship was actually destroyed and reduced to a nominal honorific. The untenability of this whole idea is immediately apparent if we counter this with the fact that the Christ already possesses, and will continue to exercise, the supreme judicial power over all unbelievers, and thus over all mankind. It is not enough to speak of spiritual influences, for their non-involvement with or rejection of Christ shows that these influences did not work, or did not penetrate. Yet the decision about the fate, the prosperity and well-being of all is placed in Christ's hands. The Christ must also know all non-believers, know them in their inner existence, and know all that they have done, be it good or bad, in order to be able to pass judgment on them one day. Thus, the Christ possesses a power which

extends to all men, which presupposes knowledge of all life, and which one day will dispose of them with divine majesty, without appeal. This high significance of Jesus' judicial power is usually paid far too little attention. The whole Christian Church, through all the ages, confessed and still confesses that Christ is "sitting at God's right hand, from where he will come to judge the living and the dead". Scripture always points out that this last judgment will not only decide the eternal destiny of the redeemed, but also the eternal destiny of the lost. It is therefore certain in everyone's estimation that the last judgment will also be upon the enemies of the Lord; and this final judgment would be inconceivable in Christ's kingdom, if not all souls and lives were laid bare before him. Not only His kingship as such, but most certainly also His kingship over the unbelievers follows from the fact that the Father has given the Son the task of keeping judgment. And so, it also appears in this way that the Kingship of the Christ concerns all mankind, not just some of them, but the whole human race. According to Psalm 2, the Christ "received the nations as his inheritance and the princes of the earth as his possession", and to all the princes of the earth the call goes out that they should give the Son the kiss of loyalty and homage "so that they may not perish on their way as soon as His wrath would be lighted even slightly. Even though the congregation of believers remains his mystical body and, as such, forms the center of his most intense influence, his honor does not cease to exist in the fact that Christ is the Head of the congregation. After the last judgment, yes, then all that is saved will be incorporated into that mystical Body, and the new humanity, after the waste of what is lost, will be one with that Body. But until that time comes, we must separate, and the Kingship of Christ, as far as this earth is concerned, will fall into two spheres: the sphere of the faithful, in which He already reigns spiritually, and the sphere of the as yet unregenerate world, which is "undermined with all things at His feet. This also contains the proof that Christ's rule does not in any way reside in the independent preservation of eternal life, but that he exercises his royal power over the whole of our human life in every sphere of human activity and development. It is not the case that for Christ the only question that mattered was whether this or that soul would be saved or lost, as if this question were separable from our entire life. Such a separation and segregation in our human life is utterly unthinkable. Our human life is a single cog in which all the cogs and teeth interlock. The life question for our soul cannot be isolated from the other questions that govern our lives. And that is why the Kingship of Jesus cannot and must not be understood as the rule over one single part of our life. Since everything in our personal life is connected, the reign of Jesus must also extend to all things in

that life. It must be a power that completely controls the development of our personal life and the human life in general.

This will become even more evident if we take into account, in addition to his sitting as Judge in the last judgment, his rule over the spirit world. The supremacy of Christ over the spiritual powers within the world of human children, like His judicial supremacy, is taught with full emphasis in the Apostolic Writ. Jesus himself had already expressed his power over the world of angels when he said that the Son of Man, appearing in judgment, would come as King "with all his holy angels. Without exception, the angels are thus presented as his bodyguard, as following him, and subject to his ordinance; a glory, the prelude to which had already been seen in Bethlehem, when the angels descended to greet the new-born King with their song of jubilation. Now that the angels are subject to Christ, it is only natural that the demons should also be subject to Christ. The demons were originally angels, but they were also demons who had fallen out of their state. Jesus went against the head of the demons in the desert, and he overcame him as well. On Golgotha Satan's power was broken for good, and with it the regular supremacy of Christ over the whole kingdom of demons came into effect. Before the Temptation and Calvary, Satan could still try to maintain a certain independence in the sphere of his own unholy action, but after Calvary this has ceased. He is still there, still working, and only in the end of days will his power be nullified once and for all, but his is now only a subordinate power, which he cannot exercise except under the supremacy of Christ. The kingdom of demons is also enclosed, when it is said that all things are subject to the feet of God's anointed King.

This most remarkable part of Jesus' royal supremacy is now emphasized by the Apostles. In Ephesians 1:20 ff. Paul testifies that the Father has set him "at his right hand in heaven, far above all government, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in the next, and has put all things at his feet. In Col. 1:15 ff. the apostle derives this royal power of the Christ, that "through him all things were created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, which are visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, so that all things were created through him and unto him." And in 1 Cor. 15:24 ff. the apostle says that Christ "must reign as King, until he has realized his power, i.e., until he has put all enemies under his foot, by the undoing of all dominion, of all power and all strength." Two things are thus expressed. First, that in this spirit world not all spirits are alike, but that among the

spirits there are some that are vested with higher power. The higher power of some spirits in the spirit world is then indicated by titles and dignities derived from earthly life. There are those who have thrones, those who rule as rulers, those who are vested with dominion, and those who possess special power and strength. But however high some of these spirits may be placed thereby, all of their power and dominion are completely overshadowed by the majesty with which the Mediator is clothed. He alone is enthroned at God's right hand, high above all. This first of all, and then secondly, that not only does the royal rule of the Christ far exceed the dignity and glory of all those high spirits, but now also that all these spirits, even the highest among them, do not stand beside Jesus, but are subject to his royal power, even at his feet. Of course, this implies that the holy spirits, the pure angels, and even the saintly angels among them will willingly and naturally bow before him; But also that the evil spirits, the demons in their demonic sphere, and among them especially the spirits clothed with high power, and especially their chief, Satan, oppose this supremacy of Christ, present themselves as enemies to him, are fought and subdued by him, and that in the end all their power and strength and dominion will be destroyed. Last of all Death. "The last enemy to be nullified is Death."

That in Ephesians 1:20 ff. earthly Kings and Superiors are not to be thought of, is evident to us from what the apostle Peter writes: "Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, ascended into heaven, having the angels and powers and forces made him subject." Thus, it is not human rulers but angels that are meant here, and it is not acceptable to understand what follows of "powers and forces" as referring to anything other than the spirit world. The addition of 'forces and powers' confirms this. Among men there may still be "thrones, authorities, and lords"; But even if in later years one gets used to speaking of "teachers" instead of "teachers" in an impersonal sense, a "force" is not a human office, not a human dignity, not a human honorific, and only in the spirit world can there be an order that gives a separate place to "forces" as well as to governments and rulers. It should be noted that the Apostle Paul speaks of "power and might not only in this world but also in the next. In fact, it has been attempted to deduce from this addition that the Apostle was referring first and foremost to the kings and authorities of the earth, and only as an appendix did he add the rulers among the spirits. However, the context does not permit this interpretation, and the reason for this addition is quite different. The reference is to a Mediator, to the power exercised by this Mediator, seated at the right hand of the Father, from the world above upon this earth; a power that is

concentrated in his congregation. Well, from that spirit world, too, there is a constant action on this earth. From the fallen spirits as well as from the spirits that have remained holy. The spirit world is therefore referred to here not in the manner in which it exists and operates in the unseen worlds, but primarily in so far as it acts on earth and on the world of the children of man. It is only in this way that it can be compared to the power of the Christ, for His power, too, is mentioned only insofar as it has an effect on our human life. We are now told, first, that the similar power and strength of spirits is of less value than the power of Christ, and, second, that all these activities that emanate from the spirit world to this earth no longer operate independently, but are subject to the royal rule of Christ.

The fact that many people do not feel this at first when they read the apostle's writings is due to their inaccurate conception of the relationship between heaven and earth. Many think of human life here on earth as being entirely self-contained, and, quite apart from that, they imagine the angelic world in the immense distance before the throne of God's majesty, from which, at most in the dim past, a single person has come down to earth to convey what God has ordered him to come and announce to us. Thus, our world and the spirit world are thought of as two entirely separate spheres that do not come into contact with one another except in very rare instances. This conception, however, is entirely foreign to the Holy Scriptures, and anyone familiar with the Scriptures will admit this, especially in view of the fallen spirit world. There is no question that the world of demons has no connection with our human life, and that in the course of the centuries an influence from that evil spirit world has reached our human world only once. Jesus himself, in the Lord's Prayer, puts on our lips, as a daily supplication for every Christian man, the plea: - Leave us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; something that would make no sense if evil effects and influence from the devil world were not moving toward us day and night and trying to penetrate us. The apostle says that the devil is always going around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. During his wanderings on earth Jesus continually came into contact with the devils and into conflict, and so did his apostles after him. We know from our own experience what evil temptations from the devilish world come to us, and the deeper a child of God penetrates into the holy life, the more he discovers that the demonic world almost never leaves him alone, but is always active in his own heart, and in his family, and in his entire environment, with its evil, unholy powers.

It is strange that while the Christian community in general acknowledges, confesses and experiences this with regard to the evil angels, they are often silent

about the working and influence of the good angels. Especially since the Reformation the oblivion of the good angels has increased. This can be explained by the fact that the respect for the angels had gradually turned into the invocation of the angels in order to exert their influence on Christ, and the Reformers opposed this by stating that Christ is our only intercessor, and that we need neither the intercession of the saints nor the intercession of the angels as factors that intervene between us and Christ. This does not mean that the angels do not pray for us, nor that our saints do not remember us in their supplications, but only that we ourselves, as the redeemed and children of God, have access to the throne of grace, and that we therefore need no intermediary to assure us of Christ's love and intercession. For He "lives to pray for us." But as is generally the case, whichever way one turns, we are always prone to exaggeration, to falling into extremes. At first, we placed too much emphasis on the intervention and significance of angels, and thus saw in them a kind of intermediaries who stood between us and Christ. This was rejected in the days of the Reformation, but now it is time to move over to the other side and banish the angels from our religion.

There are those among us who no longer count with the angels at all; who still believe in their existence, but see little else in them than an ornament of glory for God's glory. And this is in open contradiction to what Scripture teaches us about the world of angels. The angel of the Lord surrounds him who keeps God's law with an invincible army. Thus, he is well preserved." And Jesus Himself testified: "Be careful not to despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." It is therefore preposterous to admit of a constant influence of the evil, fallen angels, and to deny all similar influence and effect of the good angels. The evil angels cannot exercise such influence, unless the exercise of such influence must lie in the nature and calling of the angels as such, and therefore it does not make sense to assert the influence with Satan and his demons, but to count it for nothing with the pure, holy angels. This point has been elaborated on earlier in our articles, which later appeared separately as the Tractate of the Angels of God, so that we will suffice here to refer to what was discussed then.

Our life on earth, whether in nature or in the world of man, is an independent and self-contained life. In nature we know how it is the sun, and partly the moon and many a star, which not only influence the situation of this earth, but control it. And it is no different in the spiritual world. In the spiritual sphere, too, there is action from the higher spirit world on our spiritual life. The real spiritual battle and

struggle is not waged here on earth but in the unseen worlds, and what can be seen on earth is only the result and after-effects thereof. That is why it would be utterly unthinkable for the Christ to rule as King in the spiritual realm of this world, if he did not also rule as King over the spirits of the unseen worlds, both good and bad. Jesus' reign in the world of demons and good angels is not something that comes with his kingship of this world. It is a kind of secondary honor, given to him by the Father to increase his glory. Inasmuch as the spirit world up there constitutes the spirit world on earth, it was absolutely necessary, in order for the Christ to reign here, that he should also be given dominion over the unseen spirit world. Without absolute power in the spirit world, he could not exercise his spiritual supremacy on earth. And so it is in logical connection that the Apostle Paul first says Christ has received power over the angels and demons, and then that as such he has been given to the Church as its Head. Throughout the city at night the light is burning, whether it be from gas or electricity, but whoever is to make this light burn must be the master of the place where the gas is burnt or the source of the electricity is developed. And so it is that Christ must be lord and master over all the forces and powers that make it possible for light to penetrate the spiritual world on earth, and for this reason, in order that he might be Head of the Spirits and King of mankind, he was given the power, supremacy and supreme authority over all the spiritual factors in the unseen world that work and exert an influence on this world from there.

Thus, he received power and dominion 1°. over the reborn humanity, 2°. over the not yet reborn humanity that resists him, and likewise 3°. over the world of demons and of holy spirits, - and only through the dominion over these three spheres can his eternal and glorious Kingship exist.

X. - King as Mediator.

To the King now of ages, to the immortal, the unseen, the only wise God be honor and glory for all eternity, Amen. 1 TIMOTH. 1:17.

Also is the Christ first of all the Head of His mystical Body. Second, He is the Judge of all mankind. And thirdly, he is the Lord of the angels. At the present time there is still resistance to his rule both in the human world and in the world of angels. We are still in the period of struggle. The struggle is not yet complete. But once it is won, the outcome will be that Christ will reign victorious over the entire spiritual sphere of life, which includes both mankind and angels. All opposition will then be broken. In the world of mankind, every soul that is not in Jesus will no longer count. Our human race will then only be the reborn humanity. And likewise, in the world of angels, only the host of good angels, after the demons have been cast out, will continue to exercise their effect. This reborn humanity, with that host of good angels, will constitute the spiritual world for all eternity, and in that world formed from man and angel, the man Christ Jesus will be King. In his creation man was made a little less than the angels, but if man completes his vocation, he will rise far above the angels. Therefore, looking at Christ, the letter to the Hebrews says: "He has become so much more magnificent than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name above them;" a statement in which the author makes the angels appear as "serving spirits", and on the other hand, the Christ as "the radiance of God's glory and the expressed image of his independence, bearing all things by the word of his power. Christ seated at God's right hand must therefore always be thought of in His threefold meaning: Head of the church, Judge of the whole earth, and Lord of the angels, and thereby clothed with such majesty that He can subvert the entire spiritual order of creation, can break down all opposition in that spiritual order, and in the end is assured complete triumph in all spiritual creation.

Here, of course, the question arises as to the manner in which we must conceive of the relationship between this complete dominion of Christ over mankind and the spirit world, and the original dominion of the Triune God. At no time must it be suggested that God Almighty had divested Himself of His power and dominion, that He had withdrawn from the providential administration of His creation, and that He was now merely overseeing the administration of the universe by the Christ in His name. That would be to put the Christ in the place of the Almighty, to dethrone the Triune God, to let Christ alone reign on the throne, and thus to worship a God who, if we may, with all due respect, express it in a human term,

had been abdicated, and had now become a God of non-activity. A God who saw from afar how things were going, but who Himself had relinquished all influence on the course of things. An interim government, established, not for ever, because in the end the Christ would return the Kingdom to the Father, but for now, starting with Jesus' ascension to heaven, and ending only after Jesus' return to judgment. In more than one mystical sect such an idea had taken hold, and now there are not a few who understand the reign of Jesus, as the God-anointed King, in this way and no other. And against this one extreme, whereby for the sake of Christ's kingship the royal rule of Almighty God had to be temporarily rested, the other extreme continually arose in reaction, that, in order to maintain God's rule unharmed, more and more refused to understand the kingship of Christ in any other than a metaphorical sense. Thus, they became caught in the dilemma: There can be only one King. If Christ is that King, then God ceases to be our King. Or, conversely, if God has remained King, then Christ's Kingship can only be a Kingship in name only. To think of both, the Kingship of God Triune and the Kingship of Christ, as existing together, did not seem possible. Hence there have always been, and still are, circles in which all things are so almost exclusively expected of the Christ that the worship of the Triune God is damaged by it; and on the other hand, by reaction, much wider circles have arisen in which all things are expected of the providential government of God, but then also the Royal Government.

hopes for, but has as good as given up the royal rule of Christ. Scripture does not know of this contradiction. In Revelation 17:3 it says: "Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints," just as Paul exclaims in Titus 1:17: "To the King of the ages, the immortal and unseen, the only wise God, be glory and honor for all eternity! And next to it, just as decidedly and sharply, stands the Kingship of the Christ, "who is the faithful Witness, the firstborn from the dead, the Chief of the kings of the earth." Yes, the Christ sits "above all government and power and strength and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the next." It is therefore important to understand the Kingship of Christ in such a way that the Kingdom remains with God, and it is this combination of both that the Scriptures express by saying that the Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, at the right hand of God, in heaven.

This "seated at the right hand of God" is metaphorical language and, like all metaphors, it is derived from situations here on earth, and specifically from situations as they existed in the East in Jesus' days. In particular in the Eastern

countries there was a Grand Vizier, as there still is in some Eastern countries. Such a Grand Vizier is the ruler of the King's realm, who orders all things in the name of the King. He was and is the highest dignitary among the princes. Even though there are ministers, and even though there is a Council of Ministers, the Grand Vizier is far above these lower officials. Even today in Turkey the Grand Vizier, and he alone, has the title of His Highness. The Grand Vizier has the complete confidence of his Sovereign, his Sovereign grants him his full powers, and even though the reign remains with the Sovereign, so that he can depose his Grand Vizier at any time, as long as the Grand Vizier remains, he is the person through whom the Sovereign exercises his sovereignty. This unique position of the Grand Vizier gives him the right to the highest seat of honour on solemn occasions, and that seat of honour is on the throne, to the right of the Sovereign, and so sitting at the right hand of the King is the standing expression of the Grand Vizier's high position of honour. And this expression was already in Israel's prophecy, and was later transferred to Christ by the Apostle; not as if His majesty were fully expressed, for nothing on earth could be compared to Jesus' rule, but because a metaphor was needed, and our earthly society provided no other image in which the subordinate rule was more strongly expressed than in the position of such an Eastern Grand Vizier. But it was no more than a metaphor. No Eastern Sovereign possessed a majesty as befits God. The Grand Vizier of such an Eastern ruler was not his son, but a stranger. The Grand Vizier was often deposed and replaced by another, and then returned to the position of an ordinary subject. These are all additional circumstances that already show the fundamental difference between the rule of such a Grand Vizier and the Kingship of Christ. Jesus is King, the Grand Vizier was merely a paid official. Sitting at God's right hand should, as far as imagery is concerned, never be taken any further than to indicate that among all creatures no one is clothed with the majesty of Christ, and that God Triune exercises His dominion through Him.

The basic idea remains, therefore, that in the royal rule of Christ we are dealing with a transferred, an imposed, an instrumental rule. In God, the reign is self-existent and original; in Christ, the reign is a consequence of an act of God by which Christ is anointed King and clothed with power. But never in the sense that God, by anointing Christ as King of the Kingdom of God, would Himself have renounced His Majesty. God Almighty is and remains the King of kings. His is and remains the supreme rule. And where the Christ serves as an instrument through which God exercises his dominion, it nevertheless always remains God, and God

alone, from Whom the dominion emanates. If a mother entrusts the care of her offspring to a servant and this servant rules in the children's room, this never means that the mother has ceased to have control over her children. Rather, it is by virtue of her maternal authority that she appoints a servant over her children, for that servant must obey her orders and govern in her spirit. And as often as she herself appears in the children's room, no one thinks that her authority has been broken or even diminished by that servant. A teacher at a school with several classes is not present in all classes at the same time, and therefore he appoints teachers for the lower classes, who supervise the children in their classes who are entrusted to him. But always the Master remains the responsible person and every pupil as well as every teacher knows that the Head of the School exercises his authority in all classes. This is how it is with a king who places a commander at the head of his army. Every soldier and every officer of that army must obey the commander and carry out his orders, but in none of them does the idea arise that the King would thereby relinquish his authority. On a ship at war a chief officer commands, but if the whole fleet steams out under an admiral who has the supreme command, the whole crew knows that this admiral keeps the whole fleet in his power, and that the commander of each individual ship derives his authority only from him. And also, both the admiral and the ship commanders never think for a moment that the authority with which they are vested would exclude or nullify the supreme authority of the Sovereign of the country. Thus, we have before us examples from our earthly household which show us how a high authority can be exercised exclusively by other authorities without there ever being any question of the Sovereign of the country, a father in his family, a commander-in-chief in the army or an admiral in the fleet, relinquishing his authority. Rather, the power of those who use other persons to exercise it remains unharmed and unimpaired, and the original authority is not affected in any way. And thus, the supremacy of God the Triune remains entirely what it was and is, even though the Christ acts as the Mediator to exercise, in the name of His Father, His divine authority over the world of men and the world of angels.

Paternal power does not replace God's power over the child, and both, father and child, understand very well that it is God who rules them both. The power of the king who rules by the grace of God does not replace the power of God over the country and the people, and both, king and people, insofar as they serve God, understand that God remains their Lord and Master. And thus, the rule of Christ does not replace the supremacy of the Almighty, and it remains Christ's honor,

never to mean anything but the honor of his Father, to find his savor in accomplishing the Father's will, and not to keep his own from the Father, but on the contrary to bring them to the Father. All derived authority as such, be it that of a father in his family, of a ruler over his country, or of Jesus as King of the Kingdom of God, rests on and proceeds from the authority of God Almighty, remains subordinate to it, and does not abrogate it, but serves it and serves to glorify it. But while there is considerable equality between the derived authority of a father and king and the authority of Christ as King of the Kingdom of God, there are two profound differences between the two. The first difference is that the authority of the father and king is limited, whereas the Kingdom of Christ is all-encompassing. And the second difference is that the authority of a father and king on earth is often exercised imperfectly, and even against God's will, whereas the authority of Christ in the Kingdom of God is always pure and holy, and is never exercised except in accordance with God's will. A brief word about these two differences.

A father must take care of his children, ensure their existence, guide and educate them, and thus train them to act independently in the world. But in doing so, the father is limited in his resources. He must receive the bread of his God himself in order to be able to hand it out to his children. He has only partial control over the health and welfare of his children. He is not always with them. He is not in control of the influences that are exerted on his children from all sides. He has to use all kinds of help to guard his children, to lead them and to have them taught. And above all, no matter how intimately he lives with his children, and even though they are the flesh of his flesh and the blood of his blood, he has no access to their hearts other than in a very indirect way. Neither their inner life nor their destiny is in his hands. In so far as the authority of God is exercised by a father over his children, it is thus only exercised to a very limited extent, and it can never be said that the father is the instrument through which God exercises all his divine authority over the child. This concerns the first difference. And stronger still speaks here of the second difference. A father, himself a sinful, defective man, cannot but be a sinful and defective instrument for the exercise of divine authority. This often goes so far that a father not only exercises his authority over his child in an extremely fallible manner, but also abuses that authority to go against God's will with his child. There are fathers, unfortunately, who break down God's authority over their child instead of building it up. Fathers even caused their child to go against God at their insistence. And this not only through bad example and lack of

education, but even through the deliberate cultivation of unholy principles in the child's heart and the pouring out of ungodly seed. What is true of the father is also true of the princes of the earth. Their power, too, is on the one hand limited and goes beyond the inner life of their subjects, and on the other hand often turns against the honor of God, instead of inculcating and confirming respect for divine authority in their subjects.

But it is precisely these two obstacles that are completely removed by the Kingship of Christ. His influence on our hearts is unlimited. There is nothing in our existence or inner life that is beyond His power and influence. To make this clear, Jesus himself said that to him, not to the father nor to the prince, but to him alone all things were given, yea, that all power in heaven and earth was at his disposal. There can and must be complementarity with a father or a prince, but there can never be complementarity with the Christ. His reign encompasses the entire existence of His people. The Lamb that was slaughtered", God's angels sang, "is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and thanksgiving. And, in the other place, in Jesus any defective exercise of divine authority is unthinkable. Never can anything fail or go wrong in the exercise of the authority due to Him, and never, especially, can the exercise of Divine authority by Christ be contrary to the honor of God or His holy will. With all other imposed authority, it is the limited, the defective, the sinful; with Christ, the exercise of the Fathers' authority is always comprehensive, complete and holy in the most sacred sense. This means, on the one hand, that in the reign of the Christ no supplement is necessary, indeed no supplement can be questioned, and on the other hand, that it is precisely the divine authority that is always and fully expressed in His rule.

This is only possible because Christ is God's only begotten Son, and is himself partakers of the divine nature. It is so, as Jesus and his Apostles clearly state, that he is vested with this royal power as the Son of Man. As the Son of God, as the second Person in the Holy Trinity, no power could be given to him, but he possesses that power in and of himself. Nevertheless, even as the Son of Man he continues to carry his divine nature within himself. He humbled himself in the state of divine glory and is found in the form of humiliated humanity, but his divine nature could not be discarded. It could be shrouded, it could be shrouded, but it never left him for an instant. And precisely this makes that in his royal rule as the Son of Man, divine authority always reigns supreme. Both are inseparable from each other in his own person. We cannot delve deeper here, for who will say, albeit stumblingly, what the bond is between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in

the Divine Triune Being? Is it therefore enough for us that the Apostles, when they present us with the Royal Government, always refer back to the Divine power through which Christ, as the Son of God, created all things, being and remaining the reflection of God's glory and the expressed image of God's self-existence, so that we not only owe our existence to him, but also still exist through him. Thus, there can be no separation or opposition between the authority of God and the authority of Christ.

But his being King does contain the Mediatorship. The rightful fellowship of our spirit with the Spirit of God was broken by sin. By that sin there was an interruption. The divine authority, now taken in its holiest sense, could not be done justice in us sinners. It could be exercised over us, but not holily in us. And in this breach now the Mediator provides. As the Lamb who was slaughtered, he breaks through the poisonous stench of sin, which prevented the right of God from coming into being, and as our One, as the Son of man, he enters into communion with our sinful human race. This meant that the Christ gave us an approach to the divine life that we did not have directly with God Himself. In this way he was able to penetrate the divine authority to us and within us in a much more intimate way than communion with the Father, in our inadequate state, still allows. But, of course, it cannot stop there. The ultimate goal must be that we become directly subject not only to Him through Whom all things are, but also to Him from Whom all things are. The divine authority must in the end penetrate us directly from God Triune without an intermediate link and govern us completely. Well then, the Apostle testifies that it will come to that. Until the end of days the Mediatorship remains indispensable. But when the end comes, the Mediatorship will no longer exist, and the Christ will surrender His dominion, insofar as it ensues from the Mediatorship, to God and the Father, so that at the last all separation will be annulled, and it will then be God all in all. Then the divine authority, the divine authority, without intermediary will directly govern all hearts, and the world of mankind together with the world of angels will form, in glorious harmony, that spiritual creation in which God Triune will rule spiritually. It is not as if with this the royal rule of Christ were to disappear. He remains forever the Son of God, and He remains the Head of the mystical Body. But the veil of the mediatorship will then fall away; that mediatorship will then have fulfilled its fruit; and it will no longer be through the mediator to the Father, but in Christ in blissful fellowship with God Triune.

XI. - The Messiah.

And I saw in the visions of the night, and behold, there came one with the clouds of heaven, as the son of man; and he came to the Ancient of Days, and they drew near unto him.

And unto him was given dominion, and honor, and kingdom; that all peoples, nations, and tongues should honor him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, neither shall his kingdom be corrupted.

DAN. Vil: 13,14.

Christ's Kingship does not replace the reign of the Fathers, in but serves as its instrument. It is through the Royal Majesty of Christ that the Kingdom of the Triune God comes into its own. The prophecy of Israel and Jesus' own connection to Israel confirm this. He is not only our Mediator, but also the Messiah. In itself it was quite conceivable that the Son of God had taken on our nature through a new creation as in Paradise. Why could not the Word become flesh, without seeking connection with the existing human race? We also discussed elsewhere the question why God the Lord, after the fall of this generation into sin, did not destroy this human race and put another generation, a new one, in its place. But this has not happened. There may have been appearances, in which the Lord appeared to Abraham, to Hagar or to Jacob in a human form, but this passed. It did not stay. It was not the Incarnation. The Incarnation itself, on the contrary, is a direct connection to the existing, the sinful human race, and in that human race specifically to Israel as a nation, and in Israel to the House and Family of David, and in the House of David to Mary, the blessed one among women. Next to the lineage in Israel runs the prophecy in that same Israel. Thus, two lines run parallel. A single branch is set apart from our lineage in Abraham, who will be the father of all believers, and from that branch the House of David buds, and to that House of David, Mary is finally the budding flower. That is, if we may express it this way, the line to the flesh. But next to it runs a completely different line, because from Paradise a Messiah arises in the prophecy, who later on through Abraham attaches himself to that same Israel, and that is the line not of the flesh, but of the spirit. In Israel's history you see the two, the line of the flesh and the line of the spirit, at times intertwined, at others walking side by side, at times even rubbing up against each other. In David they are as one, in Rehabeam they diverge, in Manasseh they collide. them. But when both lines have finally come to their conclusion, and Messiah appears on the banks of the Jordan, in Capernaum and in Jerusalem's

Temple, then there has been a connection from God's side not only to our human nature, but also to the existing human race.

God's work in paradise is not destroyed in order to replace it with a second work of creation. Satan does not take away the first generation of the paradise as booty, so that God the Lord, after this first failure, has to try it with a second generation. No, the other way around, that first generation of paradise, as leprous as it is, is wrested from Satan, then cleansed of its leprosy, and, after being cleansed in this way, admitted to the kingdom of glory. The Incarnation was therefore the joining of a sinful generation. The sinful state of that generation was the very reason why God the Lord could not be all and in all in that generation. Thus, the spiritual rule of God Triune over this generation could not yet be direct. And here lay the necessity of the intervention of an intermediary, of a Messiah, who on the one hand would be God Himself, and on the other hand a member of that existing human race; who would be Head of that race, in so far as it was reborn; and precisely this is brought about and revealed in Christ's Royal Reign. Two periods can be distinguished here. The first is the period that begins with Bethlehem and that will end when the Last Judgment has been held and the Kingdom of Glory begins; and then follows the second period, when the Kingdom of Glory has come, and on a new earth, and under a new heaven, there is nothing more than reborn humanity. In the first period, sin and grace stand side by side, and grace does triumph, but without sin and all its demonic power having yet been eradicated and burned away. The last enemy has not yet been conquered. The struggle, which aims to bring all of God's enemies under the feet of Alessias, is still going on. But one day it will end. Then the power of Satan and sin will not only be completely conquered, but also nullified. Then the human race, pruned and shaken, will have sprouted new splendor, sinless and pure, and then the struggle to bring about the kingdom of eternal peace will be over. In the first period the circle of the Kingdom of God, which is foreshadowed in David the hero who fights God's battles, and then the second period of Christ's royal reign, which was foreshadowed in the peace reign of Solomon. This first period still continues today. The present living race is also in that period. The reconnection of the spiritual life of our generation to God Triune thus exists in Christ and through him in his members, but not yet to our generation as such. Hence the intermediate dominion of Christ, as an instrumental dominion, in which the Redeemer covers the sinful in us, and is Himself one with the Father. But once the battle, the struggle, is over, and once sin has been wiped out for all, then the Father Himself joins the reborn generation, and God will be

Triune all and in all, that is, not only in some of our generation, but in our entire human race as such. And even then, the Christ will still be the Head of this reborn humanity and the King of this generation as His people, but the intermediate link will then fall away. The connection will then be complete. God and his humanity are one in Christ. They are all one, just as Thou, Father, is one. in me and I in Thee." The answer and application of the supreme prayers, no longer, as now, to the few, but to what God, in the creation of our family, had set before Himself as the goal of His holy Kingdom.

The Messiah therefore does not suddenly appear in our generation after paradise, but a long preparation precedes his coming. And that is according to the pattern in Abraham and his seed, in the people of Israel, in the tribe of Judah, in the House of David, in the family from which Mary was born, and finally in the person of Mary as the Mother of God. In addition, the spiritual line in the prophecy runs from paradise, which also concerns Abraham to the people of Israel, and continues in this people until the time when David's house was thrown down, the greater part of Israel wandered into exile, and even the Temple was destroyed. And now it is remarkable in this prophecy that it steadily prophesies two things, on the one hand the restoration of God's own rule over his people, but on the other hand also the coming of a Messiah, of an intermediary, of a Mediator, who will stand between God and his people, and who will initially lead the royal reign. Here again, the two moments. On the one hand, that God himself must be king and, on the other hand, that a Messiah appears who exercises this royal rule in his name exclusively for God and to his honor, without there being the slightest mention of a contradiction between the two. Also, in the reign of the Messiah, it is the reign of God that is maintained. In Psalm 96 the coming not of a Messiah, but of Jehovah himself is announced: "Jehovah rules; the world will be established, it will not be moved. He will judge the nations in all righteousness. Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth rejoice, and the sea shine with its fullness before Jehovah, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth." And likewise in Psalm 98: "You rejoice before Jehovah, all the earth, cry out for joy, and sing joyfully and psalmically before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the nations in justice." Isaiah also says: "Your God will come to avenge you with the retribution of God. He will come and redeem you." Still stronger it sounds in Isaiah 40: "O, Zion, thou proclaimer of good tidings, lift up thy voice with might, fear not, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold here is thy God. For behold, the Lord Jehovah shall come against the strong, and his workmanship is before

him." Or also in Isaiah 52: "Jehovah will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your retreat." Not differently does the Lord express it in Ezekiel: "So says the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I, yes I, will inquire after my sheep and will seek them out, as a shepherd seeks out his sheep." Thus, the constant announcement that it is Jehovah himself who will approach his people and assert his royal rule.

Throughout Revelation always that one thought: In sin man breaks away from the community with his God, but God will heal that broken community. Man has departed from God, but God seeks out, investigates and traces the man who has wandered away, and will not rest until the original community has been fully restored. The approach of the Father of spirits to the spirit of man is the essence of the whole work of revelation. When Satan, in the fall of man, attempted to dethrone God, God Himself opposed this, and did not rest until all the original fellowship had been restored.

He will not rest until man has once again bowed down in adoration at the footstool of His feet. That is why there can never be any question of the intervening royal rule of Christ replacing or limiting the royal rule of God Triune. Revelation as a whole has but one purpose, and that one purpose is precisely to restore the complete dominion of God over man, whom He created in His own image.

But when Scripture proceeds to explain how, and in what manner, this restoration of God's dominion over mankind will take place, then the view is opened from the very beginning of Paradise that it can only be effected by the Son of Man, presented as the female seed in the promise of Paradise. And with this the Scriptures insert the prophecy of Jesus' instrumental Kingship as an intermediate link in the prophecy of God's coming to his people. That inserted prophecy then widens more and more, until it assumes the character of Messianic prophecy in Israel, i.e. becomes the foretelling of a King-Priest, born of Israel, who will extend his rule over all nations and peoples, and who, after a hard and fearful struggle, in which he himself will first suffer, will at last hold the judgment, and then bring in the kingdom of eternal peace. And now in this prophecy both thoughts are constantly combined, both that Jehovah Himself will rule His people, and that Jehovah will do this through the Mediator. On the one hand it is said: "Jehovah, will search for my sheep like a shepherd," but on the other hand, "I will raise up a shepherd for them, who will pasture them, my servant David will be their shepherd." Or also both together in Ezekiel 34:24: "I Jehovah shall be their God, and my servant David a king in their midst." The two ideas thus, of a direct and of

an instrumental reign, go together, without excluding each other. Also, in the reign of the great King who will appear as Messiah, it is God's reign that confirms itself.

History also shows you this same distinction and conjunction of the personal rule of Jehovah and the assigned rule of the Messiah in the course of life itself. It is already revealed to Abraham that kings will spring from his loins. Jacob in his blessing speaks of the. Jacob in his blessing speaks of the Scepter of Judges and of a Silo that will come, to whom the nations will submit. Bileam also sings at Israel's journey to Canaan of a "sounding of the King" that is with them. Even Moses points out the consequences that the appearance of a King will have for the people. But with all this, in the first part of this history the King himself remains absent. The Messiah has not yet come, and neither has his example or type. For the time being, only one idea prevails in all of this history, and that is that of Jehovah's reign. Abraham could very well have assumed the title of King as soon as he had gained a foothold in Canaan. He, who fought a battle with his allies against Kedar Laömer and defeated him, was not nearly as powerful as Melchizedek, who held the title of King of Salem. Many other kings of the time were also certainly less powerful than Abraham in that region. Yet there is no question of Abraham taking the title of King. We see the same thing with Isaac, and then with Jacob. And even more so in what you see at the time of the exodus from Egypt. At that time, the lineage of Abraham had already grown into a large and numerous people that could bring armed troops of thousands and tens of thousands into the field, and that people had a head, Moses. Not Aaron, the priest, but Moses remains the leader and captain of all the people until his death. Not in the patriarchal sense, because he did not have this exercise of authority by family, but by virtue of his appointment by God. Nothing would have been more obvious than for Moses to have assumed or received the royal title. But here, too, the kingship did not materialize; something that is all the more evident because Moses not only led and saved the people, but also organized them and brought them under fixed laws. But under all this, it remains in Israel pure and direct Theocracy. Jehovah Himself is Israel's King, and there is no King under Him. After Moses' death, Joshua acts as an energetic general. He overcomes most of the then Kings of Canaan, and takes their cities and strongholds, but he too does not hold the title of King. Jehovah alone is honored as King in Israel. Among the Judges, it is no different. Richter after Richter appears and is honored as a leader in wider or narrower circles, but the idea of a king only appears with Abimelech in Shechem and has no hold on the pious people. First under Samuel this becomes different. When this Seer grew older, the people began

to feel other needs, and then they called for a King "like the other peoples had", and from this moment on the royal power appears among Israel, in distinction to the royal rule of Jehovah. Yet it is precisely here that the contrast between what was called a King on earth, and what in Messianic prophecy would be the King intended by God, and represented in an earthly example, becomes apparent.

Kingship, as the other nations knew it, is in irreconcilable conflict with the Kingship of Jehovah. To Samuel it is said unequivocally: "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should no longer be King over them." The King, who acts first, is therefore a final deception. Saul's Kingship is not only diametrically opposed to Jehovah's Kingship, but also to the Messiah Kingship. He therefore goes down, and his Kingship perishes. And now God himself begins to establish the exemplary Kingship of Israel. David, Isaiah's son, is called from behind the flock. He is anointed and strengthened to lead Israel's battles, and in spite of all opposition his Kingship is finally recognized by all Israel, and this King is crowned with the covenant promise that God will build him a house, and that in this Davidic House the Kingship will one day assume a lasting and eternal character. But with this Kingship deployed by God Himself, the Theocracy does not fall. Jehovah remains Israel's King, and David "as the man of God's heart" exercises his high rule. After him now appears in Solomon, his son, the second phase of the exemplary Messiah-Kingship. The first phase would be struggle and wrestling. After that, in the second phase, the glory of peace would break through under the Messiah-King, and it is this future glory that is foreshadowed in Solomon's reign. Immediately afterwards, however, Israel was robbed of all illusion, as if the kingdom of the Messiah had already come to David's natural house. Already with Rehabeam, the ideal of the Messiah-Kingship was separated from the real monarchy in Jerusalem. The largest half of the people fell away. Idolatry again increases hand over fist. There are Kings of David's house who go along with this, and even stir up that evil of apostasy from Jehovah. In between these are the better kings, who restore the Theocracy so that the covenant of God with David may endure. But however high some of these kings stood, this realization gradually dawned on the pious people that the real King had not appeared in this series of kings. As a result, the prophecy of Jesus' Kingship increasingly separates itself from the real Kingship in Jerusalem, takes on an ideal spiritual character, and raises the expectation of a Messiah who will soon come as a miracle, and in whom God Himself will approach His people.

But in the meantime, the separation of the ideal from what was in view goes even further, because finally the whole of the Kingdom in the House of David is destroyed, the people themselves are driven into exile, and the Temple in Zion is disturbed. Now everything is gone in the Holy Land. There is no more King, there is no more free people, there is no more Theocracy, there is no more Temple and no more sacrifice of atonement. Israel could not have been driven more powerfully from the real world to the ideal. And it is especially thanks to the exile that the Messianic prophecy of Jesus' kingship as coming from above, as spiritual in character, and as destined to be a reign over all nations, breaks through ever more clearly in the prophecies. In the Psalms and the first Prophets, too, you will find clear indications that leave no doubt about this, but at the beginning the Messianic prophecy of Jesus' Kingship is still shrouded in a mystical veil, and it is only under and after the exile that both the ideal and the personal character of the Messianic Kingship take firm shape. It is not separated from the House of David by this. Rather, the conviction that the Messiah will be a sprout from the house of David is steadily gaining in certainty. But the earthly glory fades, and the greatness of the Messiah-King fades into the. Man of Smart e, in the "Shepherd who shall be pierced." All that remained was a severed trunk, and from that trunk a risen one shall come forth. The idea of reconciliation, the idea of the priest mixes with the idea of the King, and the majesty of the King who is to come is no longer derived from Solomon's elven throne, nor from David's warrior trophies, but from his higher origin. The divine nature of this ideal King begins to shine through. "Therefore, O God, thy God has anointed thee with oil of joy." Divinely great, despised to the world and cast out by the world, this King will be. The Messiah becomes the suffering Messiah on earth. There will be a downfall in blackness and in death in the form that the prophecy shows you. From Israel His image is thereby loosened. It will be a reign that will encompass all nations, but a reign to which he can only come by rising from the dead. Only then will the struggle against all evil powers begin, and only when that final struggle is completed can the glory of the kingdom of peace, which is sung about by prophet after prophet, break forth.

In the meantime, however, four centuries had elapsed before the Messiah promise, thus richly developed, was fulfilled. In those four centuries, the voice of prophecy had been hushed, Israel as a nation-state had risen and fallen in an entirely different form, and Israel's expectations of the Messiah had been completely changed. What had already acquired a spiritual, universal and ideal character in the prophecy, has in the course of these four centuries been reduced to a national scale and taken to

be a matter of fact. It now became a Messiah who would come to deliver the Jews from their oppressors, from Herod the Idumean and from the Roman legions that were dominating the whole country. Thus, all higher ideas were lost, all ideal ideas faded, the spiritual faded away, and when at last the spiritual Messiah himself appeared, these two diametrically opposed ideas clashed: 1e. On the part of Jesus, a Messiah-Kingship, which with its starting point in divine nature, meant the restoration of God's supreme rule in a spiritual sense over all nations and peoples, and therefore had to go through suffering to reach glory; and 2e. on the part of the people, the expectation of the re-establishment and liberation of the Jewish nation-state, in order to go out with broad armies and to conquer the surrounding peoples, as in David's days. In the struggle between these two diametrically opposed ideas, the Jewish nation-state collapsed. When the Christ had appeared, that nation had fulfilled and exhausted its calling, and what remained was not Judaism but the glory of its Messiah, who, though he died, in overcoming death, established in his own person the spiritual reign of Jehovah over all nations and peoples.

XII.- King of Israel.

Ye worship what ye know not; we worship what we know: for salvation is of the Jews. JOH. 4:22.

First there was in Israel the absolute government of God, the direct working Theocracy. God was King. He alone. Then the idea of a Davidic Kingdom comes in, which, although appearing in earthly form, at the same time shows an ideal line. As a result of Israel's infidelity, tribulation and exile, and as the fruit of the prophecy that broke through powerfully just in those years, earthly kingship will soon fall away. At last, there will no longer be a King from the House of David. But it is precisely now that the expectation of the Messiah is taking on a more spiritual character, and the national conception of the Davidic kingship is collapsing into the ideal conception of the Messiah as King of the Kingdom of God. In the meantime, however, a Jewish People's State is reviving in Canaan. The Maccabees amaze with their heroic achievements. And again, the national conception of the Messiah superseded the ideal of the King of the Godhead. Especially when, shortly afterwards, foreign domination again offended the Jews, the whole people again clung to the national idea of the Messiah. The national Messiah himself became the ideal for the Jews, and this gave rise to that high self-esteem that made the Jew feel that he was the heir to world domination in national pride. All peoples could find refuge in Israel's tent, provided the tent remained Jewish. And then began that mighty propaganda to win proselytes, of which Jesus spoke: "You travel about sea and land to win one fellow Jew, and if you win him, you will make him a child of hell worse than you are yourself." Your imagination of a Messiah who will satisfy your national pride erects a wall between you and the true Messiah and prevents you from entering his kingdom. And where that heathen man, whom you are circumcising, would otherwise have had an open ear and open heart for the true Messiah, you are closing him from me, and thus from his eternal salvation. Thus, when John the Baptist finally appears, all Israel is stuck in its national bitterness, so stuck that even just before the Ascension, Jesus still has to hear from his own youth: "Lord, when will you re-establish the Kingdom of Israel?" Paul in Antioch had to openly resist Peter, and even then, the Jewish ulterior motive, which had an effect on the newly converted Christians from the Jews, was still stirring in Peter. Especially the appearance of Herod, the Idumean, who was from Edom, drew the Jews' spirit from the humiliating present to a future of honor, in which the second David would be enthroned in Jerusalem, in order to subdue the nations from Zion, not metaphorically, but actually. The Jews were the holy

people; the Goim, i.e., the nations, were unclean. Only through proselyte baptism could those who were Gentiles pass into Israel. Through baptism he then broke away from his own people, yes, even his own family, in order to pass over and merge completely into Israel. Later, salvation would be established in that Israel. And from that Israel salvation would proceed over the earth, but it would proceed in no other sense than that all nations would be converted to Judaism, or would be subjected to it by the Jews. Those who resisted would suffer. And finally, this would be the kingdom of glory, when the King of David, and not the Emperor of Rome, would have the scepter over the world empire, and the service of Jehovah in His temple on Zion would supplant all idolatry. Thus, the stream of spiritual life sank under the prophetic expectation. Only the crust of ice left behind by the flowing stream recalled those metaphorical words in which the prophecy had sung of its high and holy ideal. The spirit of prophecy lost its power over the soul of the people, and Pharisaism, on the other hand, took possession of that proud soul. A Pharisaism, therefore, so feigned in marrow and bone, not because it deliberately lied, but because it presented itself as the bearer of the Messianic expectation, and yet in fact left all the high and holy ideal of Revelation petrified in a lawful form service and in the illusion of a national self-image.

It was then that John the Baptist first made an irreparable break in this national haughtiness, precisely through his baptism. John's baptism was nothing less than a testimony to Israel that Israel itself was unclean, and that therefore the unclean Gentiles should not enter Israel, but that both Jew and Gentile were unclean and both had to enter the true Kingdom that was to come in Jesus through the baptism of the remission of sin. In this baptism in itself lay the program of things to come. That seemingly so simple baptism at the Jordan was the most radical condemnation of Israel's national expectations and national pride that could be imagined. The Jews cried out to the Gentiles: "I am holier than thou, come over to me," and John, just before the Jews, even called them out, saying: "You yourselves are unclean, then be baptized to enter into the holy kingdom of Him who is coming, and to whom I am not worthy to unbind the cobwebs of His feet." Thus, baptism seemed to be opposed to baptism, as if both baptisms were equal. The baptism of John, to call the Jews to the Kingdom of Messiah, as opposed to the baptism of the proselytes, which brought the Gentiles into Judaism. But this was no more than appearance. The baptism of the proselytes was a purely external baptism. The Pharisee was really formalistic in his adherence to the external bath of water and to the ceremonies that accompanied it. But the baptism of John was something else

entirely. A sign, and no other sign, of conversion and the washing away of sin, referring to the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. In this way the baptism of John broke through the formalism of the Pharisees and led them from the fossilized forms of religion to the spiritual core of the true religion. And John summarized the latter in the one solemn announcement that not the restoration of the Jewish Kingdom, but the Kingdom of heaven had come near.

Jesus' coming to the Baptism of John thus had this high significance, that Jesus Himself, who was born as a Jew and therefore a member of the Jewish nation-state, in the Baptism at the Jordan solemnly broke with the false national expectations of the Jews of that time; laid a ban on all that false national expectation; and now took position as the pretender-King, if we may so express it, of the true Messianic Kingdom. In the baptism at the Jordan lay in principle the complete condemnation of, and the direct break with, Pharisaism, and the opening up of that spiritual Kingdom in which he would act as the King anointed by God. Yet you can tell by everything that Jesus, in this way, by no means cut the tie that bound him to Israel's past. Salvation is of the Jews", he said to the Samaritan woman. He sent out his disciples to all the spots and cities of Israel. He himself brought his testimony no other way than to Israel. He sent the harsh word to the heathen woman around Sidon: "It is not lawful to take the bread of children, and to throw it to the dogs." Always he invoked the Revelation, in the Patriarchs, and also in Moses, the psalmists and prophets given to Israel. Rather than flee Palestine, he himself sought his exit in Jerusalem. And when Pilate nailed the sign above his cross, which read: the King of the Jews, this expressed the false national view of the Jews, but it also had a profoundly real meaning. The Kingdom of Heaven arose from Israel.

In all that we know of Jesus' short life on this earth, it is clear in every way that he could only act in Israel. On the one hand, his origin was Israel, and on the other hand, only in Israel did he find the young people to whose spirit his testimony could be connected; the environment, as we say, in which he could work. And this origin and this environment are equally important here. There was nothing in itself to prevent the Incarnation of the eternal Word from taking place in Rome, with a Roman woman as the mother. God's omnipotence was not bound in itself. And according to ordinary human calculations, one could even say that an appearance of Jesus at the center of the then world power would have made a much more powerful impression than his appearance in remote Galilee and in the forgotten spots of Palestine. But such was not the divine order. In this order everything is

prepared, everything is organically connected to the past, everything is historically determined. It is not a sudden intrusion of the highest Revelation into the world society of the time, but a connection to the course of Revelation from the earliest centuries. It is one work of God, which had begun in the entire course of Revelation and now reached its climax in the appearance of the Promised One to the fathers. The lineage of the Messiah goes out from Abraham. It passes into the tribe of Judah. It establishes itself in the House of David. And through a history of centuries, she runs out into Mary, the blessed one among women. Mary was the product of this holy history of many centuries. Compared to the women of other nations, and even compared to the other women of Israel, Mary stood so very high, not because of what she herself was or had accomplished, but because God had chosen her for this. In her, the female nobility shone at its most brilliant.

But even the bond that linked Him to David, Judah and Abraham through Mary was not enough for Jesus. To be the Son of Man his historical connection had to continue all the way to Adam, the dethroned head of fallen mankind. The genealogy in Matthew I points back to Abraham, that in Luke III goes back to Adam. Already with Seth the separation began in this second genealogy. This line continues over Noah and ends up, over Shem, at Abraham. Jesus must not be inserted as a foreign element in the middle of historical mankind. He must have his genealogical root in the first Adam, from whom the entire human race arose. Only in this way was he essentially our one. And so first He could become the Head not only of a few converts from Israel, but the Head of mankind reborn, and the effect of His sacrifice on the Cross could be traced back to the beginning of original sin. Legend has it that under the hill of Golgotha rests the mortal remains of Adam, and that through a crack in that hill a few drops of blood from the Man of Sorrows were drained to Adam's mortal remains. Without wishing to emphasize this point, the legend expresses the profound idea that the atoning power of the blood of the Christ, because he was of Adam, went back to Adam. He did not die as the atonement for our, that is, the Jews', sin alone, but as the atonement for the sin of the whole world, for our entire generation, for the reborn from all mankind.

If our King thus found in Adam his historical connection to humanity, in Abraham to Israel, in Judah and David to the King's type, and in Mary to the blessed one among the women of Israel's ennobled humanity, it can never be inferred from this that salvation arose from human holiness. The inclusion of Tamar and Bathsheba in the genealogical register already implacably rejects any such notion. On the contrary, because of its historical origin, all honor was taken away from mankind,

and all honor of salvation was assigned solely and exclusively to God, because what distinguished Israel from the nations was not the existence of Israel as a holy nation, but rather what God had worked on and in Israel. And this work of God, and not of man, in preparing for the coming of our King was by no means limited to his origins, but manifested itself even more strongly in the creation of what we called the environment that was indispensable if Jesus' appearance was to be effective. Everyone lives in a milieu, in an environment, in a circle of life, whose life he shares and in which his life can only fully express itself. Thus, there is a religious world, a moral world, a world of thoughts and propositions, and a world of persons in the midst of which we act and live our lives. If there is no sympathy, no agreement, no connection between our lives and the world around us, then what happens to the plant that you transplant into foreign soil happens to us: we thrive, we do not grow, we have no influence. No one experiences this more bitterly than the man who is sent out to preach the Christ to pagans or Mohammedans. At first, he imagines that this will happen of its own accord, because in every man's heart there is a certain need for salvation. But he soon realizes that this is not working out, precisely because he can have almost no contact with the religious and spiritual life of the pagans and Mohammedans. They are different, they exist differently, they feel differently, they think differently. The same would have happened to our King if no human environment had been prepared in Israel to which he could relate. He would not have found it in Athens or Rome. It could not have arisen anywhere on earth from ordinary human development. It could not have come unless God Himself had to provide it, and now our God has actually done so through Abraham's separation and through the founding of the people of Israel. What Jesus brought was the kingdom of heaven. Something from heaven had to enter this earthly life in order to make the necessary preparations for Jesus' coming. And this is exactly what happened through the whole of the Revelation that God gave to Abraham and Israel, and through the special course of life that God, under the effect of His miracle power, extended to Israel.

What was needed in the first place was a circle, a people, a milieu in which the one true God was known and recognized, and in which all idolatry had been broken off. Monotheism had to prevail in this environment. Well, this result was in fact achieved in Israel when our King appeared. Not before the exile. Until the exile, Baal worship prevailed among ten of the twelve tribes, and also in Judah's kingdom the most banal idolatry reappeared, often encouraged and promoted by the Kings of Judah. But in the end this evil was defeated. Under Ezra and

Nehemiah, and under the Maccabees, the rejuvenated Jewish people made a final break with idolatry, and adhered in principle to monotheism in their entire existence and outlook on life. Even now, among the wandering Jews, the profession of this monotheism, insofar as they remained religious, is their highest and most desired honor, the glory of their strength. The apostles, acting among the Gentiles, again cry out: Keep yourselves from idols! But Jesus did not fight idolatry. Idolatry had been conquered in Israel, and Jesus entered the midst of a people who generally professed the one true God.

The same was true of the moral world that Jesus found in Israel. In earlier times the Jews had also suffered from the deep moral decay brought about by the Asian idolatry of Astarte and Baal. In the Pagan world there was no sense of a divine order of purity in the moral sphere, to which every human being was automatically subject. Hence the terrible immorality which prevailed everywhere in the Pagan world and which had led the service of the senses into opulence and bread-drunkeness, even into the most unnatural sin. Just read in Romans 1 how the apostle, who lived among this pagan world, found it in Corinth, Athens and Rome. Only in Israel was this different. This is not to say that all sorts of sins did not break out in Israel as well, and that Herod in particular did not compete with the Emperor of Rome in sinful opulence in his court at Tiberias. But Israel did have one thing, that it recognized a law of God and a higher order of life, and that this law and order had cultivated a moral seriousness that was sought in vain elsewhere. In the Pagan world there was moral seriousness among the few, but not in popular opinion. And even though Pharisaism in Israel had petrified the seriousness of God's law in its formalism and had removed the life-giving vein from it, the fact remained that the conviction had become ingrained in Israel of all ranks and positions that we cannot mould the law to our own will, but are subject to the law laid down for us by God. Only in this way was it possible to conceive of sin and to feel guilt, and therefore Jesus could only act as the Lamb of God who carries away the sin of the world in such an environment.

The same applied to the world of thought. Israel was entrusted with the Holy Scriptures. In that Scripture a complete worldview was given to Israel. A right view of the present, and a right view of the ideal that had to be pursued. The psalms in particular show us the state of mind of the pious people of Israel thanks to this Revelation, and the prophets open up the most glorious prospects for the ideal of the future, which, in contrast to the inadequate present, was one day to be realized by God's action. This can be summarized in the ideal of the Messiah, as

the psalmist and the prophet have drawn it to us in ever clearer lines and colors. And even though in the Israel that Jesus found this high ideal was skewed by one-sided patriotism and by national narrow-mindedness, the expectation of the second David still only held good in Israel, and from the Law, from the Psalms and from the Prophets, Israel knew the thoughts, the terms, the words, the expressions, that would later be necessary to make the Kingdom of Heaven understood. Only in this way was there an exchange of ideas, was it possible to express thoughts, and could Jesus present himself, not as a stranger, but as the promised one of the Fathers, as the Messiah in whom Israel's entire history was centered. In his first appearance, he begins by reading the promises from Isaiah's prophecy and then declares: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your ears. That is the connection to Israel's world of thought.

Finally, there is the personal environment. Had Jesus died, had he suffered, had he risen and ascended again into heaven, without leaving behind persons who could be his witnesses, then, after his death, everything would have reverted back to the way it was. Only by shooting out the tendrils could this vine continue to flourish and bear fruit. For this, persons were needed who formed a fixed circle around him, and who, after his passing, would carry his testimony into the world. Well, Jesus found those persons in Israel; and Paul included, all his apostles are of Jewish origin. Yet Jesus did not find these persons in Jerusalem, nor in Judea, but specifically in Galilee. This was the northern region, where Pharisaism with its fossilized nomism had exercised much less influence. The inhabitants of this region were regarded as "the people who do not know the law," that is to say, as a group in which the spirit of Israel lived on, but without having undergone the transformation that Pharisaism brought about in Judea. In many, therefore, the true confession had been diluted, but there were some among whom the spirit of Israel still retained some of its prophetic brilliance, and it was these men and women who joined Jesus unhesitatingly and undividedly, thus offering him the circle he needed. Not as if in that narrow circle there were not also much of the national sourdough. That restless urging of the Apostles for the establishment of the Kingdom in Israel, and that asking of that mother, what high dignity her sons would hold in that new Kingdom, remained until the very end a dividing wall between Jesus and His own. This had to be resisted, therefore, and all manner of misunderstanding had to be eradicated from that small circle before the full, clear awareness of the Kingdom of Heaven could break through. But the data for affiliation were there after all. However difficult it may have been, that circle finally came to a right

understanding of Jesus' appearance, and through that circle, after his Ascension, his cause was not only promoted, but carried into the whole world. And so our King appears as the Son of Man, by virtue of his descent from Adam, Abraham and David, and at his appearance in Israel he finds monotheism ready, ready also the recognition of God's law, ready the world of thought to which he could connect, and no less ready the circle of persons who take in his Spirit and can understand and propagate his Word.

XIII. - John the Baptist.

And saying: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. MATTH. 3:2.

John the Baptist, before the Messiah appears, fulfills another special calling, closely connected with the preparation for the coming of our King throughout Israel's past. For the appearance of Immanuel to be successful, it was essential that a religious and moral atmosphere, a mind and imagination be prepared in advance, and that a personal circle be established to which he could belong. This indispensable preparation was effected in Abraham's isolation and in Israel's history, and it is noticeable how the Diaspora, i.e. the dispersion of the Jews at that time through the countries to the east and west of Palestine, particularly on the Euphrates, in Egypt, in Greece and Italy, gave the same point of connection to the Apostles and the evangelists, when they also spread the Gospel among the Gentiles. Not only did the preaching of the Gospel usually originate from the Synagogue, but long before that the knowledge of Israel's Revelation had come through the Synagogue to the seriously minded Gentiles. And even if it were only a few who had themselves circumcised, the number of men and women everywhere, especially from the upper classes, who feared God and allowed themselves to be found in the Synagogue, was quite large. We know how in Capernaum even the Synagogue of the Jews was built by such a devoted pagan. It is not going too far to speak of two kinds of preparation from Israel, in Palestine before the arrival of the King himself, and in the Diaspora before the arrival of his apostles.

But of how great importance this general preparation for Immanuel's appearance may have been in Israel, still, when his coming was imminent, a final preparation was needed, and for that John the Baptist appeared. The prophecy had already pointed to the coming of such a forerunner. A voice of those calling in the wilderness had been heard: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make a straight path for our God in the wilderness". And it was heard from Malachi's lips: "See, I will send my angel to prepare the way before me. And in an even more specific sense: "Behold, I send you Elijah, the prophet, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes". Thus, John the Baptist appeared before Jesus, not only to announce his imminent coming, but also to bring about a shifting of the spirits, and to bring together again all that had built up in Israel's history and prophecy the ideal concept of the Messiah and to set it firmly against the distorted national view. John tells the Israel of that time that God can also beget Abraham children from the stones of the rocky desert. This is the jaw-dropping blow against the fallacious, fleshly patriotism that boasted only of descent. John transfers the baptism of

proselytes to the Jews themselves. This is the break with national pride. The pseudo-baptism that the Jews practiced, instead of saving them, destroyed them and, according to Jesus' sharp word, made them children of hell instead of children of God. True baptism, on the other hand, was the baptism that first led the Jew and then the Gentile out of their unholy state into the state of God. For this very reason John could only administer this baptism temporarily, while waiting for the one who would baptize with the fire of the Holy Spirit. And finally, John the Baptist destroyed all expectations of a return of Solomon's earthly glory in a Davidic Kingdom in Jerusalem, by announcing the coming of a King, whose Kingdom would not be earthly, but heavenly in nature. Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

This significance of John's action in the providential spiritual order cannot therefore be overstated. His was not just a preaching that summarized the prophecy, i.e., summarized it in short, his action was an act. He intervened with a powerful hand in the state of mind at that time. He brought about a fermentation in the minds of the entire country. That fermentation brought about a shift. In Jerusalem people looked upon his action with dismay. Herod trembled. The Sanhedrin became anxious. And yet the impression of his actions on the people was so overwhelming that they did not thirst for him and left him by the Jordan

and that almost all over the country a group was formed that took sides with John and against the official clergy. Before his arrival, the spirit of the entire nation was shackled to the official clergy; and what he did and accomplished by his actions was to free the spirit of a part of the people, to call them back to the essence of things, to restore the higher and more ideal conception of the Messiah, and to join in with the great prophets who had risen before, during and shortly after the exile. It is also with that spiritually liberated and recalled part of Israel that Jesus found acceptance during his appearance. It is John who, through his baptism and preaching, has led the Bride of Israel to the Bridegroom who came.

All of this is brought together in John's Gospel of the Kingdom, in his proclamation that the Kingdom of heaven had come near; reason why Jesus Himself, at His appearing, summarizes in similar words the brief contents of the Gospel, and begins in the same way by testifying that the Kingdom of heaven has now begun. The kingdom is the kingdom of the King. The sermon thus does not begin by announcing the Savior, the Redeemer, but places the King in the foreground. The King would bring salvation and a glory that surpasses all others to

the people. He would also redeem from sin and reconcile with God, and be our guarantor of eternal life, but all that does not precede his Kingship, but follows from it. He will also be our prophet and our high priest, but not in order to become King first and establish His kingdom. It goes the other way around. Christ is our King, he establishes his kingdom, and as King he is also a prophet and priest, in order to make the establishment of his kingdom successful. Not enough attention has been paid to this. When hearing the word Kingdom, not enough attention was paid to the fact that there is no Kingdom without a King, and that whoever speaks of the Kingdom of heaven, supposes the heavenly King. John also announced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but only when he stood before the future disciples of the Christ. These were introduced more deeply. But his first and his general announcement to all the people was and remained the announcement of our King, whose kingdom was about to begin and of whom he was not worthy, precisely in view of that Kingly honour, to untie his shoes. The kingdom, and thus the King, went first. Everything else followed. The Christ was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek too was first King and as King first priest. Jesus' prophetic calling comes and passes. His high priestly act is accomplished on Golgotha. But he is and remains King. In that Kingship lies His very highness. To this end, Jesus himself said to Pilate, that is, to be King, I was born, and for this purpose I have come into the world. From the outset, his unbeatable majesty is drawn together in the Kingdom. Before going to Golgotha, he rides into Jerusalem on the colt of the donkey, under the cries of the people: "Hosanna the Son of David! One does not understand Scripture, therefore, if one thinks only of the Kingdom when John preaches and loses sight of the King. In the preaching of the Kingdom the preaching of the King was included, and the announcement of the King was even in the foreground. Without the King there is no Kingdom. The Kingdom is not first established for the King, so that he may later act in it. He himself brings about that kingdom in his own person. He founds it. It is only through his action that it comes into being.

This must be emphasized so strongly because, unfortunately, even among professors of Christ an idea took hold, as if the "Kingdom of Heaven" were to be understood as a certain spiritual order, outside of any connection with Jesus' Kingship. This conception has penetrated our minds from a wide circle which cries out for law and justice and boasts of spiritual ideals, but refuses to bow its knees to Jesus and, not feeling anything for his Kingship, refuses to honor him as King. They then generally and metaphorically speak of a spiritual realm, a realm of the

ideal, a realm of justice, and imagine that the expression "Kingdom of Heaven" is to be understood in the same metaphorical sense. As soon as justice triumphs and high moral ideals take root, it is thought that the kingdom of the spirit will of itself come to rule. This is then understood to be entirely outside Jesus' personal rule. Such a kingdom, such a spiritual kingdom, they imagine, would have come along the way even if Jesus had never appeared. It is a kingdom in itself that must gradually come to victory and triumph. And even if one then acknowledges that Jesus is also among those who have promoted the coming of this kingdom of the spirit, one nevertheless understands this only from its moral and spiritual and religious influence, and does not think of putting all this in direct and inseparable connection with Jesus' Kingship. That is why even those who honor in Jesus no other than a Rabbi of Nazareth, and even doubt his absolute sinfulness, can fool around with that Kingdom of heaven; a Kingdom, which then by no means would have been founded by Jesus, but to whose foundation all nobler figures among all nations have contributed, and only in this sense also Jesus, for his share. Now this whole idea goes against everything that has been revealed to us in Scripture. Not until Jesus comes has this Kingdom of heaven come near. It is a Kingdom that begins with the coming of the King. A Kingdom, as it was announced in the prophecy, with its roots in Israel's history and in David's house. A kingdom that cannot be thought of without the King, that is summed up in the King, that enters the world only with his appearance, and that will reach the revelation of its full glory through him and him alone. The concept of a spiritual realm in the figurative sense was entirely foreign to Israel. This conception came from the Greco-Roman world, not from the Israelite world. It is a deductive attitude, which is completely out of place in the interpretation of Scripture. A kingdom without a king in the most literal sense of the word is, on the lips of the Baptist and on those of Jesus himself, an inner contradiction.

Figuratively speaking, we Westerners speak of a kingdom of minerals, a kingdom of plants, a kingdom of animals, and also of a kingdom of arts and sciences, the kingdom of truth, the kingdom of justice. The French even speak of a *règne de la mode*, the realm of fashion. The scholars among us, in connection with the Latin custom and our former state orientation, repeatedly spoke of the *respublica litterarum*, i.e., the republic of letters, which amounts to the same thing. Everything that was a closed whole with fixed laws was presented as an empire. Sometimes one even went so far as to speak of a lion as the king of the animal kingdom, of a cedar as the king of the plant kingdom, and of gold as the king of the

mineral kingdom. But all this remained figurative, a transferable manner of speaking, in which one does not think of a personal king. And by applying the same to the realm of truth, the realm of good and the realm of beauty, one arrived at a conception of the kingdom of heaven that was completely in line with the rule of good, true and beautiful. In Frankfurt on the Main the inscription "Devoted to good, to true, and to beautiful" is inscribed on the facade of the Opera House in large letters, and it is actually in this same spirit that all too many have created the "Kingdom of Heaven". To the foundation of this kingdom it was now recognized that, like Plato and Aristotle, like Solon and Lycurgus, yes, in a more elevated sense even Jesus must have contributed, but it was all taken metaphorically, and it is precisely this figurative, metaphorical conception that is unknown in the East and appears nowhere in Scripture. The trees are still metaphorically introduced as seeking a king, but the word kingdom is nowhere found in Scripture in the metaphorical sense we often ascribe to it. Especially as soon as we arrive at what we call the organic kingdom, it is impossible to conceive of the whole as a kingdom without conscious legislation, conscious administration, conscious jurisdiction, and conscious struggle against the enemies who want to overthrow the kingdom. And since this conscious regiment of a kingdom is only conceivable in a personal King, the Kingdom of heaven may and cannot be understood in any other way than as a kingdom with its King, founded by its King, maintained by its King, ruled by its King, and defended by its King against its enemies. Accordingly, Jesus also appears in Scripture as the King of the kingdom of God, as the King who founds, maintains, reigns and protects the kingdom of heaven, and who, as King of that kingdom, will one day sit as Judge to judge the living and the dead, and at the same time, with this judgment, to deal the final blow to his enemies, so that they must all submit to him. Strictly, and without admitting anything, it must therefore be maintained that John's announcement, later taken over by Jesus himself, reads: "that the Kingdom of heaven had come near", implied the announcement of the Messiah himself, i.e., the announcement of the King who would bring us the Kingdom.

Now let it be noted that the expression "Kingdom of Heaven," occurs only in the Gospel of Matthew, and that, even in places with the same name, the other Evangelists already use the expression of the Kingdom of God. The same thing, but indicated in slightly different terms. Now, in the expression "Kingdom of God", the King is mentioned by name; it is the kingdom in which God Himself is King; and if Matthew too had chosen this form of expression, the figurative view

would probably never have been accepted; and it is more than anything the expression in which: from heaven, instead of: from God, is written, that has led to this figurative view. The idea that, if there is mention of the Kingdom of God, this would not include, but rather exclude, the Kingship of Jesus, does of course not hold water. It is precisely in the Kingship of Christ that the Kingship of God operates and is maintained. Rather, in this expression of the Kingdom of God lies the higher purpose of stating that it was God Himself who would come to us in Christ, and that the Christ would not be an ordinary descendant of David, but such a descendant, such a sprout of David, in whom the Eternal Word, who was God and with God, would Himself take on the flesh, that is our nature, and this from the lineage of David.

This goes back to what we have already explained. Originally there was no king on earth in Israel, because God Himself, in a completely theocratic sense, was the King of Israel. It was therefore a rejection of his God as his King when, in Samuel's day, Israel cried out for an earthly King. Saul therefore fell, and only in David did God himself raise up a royal family, which in the end would flow again into the kingship of God himself, and thus restore the original state. Already the prophecy had clearly foretold that this would happen through one who would be "Council, Strong God' himself, and who, as Immanuel, would cause God himself to reign in his reign. John's announcement that, shortly after his appearance, an absolute Theocracy would arise again through the coming of the Kingdom of God, thus implies both a fulfillment of the prophecy and at the same time a contradiction with what Israel had wrongfully desired. Israel had rejected the Kingdom of God. Then an earthly kingdom had come. But the divine order had led to this in such a way that, in addition to that earthly Kingdom of David, the theocratic Kingship of God would ultimately return, and this by the first mystery that was gradually revealed, that one day God Himself would be revealed in a sprout from the House of David.

John's announcement of the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven, thus goes directly against the expectations of the Jews at that time. Their national arrogance is rejected, for God is King not only over Israel, but over all mankind, and God will reveal Himself as King, not by crowning another Jew from the house of David, but by sending His one-born Son, and in Himself revealing Himself to Israel and to the whole world. Israel was called to service. It was the people chosen by God to receive the Revelation and to carry salvation in an imaginary form. But once that calling had been fulfilled and that task completed, what arose from Israel

was to flow out through the whole world, and thus humanity was to take Israel's place. In this way Israel would also retain a place of honor among the nations, but it would have to relinquish its entirely unique and exceptional position of its own accord. It was not to become a Jewish kingship, with all the nations and peoples submitting to the Jewish People's State, but the Jewish People's State was to merge into the Kingdom of God over all our generation. That is what happened, but against Israel's will and choice. It even violently resisted this transition. It beat the Christ on the Cross and thus brought upon itself the judgment that came in the destruction of Jerusalem thirty years later. Yet the people of the Jews have remained a nation ever since. While all the surrounding peoples disappeared without trace, the Jewish nation is still there, and has even grown to almost twelve million. It also still possesses very special intellectual gifts, which of course it only receives from God. But with all this it has moved beyond the line of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the necessary consequence that was inherent in John's announcement that now the Kingdom of God was to be restored not only over Israel, but over the world, and that this would not be the earthly Kingdom, but the Kingdom of heaven.

The King is thus in the foreground. That King is God Himself. God Himself reveals Himself in the Son of His love. Thus, the Christ acts in His name as King, and it is through Him that God reigns again as King. And this reign of the Christ lasts until the royal authority is actually and truly restored in all spheres of the spirit, and then the Son will hand over the kingdom to the Father Himself, that God may be Triune all and in all. Jesus expresses the same when he says: "My Kingdom is not from here." The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Christ are one. Therefore, there can be no question of a figurative conception. In den Christ the King acts personally. From him goes out the law for the Kingdom, as he exposes it especially in his parables about the Kingdom. He rules that Kingdom. As King of that Kingdom, he will one day sit as Judge. And it is he who personally fights for that Kingdom, to subdue and render powerless all enemies who oppose it. It must never be said, therefore, that this Kingdom has a purely spiritual character. For it does begin by not coming "with outward countenance." There is no throne on earth for our King. His is no glorious court procession. He has no armed force marching before him. There is no crown of diamonds on earth, which shall be pressed upon his head. But this purely spiritual character of the Kingdom of which he is King will not last forever. Once the spiritual struggle draws to a close, his Kingdom will also break physically. The whole of nature will be shaken up; the existing order of

things will be violently changed; events will take place that are so terrible that the whole earth will melt away, and later it will shine in splendor as a new earth under a new heaven. The full meaning of this cannot yet be worked out here, but it must nevertheless be pointed out in this connection, because all figurative conceptions of the kingdom of heaven have led, and must lead, with necessity and of themselves to reject the Last Judgment as a product of fantasy, and to overturn everything in prophecy, in the reasons of Jesus, in the apostolic letters, and in the Revelation of John that points to these physical events that await in the end of days.

XIV. - Triumph of the higher order.

That the mortal of life may be devoured. 2 COR. 5:4.

To clear insight into Christ's royal rule is best gained by observing the rule of the principle of life in those orders or realms of nature which possess a life of their own.

Nature is not a monotonous one, but infinitely varied; so much so, however, that in this great diversity there appears to be a certain order, by which the phenomena we observe are divided into certain groups, which are then called orders or realms. The lowest kingdom in order is the mineral kingdom, followed by the plant kingdom and then the animal kingdom. The name "mineral kingdom" is certainly not a good one, and in any case, it would be more correct to refer to this kingdom as the inorganic one. To this lowest realm of nature belongs everything that does not yet exhibit the action of its own life germ. The question whether crystals do not do this to a sufficient degree remains unanswered. We cannot go into the details here. We shall confine ourselves to the three realms of nature in general. Between each of these realms there are boundaries, but boundaries which it is not always possible for us to draw sharply. For our present purpose it is sufficient to count all that lives on its own principle among the plant and animal kingdoms, and on the other hand all that lacks such a principle of life, among the inorganic, or what used to be called the mineral kingdom. The possession of a life of its own is manifested first in the vegetable kingdom, and to an even greater extent in the animal kingdom, in such a way that the higher you climb through the animal species, the more strongly it comes to the fore, and most strongly in man, who according to his lower disposition is always classified in the animal kingdom. But man is not included in the animal kingdom because the principle of life in him takes on the even higher form of spirit. Through this spirit man is again related to the higher spirit world, and in the order or realm of all that is spiritual the Christ again occupies the highest position. He is the Lord of the angels and the Son of man and, as such, completely controls the order of spiritual life here and there. And because He is the Eternal Word, the entire spiritual world consists of the Father of spirits, but only through the Christ. Thus, starting from the lowest, you find this creaturely stage. First there is the material world, then the plant world, then the animal world; within the animal world emerges the world of man; man is connected with the world of spirits. It is thus a combination of all the orders of the lower natures and of the spirit world, which reaches its highest zenith in Christ. A universe, originating in God's creative word, ascending in its own sphere from the lowest to the highest;

finally culminating in the Christ; and in and through the Christ again bound to God Triune. Beginning with the unconscious, inorganic, and ascending through all levels and stages to the God-manifest life-consciousness in the Christ, and in him sealing the creative bond with God. Is it a rule that every higher order controls the next lower order? If we now take it as a rule that every higher order controls the next lower order: the plant the material; the animal the material and the plant; man the material, the plant and the animal; man's spirit all these things and, furthermore, his own animal nature; and Christ, in all these things, the spirit in man, until Christ too surrenders the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all and in all, then this shows how the power of Christ, along the whole range of creation, reigns royally in all Creation, and how all things in heaven and on earth have been handed over to Him. In his miracles, the Christ demonstrated his power over material things, over plants, over animals, over mankind, and over the evil spirits he cast out, in every way, from the outside. Hidden and internal, that bond existed from the beginning, for all things, i.e., all realms and orders of nature, were "created by him, and exist together through him." Through his mediatorship he raises this all-embracing and all-embracing bond to the highest spiritual consciousness. And once his mediatorship has been completed, the transition of this broken world into the realm of glory will take place at the same time as the last judgment, through tremendous events in all the realms of nature, which will emanate from him. His royal rule, founded by the Eternal Word in the creation of all things, thus permeates all spheres of creation, and in the end, it will appear that nothing in heaven or on earth is excluded from that royal rule.

Now we see life emerging in the realms of nature in a way that is completely unimaginable to us, and as soon as that life, in its first, lowest and weakest form, has not revealed itself, it immediately exercises dominion over the lower parts of creation. The seed germ of a plant may be so small, but it immediately rules over the material things it finds around it. From that germ, which emerges from the seed, the plant builds itself up, and in doing so it has access to the substances it finds in the soil and in the air. The plant processes these substances in itself, transforms them into its own nature, masters them, and perpetuates its life by procreating, in order to rule over the material again and again and to subject the material to itself. Only when the plant is weakened in its life stock and is no longer able to exert its full dominion over the matter in the soil and air, does its life become endangered. The material then begins to resist its dominion, reasserts its

own power, and if this continues, it finally extinguishes the life in the plant, and the plant withers, petrifies, and dies. Death sets in.

It is the same with the animal. The animal also carries life within it, and life of a higher kind and order than the plant possesses. By means of this life contained in its being, the animal uses both what it finds in the material world and what it finds in the plant world to build and maintain itself. It is true that the plant kingdom also knows parasites which live off other plants, and likewise the animal world knows a devouring of one animal by another, but this is an exception to the rule that the plant lives off the material in the soil and air, and the animal lives off both the material and the plant kingdom. This too is dominion. The plant serves the animal. And the animal plants

And the animal plants and propagates itself in order to continue its dominion over the plant kingdom. But here too the same phenomenon occurs as in the plant world. The animal can weaken. Both the material and the plant world can wage war on it in that weakened state. Plant tissues can cause devastation in the body of the animal. And even without that, the life of the animal can lose its controlling power. Then life in the animal also dies out. Decomposition and decay set in. And here, too, the end is destruction.

If you now look at man, you will see the same phenomenon in him, insofar as he belongs to the animal kingdom, as in the animal. Man, too, is built from a germ of life, which serves and controls the elements of the material and vegetable world. But in mankind something even higher occurs, through which man also controls the animal world. And here too you see a struggle emerging. Poisonous plants and wild animals threaten his life, and even in the form of germs and microbes, of maggots and tapeworms, you will see the plant and animal kingdoms fighting against the life of man. If these elements of a lower order succeed in establishing themselves in the human body and in attaining independent development in that body, so that the life force of the body can no longer control and stop their proliferation, then here too destruction will occur, the life of man will be affected, and death will follow. Or, if man's life force diminishes and he dies, chemical substances, plant germs and indwelling animals resume their dominion over the human body, and decomposition sets in.

But with man this goes further. In mankind there is not only, as in animals, a soul as an element of life, but that soul, that element of life in man, also possesses a spiritual character. And that spiritual element in man rules over his lower soul life,

which he shares with the animal. It is precisely because of this dominance of his spirit over that lower, animal part of his soul life that his value and power as a human being are revealed. The more the spirit in him rules not only over the material, vegetable and animal elements in his body, but also over the lower elements of his soul, the higher he stands as a human being. And conversely, the less the dominion of the spirit in man succeeds in subduing the animal parts of his soul, the more mankind's value as a human being diminishes and he returns to an animal existence. What Scripture reveals to us about the Beast that arose from the sea, and about the animal forms of the ungodly kingdoms, says nothing else than that man as a group, as a people, can also descend from the high spiritual order to the low animal order. Even popular custom calls man, who has lost all dominion over his animal life, a beast of a man. And this is not metaphorical, nor figurative, but very factual. If man's higher order recedes, all that is left is his lower order, which he shares with the soul life of the animal, and his kinship with the animal becomes conformation. Now this too is destruction, is dissolution, and ends in death. Hence the Scriptures present the consequences of sin as the death of the spirit in man. Death cannot be a power here, and cannot enter into any sphere, unless the high in the soul, which has dominion over the low, is broken in its power, and stripped of its dominion. It can even be said that the resurrection of Christ was nothing other than the final reign of his holy, spiritual life over the lower orders of nature that took up arms against him and tried to destroy his body. This they could not do, because his inner life force, which emanated from his spirit, had remained unbroken.

But even if in this way the law that the higher prevails, when that which is of a lower order triumphs, could also be applied to man, so that poison, parasite or devouring by the power of the plant and animal kingdom would destroy his body, and even if the animal in his soul life could also lower him spiritually, all this is still not enough to explain the breaking of the power of his spirit. It did not come about outside the realm of plants and animals, for we also read of a tree fruit and a serpent at the time of his fall. Generally speaking, we count only the three realms of the material, vegetable and animal, but the realm of the spirit must not be forgotten for, through his spirit, man is in contact with the spirit world as well, and from that spirit world effects may consequently be produced upon him. Now, compared with man in his glorious completion, the angelic world is of a lower order than man. It is true that man was created slightly inferior to the angels, but his consummation lies in the fact that it is not the angel that is crowned with glory,

but man. It is written explicitly that we shall judge the angels, not them us. This can be explained by the fact that the angels were created in consummation from the very beginning, and therefore did not undergo any developmental process, whereas we, on the other hand, are dependent on a steady development, which can only be completed in stages. We start lower, but go higher. In fact, man in paradise was less than the spirits in the high spirit world; potentially, according to his ability, he was more. Now the workings of this higher spirit world can be of benefit to our higher development, inasmuch as the angels are sent out for the sake of those who will attain salvation, and the Christ Himself says of the children that their angels are always standing before their Father in heaven. An unstoppable army of high spirits surrounds those who do God's will, and only eternity will reveal to us what we owe to the higher spirit world for our salvation and sanctification. But from that higher spirit world an infuriating element can also penetrate us. In this higher spirit world there is a demonic realm as opposed to a sacred one, and this demonic world is organized under a spirit that is richer than any other, Satan; and this Satan, or devil, like the plant world and the animal world, imposes himself on us in order to become a parasite within us, that is to say, a parasite on our spirit.

As a mere spirit, this demonic parasite has no hold over the plant world; it can, however, come into contact with the animal world, as we see that Jesus put a number of demons into the herd of swine so that they tumbled down the mountain and drowned in the sea. But this spiritual parasite only has its real effect on mankind, because in mankind life also contains a spiritual element. Like the parasite in the body, this demonic parasite also nests in our spirit. This took place especially in Jesus' day, as evidenced by the many possessed persons whom Jesus met on his way, for possessed persons are precisely those in whose soul a demonic spirit has managed to nestle as a parasite, to speak through his mouth and to feed on his spirit.

Yet all this was only the aftereffect of Satan's first incursion into our human race. At that first intrusion it was decided. The natural bond of man's spirit to God was severed by him and, on his part, a cord of dependence was thrown around the spirit of man; and since then, this influence has continued, and is still continuing, until it will not be nullified by Christ until the end of days. Thus here, too, the dominion reversed. Man, as a potential of a higher order, had dominion over the spirit world and should have retained it. But the demonic world, however much of a lower order, then rebelled. It has taken upon itself the rule over mankind. And if no other order of God had intervened, this demonic world would gradually have destroyed

all that was high in man, pushed him back into animal life and caused him to vegetate like a plant. Always as a result of this fixed law: If the higher is weakened, the lower immediately resumes its attempt to nullify the rule of the higher, and itself attracts the rule of the higher. Therefore, only by the entrance of the Eternal Word into our nature could our human dominion be restored. Once weakened by the fall, the spirit of man could no longer shake off the demonic yoke or resume its dominion in the spirit world. Only when the spirit of man emerged unimpaired, unbroken and inviolable in a human child could the Son of man again overthrow the tyranny of the demonic parasite. What entered now was death. Not as if all life had been extinguished at once. On the contrary, the animal life persisted, and the spiritual life remained as the wick of the night-light, which glows with soul. As a result, the animal life of man gained the upper hand and the destructive power of the material, vegetable and animal world was thrown upon him in order to weaken him physically by all kinds of illness and danger, until finally the battle had to be given up and physical death occurred. The same weakening, poisoning and destruction occurred in the society of mankind, which brought it into complete disorder. And what was most frightening, the spiritual in man was also poisoned and forced by Satan to serve his highness instead of God's honor.

Thus, the parasitism of the lower orders and kingdoms penetrated ever more into the higher order of creatures, and our whole world was faced with the question whether the higher order would be able to regain its dominion, or whether it was doomed to perish in the domination of the lower. Would the plant and animal kingdom continue to destroy man physically; would the animal in us destroy the spiritual; and would the demonic world continue to poison the spirit in us? The question was not whether God would allow the human spirit to break away from Satan and take back its own dominion over all the lower orders of creation. The question was not whether God Almighty could break this resistance of the lower orders. His Almighty, who created everything, could, if necessary, turn it all back to nothing and create a new world. No, it was about the spirit of man. The question was whether the spirit of man could be restored to its original strength, and thus regain the dominion originally granted to it over all the lower orders of creation. It is therefore the Son of Man who always comes to the fore in this new struggle. The Son of man was God, but he had humiliated himself, yes destroyed himself, and taken on the form of a human being, yes, of a servant. And this is the marvel of salvation, that in this Son of Man the spiritual is entirely unweakened and

unbroken, and that his spirit has dominion over all the lower orders of creation. In his miracles he does this over the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom and the realm of demons. But this demonstration of regained human supremacy served only to start the battle and to show his supremacy. But this triumph in the periphery was not the salvation of our race. The battle must be fought spiritually in the center, in the center of human life itself, and this took place in the Temptation, in the spiritual duel between the Son of Man and the Ruler of the world. Hence, at the time of Temptation, the fasting to suppress the animal, the wild animals that prowl about, and finally the bread question when Temptation begins. And when it turned out that the Son of Man could not be wounded or hurt spiritually, it had to be Satan's intention to make Jesus disappear, and if possible, to destroy him with death. That is what Satan set out to do, and Jesus died. But it was in that death that the spirit of the Son of Man proved invulnerable. He devoured death by the power of His spiritual life. He arose, and it was in the resurrection of Christ that the power of the higher order over all the lower order of creation was restored. The life of the spirit overcame death. The life of the spirit broke through into the glorified body, and from that moment the great process begins of taking what is to be saved from the world into Jesus and making it like Him. This power carries the souls and transforms them into eternal life, that is, into a life that is no longer controlled by a lower realm, but controls itself. A completely different order of things now pervades human society. And the prophets foretell us of the moment when, having been renewed, a new humanity will shine forth on this earth, one that, glorified in body, will shake off all dominion of the lower realms over this body, and one day will stand before God glorified as Jesus Himself, yes as crowned King. And here too is organization. It is not each man in himself, but all mankind in one Body, and in that Body Christ as the Spirit-providing, all-leading, all-controlling Head. That is His Kingship. Thus, a Kingship that begins in the spirit of man, but through the spirit of man subjugates all the lower realms of nature to itself, and thus penetrates all these realms, i.e., the whole of creation. A re-creation that encompasses man in his soul life and his society, but also extends to the lower orders of animal, vegetable and material life. A kingship that may have been temporarily interrupted, but that restlessly pushes on, and will reveal itself at the end of the centuries as a complete, all-embracing dominion. And once this is complete, everything that stood between the Triune God and man as created in His image, and that hindered the full, rich and intimate fellowship, will fall away. Then the Mediatorship will also be complete, and God Triune in Christ will control all of our gender, and through our gender all of creation, and be all in all.

And what else will have triumphed than life? That wonderful principle of life, which rises in the plant, develops more abundantly in the animal, and completes itself in man. And that life, which was continually encroached upon by the proliferation of the lower realms, and thus stripped of its power, that life was the Son of Man himself; that life in its highest and richest manifestation. And it is that life, which in the Son of Man acting unconquerably, has devoured the material, and thus triumphs over death. The last enemy to be vanquished is Death; and He, who overcomes Death, is the fundamental Life in its highest expression of power. When God will be all and in all again, it is Life that will flow forth pure and undefiled from the Fountain of Life and will flow through all of His creation.

We dare to trust that what was said in our first series about the revelation of Christ's royal rule also in the increasing power of the human spirit over nature, will now be understood in its deeper meaning.

XV. - Cohesion with life.

For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he the Son to have life in himself. JOH. 5:26.

The apostle testifies that in the Eternal Word, i.e., in the Son, is life, and that this life is the light of men. Instead of light, we might write higher consciousness, but the meaning remains the same. In Christ is life, and from that life emanates all higher flourishing, and thus also our salvation. Christ himself explains this further when he says "that the Son has life in himself", and that we, on the other hand, can only receive life from him. He appears to us as the one who gives life to the world. He calls himself "the way, the truth and the life". Hence the maxim: "He who has the Son has life, and he who does not have the Son has no life. All salvation is a transition from death to life. And Christ is at the same time the Bread of Life, i.e. the Bread by which he who once received life remains alive. Paul even draws this so far that our - life with Christ is hidden in God, yes, the Christ is our life. If now, in contrast to that life, all unholiness, all iniquity, all the inner weakening of our higher existence, is portrayed by Scripture in the image of Death, it follows that the reign of our King must be a reign of life over death, and that it is in life itself that we must seek the fundamental explanation of that reign. Death has reigned from Adam to Moses, and so now life will reign in those who are in Christ. In all Jesus' appearance, therefore, the most important thing is not the word that He speaks, but His own person; not what emanates from Him, but He Himself; and the whole struggle against Him ultimately draws together in the one aim, to destroy His life; while, on the other hand, His Kingship arises from the fact that the life that He possessed within Him could not be destroyed, but broke through death, and glorified itself in His Resurrection. Not sin, not even Satan, but Death, i. e. the antithesis of Life, is therefore the last enemy that must be conquered. The movement of grace starts from life as from its first milestone, and the last milestone is not reached until Life expels Death. The reign of the kings of the earth is not like that. It occurs externally. A command goes out. The subject hears this command. His will conforms to that command, and he carries it out. Or he does not, and then the strong arm comes and the King forces him. But here we have a rule, which rises internally from life itself, and rests in life. Christ, our King, shares his life. Those who receive his life are born again, and as such are members of his body; an image derived from life as well. And out of that life comes the hearing of his word, and the fulfilling of his word with one's own free will. But that is a consequence. It is an effect. It is the second phase; but the starting point, the

beginning lies in the life, and therefore in Christ's Kingship it is the life for all things, i.e., his life, that rules us, and makes him King in us.

Now Christ's life is the highest, the richest, the only unshakable life, but it nevertheless remains in its fundamental character one with all the life of the creature. It is the life of the highest order in the life of creation, and from that life, therefore, the Kingdom, which is far above all the realms of nature; but it nevertheless follows the law which governs all life, and is related to all the lower orders of life. He, the Christ, took on our human nature, not only in the soul, but also in the body, and our human body, in its turn, is directly related to the animal kingdom as well as to the plant kingdom. Thus, there is an ascending order of creatures. The lowest in order is the life of the plant, then comes in second order the life of the animal. In the plant, life rises in a soul, but not in the animal. All the same, Scripture tells us that the animal also has a soul. But in mankind this soul life ascends to a higher order, to a spiritual order. In the spirit world this spiritual order begins by rising above us through its ready completion, but in the end the spirit of man rises above the spirit world. The higher order of man's spiritual life then finds its highest revelation in the Christ, and in the Christ is the rightful connection with the life of God. A scale, as it is called, i.e., a ladder of life, along which life climbs higher and higher from rung to rung, but in such a way that even on the lowest rung life itself remains the great mystery, and it is said of plants and animals in Psalm 104 that the spark for it is ignited "by the Spirit of God. From God, through God, and to God is on all the range of life the set law. And the second law is that in this series of the lowest, the higher, and the highest life, the higher always rests on the lower and must govern the lower, and does so as long as it remains intact and unblemished. But then also vice versa, that if the life of the higher order decays and sinks, the life of the lower order starts to rule over the higher, and thereby kills the higher life. If the plant starts to rule the animal, the animal dies. If plant or animal dominates man, man dies physically, and if the animal soul dominates man's spirit, man dies spiritually. And that is why man's life could only become imperishable and eternal through that, that a spiritual life of a higher order took hold in man, a life that spiritually could not succumb and physically could break through death; and that has happened in Him who, as our King, controls all the lower orders of life so completely that no life of a lower order could ever again prevail over the higher. And so, this our King, who has life in himself and is our life, rules over all orders of creation. He rules the spirit world, he rules the world of human children, he rules life in the realm of animals and

plants. He rules over the plant life, over the physical life, over the soul life, over the spiritual life. And all things are subject to Him, because "all things exist together through Him."

It is only through this return to life that the Royal Lordship of Christ in its full splendor and glory appears to us in a clear light. His birth, His miracles, His death, His resurrection, His being the head of the angels and of mankind, His possession of power over all things, i.e., over all creation, only then forms a unity if you go back to the deepest core of His power, i.e. to the life of the highest, all-controlling order that was in Him. Everything can be analyzed, for everything a cause and origin has been discovered, but not for life. And whether you take this life of plant or animal, of man or angel, it always remains just as enigmatic, the great riddle that defies all solution. Suddenly life appears in creation, and to the question: Who ignited the spark of that life, there is still no other answer than: God did. All life in creation is an immediate testimony of God's action, both in the life of the nations and in Michael the archangel. Through all the orders, kingdoms and ranks of creation, that life therefore remains one in its essence. It unfolds from lower to higher. First it creeps and crawls; then it goes and moves on in higher consciousness; gradually it develops into ever clearer consciousness; it becomes spiritual in nature, and begins to show God's servitude to life. And finally, it appears in Christ in that higher, royal form, by which it is both human and divine at the same time. All these transitions from lower to higher are only brought about by an action of God. The animal is not of the plant, man is not of the animal, the angel is not of man, the Christ is not of the created spiritual world. Again and again the mystery enters in. The separate mystery in the creation of the plant, its own mystery in the creation of the animal, a special order in the creation of angel and man, and so also a distinct mystery in the Incarnation of the Word, but in this whole series of mysteries God Himself connects time and again the higher with the lower. There is no life of the animal except through the life of the plant. In mankind there is a connection with animal life. Between man and angel there is coherence, and the Christ does not appear except through the assumption of our human nature.

The dominion exercised by the Christ, as having in Himself the highest, the unshakable life, is therefore not an effect of imposed dominion, but a dominion that organically and naturally pervades the whole of creation. His is an unshakable kingdom, precisely because it is not externally formed and imposed, but is rooted in his life and, through this highest life, automatically exercises dominion over all

life of a lower order. It is not a scepter that is handed out to Christ so that, by the power of this scepter, he can subdue everything else. For him and for his dominion the image remains: The head of the body. In the dominion which our head exercises over our limbs, our head does not give external commands to our limbs, which our limbs, by bending their will, obey; but the dominion of our brains over our senses, and over our limbs, proceeds naturally and applies internally. If the head wants to walk, our feet automatically move forward. If we want to grasp something, our hands automatically move toward the object we want to grasp. If we want to see something, our eyes automatically direct to the object we are looking for. It is already in us a self-operating rule of the brain in this head over the other parts and conductors of our body. And now Scripture puts this image forward to help us understand the nature and effect of the royal rule of Christ, which differs so dramatically from the rule of earthly kings. The kingdom of heaven is within you, and it is through the life itself that your King pours into you and allows the blood to flow through your veins, through your whole being, that He establishes, carries out and maintains His rule within you. But in doing this you cannot and must not separate and segregate yourself from the rest of creation. You are part of that creation, you participate in all the life of the lower orders of creation, and thus the royal rule of Christ is not determined and limited to your spiritual life. It penetrates all orders and ranks of creation. Here too, and here in particular, everything lower is subject to the higher. Christ had dominion over the kingdom of plants and animals. We never read that the Christ was ill. His life and body were too much in control of him for that. In his resurrection, he shows how the power of his life over his body even broke through death. And only when you understand the royal rule of Christ in that perfect sense to which you naturally aspire, when you choose his life as your point of departure, does a light shine on those otherwise so mysterious words, that he has been given "over all things in heaven and earth.

It is remarkable in this context how little Christ, in all his actions and words, withdraws into the detached spiritual realm, how seldom he utters doctrines, and how he dogmatizes only in exceptional cases. Almost always Jesus moves in his actions, in his words, and under his preaching in the life that he finds around him. And then we see our King occupied with the creature life of the spirit world, with the ordinary manifestations of human life, but also with the creature life of a lower order in the plant and animal world, and even into the realm of the material. Already under Israel the connection with the higher life in the Tabernacle and Temple was given from time immemorial in the fruits of the field and in the

offering from the flock, which was carried up to God in His sanctuary. And far from loosening that link, we hear Jesus, even in the Sermon on the Mount, pointing out to the multitude the lilies of the field, which neither labor nor spin, but which God Himself clothed with a glory, far beyond the splendor of Solomon and his palace. And likewise, he points to the birds of the heavens, which neither sow nor reap, and yet are all fed by our Father who is in heaven. Jesus also uses an image from the animal world to illustrate his break with Israel. Just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, so I, your King, wanted to gather you, O Jerusalem, but you refused. He himself is presented by the Baptist in the image of the Lamb of God. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And in the Revelations on Pathmos this own image for the heavenly realms is taken over in the heavenly vision, and John sees "a lamb standing as if slaughtered." Always from the lower order of creation the image is taken for what in the higher order demands our worship. Jesus Himself serves as the Bread of Life. And when the moment of separation from his disciples approaches, the journey to Golgotha begins, and definitive signs for the New Covenant must be established, Jesus once again takes from the world of plants both the bread and the wine, and presses the sacramental seal on both. We already pointed out how the same thing happens in his miracles. Miracles in the plant world, when the loaves are multiplied and the fig tree withers, and miracles in the animal kingdom, when the miraculous catch of fish amazes the young, or the fish are multiplied for the multitude of 5000. Jesus hardly ever moves in the distracted, almost always he is busy in what is in front of his eyes; and the two lower orders of the animal and plant kingdom are so little forgotten in this, that they rather come to the fore, and constantly offer new material for the existence of a higher power and for the unveiling of holy mysteries.

This connection of Jesus to the ordinary life around him is even more evident in his parables, which are almost always presented to us as parables of the Kingdom. After all, in these parables too we are reminded of the effect of the sour dough in the flour, of the miraculous mustard seed, of the sowing of the seed in the field, and of what becomes of the sown seed in connection with the condition of the soil. We are referred to the wheat and the weeds, and to the collection of the harvest. The catching of fish comes to mind, and so does what happens to the fish when they are being sorted out after they have been caught. In his parables, Jesus deals with ordinary human life, with what happens when people buy a field, with the workers who are hired in the vineyard, with a woman who loses a penny in her

house, with a king who is planning a wedding, with the virgins who are waiting with their lamps for the king's entry. But stronger than all of this, the image of the shepherd with his flock comes to the fore. We are the sheep of his pasture, as it was already sung in the psalms. There are still other sheep, which Jesus must also bring. It will be one flock and one shepherd. The wolf that attacks the flock is repelled. And when Jesus foretells His final judgment, He pronounces that the Son of Man will sit as King, and that He will thus separate the sheep from the goats. Now, according to Jesus' own word, this speaking in images was certainly also intended to cover up the sacred and spiritual, but in itself all such speaking about the Kingdom in constantly new images, borrowed from the lower order creature life, points to a connection with that lower life. There had to be a sense and a thought in all this creaturely life, through similarity, if it was to serve as an image. Now we do not even need to guess. After all, it is expressly stated in Matt. 13:35 that Jesus spoke in parables in order to reveal things that had been hidden in them since before the foundation of the world. What else does this mean, than that in the creation all the lower order of nature was a prophecy of the highest order, which was about to be revealed? What else does it mean than that the same idea of God has dominated the whole of creation, and that in all the realms of creation, this one holy and highest idea was first expressed in the rudimentary form; that it becomes more and more refined as creation progresses to the highest order; and that it is finally fully expressed in the highest order? And this always so, that whoever knows a higher order, discovers its foundations in the lower orders that preceded it, and that whoever finally enters the highest order, clearly sees the connection with all the lower orders of creation.

Now understood in this way, the Kingdom of heaven itself is the highest order to which the life of creation ascends. It is therefore repeatedly said that we are not far from that Kingdom and that we enter it; which can only mean coming under the rule exercised by Christ our King over that highest order. Just as man was called to be king in this earthly household and, as man, to rule over the three lower realms of nature, over the material, plant and animal kingdoms; yes, as man as such in a certain sense still actually exercises that kingship over these three realms of nature; And in that realm of the highest order, the basic idea of all creation was realized. Christ is the head of mankind and of the angels; man the head of the visible creation on earth; the animal the head of the realm of plants; and the plant the head of the realm of minerals; and all this is subsumed in Jesus' Kingship and extended in one line of dominion. Thus taken, all lower realms could and should already

contain the basic features of the higher and highest, because God had put them there, and thus Jesus found ready, in nature and in the environment around Him, all the images by which He would explain to us the nature and essence of His Kingdom. Jesus did not put all that in, but it was there from the foundation of the world, and Jesus took it out because he saw it in it, and pointed it out to us, so that we too might see it in it. Wherever we turn, we must never erect a wall of separation between the Kingdom of heaven and the lower orders of creation, as if all of that, as soon as we enter the Kingdom, would no longer affect us. To do so is to promote a false spiritualism, which is not supported anywhere in Scripture. It is not the case that only souls are saved, and at most the human race as a whole is saved. The reign of our King must encompass the whole of creation, and therefore it is inevitable that all orders and kingdoms of creation will be freed from the pressure under which they are suffering. All of them, as if in distress, await the revelation of the freedom of God's children," and this in the knowledge that "all of creation itself will be made free from the servitude of destruction. Jesus himself testifies that he will drink the wine anew in the kingdom of his Father, and all that is prophesied to us of the kingdom of glory steadily points to an effect of Christ's royal power in all creation. Already the prophecy in Israel foretold a future in which the desert would bloom like a rose, the wildness of the beasts of prey would depart from them, and a child would play in the viper's den. And whether you read the prophetic or the apostolic scriptures, everything points invariably to a future in which the whole earth will be renewed and the Lord's glory will radiate from a new heaven onto a new earth.

It is never about the soul without it also being about the body. Christ's resurrection from the dead dominates so much of the Gospel that we are constantly being told how our mortal body will also gain immortality and how our humiliated body will be made like Jesus' glorified body, not of itself, but by an act of our King, an act that will be the result of that wonderful power by which he can also subdue all things, even material things, to himself. The addition of the Kingdom of Heaven should therefore not mislead us for a moment, as if we were to be separated from visible things forever at our death. It is one line that the Apostle Paul particularly extends from Christ's Resurrection to our spiritual resurrection, but also to our bodily resurrection in the last day, and to the glory that comes afterwards; and that same line he finally extends to all the creature that now groans under vanity. And when in Revelation the visions are presented to us, in which this final unravelling of the mystery of salvation is portrayed, then we see before our eyes how the royal

power of Christ penetrates all realms of nature, controls the abyss and the earth and the heavens, and breaks them loose from their distorted order, in order to put them together in their God-given order. Because Jesus' Kingship is rooted in the very principle of life, and all life, lower and higher, is one in its starting point in the mystery of God's Almighty power, nothing that lives can and may remain excluded from His Royal Dominion, and this all-embracing character and the urgent power of Jesus' Kingship must always be held fast to the one-sided spiritualism that only has an eye and a heart for the closed spiritual. Unspiritual man sees only the trunk and the branches, the leaves and the blossoms, but Jesus sees from the trunk the root that lies hidden under the earth, and it is to that root of all higher life that he constantly points us in all the realms of creation of a lower order. Not the tree as the trunk that has been cut down, but the tree that blossoms on its intact and undamaged root will one day, under its royal rule, be the image of the glorified creation.

XVI. - Preliminary situation.

For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and suffers the damage of his soul? Or what shall a man give for the redemption of his soul?

MATTHEWS. 16:26.

The kingdom of heaven is a kingdom because it is founded by a king and exists in its spiritual ordinance, as one calls an order of construction, monarchically. This cannot be otherwise, because it is not only moral, but for all things even religious in nature, and sets the beatitude and glory in the direct subjection of all creature to the Divine order. The reign of God must thus be complete in that kingdom, God must reign in it in its along all lines. God the Lord must thus be King in it, and it is God's all-embracing supremacy over heaven and earth that is expressed in this royal name, insofar as that supremacy concerns spiritual beings who possess consciousness and will, i.e., angels and men. The sovereignty over the inanimate creation is not therefore omitted; rather it is assumed, but in the sovereignty over matter and over the elementary forces of nature the royal character of the Supreme Government of God is not revealed. Kingship presupposes subjects with a sense of self, who are governed by the King, be it by force or because they want and desire it themselves. In the Kingdom of Heaven only the latter takes place. His people will be willing until His holy day. The relationship of Father and child becomes an expression of the personal relationship between this King and those over whom He rules. And His regiment penetrates to the extremes of the self-conscious existence of His subjects. Once this Kingdom of Heaven has become a reality up to the completion of a holy ideal, then the self-conscious life of those who have entered it has been fully developed to its richest expression, and this complete development along all lines and in all forms is controlled by God as our King. Just as the sun rules over all our solar system, so God rules over all His spiritual kingdom. Without a single hiatus, without any defect or deficiency, without a hint of anything that might be unholy or unfortunate. In perfect purity. And the entire inanimate creation will then have only one purpose, namely to illuminate the glory of that Kingdom in the external and visible.

This situation is not present yet. This situation will only come about when the consummation of the ages comes, and there will be no more night, i.e., when time will be consumed in eternity. Until then, this Kingdom exists only in the heavens, holy, and as the ideal that is to come, and is therefore called the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. But now it has begun to be realized on earth. Still imperfect. In a

condition that finds the reborn sinner as a "new man", but without the final cut-off of sin from his inner life; and as a "child of God", but without the servitude of destruction being entirely undone. There is still sin in this "new man" and he is still in a state of misery. Although God has become his King, God has not yet become everything in him. There is a provisional situation, and this means that the Kingship of Christ takes precedence over the direct Kingship of God. Christ, because he is not only the Son of God and God himself, but also the Son of Man, can have direct fellowship with the elect, even though their sin still clings to him, and he can also rule over us, even though we are still in a state of misery and not yet in one of glory. He himself took our sin upon himself and entered into our misery. From there Jesus continually speaks of: "My Kingdom", because it is he who appears as the King with the clothes on his back in the Kingdom of heaven, in the Kingdom of God. He is the Mediator and King. And only when all sin has been destroyed and the last enemy has been conquered, and all misery has been transformed into glory, does this adornment of place come to an end, God Himself will be all and in all, and the Kingdom will be handed over to God the Father. Christ then also remains the Head of the Body. He remains so forever. But the Triune God's sovereignty then operates directly.

The fundamental difference between the two thus lies in the fact that the vicarious Kingship of Christ serves to prepare and bring about the situation that must come in order to make the direct Kingship of God Triune possible. There is still impurity within, and there are still enemies outside. Sin and misery have not yet been eradicated. That does not happen overnight. A long process must be gone through for this. As the angel called out in the vision from Patmos: The harvest of the earth must first ripen. (Rev. 14:15). Those who fall away must first ripen for destruction, and those who enter must first ripen for glory. In such a situation only he can exercise the Kingship, who, being God himself, is at the same time the Son of Man, and thus has direct contact with our human existence. That is why Jesus himself says in Matthew 25: 31 ff. that when the maturation, when the spiritual process will be completed, not the Son of God, but the Son of Man will sit on the Throne of His Glory, and that the Son of Man, as King (v.34), will then execute the judgment and complete the separation.

Now it depends on this that our King is also our highest Prophet and our only High Priest. In a kingdom that is not purely spiritual, the power, the rule, is increasingly separated from the spiritual factors of the people's life. In the order of Melchizedek, Kingship was still combined with the Priesthood. Thus, it had

emerged from the father's regiment over his family. In the family, the father not only has the power to rule, but also the spiritual responsibility to lead his family spiritually. Power and spiritual leadership are still one in fatherhood. Thus, it could not be otherwise, than at the very beginning, when the Kingship arose, the King also had to be a priest, and this is the original position, which is portrayed to us in Scripture as the order of Melchizedek. Hence for Messiah the prophecy in Psalm 110: "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent, Thou art a priest after the order of Melchizedek." And this was said after the Messiah's Kingship had first been proclaimed in the preceding verses: "Sit at My right hand, until I have set Your enemies as a footstool Your feet." Today the attempt to unite the Kingship with the Priesthood is still alive in the Caesaropapie, as it is continuing most strongly in Russia, but also partly in some Lutheran countries, since the king has also been declared Supreme Bishop, *summus episcopus*. This Caesaropapy, however, is nothing but an exaggeration of power against the Church of Christ. Both the royal power and the episcopal supremacy are bound together completely externally. All inner unity is missing. Even if the king is personally a complete infidel, he remains the "primitive bishop". In the good course of events, on the other hand, the royal authority and the spiritual highness have increasingly diverged. The one has been separated from the other. And so, the priest acted independently of the Kingship in Israel, and the prophet intervened between the two. The prophet, under the guidance of the Spirit, was to make the high ideal shine; the priest, through sacrifice, was to atone for the people's sins. The one full office thus splits into two. On the one hand there is the Kingship, to exercise authority and to govern the people, and on the other hand there are the two spiritual offices of the prophet and the priest, to take on the spiritual leadership of the people. For the external life the King, for the internal life the prophet and the priest.

But of course, in the Kingdom of Heaven this separation could not continue. The separation arose from the division of our lives, from the separation between the higher and lower life of the people, from the personal unholiness of so many a king among the kings of the earth. The power by which kingship was sustained was therefore the power of external force. The unwilling were not persuaded and spiritually converted, but forced by the strong arm to acknowledge the authority of the King and to submit to him. But in the Kingdom of Christ all this fell away. His regiment is a spiritual regiment. He does not coerce externally, but regenerates and convinces internally. He seizes the inner life. "The Kingdom of God does not come with outward countenance, it is within." They are spiritual factors, through which

the Christ rules over God's children. He takes hold of them in their souls, He takes hold of them in their spiritual lives, and He transforms them internally in such a way that their entire internal existence turns towards Him, yes, that He incorporates them into His mystical body. Thus, there could be no place for an isolated prophet or priest next to the King. This King could not be King, unless he himself is prophet for our conscious, and priest for our ethical life. Only by being our prophet and our priest can he be our King. These three offices merge with him into one all-encompassing office. The three lines of the threefold ministry in Israel combine in him to a higher unity. He gives in a perfect manner what the Prophecy in Israel gave only in a preparatory way, the complete revelation of the truth about heaven and about our earthly situations, and about the Divine ideal towards which everything is moving and for which everything is maturing. And also, he gives in a real and complete way that which the priest in Israel could only represent in an imaginary way, the unification of the sinner with the holy God. He does not sacrifice the lamb, but is himself the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. It is only through his reconciliation as a priest, and his clear insight as a prophet into what is, what was, and what is to come, that this spiritual and royal power, which enables him to rule over the spirits with absolute authority, is effective. What we have here is a purely spiritual power that will rule without limit, but which, in order to rule, does not repress the spirit movement and overpower the spirits with the sword, but which conquers the subjects within, seizes them within their own nature so as not to let them go, and now completes their spiritual edification in such a way that they become 'living stones' for the temple in which God will dwell.

Therefore, in Christ, the King and the Prophet must be one.

With the anti-Christian power, on the other hand, you see just the opposite in the vision on Pathmos. First the Beast rises out of the sea, and in this illusory human form the anti-Christian kingly power presents itself. But then another Beast rises from the earth, and the reified human form that appears in it is not a king, but a prophet; a prophet only; and he now prepares to give spiritual guidance to the people, so that they may worship the image of the anti-Christian king-power, receive his mark, and exclude in their conduct and walk, i.e., in their social society, all those who do not bear this mark.

Now the Kingdom that comes with Christ is called a Kingdom because it exists in a monarchical and spiritual sense and because a King rules it, but this Kingdom appears in very different forms. Taken as it was in the order of God, it is one, but

in the course of its historical development it takes on very different forms. It is a kingdom that has boundaries, which determine what belongs to it and what does not. This empire also has its own territory, and beyond this lies a territory that is under a completely different dispensation. The boundary that defines what belongs to this Kingdom and what belongs to the area beyond must be crossed in order to enter this Kingdom. One can approach it, and even not be far away from it, yet not be able to take the last step across the border and still be outside it. In the same way that it was said to the rich young man: "You are not far from the Kingdom of God"; but still he could not take the last step, and so he did not enter, but remained standing on the area that lies outside, albeit right next to the border. This, of course, rules out all vagueness in the conception of this Kingdom. There is not a floating spiritual sphere that passes imperceptibly from one to the other

and to which one can add everything that hints at the true, good and beautiful. It is a realm that shows where it is and where it is not, and therefore always requires a transition. It is a transition from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the Son of Love. Being drawn out of the power of darkness into the kingdom where His wonderful light shines. A passing from death into life. Especially this last expression of Scripture draws the line very sharply, and takes the contrast between what is inside and what is outside the Kingdom very concrete. It is precisely this transition, this being transferred from the unholy to the Kingdom of Christ, that John the Baptist, and Jesus in his first appearance, emphasized so strongly. The Kingdom of Christ did not exist at first. Not even in Israel. But now it came, it was near at hand, and everyone who feared God was now called upon to cross over and enter that Kingdom, to enter through conversion; and to seal this transition and conversion symbolically by undergoing the Baptism in the river Jordan, to be followed later by the baptism by fire of Christ. Even a gradual transition is out of the question. What was, did not flow unnoticed into what was to come. There was a break, there was an exit from that in which one was, in order to pass over into the new that was to come, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

If you now take this Kingdom of heaven according to its divine specifications, in its ideal conception, and as it will be one day at the consummation of the ages, then it stands before you as the Kingdom of perfect bliss, holiness and glory. Then two things are acquired. First, the expulsion and elimination of all that which, from the demonic world, from mankind's sin, and from the misery that followed sin, both in the spirit world and in our human world, had nestled itself against God in the creature world and had set itself at enmity against Him. Secondly, does not the

state that existed before the fall, with Paradise as it was, return? After all, in that state of paradise, human development had only just begun, and was in no way complete. Now, after the elimination of sin and misery, life in paradise does not begin anew, but the creaturely world appears in its final and completed development. In paradise man could still fall, but in the state of the completed Kingdom of God this is impossible. The saved angels and the saved human beings are elevated above the danger of falling into sin, and everything that would have come forth from man, had he not fallen, in a richer development, is, after the Last Day, in the Kingdom of Heaven, not only potentially, but in a full sense and to the full extent realized. Satan's power and influence over our human race will then have been nullified, and man will no longer be left to his own devices, but everything that has spiritual life will be controlled in its spiritual existence by Christ as its King. Fallback is unthinkable. No one can snatch from His hand what was given to Him by the Father. The high ideal has then become reality. All the fruit has ripened. The perfection of God is reflected in a perfect creation. The "God saw that it was good", from the hour of creation, is therefore also applicable to what has become of creation. Nothing stands against it anymore. The "Holy, holy, holy!" in the hymn, rises from the pure holiness of the spirits. And God is all and in all.

But this is not the situation that immediately arises. Even in the heavens the revelation of perfect glory still remains. Even in the high spirit world the battle is still going on. Michael and his angels are still battling the Dragon and his henchmen. And so also on earth the Kingdom is beginning to be confined within very narrow limits. A small flock. A circle of a few faithful. And even within that circle, as small as it is, the struggle still continues. Gradually a people will come before this King, a people of their own, an acquired people, but that people will stand as a small band against the mighty nations of the earth. And though this small multitude has grown after Jesus' ascension, and though Jesus now finds his subjects among all peoples and nations, even now that group among the children of mankind, which has definitely made the transition and has passed into the Kingdom of heaven, is not comparable in number or power to the broad multitude standing outside. In the course of its history, moreover, the glory of the Kingdom has by no means yet been revealed or revealed to the world. The outward show of the world hates God's child, because it would not be able to satisfy his high demand, but also the outward appearance of the glory is still held back. The misery continues; it is often increased for those who have entered the Kingdom, precisely

because of that entry. And not only the fact that the glory still remains, but also the effect of the holy character of the Kingdom can only bring it to the beginning of its high splendor. Not even a small beginning of perfect obedience, says our Catechism, is found here on earth in even the best and most pious, and only in their death do they die to sin. The battle that always precedes the full revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven in the spirit world, in a struggle between evil and holy spirits, thus finds its counterpart on earth in two kinds of struggle. First, in the struggle between those who fear God and those who oppose Him. But also, secondly, in the subjects of King Jesus himself. Sin is still at work. The demon world still tries to lure the subjects of our King into infidelity. And it is only because the spiritual supremacy that emanates from Christ is so overwhelming that the decline of His subjects is prevented. It is not they who maintain themselves. It is their King who protects them and stretches out his hand over them. But with all this, the Kingdom also reveals itself in them only in an imperfect form. He who has been incorporated into Jesus can no longer sin with the sin of Adam and fall away, because he has been born of God, but the glow of holiness still remains numbed by the dust of sin.

Even though the reign of our King is still limited by this, it is by no means limited to the reign over the new life in the born-again. By having a spiritual effect on his own, he has a spiritual effect through them on the whole of the conscious life of our human race. His own are not taken away from the world, but are kept in the world. Thus, they remain in contact and intercourse with the world and exert an influence on the development of the conscious human life. Thus, the rule of our King is not limited to the borders of his Kingdom, but extends beyond them. When heathen nations such as Japan and China undertake to abandon the former cruelties and barbarities in war on land and sea, to allow the higher human to come into its own in war, then this is a fruit of the reign of Christ. He has awakened these holier feelings in his own people; through his people they have passed into the general human consciousness; and through the power of human society these feelings then triumph far beyond the actual borders of the Kingdom. And so it is in every field. Had the Christ not brought His Kingdom to this earth, human development would never have become what it is today. It is not man himself, but the Christ, who by the power of his spirit has placed us on this higher plane. In an empire like ancient Egypt or one like China, which completed its development through centuries of struggle, we see what becomes of that development when it is left to man. But likewise, in the development of human life that has now come about in so-called Christian Europe and America, we see how much greater flight this development

owes to the influence of Christ. For though all manner of discord may be heard in this development, indeed though it may not be denied that it also came to a terrible pass in the unholy realm, it cannot be disputed that better feelings have prevailed and that the power of the human spirit, now taken in a good sense, has expanded in an encouraging manner under the banner of the Cross, even though that Cross has actually been denied. And this did not happen outside of Christ. It is through the power and influence that emanated from Him and His people that this result has been achieved. Just as our country has colonies outside the Kingdom, so also the Kingdom of Christ has the whole world as its outside possession, and in that world He works with blessing, softening and energy-giving effect. Already among the peoples of the world the influence of a powerful and energetic people is not limited to its borders, but extends far beyond them. Just think of the influence of the French spirit or the spirit of England and Germany exerted on all peoples. And so also the rule of the spirit of our King is not confined to his realm in a narrower sense, but penetrates beyond those borders into all our human life.

XVII. - The existing order is maintained.

All the soul is subject to the powers that be; for there is no power but from God, and the powers that be are ordained of God. ROM. 13:1.

Should now the royal rule of Christ be understood in such a comprehensive sense, that from the moment of his ascension all authority existing on earth is to be regarded as emanating from him?

Does the government in particular, after Jesus' ascension, derive its authority from the Christ? Does Christ govern not only the Christian emperor of Germany, but also the pagan emperor of Japan? Especially in earlier centuries this question was of such great importance, because the "Vicar of Christ" asserted that he also had the authority over thrones and crowns. But although this theory of papal authority has now been almost forgotten, the question itself still carries weight, and we have to consider whether authority on earth has an independent sphere or whether all worldly authority among men is now to be regarded as emanating from the Mediator. We will not now speak of the authority of the Church. That all ecclesiastical authority descends to us from Christ is indisputable. The question before us refers only to temporal authority, to that authority which, not only among Christians, but also among pagans and Mohammedans, is exercised by one man over another. Authority is exercised among men by a father and mother over their children, by a husband over his wife, by a ruler who rules, by his officials and appointees, by the judge in the court of law, by a general over his army, by an admiral over his fleet, by a teacher over his pupils, by a patron over his workmen, by a gentleman or woman over her servants, by genius and talent in the sphere in which they shine. Wherever superiors live together, there is one who leads and there are others who follow. Without this dominance of an official or an inbred authority there can be neither orderly society, nor development and progress. Supremacy also exists in the plant and animal world, but a supremacy grounded only in violence. A higher society has arisen among men alone, in which authority takes the place of violence and, if necessary, is also upheld by the strong arm, but which nevertheless rests on a moral basis. A king who knows how to mainline himself by the power of the sword alone is lost, and the nerve of his supremacy is not to be found in his soldiers, nor in his police force, but in the conscience of his subjects. As long as only a part of his subjects resists, he can deal with them by force, but even then only on the assumption that the great majority of his subjects will remain loyal to him and adhere to his authority. Even the troops that have to suppress a rebellion would no longer support his authority if he could not count on

their loyalty. The violence is secondary; the basis of his rule can only be found in the loyalty of his subjects, loyalty which arises in their conscience from the conviction that they must honor and obey him for God's sake. The power which rests on this foundation has the character of authority, and it is this authority which is the cement of all human society. Is it to be said that this authority among men (apart from the Church) is given by the Triune God, or that it is given by Christ, as King of the Kingdom of God, to those who are vested with it? Or also, if this authority emanated from God Triune in earlier centuries, should it at least be confessed after Jesus' ascension that it does not emanate from God Triune but from the exalted Messiah, who is seated at the right hand of the Father?

The answer to that question is that, before and after Jesus' ascension, all worldly authority among men emanates not from the Christ, but from God Triune. The king rules by the grace of God, and not by the grace of Christ. The dominion due to the kings of the earth, as well as the spiritual dominion of the Christ, is assigned to them by God Triune. Jesus is King in His Kingdom, and they are King in the Kingdom assigned to them, both under the order, disposition, and regulation of God Triune. The reign of Christ is far superior to their reign. Their kingdom is not the same in size, duration or inner strength, yet it stands beside them, not under them. The Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, not because he appoints kings and lords, but because among all kings and among all lords he is in all respects the highest, the most excellent, the most exquisite, and because one day he will spiritually judge them and be their judge. But the source, the origin of their authority is not to be found in Christ. That origin, that source lies in the Triune God, in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and thus also in the Son, in so far as he is in unison with the Father and the Holy Spirit; but not in the Son of Man, not in the Mediator, not in the King of the realm of God as such.

This is most clearly felt if one looks first of all at the parental authority, which is of the same kind as the governmental authority. This parental authority, however, as far as its origin is concerned, goes completely outside the work of redemption. It arises from the division as far as the parents are concerned, and from the birth as far as the children are concerned. This division and birth arise from a creative order. In itself it would have been quite conceivable that all human beings, like Adam, had been created directly by God. Why not? The angels were no different. There is no marriage among angels. Jesus himself pointed out that in heaven no one is given in marriage, even among the blessed. What we call the generation of one creature from another exists only on our earth. It exists in the plant kingdom,

which was created by sowing seeds. It exists likewise in the animal world, where the one animal is born of the other or springs from the egg. And so, God has also ordained for mankind in His Creation Ordinance. After Adam, Eve was created by a separate act of creation, but after Adam and Eve, every human being has a father and a mother. In that birth from father and mother, both their authority over the child born from them is founded. With the animal, there is no question of authority in this relationship either. As soon as the young animal stops needing help, it goes its own way, looks for its own food, and it is not long before it does not even recognize its own mother. It is only in very exceptional cases that it temporarily knows its father. With humans this begins in a similar way, but soon takes an entirely different form. The need for help is not even felt by the child at first. The young, newly born animal is immediately much more developed than the young, newly born child. The child knows nothing, notices nothing. It cannot walk, it cannot look for its mother. It is carried, and it goes through its first life completely unconscious and helpless. And not only that the young child is much less developed than the young animal, but also when the development and the growth start, they take much longer. A young animal, one year old, often already finds its own way, a one-year-old child is still dependent on the mother's care for everything. It takes at least seven, and often ten years, before the young child begins to gain some independence, and the vast majority of them are not able to stand on their own two feet and provide for themselves until they have been under the care of their mother for fifteen or sixteen years. In addition, the young animal needs only physical development and is driven by instinct, while the young child, in addition to its physical development, also needs spiritual development. This not only creates a second need for help and dependence, but also creates a completely different bond between child and parents. In the case of an animal, all understanding with its mother is sometimes completely broken off just a few months after birth. With the young child, on the other hand, in a series of years of life, an ever-closer bond is woven between its heart and the heart of its parents. It is in both of these, in the child's long-standing need for help and in the spiritual bond from heart to heart, that parental authority rests and from both rests the child's recognition of that authority.

Now we do not say that this goes beyond sin and grace, and thus beyond the work of Redemption. Rather, it is in the nature of things that sin in the parents and sin in the child steadily undermine this authority. It is the sin of the parents that constantly weakens the care for the child and the authority over the child of the

father and the mother, and conversely, it is the sin in the child's heart that undermines obedience and encourages disobedience, if not resistance. And likewise, it is perfectly true that grace stops this corruption of sin both in the parents and in the child, and establishes the parental authority on a firmer basis. Baptism is also a support for authority. But even though it must be acknowledged that sin and grace also have an effect on this relationship, grace is not the basis of it. This is strongly emphasized if you notice how, for example, in China paternal authority is much higher than in Christian Europe. No son, even if he is 40 or 50 years old, will sit down in the presence of his father in China unless his father has invited him to do so. Respect for the father at least, and partly also for the mother, is the nerve of all moral development in China: And even if for some other reason this relationship may be questioned, what still exists in China today proves in any case that paternal authority can flourish and endure among a people who are still alien to all influence of special grace in their national life.

Now, if both the ordinance that not every human being is created separately, but born of parents, and the ordinance of the utter helplessness of the new-born child, added to its only very slow development, are founded in creation and not in the work of grace, it necessarily follows that the parental authority that arises from these two ordinances is derived from Him who created the earth and all that is in it, and not from the Mediator. This authority may be restored by the Mediator, where it is in danger of being disturbed, and sanctified in its exercise, but in itself it forms an independent sphere, which, being founded on the natural order of things, exists independently of the faith to which salvation is conferred, and which has survived even in countries and regions where the people have not at all been Christianized, and sometimes more powerfully even in heathen countries than among many Christian peoples. As far as we know, it has never been claimed that parental authority could be derived from Christ, and would be the consequence of his royal order. If we think of the centuries before Christ's arrival and of the life of this world, in so far as it did not receive Christ's baptism, then parental authority is the starting point for all human society. Throughout all ages and in all regions, human society has developed from family life, and that family life always found its unifying bond in the authority exercised over the children by either parent, or father or mother. If parental authority is not derived from Christ, but from the ordinance of creation, it follows that the further structure of the social and political life of nations cannot be derived from Christ either, but must be explained by the order and disposition of Divine Providence.

Patriarchal authority developed naturally out of the family and parental authority, and the patriarchal relationship passed unnoticed into the tribal relationship. In these patriarchal circles and tribes too, the need is felt for a certain order and regulation, but also for a certain unity, in order to be able to defend oneself more strongly against third parties. In this way, a unified authority arose in various forms, and this authority too had nothing to do with the coming of Christ. It existed before he appeared. It remained after his coming what it had been before his appearing. And it held good even among the tribes who continued their existence outside the sphere of the Baptism. If the tribal connection has gradually grown out of the tribal connection and the state connection, long before the Christ was born in Bethlehem, and if the formation of these states has also continued from time immemorial outside of any connection with the Christ, it is hard to see why the same should not apply to the governmental authority over a whole people as to the paternal authority in the family. The fact is, the governmental authority has been established for sin's sake. Without sin, the authority that arose directly from the family would have sufficed, no violence would have been committed, no violence would have been reversible, and the greater part of what we call State structure would not have arisen. Also, the division of the peoples, which now emanated from Babel's confusion of speech, would not have occurred. The state authority is thus a corrective, which serves to counteract the distorting effect of sin. However, this rise of the state authority was not due to the special work of redemption, but was the result of the grace of God. Grace has a twofold character. It is sanctifying with a view to eternal life, but also temporarily restoring with a view to this earthly life. As a salvific power it redeems only the elect, as a temporary restorative power it extends to all mankind, and the actions of the State must therefore be explained not by the Beatific, but by the Common grace, inasmuch as State life and the related Government authority arose among all peoples, lasted both before and after the appearance of Christ, and constantly asserted itself there, where the name of Christ is not even mentioned. The corrective effect of state authority was directed toward human society as it existed according to the order of Creation. The defect brought about by sin in the life that arose by virtue of that order of creation indicated the form in which this state authority had to act. It was determined by it. It was influenced by it. Given the Creator's ordinance for our human life, and given the disruption it had undergone through sin, the lines for the erection of the State building were automatically indicated by this, and thus, by its very nature, the construction of the State went entirely beyond the work of Redemption. Suppose for a moment that salvation in Christ had never appeared, nevertheless the State

would have arisen, nevertheless a Government would have arisen, and nevertheless this Government would have asserted its authority. Everything that would have been the same if the Christ had never appeared cannot be explained in terms of the Christ, but must find its origin and the source of its creation in a Divine ordinance that was ordered by the Creator of our human race for our entire race. This is by no means a denial that the Christ also influences state life, as it exists today, and that those who profess the Christ allow themselves to be inspired by the Christ in their state policy as well. This will be extensively discussed in the third series of our articles. But all of this is grafting onto the original stem, and the stem on which it is grafted has its own origin and can never be explained from the graft.

It is therefore remarkable how the Apostles, who were always anxious to exalt the royal authority of Christ to the highest level, when they came to discuss worldly authority, never pointed to Christ, but always to God. Especially what the Apostle Paul explains to the Church of Rome in this regard speaks volumes. He writes: "All souls are subject to the powers that be, for there is no power but from God, and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore, he who opposes the power resists the order of God; and he who resists it will bring judgment upon himself." Thus, the name of God is emphasized three times, and in what follows the government is once again called a "servant of God", without the name of Christ even being mentioned in this context. Jesus himself, in his testimony before Pilate, declared in the same way that Pilate would have no power over him if that power had not been given to him from above. Jesus does not say: if that power had not been given to you from me, but if it had not been given to you from above. Jesus has always submitted himself to that power given to him by God. And the great sin of the Israel of old, and for a short time also of the young, was precisely that they imagined the Messiah to be a worldly power that would raise Israel to dominion over the nations and the King of Israel to a kind of Emperor over all the princes. Jesus never claimed that the secular Davidic kingly power had passed to him. He never extended his hand to the reign over Israel, but rather always recognized the actual governing sovereignty himself, and obliged his disciples to recognize it. His descent in the flesh from David did not in the least refer to the inheritance to him of the worldly authority that had once been exercised by David. David's kingship was secular and had no other meaning than national symbolism. Israel was the image and prototype of the Kingdom of God, and David was in a higher sense only the foreshadowing of what the Christ would be in the spiritual Kingdom. Jesus and his Apostles therefore left the existing order untouched and undisturbed. It is in

that existing order that they act. They make no attempt to replace it with another order, and it is of the existing powers that the Apostle says they are of God. So it was then, and so it is still. The framework for our human life is given in the creation itself, both for our body and our spirit, and both for the individual human being and for the human community. It is according to the order of these specifications that human life still continues. And all these lines of this original plan lie before and therefore outside the work of Redemption, and therefore cannot be explained by Christ, but must be derived from the Wisdom and Omnipotence of the Triune God, Creator of all creation. It is not the basic structure of the Creation that has conformed to the Redemptive Work, but the Redemptive Work that has conformed to this basic structure. It is God the Lord who has ordained both: first the Work of Creation according to His appointed ordinance, and then the Work of Redemption, partly in the common grace, partly in the special grace, and God the Lord has directed this work according to the principles of the first work. Thus, it is that Christ was instituted as Head of the Church and King of the Kingdom of God by the decree of God, and it is by an equally holy decree of God that the authority of man over man in the worldly realm has been established, both of the parents over the children and of the government over the nations. Both the Christ as King of the Kingdom of God and the princes of the kingdoms of the earth reign by the grace of God.

XVIII. - The salvation of the world.

If any man have the good of the world, and see his brother in want, and shut up his heart to him, how shall the love of God abide in him? 1 JOH. 3:17.

In the announcement of the angel Gabriel to Mary, the Kingship of the Christ is immediately placed in the foreground. It is said of John the Baptist in Zechariah's hymn: "And thou, the child, shalt be called a prophet of the Highest□, but of Jesus the angel says, even before he is born: "This one shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest□, and God shall make him the King of the world. and God will give him the throne of his father David, and he shall be King over the house of Jacob, and his kingdom shall have no end." Jesus will also be a prophet, but John goes before Jesus as the prophet, and Jesus appears as King. Jesus will also be a priest, but this priesthood, too, initially recedes, and it is his royal majesty and royal calling, which, as all his life is controlled and all the rest included, to the exclusion of every other office, is announced to Mary by the angel. The Wise Men from the East also come to Jerusalem with the message that a great King must have been born in Israel and that they have seen his star in the firmament in the far East. Later, John the Baptist appears to usher in the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven and to prepare the multitudes for the appearance of the King who will sway the scepter in this kingdom. For his Kingship Jesus is judged by the Sanhedrin and sentenced by Pilate. It is his royal title that is nailed to his Cross in defamation. It is as King that He ascends into heaven and is now seated at the right hand of the Father. And when in the Revelations at Pathmos the end of things is shown to us in vision after vision, it is always Jesus, as the King of kings and as Lord of lords, riding on the white horse of his majesty, who defeats his enemies and causes the matter of God to triumph. Thus, the King first, the King from beginning to end, the King always in the foreground, and his honor as Savior and Redeemer first flowing forth from this Kingship. Not initially only a savior and a physician, only to climb up to royal honor as such, but precisely thanks to his Kingship able to be our savior and bring salvation. Not the Saviour becomes King, but the King becomes the Saviour, and can only be our Saviour because he is King. Christ is the Savior. He is the Savior of the Body, but also the Savior of the world. He did not come to the world "to judge the world, but to save the world." Judgment will come, but it must remain until the consummation. If Jesus had appeared immediately as Judge, there would have been no place for the work of salvation. His first and second coming are therefore not only different in terms of time, but even more so in terms of nature and character. His first coming is not to judge, but to save; His second

coming will be, not to save, but to judge. This distinct purpose of opposite character determines the peculiar form in which Jesus appears the first time in Bethlehem, and will one day also determine the peculiar form in which he will come to judge. First as Saviour, later as Judge, but in all those forms the King, who fulfills his vocation and completes his task, and who, appearing either as Saviour or Judge, both times realizes the Salvation of the world. Salvation, the first time by curing and restoring the sick, the other time by sorting out and putting to death all those who have turned out to be unpleasantly sick.

Jesus does not accomplish this work of salvation mechanically, not mechanically, not like a doctor who administers a medicine and then removes himself, and much less like a goldsmith who restores a precious stone that fell into disrepair and now returns it to its owner; no, that work of salvation proceeds organically. That is to say, Jesus himself enters that world which he will save. He does not merely descend into that world to touch its surface with the sole of his foot, and later to ascend again into heaven. Jesus enters the very life of that world, and dwells in that world and among the children of men, not as an alien heavenly being, not as an angel or messenger from above, but as a man he enters among men. Not as a newly created human being, who presents himself to our old Adamic race as a human being in his own right, who will be the founder and progenitor of a new human race, but as "sharing of the flesh and blood of the children," carrying the same blood in his veins as the fallen Adamic race. In order to preserve the world, he allows himself to be incorporated into that world in such a way that he now belongs to that world himself, has a share in its life, and can allow his power to act upon it from within. And it is in this that his Kingship is revealed. Our Queen is Queen of the Netherlands but she is not Queen of Java or Sumatra. Java and Sumatra are provinces subject to her crown. But we are her people. The past of our fathers is interwoven with the past of her fathers. Between us and our Queen there is a community of life. She our Queen and we her people. And so it is here. The world did not pass to Jesus as a province and, as foreign to him, was subject to his power, but he came to us, entered into our lives, became one of us. Thus, he is our King and we are his people, and it is as our King in that narrow and organic sense that he will preserve the world. It is one life that he has in common with us and we with him, and from that very life that is in common with us and him with us goes forth the power that drives out the poison, cures the sick, and will separate from us the incurable, in order to celebrate once and for all the being saved and kept of the world, when no blemish or wrinkle will defile it, and nothing that is unclean or

unholy will be found in it. Then the work of redemption will be completed and the salvation of the world will be complete. It is not this world that must go and another world take its place. This same world must remain. It must not be destroyed, but preserved. Renewed, recreated, be it so, but still always in essence and order the same world to which we belong, in which we live, the world of all our ancestors, the world which God once created and saw was good. God will not abandon the work that His hand began. There can be no question of God's work being destroyed. Seemingly all may be lost, but that appearance will be destroyed. Everything that Satan and sin have put into the world to destroy it will go out one day, but the world as a world will remain. What passes away is "this form of the world", not the world in its essence. It remains as "new earth under the new heavens", and to God will be the glory of His creative work forever.

In order to bring about the salvation of the world, Jesus has seized that world with mankind. That man here on earth is the crown of Creation. Man is the ruling and all-controlling creature of this world. There is an inanimate nature. In the midst of this inanimate nature, the life of the animate creation emerges in plants and animals. But this is not the end of creation either. The building still lacks its façade and cornice, and it will only be completed when man appears in paradise to receive from God's hand the scepter over all creation. Thus are all the parts of creation in this world combined. The inanimate nature serves the animate; the plant world nourishes the animal kingdom; and the animal kingdom as well as the plant kingdom are subject to man; and only these four orders together constitute what is called the life of the world, and it is that life of the world which must be preserved. That is why Jesus, in coming to this earth, takes hold of it in mankind. He enters our human race, joins the ranks of mankind's children, and replaces Adam in this human race. Whereas Adam was the naturally appointed King of mankind in Paradise, in his place Jesus now becomes the Head of mankind, the King of our gender. We human beings are one and the same; one differs from the other; among us there are superiors and inferiors; from the superiors emanates dominion over the inferiors; and it is precisely this naturally arising dominion that links us into one whole. The effect of this power from man to man is not limited to the time that we live on this earth. Powerful spirits work after us, even when they have left us. It is the influence exerted by these more powerful spirits that unites the people, shapes peoples and nations. If there is now one among all these powerful spirits who surpasses them all in power and spirit and consequently controls them through his spirit, now and in future generations, then that one, all-transcending spirit is the

King of all, the King of the spirits, the King of our generation, the King of mankind in this world, not only in name and title, but actually, truly, because he rules royally over all and subjects all spirits to his majesty. That was originally Adam, and Adam could have remained so, but he fell out, and then everything lay dejected, precisely because we had then become a kingdom without a King. This lasted until the coming of Jesus into this world and the entrance of Jesus into our human race. From that time on, mankind and the world once again had a King, their King, the spirit that surpasses all spirits in power and whose rule came naturally. The world did not notice this, and it was not heard of in the royal residences. Israel itself did not understand it, nor did the young people understand its meaning from afar. But in fact it was so. From the moment that Jesus was conceived in Mary's virgin womb, and Jesus began his existence as the child of man, he belonged to mankind, was in our lineage, and was his spirit, which surpassed the power of all other spirits in our lineage, not only in relation to it, but completely, and therefore he was our King. He did not become it first after his ascension, but was it from the beginning, because the strength and power of his spirit and truth at once potentially surpassed everything else. It was only after His ascension that this Kingship could reveal itself outwardly in its brilliance. At first it was allowed to take shelter, just as even the power of speech takes shelter in the newly born child. But the royal majority did not have to be conquered first. It was there from the moment of his conception. This is the mystery of the eternal Sonship. The Word became flesh, God was revealed in the flesh. Thus, in our generation there could not be or come anything creature-like that went beyond Jesus. He was, He is above all, and will always be above all. Hence, his is the dominion and the power over all the spirit of mankind, naturally and without transfer. There may be temporary opposition, there may be resistance, there may be struggles, but the final outcome must and will seal his rule, break down all opposition, and one day the hour must come when all knees will bow before him, and when all tongues will confess him as all Master, Lord and King.

But between Bethlehem and that glorious final outcome lies a long historical course, which has already lasted for twenty centuries, and who knows how long it may continue. It is not only the preservation of mankind that is important, but the preservation of the world. Entered into our human race, Jesus must thus, from there, also subject that world to His royal power. That world does not stand alone, but is connected with the world of spirits, as well as with God's holy angels as with the fallen angels that form Satan's hosts. As our King, Jesus must therefore also

order in the spirit world what is necessary for the salvation of our world, and he can do this because he is also the Lord of the angels. The following are therefore distinguished: 1. what Jesus as King does for and in the individual persons; 2. what he as King does for and in the society of our people; 3. what he as King does to subjugate the world outside mankind to mankind; and 4. finally, how he as King fights to nullify the power of sin and Satan and death. The first, the infliction and salvation of the few, is spiritually the most profound, because divine power directly transforms the spirit in a person's soul. With the few chosen people, it finally comes down to personal rebirth. Conversion is not a strong enough word. Conversion is the personally-aware effect of rebirth; but the transformation of life, objectively brought about in the miracle of rebirth itself, is a mystically Divine act, which defies all explanation. Through that rebirth the converted person already becomes, without knowing it himself, a subject of King Jesus, and through personal faith the conscious connection between that rebirth and the once accomplished atonement arises. Thus, the subject also becomes the purchased through the blood of the Lamb, and as such, in soul and body, Jesus' subject and property.

That body, too, must be reckoned with here. If nothing more and nothing further had happened than that the separated souls of the elect had gone up to heaven after dying, other spirits would have been added to the host around God's throne, but what God created in man, so completely different from that in the angel, would not have been done justice. The great significance of the world of mankind as compared with the world of angels lies precisely in the fact that in man the visible and the invisible are united. In the inanimate creation there is only the visible, in the angelic world there is only the invisible, but in man both are interwoven. That is why Jesus, in order to be our King, also had to accept the flesh and blood of the children; had to suffer not only in spirit but also in body; and had to seal his love in the shedding of his blood. In this, that the Word became flesh, lies the starting point for the salvation of our generation. The resurrection has only become necessary and possible through the incarnation, and even the ascension into heaven is nothing other than the necessary consequence of his victory over death, not only spiritual, but also moral on the part of the body. How many dear pious people could imagine a Kingship of Jesus that still triumphs in His glorified body, and yet could not imagine it any other way, or the departed would in fact only continue to exist in the soul, is, with the Scriptures in mind, a complete mystery. The conception of the flesh demands the resurrection and ascension and the reign of

Jesus at God's right hand in the glorified body. And from this it follows with necessity that the redeemed will through the blood of the Lamb in their turn be partakers of the resurrection, and that their humiliated body too will one day be made like His glorified body by Christ. And this now provides proof that the Kingship of Christ is not limited to the unseen, but extends to the visible as well, and that on that account all one-sided spiritualism must be condemned. After all, our bodies are not the fruit of an isolated creation. The whole work of Creation is like one chain, the single links of which are riveted to each other. As far as his body is concerned, man was created from the dust of the earth. His creation completes the series of the separate creations. What was created in plants and animals had to precede to point to what would become so much richer and so much nobler in the body of man. And if we still dissect the human body today, or scientifically study the nutrition, preservation, care and healing of that body, it appears again and again that almost everything that exists in the visible world outside man is certainly related to what we observe in and on the human body. If, therefore, Jesus' Kingship is to extend over all mankind, and to guarantee to all mankind full glory both in soul and body, then you cannot and must not isolate the Christ from the rest of the visible creation in any way, but it is a requirement that you also subject the whole of the visible world in its composition to Jesus' Kingship and incorporate it in your confession.

And the same applies to human society as a whole. This human society is not meant here as a community, but as the rich, organic life that arises out of the many people in their mutual connection. In the Libyan desert in the 8th century, tens of thousands of lonely cliques roamed the streets, seeking higher sanctity in the seclusion of human life. And, although we will refrain from condemning out of hand the intention that drove them to do so, one need only compare the rich human life on the Nile with these wandering loners to feel at once how the human composition is something entirely different, something much richer, something much more elevated, than the life of many individuals, each on his own. Everything that manifests itself in such a human society, in family and society, in agriculture, industry and trade, in science and the arts, in moral development and, above all, in Godly exaltation, has been planted in our human world by God Himself as a seed. He did not create just a single human being, but a world of human beings, and in that world of human beings His manifold wisdom shines forth. Now it is true that sin has also affected this society and has poisoned and spoiled its life,' but this is not the reason why God gives up the treasure He placed

in that world of men. Rather, under His Redemption System this human world must be cleansed of the impure, unholy and satanic elements, and then raised to a higher and richer level of development, so that only at the end of the centuries on the new earth and under the new heaven can the full wealth of the human society be revealed in undimmed glory. But if this is so, then the human world in its organizational development cannot lie outside Jesus' Kingship. Then Jesus' Kingship must extend not only to our soul and our body, but also to our society as the human world. And only in this sense does the statement of Scripture, that God gave his Son to save the world, come into its own. Any attempt here to understand the world to mean only the souls of the elect would miss the deeper conception of the work of Redemption, which always comes to the fore in Scripture, as encompassing the whole of our human existence, soul, body and community.

But even with this, the ultimate limit of Jesus' Kingdom has by no means been reached. Our human world is not limited to this earth as we know it. Our human world also includes the host of martyrs and redeemed who are already jubilant before the Throne, and this human world is in contact with the spirit world both here on earth and beyond. Just as our human world, through our physical existence, is in contact with all of creation, so, too, as spiritual beings, we are in contact with the unseen world of spirits, both sacred and unholy. It would therefore be of no avail for our King to set us free according to our souls and to bring our human coexistence to its fullest development in the Kingdom of Glory on the new earth, if he did not also assert his power as our King in that spirit world. His must be a power to resist, to break and to destroy that which in the spirit world is bent on our destruction, and likewise to place at his service that which in the spirit world is favourably disposed toward us, and to make it work for the preservation of the world of men.

It is only in this way that the Kingship of Christ will be complete. It is a Kingship for the soul, a Kingship for our body, and in connection with this for the entire creation. In the third place, it is a Kingship that penetrates our whole human society, in every area and in every way of life. And fourthly, it is a Kingship that rules over the spirit world, in order to preserve our world in a fuller and richer sense. We shall deal with this later, while pointing out our obligations in this regard. But beforehand it is necessary to point out the two distinct periods in which Christ's Kingship manifests its power: the period of the gradual process in which we now find ourselves, and the final period which, quite differently, will bring the great trial to a conclusion with supremacy.

XIX. - Preparation, foundation, working through and consummation.

To him I say, whose future is according to the working of Satan, in all the power and signs and wonders of the lie. 2 THESS. 2:9.

The Kingship of Christ begins with man. The kingship of Christ takes root in man, not only in his soul, but also in his body. Through the latter it penetrates into the world of visible things. Furthermore, since man is not an atom but a member of the human family, the royal rule is established not only in the heart of the individual but also in all society. Inasmuch as our lineage is subject to the influence of the spirit world, for better and for worse, Christ, as our King, must also rule over that spirit world.

Only now taken to that extent is Christ's kingship capable of preserving the world and thus making the mission of Christ to our earth fulfill its purpose. But, as we noted at the end of our previous article, the extent of the area over which the Kingship extends is thus determined, but no less attention must be paid to the distinction of its operation in the various periods through which it passes. These distinguished epochs are four in number. There is for this Kingdom a period of preparation, beginning in paradise and continuing until John the Baptist. There is, in the second place, a period of its foundation, beginning at Bethlehem and ending on the Mount of Olives at the ascension. Then there is the third period, the period of influence in the course of world history. And at last there will come a fourth period of yet another character, the period of consummation, which will begin with that which will usher in Jesus' return on the clouds, and which will find its conclusion in the handing over of the Kingdom to the Father.

It is evident that these four periods have a completely different character, and it is the person of the Christ who sharply differentiates them. In the first period, the Christ is not yet on earth. In the second he comes to earth. In the third, He is gone from this earth again. And in the fourth He comes back to this earth. In fact, in all these four periods the Kingship is one, but its effect differs according to the relationship in which the King stands to his kingdom. In the first period, let us say, under the dispensation of the Old Testament, the King announces his coming, suggests it, and has everything prepared for it. In the second period he appears and shows his power for a moment, only to have it subside again in his death, but to triumph over it just as decisively in his resurrection. When the foundation of his kingdom is thus provisionally completed, he withdraws again to where he was before, and now rules his kingdom from on high. This will take place until the

struggle between Christ and the adversary is completely over, and the leaven has leavened the three measures of wheat. And once that point has been reached and the harvest of the earth has ripened, then the King will come again to quench resistance "through the spirit of His mouth', and now to make the breakthrough in full splendor of the Kingdom, which will be handed over to the Father in its consummation. The first two periods are long behind us; we are currently living in the third period; the fourth or final period still remains, and remains the expectation of all those who, in Faith and Love, also hold fast to Christian Hope.

The period of preparation awakens the need for the Kingdom of Christ, visualizes it, gives it not only a historical form in Israel, but at the same time also a point of connection with the person and house of David, and creates a circle that is equipped to receive the King. The first arrangement for this work of preparation already started in paradise; it continues in Noah's days; through Abram's calling it begins to become active and, again splitting and dividing, the contrast, which already began with Cain and Abel, is continued through Jacob and Esau, to finally take root in Judah's tribe and in the house of Israel. Continuous division and splitting, in order to make it clear that although our human race withdraws from God's authority, the Lord in His sovereign will repeatedly lays His hands on a part of that race, includes that part in His covenant, subjects generation after generation to His majesty, and thus brings the rise of a kingdom of heaven increasingly nearer to the kingdom of the world. In Israel's national existence, this preparation also takes on its figurative form. This national existence of Israel is not the Kingdom of Christ, but it merely portrays it and shows it in a figurative form. Prophetically, the idea that what is to come will be a Kingdom, rises in the minds. In order to make it clear that David's kingship and the existence of the Israelites were not real, but only imaginary, David dies, his hereditary kingship is extinguished, and his people must leave their land in exile. All the actual, all the real, is taken away. What remains is only the idea, the prophecy, the spiritual form. And that idea, that prophecy, that spiritual form, finally cries out for fulfillment and realization, and it is that fulfillment and realization that comes when the holy Child is born in Bethlehem. A child that could only come to a farm, to a people and in a spiritual environment, as the fruit of history offered itself to Israel of that time. Those who had no eye to see the spiritual then looked back to the line of David, Solomon and Rehabeam, and those who had no spiritual ear to hear tried to understand Israel's ancient existence, its preparation, foundation, development and execution, and to choose Israel's triumph over the nations as their ideal. But he who had ears to hear

what the Spirit spoke also let go of the shell in order to grasp the pearl, and passed from Israel's sensuous national existence into the full spiritual reality of the Kingdom of Heaven. This preparation was not accomplished outside of Christ. The King, anointed of God over Zion, was himself active in all of this. As it says in Isaiah 63: "In all their distress He was distressed, and the Angel of His face preserved them. Through His love and mercy He redeemed them, and He received them, and He carried them all the days of old. Thus he became to them a Savior."

With the completion of the Preparations, the second period then begins, the period of the foundation of the Kingdom of Christ, when the promised of the Father is born of Mary in Bethlehem. In John the Baptist, just before his coming, the prophecy of preparation is drawn together once again more than ever before, and Jesus himself declares that the prophetic period now comes to an end, and that the Kingdom of heaven itself will now begin. And in the short years that the King of the Kingdom of God has been on earth, he has revealed the majesty of his Kingdom in every area of human life. Already during the preparatory period, the full extent of his Kingdom was outlined. The chosen ones were personally awakened to life. Who can enjoy the psalms without feeling that it is a redeemed soul that struggles in them to grasp salvation? But also, outside the spiritual and unseen terrain, the power of the Lord had intervened in the order of visible things. The miracle was the means of deliverance for Israel from the Red Sea, and this miracle has always intervened in the world of visible things, and has always accompanied Israel on its pilgrimage through the course of history. The power of the King, both over the material world

The power of the King, both over the material world and over nature, was to be demonstrated already in the preparatory period, and not only as a revelation of power but also as a means of salvation. The miracles of the Old Covenant are almost all redemptive works. But it did not stop there. It is in the patriarchal society first, and then in the national existence of Israel, that the King, anointed of God, practically expresses his influence and effect on the society of mankind. And finally, with regard to the fourth area, the area in which the King waged his battle with the unholy powers, this battle was depicted in Israel's struggle with the nations. Those nations were ruled by the spirit of the demonic, as manifested in their idolatry, guile and devilry. And though Israel in its smallness is nothing compared to the mighty empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Persia, yet that small Israel, as long as it holds on to God, is honored in its independence, and even

under Solomon it seems as if Israel already rules over the demonic power of the nations.

But now the same thing breaks through much more clearly, when finally in the second period, in that of the foundation, the King himself is born, and the Kingdom of heaven enters. Here, too, action is taken in the four areas: 1° in the soul, 2° in the body and in visible things, 3° in the society of mankind and 4° in the struggle with demonic powers. In the three years of his walk on earth, the King of the Kingdom of God made his royal majesty shine in each of these four areas. He calls his youth and they surrender to him. He teaches the multitude and captivates them by his word, and soon the apostle can testify: "We have beheld his glory as of the one born of the Father." The circle that joins him is not wide, but those who join him are called to life, and will soon be his witnesses in all the world, first by the word they speak, and now still by the word they recorded and left us as an heirloom, a spiritual heirloom. But to the spiritual effect on the soul Jesus does not confine himself, he also attracts the body. If there are sick people, he heals them. He restores sight to the blind. At his word of power, the afflicted takes up his bed and walks. Sometimes it even seems as if the healing of what ails the body is more important to him than the salvation of souls. And finally, he reveals his supreme power over the body, by bringing back to life those who had died, and in the end himself, after he has died, to rise again from the dead and to reveal himself to his own in a glorified body. From the body, the royal power of Christ then extends to all things visible in nature. He controls the vegetable kingdom at the wedding in Cana, in the multiplication of the bread, in the cursing of the fig tree; and likewise, he shows his power over the animal kingdom, in the wild animals that prowl around him in the desert, and in the miraculous fishing. Yes, even the elementary force of nature he manages to subdue to his power, and when there is a storm on the lake of Gennesareth, he subdues the storm that has arisen by his word of power. The King does not transform human society as such when he comes to this earth. He is not doing what the Anabaptists of all ages have wanted, namely to establish a new order for social life. He does not affect the relationships in the family, the relationships between employers and workers, the relationships between people and government, he honors them and allows them to continue. But Jesus does try to make a holier spirit work in all these relationships. He combats "the addiction to the sensible and to the visible". He sanctifies marriage in a nobler form. He elevates the position of the woman who is always oppressed in the East. He draws the children to the foreground. He takes care of the poor, feeding five thousand.

He places the whole of life under the highness of religion, and points in everything to the high and holy ideal that speaks in the law of his God, drawing this ideal together in the power of love. Thus, he leaves intact what had arisen from the ordinance of life, but pours into it another spirit, in order to reign through that holier spirit Royal also in society; and immediately you see, when Christian circles begin to form, that they display a different social image than what existed before. And just as royally, Jesus makes his fourth appearance in relation to the spirit world. God's holy angels herald his coming and appear repeatedly during his short earthly life. He refers to these angels in the Lord's Prayer. He speaks of the joy of the angelic world as one passes from sin into the kingdom of heaven. He says that the angels who are sent to serve us stand before the Father. On the other hand, from the very beginning he engages in battle with the unholy spirits. He casts the ruler of the world back into the desert at the first Temptation. He casts out the demons from the possessed. And he acts openly against the brood of vipers, just as John the Baptist did before him, in order to break the power with which Satan imprisoned the spirits in countless persons and circles, even when there was no question of possession. He even transferred the struggle with the demonic powers to his apostles. Their vocation, too, was to do harm to the demonic realm; and to cast out devils was a definite part of their task from their first mission among Israel. And that even with the passing away of His Apostles this battle would not yet be complete was most clearly shown by the daily prayer of "Deliver us from evil," which Jesus put on the lips of His disciples and redeemed for all centuries.

The result is that both in the preparation of the Kingdom of Christ among Israel, and in the establishment of this Kingdom in the period between Bethlehem and the heavenly city of Jerusalem, there was a great deal of preparation, establishment, operation, and execution, the action took place on four levels: spiritually in the soul; physically in the material world; socially in society; and anti-demonically in the spirit world. What is more, in each of these four areas the action was constantly brought about by the direct intervention of a supernatural power. The whole action is as if permeated by the miracle. If we could now pass over the third period, the period of continuation, in which we are at present, in order to arrive directly at the fourth or last period, the period of completion, we would find the same character of Jesus' royal act here again. We will explain this more extensively in view of the Revelation of John. But this much can already be said, that also in the period of the consummation the act of the Christ will have a partly spiritual, partly material, partly social, partly anti-demonic character, and that also then the act will often be

of a supernatural nature. The idea that the action of Jesus in his Kingdom would be and remain exclusively spiritual therefore appears, the deeper one digs into the subject, more and more untenable. Rather, it must be determined that the King's action in the Kingdom of God has a predominantly supernatural character; that the miracle is inseparable from it; and that both the body and the soul, and likewise the powers of the spirit world and the forces of nature, are governed by this supernatural action. What we call the miracle is not added to it, but is at the forefront of it. This applies to each of the four areas, at least as long as we are talking about the first two periods and the last or fourth period. In the preparation, the foundation and the completion of the Kingdom, the miracle sets the tone, and in the main everything that appears in the course of history is brought about by the miracle alone. The third period, the period of development, is, however, characterized by the fact that in this period the miracle increasingly hides and a natural development largely replaces supernatural intervention.

It is not as if the supernatural intervention therefore ceased completely. Rather, in the spiritual realm, it persists all the time. All rebirths accrue to the soul in a supernatural way, and without rebirth no one enters into life. He who has not been born again of water and spirit cannot even see the Kingdom of God. And if you ask Jesus how, from where, and in what way the rebirth comes to our souls, the answer is that it is like the blow of the wind in the sail. You hear the sound of the wind, but you do not know from where it comes, nor where its blow goes. Nor would we dare deny that miracles still occur from time to time in the physical realm as well. Much of what is called miracles in this sense may be explained by an effect that affects the nervous system subjectively through faith, but even then faith must be supernaturally strengthened by special grace to obtain this effect. Moreover, healings have been produced which do not even permit this explanation. The question, which is decisive for the character of Jesus' Kingship in this third period, is not, however, whether here or there, now or then, a miraculous healing or salvation was not also recorded in history, but, quite differently, whether the supernatural revelation of Christ's power is still, as in the first and second periods, the rule: Whether, also in this third period, the miracle is the ordinary act of power through which Jesus presents, continues and upholds his royal majesty; and whether, consequently, one must say that, just as in the Old and New Testaments, also in these last eighteen centuries the history of Christianity has been one continuous story of victories, and that it has remained, in the main, one mighty, impressive revelation of miraculous, supernatural effects. And if one asks the

question in such a way, according to the only correct way in which it may be asked, then the answer cannot be in doubt, it is certain that in the period of the working through, on the material and the demonic level, the supernatural intervention almost entirely recedes, and the history of the Kingdom of God more and more takes on the character of a leavening of the three measures of dough, by the leaven that was laid in the flour.

The character of the action in the third period, in the fourfold yard, on which that action still emanates today, may be briefly described thus. In the sphere of the life of the soul, this action, before as well as after, remains of a supernatural nature, beginning with the rebirth and continuing with the conduction of grace. It is true that the spiritual life is carried more than before by Covenant grace in the generations and thus also by the service of the Church and by spiritual life together, but even so all spiritual life, in its emergence and progress, remains the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit; and after all, the Holy Spirit always works in a supernatural way in the life of grace. In this the direct! In this the direct rule of our King still holds good, and our King leads that rule over the spirits by the Holy Spirit. With regard, secondly, to the effects on the body, and on nature as a whole, Christian action, by penetrating the social life of art and science, has discovered and traced the means of curing all kinds of diseases and of making all kinds of natural forces subservient to itself, and this on such a broad scale that its scope far exceeds the benefits of earlier supranatural action. A fact which immediately springs to mind if one compares the means of healing and controlling nature available to us in Christian Europe today with the earlier situation before Christianity entered the world, or with the situation which still prevails in the pagan regions of Asia and Africa. As far as the third estate is concerned, that of our human coexistence, the rule still holds that Christianity does not overturn the existing order of things, but raises and ennobles it to a much higher level through its spiritual power. And finally, as far as the anti-demonic working of Jesus' Kingship is concerned, in Christian countries Satan's working is still going on, but it is completely broken as a ruling power. In the moral sphere it still continues, and even rises, being steadily counteracted by the moral power of Christianity. But as a spiritual power the demonic is no longer in any Christian country what it used to be in Europe, and has remained in the pagan country to a large extent.

XX. - The Second Coming of the King.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals. REVELATION 5:1.

Christ, our King, has prepared His Kingship in Israel, with deep with the roots to paradise. He established it, by his incarnation in Israel, before now twenty centuries. He has been gradually working his Kingdom into the life of mankind for centuries. But one day, this third period of gradual working will also come to an end, and the final period, that of completion, will begin, gathering around the great event of His return. This absolute revelation and announcement in Holy Scripture must not be undermined, shrouded or spiritualized. It must be firmly established and clearly expressed to us that the period of gradual effect in which we are now living will one day come to an end and pass into the final period of a supernatural revelation of power that will encompass the whole of this world, indeed, with this world, the entire universe. The path of gradualism cannot bring the final triumph. It ends in failure. And when it has become clear in the course of history that natural, gradual development does not and cannot lead to the final goal, then, but only then, will our King intervene in a wholly supernatural manner to nullify all opposition and to make the full glory of his Kingdom break through. It must have been determined and proved beforehand that gradual development could not lead to his triumph. It must not be possible to say from the back: "If only God had seen fit to leave mankind to its own natural development, everything would have come out naturally. No, the facts of history must show that mankind itself is powerless to do this. It must therefore be given time. Time to absorb all the blessings of Christianity gradually. The time to try in every way and manner whether she herself, with the help of the Gospel, can save herself. And only when, at the end of that ample time, it will have become apparent that mankind is not succeeding because the very root of her life has been poisoned, and with each new development the demonic power finds new ways and means to penetrate her veins and destroy her inner self, Only then will the Christ suddenly interrupt this period of gradual development, leavening and working through, and intervene with His full royal power, now not to preserve, but to judge, and with supernatural power to bring about the completion of His Kingdom.

The leading thought here is this. Mankind is created as one whole, and thus represented in a natural head, i.e., Adam. Sin breaks this organic unity. After the fall, humanity no longer has a head, no longer has a King, and therefore falls into continual disintegration and dissolution. Either humanity continues to decompose,

and finally loses all meaning as a unity. Or, humanity must receive a new head, and God must give it a King. The latter has been accomplished. In Christ, humanity receives back a King, but now in the second Adam much more gloriously than was the case in the first Adam. From the fall comes not the same thing that would have come out without the fall, but something far more glorious. This is what Augustine called the *Felix ciilpa*, the fall that brings happiness. This gift to mankind of such a glorious King has now proceeded in such a way that first the high life of mankind is drawn together in the national existence of a single, chosen people. This has happened in Israel. In this chosen people, the idea of a holy kingship gradually emerges. It is not real, because everything in Israel is shadowy and imaginary. But the idea takes root nonetheless. A Son of Man, not of mankind, but infused into it, as its spiritual head, becomes the popular ideal; already with Daniel the formula of the Son of Man is firmly established. Finally, the King appears in Israel. But now the figurative and shadowy nature of reality is also breaking through. As we expressed it in a previous article, the shell splits and the pearl emerges. With that, Israel falls as a nation. The fleshly Israel of Abraham is replaced by the spiritual Israel of the reborn. Christ is the real King of that Israel. It is He who creates His people and unites them in one body with Himself as its Head. This spiritual Israel is formed from all generations, nations, tongues and languages. Thus, there is a separation in the life of mankind. On the one side stands that portion of mankind that truly lives by Christ as its King, is ruled and protected by him, and on the other side stands that other portion that refuses to submit to him as its King. Whether the followers of Christ or the subjects of the King increase in number from thousands to millions, the contrast does not disappear.

A part of humanity persists in rejecting the King. This is so now and will remain so until the end. The power of the demonic is now firmly established in this unruly part of humanity. It is the Tempter once again who wants to be the ruler of the world and who is trying to set his kingdom against that of Christ and to maintain it, even to destroy the Kingdom of Christ. And this our King will put an end to by his Second Coming. He will break down the history of mankind by His Second Coming and bring it to an end. He will destroy and crush the power of the demonic for good. And He will sit as Judge to judge the living and the dead, gathering into His kingdom all the human race, in so far as His Kingship will have penetrated into it, and casting off from the trunk of our race all those few branches and leaves and withered blossoms that will have persisted to the end in rejecting His Kingship. Thus, in the end, nothing will remain but the Kingdom of Christ. All that will

constitute the human race will be submissive to Him. And then the Kingdom of glory will begin. A kingdom that will therefore be the kingdom of glory, because all of nature and the spirit world, together with all of our sanctified gender, will then be included in perfect harmony in the unity of life and government established by our King.

The final event that will occur at the Second Coming of Jesus, that will be decided by the Last Judgment, and that will bring about the completion of Jesus' Kingdom and the Kingdom of Glory, is announced by the Holy Scriptures in the visions that were given to John on Pathmos. We cannot, therefore, arrive at a clear conception of the Kingship of Christ unless we first draw attention to these visions; and it is certainly a gap in the minds of the faithful that they know so little to drink from these Revelations of John of the comfort and spirit which Scripture offers them. But though it is particularly in Revelation of John that this final period of the consummation is portrayed to us, yet that final event is announced to us just as surely in prophecy, in the Gospel, and in the letters of the apostles. Nowhere in Scripture is the prospect of a completion of things through gradual spiritual development given. The constant teaching of Scripture is that the course of history will one day be broken off, broken down for good, and that then by a supernatural intervention, which will encompass both the entire unseen and the entire seen world, the realization of the high, holy ideal is imminent. Already Joel, one of the oldest prophets, announces the day on which "the harvest of the earth will have ripened" 13:3, and the sickle will be driven into that harvest, and the day of the Lord will come. And that this coming of the Lord will not only be a spiritual action, but will also penetrate to nature and her elementary powers, is evident from what he writes, that not only the Spirit will be poured out, but that also "wonder signs will come in heaven and on earth, blood, fire and smoke pillars, and that the sun will be changed into darkness and the moonlight into the color of blood, before that great and august day of the Lord comes." And in 3:15 Joel repeats again, that when the day of the Lord is near "the sun and the moon shall have become black, and the stars shall have withdrawn their lustre."

No less emphatically than the prophets of Israel, Jesus himself, shortly before his death, announced that day of days to his disciples. Read it in Matthew 24:27 ff, where it says: "As lightning goes out from the east and shines to the west, so will the future of the Son of Man be. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shine, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be moved. Then shall appear in heaven

the sign of the Son of man; and the nations of the earth shall weep, and shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, with great power and glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a trumpet and great sound, and they shall gather together his disciples from the four winds, from one end of the heavens unto the other." And then follows in Matt. 25:31 ff. just as decidedly the announcement of the judgment, which will immediately follow His Second Coming: When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory, and all nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. These shall go into everlasting pain, and the righteous shall go into everlasting life." At Jesus' ascension, the same announcement is again made, this time not by Jesus, but by the angels to the disciples: "Two men stood by them in white garments, which also said: Ye Galilean men, what stand ye and look up to heaven. This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will so return, just as you saw Him ascend into heaven."

In the apostolic letters, therefore, the Second Coming of Jesus is an integral part of the Gospel, which they carried into the world. At a moment's notice," so it is said in 1 Cor. 15:52, "at a moment's notice, with the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised in immortality. And when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be done what is written: "Death is devoured unto victory. And likewise in 1 Thess. 4:16: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and they that died in Christ shall rise first." The Apostle even states more and more clearly that there will first be a time of elaboration and fermentation, and that the Second Coming of the Lord will not take place until after that. Thus in 2 Thess. 2:7 ff: "The hiddenness of iniquity is already being wrought. Only those who still resist will continue to do so, until he is removed from the midst. And then the unrighteous one will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy through the spirit of His mouth and through the appearing of His future." And that this Second Coming of the Lord would be accompanied by a supernatural intervention in the existing order of things, also in nature, Peter expresses emphatically in these words: "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a noise, and the elements will perish with fire, and the earth and the works that are in it will burn up. The heavens, being kindled by fire, shall pass away, and the elements shall burn with corruption." And then the kingdom of glory will come, for "we expect, according to the promise, new heavens and a new earth,

wherein shall dwell righteousness." The fulfillment of the time-honored prophecy in Isaiah 65:17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall be remembered no more, and shall not arise in the heart."

Even if the Revelation of John had not been inserted into the New Testament as a keystone, the Second Coming of the Lord would still have been firmly cemented into the fabric of our Christian confession on the basis of the prophecy of the O.V., Jesus' own testimony, and the clear statements in the Apostolic letters. Without the Article about Jesus' Second Coming on the clouds, no Christian profession in the elaborate sense is conceivable. The twelve Articles of Faith, therefore, contain the confession: "Ascended to heaven, from whence He cometh to judge the living and the dead", and all Christian Churches without distinction have accepted the twelve Articles of Faith with this part in it. In the last nine centuries, however, this confession of Jesus' Second Coming has been little more than nominal on the part of the Churches. It is true that from century to century there have been small groups and circles which have devoted themselves, even too unilaterally, to this one doctrine, and which soon became involved in all kinds of dreams. But, with the exception of these groups or sects, the Second Coming of the Lord has not lived as an animating motive in the preaching, and has not come into its own in the faith of the church in any one church. In times of pressure and persecution the belief in Jesus' Second Coming revived briefly. This was also the case during the Reformation in those countries, where the Reformation either could not stand upright, or, even worse, after having arisen for a short while, sank away again. In such days of fear and dismay one again reached for the promise of Jesus' future. But hardly had the position of the various Churches in the 17th century been established against and next to each other, or one began to feel at home in the world again; shifted the end of things to an unseeable perspective; and began again, as before, to make the confession of Jesus' future an almost dead letter of our confession. So it was in the Greek, so it was in the Roman Church, so it was in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches; and even among the Baptists, the heirs of the former Anabaptists, who had been powerfully versed in the doctrine of the last things, a willing resignation to the quiet progress of history soon became perceptible.

As a reaction against this cool indifference with regard to "the last things", some mystically inclined or bigoted persons appeared; or powerful singers were attracted by the moving visions of Jesus' Second Coming, as our country enjoyed in Da Costa; or new groups were formed, such as the Latter-day Saints, etc., who

believed that the future of the Lord was at hand, who believed they could await the future of the Lord while still alive, within a few years; but in the broad stream of church life the waters were barely rippled by this breath of the eschatological wind. Indeed, in broad Christian circles people gradually lapsed into so completely unscriptural an idea that they imagined little else than that the separated souls of the departed were destined to lead no other than a spiritual existence for all eternity in the Father's house, without any thought of a Resurrection of the dead, of a real last judgment, or of a glorification of the body humbled in death and grave. As the confession of Jesus' Second Coming faded away, so did its connotations; and though there remained some profoundly educated Christians who were absorbed in the doctrine of the last things, strengthened their faith by it, and enjoyed it, for the great multitude the confession of the last things ceased to be an essential part of their creed. The remains of the dead had been dealt with in the grave. Our dead now existed only as immortal souls in the Father's house. That Father's house was also waiting for us. And so, it would continue from century to century. Until one day the life of the world would end, and only the life of heaven would remain. And in that heavenly life, seeing again whom we had lost here and would find again in heaven would occupy just as wide a place as life in the service of the glorified King. People thought little about that King anymore. At the most there was still talk of a Friend who had saved and redeemed us and to whom we would bring our thanks. But of a Kingdom of glory, of a new earth under a new heaven, of finding ourselves again in a then glorified body, of a triumph of the Christ over His adversaries, of a judgment over the living and the dead, and of entering into the full glory of the Royal Regiment of the Christ, there was, except for a single sermon or a single song, hardly any more talk at the deathbed or at the opened grave. The doctrine of the last things was the first thing the congregation let go of, and exchanged for a superficial, one-sided spiritual representation that had formed in unbelieving circles.

The book of John's Revelations therefore no longer spoke to the congregation. They felt nothing for it anymore. They no longer understood it. She found no food for her faith in it. And when the persecution had ceased, she felt no need for the consolation offered by this last book of Holy Scripture. One still found much beauty in the seven letters to the seven Asia Minor congregations, and also in the description of the new Jerusalem and of the heavenly paradise one still found much that appealed through poetic beauty, but what lay between those seven letters and that drawing of the new Jerusalem ceased to captivate. One no longer read it.

People no longer knew it. And it had already become a dead letter, just like the article about Jesus' Second Coming in the XII Articles of Faith. And since in no book of the New Testament does the Kingship of Christ shine so brightly as in the visions of St. John on Pathmos, it could hardly be otherwise, than that this letting slip of the doctrine of the last things had to detract more than anything else from the veneration of Jesus' Kingship. Everything was leading to honor his Savior and Redeemer in Jesus, and especially to understand his Kingdom exclusively in a spiritual sense as the dominion of his high religious and moral ideas. The fact that Jesus' royal majesty would unfold in a demonstration of power over all creatures, not only over the self-conscious, spiritual creatures in man, but also over the inanimate creation throughout the whole realm of nature, down to its first elements, and not less over the rich world of spirits, which stood outside our human circle, was increasingly lost in the imagination of the multitude. Belief in the miracles in which Jesus displayed this power during His walk on earth weakened, and it was no longer understood that this same miraculous power would break through much more gloriously in the end of days, to reveal the royal majesty of Christ. Spiritually one wanted to leave all honor to Jesus, one still as Savior, the other only to praise him as a religious genius; but supranaturalists and moderns merged in this, that nothing more could be expected of a new, still higher and still much more violent revelation of power from our King in the future. The last judgment was to be understood only from Jesus' working in our consciences. And so, it was not least the abandonment of the doctrine of Jesus' Second Coming, by which for the consciousness of faith of the broad multitude all sound representations of Jesus' Kingship, as of a King who has authority over all things in heaven and on earth, ceased to be a force for life.

XXL - The revelation at Pathmos.

And he said unto me, these words are faithful and true; and the Lord, the God of the holy prophets, hath sent his angel to show his servants that which must shortly come to pass. REV. 22:6.

Whilst we are delving into the doctrine of the last things, this second series must not be concluded without a further explanation of what the Revelation of John shows us about the Kingship of Christ. It should be emphasized here that the visions given to John on Pathmos were primarily intended for the Christians living at that time. Their fate was hard. They stood as a small circle, in the full sense as the little flock, in the midst of a world that turned against them with its governmental power, its learning, and its social striving. If those first Christians had been content to occupy a modest place alongside the life of the world, they would have been tolerated. Why should there not have been a place for the Christian religion next to the various religions of the day? The Christians, however, were not content with this. No, it was not their intention to allow their Christian religion to take its place alongside the heathen and Jewish religions, as if they were one and the same. Their intentions went much further, their aims much higher. They were the King's people, and Christ, their King, had to rule over all people and nation. All other religion had to be destroyed. The Christian religion was the world religion. The only true, the only pure, the only form of worship to be tolerated. And therefore, all temples had to be demolished, all priesthoods abolished, all idols exhibited in their absence, and all the souls of men claimed for the honor of Christ. There could be no coordination. Even subordination to the other religions could not suffice. All other religions had to disappear as sinful and offensive to God. Nothing but Christianity had to remain, and the rule of the King of Christendom over all the earth had to be recognized and honored. Originally, therefore, it was not the pagans who attacked the Christians, but the Christians who, in their confession, attacked all existing religions. Peace was thus unthinkable. There had to be a struggle, and in that struggle either Christianity or paganism had to succumb. A struggle between the Christian King and the Emperor. A struggle between the Christian confession and pagan philosophy. And likewise, a struggle between the Christian moral teaching and the moral teaching of the heathen society. This struggle, especially in the first century, seemed desperate for the Christians. What was their little flock compared to the power of Rome's emperor? How did not all kinds of pagan philosophy penetrate the Christian confession already in the first century through the teachings of the Nicolaitans, the

Doctors and the Gnostics? And above all, how did not their holy conception of life, especially in the younger generation, risk being weakened and poisoned by the lower moral teachings of pagan society?

In this state of affairs, the Christ appeared to John on Pathmos, in order to show him in a series of visions the course of history, the suffering of the Christians, but also their final triumph in fascinating images. Give assurance that the end of the fearful struggle will be a final triumph; remove all doubt as to the outcome of the struggle; Show in clear signs how the course of history will necessarily lead to that desired outcome, - and the weakest will feel heroism rising up within him, and he who must die as a martyr in that struggle will die with a cry of jubilation on his lips, and before he climbs the funeral pyre or is thrown to the wild animals, will find comfort in the strength of his soul. The entire Revelation on Pathmos must therefore be viewed from this perspective. It addresses itself first and foremost to the then living race of Christendom; it wants to make known to this suffering Christendom the certainty of the final triumph, and it wants to enliven sinking hearts by that certain future, and to comfort those who go down in the struggle. Everything comes down to that certainty. There must be no room for doubt or hesitation, and hence the appearance of the Christ Himself, hence the repeated declaration that this is how it will happen, and hence again at the end the solemn declaration: "These words are faithful and true, and the Lord, the God of the holy prophets, has sent His angel to show His servants what must shortly come to pass. A statement reinforced by the declaration, that "if any man shall depart from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall withdraw his part from the book of life, and from the holy city." Standing in the midst of a struggle that according to human calculations could only end in the total defeat and extermination of the Christians, the Christianity of that time needed firmness of conviction, the certain knowledge that the outcome would be just the opposite, and the unshakeable hope that the final triumph would remain with Christ its King. And that certainty, that certain knowledge, that foundation of her hope is what that King gave to John on Pathmos, and through him to the suffering and persecuted and hard-pressed Christianity. Those visions have been one of the means for the triumph of Christendom.

These visions had to meet two requirements. First, through the whole of history, they had to show the end and, in that end, the final triumph; and second, they had to emphasize the initial triumph that was already, immediately, awaiting. That is why these visions dioramatically provide a view through the entire course of

history, and through all of this draw the final triumph so clearly from afar that they become the resting point for the searching religious gaze. The downfall of Jerusalem is shown, and from that fixed point the line of history goes straight on to the final point, when Christ returns, all opposition is broken by him, the Last Judgment enters, and glory is revealed. Whether years or centuries lie between is indifferent. Are not a thousand years with the Lord as one day? What it comes down to is showing that the power of the King is already beginning to work. Not only in a later century, but already now, immediately, in the fall of Jerusalem, and later in the fall of pagan Rome, and that the faithful, from there peering through the diorammatic course of history, have before them the final triumph of Christ our King as a vista in clear outline. For the first you have the continually repeated statement that it is shown "what must shortly take place. A revelation of power is shown in these visions, which will not come to pass centuries from now. No, that revelation of power will begin immediately. The visions do not refer to what will only begin to work much later, but they clearly and distinctly point to a beginning of that revelation of power, which is immediately at hand. The two great powers against which the first Christians found themselves confronted were Judaism and the heathen imperial power. Well, both these powers, represented by the one in Jerusalem and the other in imperial Rome, would be attacked right away, and both their fall is shown in clear images. By the addition of the words "where our Lord was crucified" (11:8), the city outside whose walls Golgotha lay is referred to, and in 17:9 the words "the seven heads are the seven mountains on which the woman sits" are just as definitely an allusion to ancient Rome, which was known everywhere as the city of the seven hills.

Even this visionary announcement of the fall of Jerusalem and Rome must not be understood in such a way that the effect of Christ's royal power was not already at work beforehand, as if it were only manifest in such great events. It goes without saying that in ordinary life, too, Christ's royal power is constantly and unremittingly at work, both in the destinies of the churches and in the personal lives of believers. Just read how Jesus himself in his letters to the Churches in Asia-Minor constantly testifies to what he, as the Head of all, will do, and how he, precisely for the protection of those Churches, also acts on private individuals. You can see this clearly in the letter to Thyatire, where it says of the woman Jezabel: "I gave her time to repent, and she did not repent. Behold, I will put her to bed, and those who have committed adultery with her, in great affliction; and I will put her children to death, and all the churches will know that it is I who test hearts and

kidneys." But although it is clear from this that the Revelation of John in no way intends to overlook or underestimate the silent impact of Christ on everyday life, yet the intention to make the power of our King shine through in the great and mighty world events, which are set out like milestones on the path of history, and in which the course of things, visibly turning around, takes a noticeable turn. In this way everyone looks at his own life, and attaches the most importance in the memory to what has brought significant change in his life and his destiny. In this way each people shows its history by recording for the future precisely those events that dominate the situation of the country and lead it in new directions. And in this sense it is the intention of these visions at Pathmos, to encourage and comfort the Churches in their anxious strain, especially to draw all attention together to those coming revelations of Jesus' power, which by a surprising intervention in the course of history made the irrefutable character of Jesus' everlasting victory stand out before all eyes. If it is now certain that Christianity, at its entrance into history, found in Judaism and paganism, represented by Jerusalem and Imperial Rome, the two principal powers opposite it, over which it had to triumph or under which it had to abate, then nothing could have so splendidly illuminated the Christ's royal power as the fall of Jerusalem in the first century, and the imminent infliction of the mortal wound on the imperial power of Rome.

But in this the vision could not rest. With each struggle the odds could go up and down. Even though it appeared later that the Christian people were about to see Jerusalem and Rome fall, this in itself was no guarantee that the chance of happiness could not turn. And what would it profit Christ's royal power that Jerusalem and Rome should fall, if other powers were soon to arise and attack the Christian religion with a new and complete defeat? And for that reason alone, could these visions on Pathmos adequately strengthen the congregation of the living God, as it was clearly shown that not only triumph in the beginning, but also total victory in the end, was to come. However long and dark the line of sight through which, from Jerome's and Rome's fall, one saw through to the end, that end itself had, in the farthest point of the diorama, to be seen in a perfectly clear light, and, at whatever historical distance, it had to be seen as if before one's eyes, How in that end all unholy power would gather against our King, and all instruments would turn against him to destroy his Kingdom, but how our King with irresistible majesty would attack and throw down successively each and every one of those unholy powers, until one day every enemy would be subdued at his feet. And from behind the battlefield on which this final struggle was to be fought,

the full radiance of the kingdom of glory was to appear before the soul's eye, in order to make manifest in the wedding of the Lamb, or should you say in the new Jerusalem and in God's paradise, the salvation for which heaven and earth had been eternally determined by God's counsel. And this is precisely what the faithful of those days received in the visions on Pathmos. Announcement of the imminent triumph over Jerusalem. Then the fall of imperial Rome. And then the long, dark history that would lead to the end. But that end mapped out in clear, animated images. Attractive in its beauty, enchanting in the gigantic struggle in which their King would triumph, and restful in the complete certainty with which that final triumph was to be sealed.

Yet it did not stop there.

It was not enough to show what was about to happen and how glorious the final triumph would be. Also, what would lie in between had at least to be indicated. Hence the repeated attempts to find details of the entire history of the world in the visions of Pathmos, all through the ages up to the present. The after-effects of these attempts are still to be found in the canticles of our Staten transposition. Now this is true, that all that has occurred since Pathmos, and until Jesus' return is yet to come, is actually contained in the visions which trace the course of history, and only in so far did they err in trying to apply verse by verse to certain facts of history, where after all these visions could give us nothing but a summary of the characteristics which would continually, and in an ascending process, emerge in this struggle of the ages. Jesus' firm statement that no one knows anything about the hour of judgment, neither the angels nor the Son of God, because the Father has placed the times and occasions in His own power, leaves no other interpretation of these visions. The visions form a whole, for they arise from "the Book with the seven seals," and in the successive appearance of the seven angels, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials, a historical course is undoubtedly announced. But it is quite a different matter whether in such a revelation, century by century and year by year, the coming events are foretold, or whether the character is drawn to us that will reveal itself in the course of the centuries, continuing and progressing. Faith is not concerned with years and names and a few facts, but with the spiritual struggle that will manifest itself with increasing clarity in the course of history, and it is precisely the latter that presents itself in these visions of Pathmos. The character of this struggle can be seen mainly in these features: 1° there is an ascending process. The same thing happens again and again, but with each return the same struggle is shown with increasing intensity. The outpouring of God's wrath begins with the

usual phenomena of rising wars, fearful pestilence and fearful famine. But with the surge of history, the destruction becomes more and more incisive. At first the destruction affects only a part, often a third. But then it goes on and on, until at last nothing is resisted, nothing is spared, and everything goes under, in connection with which the destructive powers are more and more fearful in nature. 2°. Alongside this character of the ascending process there is just as steadfastly this sharp trait, that the battle is not only fought spiritually, but also violently, and that not only the human world, but also nature, in the firmament and on earth, is included in the struggle. The power of the King of the Kingdom of God is not limited to the realm of the mind, but also affects nature and the world of visible things. The sun and moon, the sea and rivers, the bodies of men and animals. It is becoming increasingly clear that a struggle is going on that encompasses all creation, the whole earth, and ultimately the entire universe. 3°. Besides this continually ascending process, and the increasingly all-embracing nature of the struggle, a third feature is that the apostates are still constantly given the opportunity to repent and give glory to God. With the sunken believers this succeeds in part, but the world hardens itself, and when our King still again and again calls the apostate world to repentance by His judgments, they harden themselves in evil, blaspheme God who brings them these plagues, and chew their tongues with pain, while they go on cursing the Almighty. 4°. It is equally clear from these visions that the anti-Christian power is again and again given the opportunity to show what it can do. It organizes itself more and more powerfully. It erects its anti-Christian kingdom opposite the Kingdom of Christ. It imitates in its own kingdom the kingdom of Christ. She works through kings and through false prophets, and ends by imprinting a mark on all her followers, finally excluding even those who do not bear the "little mark of the beast" from ordinary life and from trade and business. It is the man of sin who in the end poses as God in the temple of God and claims the whole world for himself. Christ will triumph, but first his enemy must be given the opportunity to bring his full power against the Christ into the field. Only when the anti-Christian power has exerted itself to the utmost, and has unfolded all its unholy power, will the final battle be worthy of Christ, and in the destruction of that fully unfolded power will he celebrate his fitting triumph.

To this is added, in the fifth place, that characteristic that dominates all visions, that what is done, whether by the Antichrist or by our King, even though it is played out on earth, nevertheless receives its driving force not from the earth, but

from the world of spirits. This is the case on the part of Christ, for he sits at God's right hand. He does not fight alone, but with the hosts of God's angels. And everything that our King does is based on what happened in the palace of our God in the heavens. The whole of the sacred drama is performed according to that which is written in the Book of the seven seals, and each new impulse for the performance of the drama emanates from the throne of the majesty of God. It is not from this earth that life rises to the surface, but the vision begins each time to move us in the heavens near God's throne, and each new movement in the stupendous drama proceeds from God's throne. But that is precisely how things are on the side of the antichristian power. Here, too, it is not the sin of mankind from which the action against Christ arises. The battle that breaks out on earth against the Kingdom of Christ is merely the result and consequence of the enmity in which Satan persists against the living God. This is clearly indicated by the casting down of the red dragon (Satan) from the spirit world onto this earth. Even before that moment, Satan's many effects on the world of men also go on before that moment, but it is only from that moment on that Satan agitates and works on the earth itself. He imitates the incarnation of the Word by incarnating himself in a human being, and in the most God-awful manner he substitutes the worship of Satan and his image for the worship of God Almighty and of the expressed image of His own independence. Thus, first the false conception of man is set against the real conception of man, the false prophet against the true prophet, the king anointed by Satan against the king anointed by God. And only now can the great battle between Christ and Satan be decided. Demons and angels, Satan and Christ, death and life, sin and holiness, hell and paradise, thus come to stand against each other in principle for the first time, and both in the full development of their power. It cannot go any further than that. History ends here. No more history can follow. Time has ended, eternity has begun. And the final outcome is that God will be all and in all, and that all unholy power will sink into the lake of destruction.

XXII. - The two Realms.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet are; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. REV. 20:10.

The only thing that has so detracted from Jesus' Kingship in the faith of the Church is the greatly increased indifference to the spirit world. For the world of angels as well as for the world of demons. It was not as if the believing congregation would go along with the denial of the existence of such a spirit world. This could not be done, insofar as one still maintains one's faith in the Holy Scriptures. The existence of such a spirit world and its effects on the life of our world are taught so clearly and thoroughly in the Scriptures that the acknowledgment of the existence of such a spirit world was bound to stand. Even if it were only the prayer in the Lord's Prayer that we may accomplish God's will on earth as it is accomplished in heaven, together with the other prayer: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", which sustained this recognition, it is nevertheless certain that all those who still pray the Lord's Prayer as a sacred prayer, automatically profess their belief in the existence, both of good angels and of demons. But this bare external belief lacks force if it is not accompanied by an acknowledgment of the effect of these spirits on our own fate and soul existence; and it is precisely this that is lacking. Much more than we might think, believers are also under the sway of public opinions and of generally accepted ideas. It is often thought that one lives by Scripture alone, but unnoticed, public opinion also has a, oh, so strong influence on the believers' understanding of Scripture. In the days of Luther and Calvin, the notion that Satan exists was part of the general conception of those days, and therefore the Scriptures were read and understood by everyone in such a way that the effect of Satan on the fate of the world and on the heart of mankind was part of everyone's conception. But when, especially in the eighteenth century, belief in spirits completely disappeared from public opinion, it also began to weaken in religious circles. At present it is often the case that, while reading the Scriptures, the existence and the effects of the spirit world are readily accepted, but when the Bible is closed, no further account is taken of it in life. Even in the sermons of convinced preachers, the spirit world is not often and deliberately ignored. The spirit world ceased to be a permanent part of education. It can still be heard in the singing of angels, and also in the last prayer of the Lord's Prayer. But otherwise both the world of angels and that of demons are often only touched upon *pro memoria*. Even in the course of spiritual events there is almost no mention of

demonic powers. It is as if man does it all, man does it all, and no other creature power apart from man is at work in history. It is remarkable how in this same era the clear conception of Jesus' Kingship, on the one hand, and the clear conception of the power of the spirit world, on the other, have become, though not worn out, half illegible in the representation of the church. This is compounded by the fact that the last book of the Holy Scriptures, in which both the Kingship of Christ and the demon world are most clearly portrayed, was left unread by an all too large portion of the congregation during the same period, or even if chapter after chapter was read or recited from it, the book as a whole nevertheless ceased to occupy an indispensable place in the imagination of the faithful. There is therefore every reason to dwell for a moment on this connection between Christ's Kingship and the workings of the spirit world. What was seen of Jesus' Kingship when he was on earth remained veiled; the regiment of our King in these centuries of silent process can only be discovered by the eye of faith; and it is only then that the Kingship of Christ will shine forth before heaven and earth in its full majesty, when the last battle has been fought, victory will be assured forever, and our King, after his final triumph, will have subdued the last enemy at his feet on a new earth and under a new heaven.

This is what the Scriptures express by contrasting Kingdom with Kingdom. Jesus spoke emphatically of the Kingdom of Satan, when he asked, "If then Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom exist?" Satan is not alone, and does not stand alone. Satan has a power under him. As long as that power remains one and subject to him, it forms an empire, and that empire cannot last if one part of it turns against the other. This empire is therefore called a "power", as we now tend to express it, what was then called a "might". The grace of God is that "He drew us out of the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love". Often this is understood to mean out of the hand of Satan, out of his power. But that cannot be the intention. One is transferred from one field to another. The "power of darkness" here is the realm of Satan's kingdom, and from that realm the redeemed is taken away and transferred to the realm of the Kingdom of Christ or the Kingdom of Heaven. The essence of Satan's Kingdom is then hereby sought in Darkness, as opposed to Light, which is the life element of the Kingdom of Christ. In this "Realm of Darkness", too, Beelzebub the Prince has a mighty army at his disposal, which fights for him as his army to defend his kingdom and consists entirely of fallen angels, demons or evil spirits. Insofar as the Prince of this Kingdom of Darkness had also extended his power over our globe, he acted as

"Commander of the World', a title which Jesus himself uses of him. This Prince of Darkness said to Jesus that all the kingdoms of the earth had been placed in his power, and that he gave them to whomever he pleased. Commander of the world is not his title as Lord of his own kingdom, but his title insofar as he, as Lord of the Kingdom of Darkness, had taken this earth as a province. This earth did not originally belong to his Kingdom, but to the Kingdom of God, and it is to God that he has dismembered this earth. He has torn it away from the Kingdom of God, and added it to his Kingdom. According to the Scriptures, the giant struggle between God and Satan is only about the possession of this earth. Through temptation and temptation in paradise, Satan has caused man to succumb, broken his power, and taken from him, as God's appointed steward, the power over this earth. And this lasts until God sends his Son, to smite back Satan's dominion on this earth, and to re-establish once more, and now for all time, the dominion of God, and to regain it for the Kingdom of God.

Neither as far as Christ nor Satan is concerned may the word Kingdom be taken metaphorically or figuratively. It is meant both times in the most actual sense. Both Kingdoms are two organized powers. Both are governed, managed and led according to a fixed plan. Satan opposes God's decree with his cunning and crafty plan. Although it goes without saying that Satan remains only a creature in power and might, he has been granted the highest conceivable power among all creatures. We know of no spirit that was more richly endowed and more wonderfully equipped before his fall than this created spirit, and it is precisely the greatness of the gifts conferred on him that made the madness to measure up to God arise in him. This madness of its own accord meant that he had to be on the alert to draw as much as possible from all that was created to his advantage and to conquer it for himself. He did not have his own terrain, his own sphere of life, his own area of power. He was the highest creature, but still remained a creature, and as such was created for no other purpose than to serve God and glorify His majesty. By becoming unfaithful to this service he robbed himself of God and robbed and robbed the honor of God with everything he took with him from the spirit world. And that which he took with him was organized, just as everything in God's creation was created in organic form. The lower spirits he seduced were soon under his control, in mutual association. His personal superiority gave him the power to control all lower evil spirits completely and to place them at his service. The demons do not wage guerrilla warfare each on their own, but are incorporated into His army and wage their battles in mutual association, using all their strength

and imagination to increase Satan's honor in the face of the honor of God that they oppose. Satan has been able to capture our human race in this unholy service, and although the common grace and redemption that began in paradise have always prevented Satan from taking complete possession of this earthly realm, he has still been able to dominate worldly life under the rule of law, He has brought worldly life under his banner, subjected the heathen peoples to the rule of his spirit, succeeded in penetrating the reign of earthly kingdoms, and thus became "First of all.

His kingdom therefore consisted of two parts: his actual kingdom in the fallen spirit world and the province he had occupied on this earth. It was into this earthly realm that he had extended his power. It is often imagined that the earthly realm itself is neutral, and that the struggle between Satan and God takes place exclusively in the hearts of men. The earthly realm itself would then remain the same, before the fall, after the fall, and after the Redemption. The scene, if we may express it this way, would always have remained one and the same, and all the difference would have consisted of mankind's estrangement from paradise, his spiritual estrangement from God, and, thanks to the appearance of Christ, his recovery to God, at least in part. But Scripture does not teach us this way. Many people even deceived themselves that, before the creation of mankind, Satan's break with God in the spirit world had already devastated the whole of creation and thus also this earth, and that we must therefore account for the "desolate and empty" state referred to in Genesis 1: 2. Paradise, then, would have been but an oasis in the incalculable wilderness, and in that paradise, man would have been called to life. Quite apart from anything else, however, the fall is immediately followed by a curse, a curse that makes paradise disappear and affects the whole earth in its way of existence, so that it now produces "thistles and thorns, and death, the terrible death, makes its appearance in this world. Not only is man's spirit tempted to waste, but his body, which is organically bound up with his spirit, is losing its high quality of life. Sickness and disease, all kinds of suffering and misery set in, by no means only as far as our soul's existence is concerned, but also our physical existence and our external society. And also, outside mankind the elementary forces of nature were 'dissolved, and destruction inflicted all over the earth.

Of course, this does not include everything that later, based on the Germanic doctrine of the gods, penetrated the peoples of Europe, of which the so-called witch trials are the best known. This, however, has nothing to do with the

representation of Scripture. And what came out of the Persian dualism must also be left out of consideration here. In Scripture, Satan and his henchmen are always God's own creatures, who exist only through His power, and who will ultimately be subject to His power again. But even so, it is in the nature of spirits to exert power and influence also over visible things, even over what is before our eyes. Everything is connected. Between them everything is organically related. Hence the power of Satan, once he has broken into this world, has gradually affected the whole of creation. What natural science and spiritual science now teach more and more clearly is that man's spirit is bound up with his body, and that there is also an organic connection between all the realms of Nature, and finally even between the organic realms of Nature and the material world, to the inmost bowels of the earth and to the finest elements of nature, has been expressed since time immemorial in the fact that the fall of man in his spirit was followed by the curse that came upon the whole earth in all the realms of its nature. The Kingdom of Satan consequently permeates everything, and seeks more and more to encompass everything. The example for the Kingdom of Satan is and remains the Kingdom of God. Just as God rules over spirits and men, rules over spirit and matter, and encompasses all creation, so too Satan seeks to establish his kingdom over God. God's power must be destroyed, and Satan's ultimate goal is to take God's place when God's power is finally broken, and to become and be and remain what God Himself is, the Controller of all things, the King over all creatures, the Lord over all creatures. And now this is the majestic thing in this battle: that God Almighty does not crush Satan, who has rebelled in the heat of the moment, by his overpowering power, but first allows him to become, and even to develop, enormous power, and then first starts the principled battle against him, and finally in that principled battle brings him down and destroys him. Satan is and remains a spirit and must therefore be spiritually conquered. He must not be crushed once by force and supremacy, but only when he can come out in his full armor can he be spiritually attacked in the hearts of men and thus spiritually nullified. Only then can the spiritual supremacy of light over darkness, the triumph of truth over falsehood, the triumph of life over death become apparent. Not only Satan must be conquered, but in that victory over Satan the high glory of God's righteousness must shine forth.

In this fearful struggle of the ages, Satan always seeks to remain behind the scenes. The thief, if he breaks in, does not want to be noticed. The assassin hides until the last moment. The robber lurks on the road from a place where he can remain unseen. And so, it is with all of Satan's endeavors, to mist up, to envelop, to veil,

and to do his work in the hidden. He is and remains the Prince of Darkness, who seeks his strength in the Darkness. Satan's laughter never rises higher than when he notices that the wise men of the world are saying that there is no Satan and no kingdom of demons, and when even among the faithful counting with his devilish snares is a high exception. He likes it when he is forgotten, when no one speaks of him, when people keep quiet, so that no one is suspicious of his tricks and schemes. There is no more glorious time for Satan than when the general cry goes out that everything previously and in Scripture professed about devils and demons is based on mere fantasy. It is precisely then that he can carry out his work undisturbed, only to appear when his efforts have been successful. But that is precisely why the Prince of Light must appear opposite the Prince of Darkness. A King must appear who will attack this ruler of the world and later destroy his kingdom. Man in himself is incapable of this struggle. Whatever will do battle with this Prince of Darkness, with his organized demonic power, must itself be an organized power.

Mankind, in order to be liberated, must also be able to act under a King, and this King must not only be a man, for the spirit of Satan is far more powerful than the spirit of man, but, appearing as the Son of Man, must also carry within himself the fullness of Divine power. Such a King alone is powerful and able, not only to defeat Satan personally for himself, but also to shake and shake loose the very foundations of his Kingdom. Whoever takes up arms against Satan must be able to sink as low and aim as high as he himself. In order to wrest the province, this earth, from Satan, Satan's power must fundamentally be eroded in his own spirit realm. Not only must his power among the people of this earth be broken, but he must also be dethroned in his own spirit world. The hero of God must both oust the "Commander of the World" and become himself King over all the kings of the earth, and at the same time be Lord and head of the angels, in order to fight the last battle in the spirit world as well. It is only in this context that the Kingship of Christ appears in its full reality. He does not appear as a King who will hover high above mankind and subdue it by force. On the contrary, he becomes one of us, human like us, organically incorporates all the elect into his mystical Body, and rules over them by reigning in them and making them spiritually free. In this way mankind, as transfigured by him, forms with him one power, one whole, an organic unity, and he is King, not in the sense of our earthly kings, but King by exercising complete dominion over all. What he incorporates as King is forever withdrawn from Satan's power. Thus, in the midst of the unholy life a holy oasis of heavenly

life is created, and from this holy focal point the Christ, as our King, expands his power and influence on earth, and at the same time he wrestles with his holy angels in the world of spirits in order to cripple Satan's influence and effect on this earth.

But just as he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness at his first appearance, so too the end cannot come until our King has personally entered into the struggle with the Prince of Demons once again. And now Satan is released, yes provoked and challenged, to confront the Kingdom of Christ for the last time in his full power and full armor; and then comes the final battle. Satan, who in the Antichrist and in the false prophet thinks himself once more master of the world, and against him rises up "the King on the white horse, surrounded by the armies of heaven, and he judges and makes war in righteousness, clothed with a garment that is quilted with blood, and his name is called: the Word of God" And now this King expels Satan and his demons with the spirit of his mouth, and the Hallelujah rises in all the heavens. "Hallelujah, for the Lord God Almighty has reigned as King." That King has power over men, power over spirits, power over soul and body, power over all the forces and elements of nature. The poison of apostasy and sin, of lies and darkness, of misery and death, is destroyed to its last creeping corner. And now it is not as if Satan had never been there. Rather, a glory now breaks through, far greater than once shone forth in paradise. It is a new earth under a new heaven, and this is the surprising final result, that Satan as Prince of Darkness appears in the end to have accomplished nothing but a higher manifestation of the glory of God, which would never have been known without his rebellion. And this can only be brought about by the appearance of our King. Kingdom over Kingdom, Prince over Prince, Commander over Commander, King over King! And that is why the glory of Jesus' Kingship must fade in your consciousness of faith, as often as belief in the rebellion and the resistance of the Prince of Darkness loses the clarity that God has sealed for you in His Word.

History is the seal of this.

Or is it not the case that precisely those heroes of faith, who most deeply experienced in their own souls how their struggle was not against flesh and blood, not against mankind, but against spiritual evil in the air, were the men who felt the strongest need of the Kingship of Christ and who glorified this Kingship of Christ at its highest?

A cloud of witnesses, from the man of Tarsen to the man of Worms with his: "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me!"

XXIII. - Mystical and Instrumental.

Who shall change our humiliated body, that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working, by which he also can subdue all things to himself.

PHIL. 3:23.

We must not remain silent of the manner in which we have to imagine the exercise of Jesus' kingly power. The apostle testifies to us that his is the "working by which he can also subdue all things to himself." In Revelation, the Christ himself speaks of "the sword of his mouth" (2:16). The Christ is said to "reject the adversary by the spirit of his mouth." And he is also shown holding in his hand "a sharp sickle to reap the harvest of the earth." We hear the hymn on Pathmos, that "the Lamb is worthy to receive the power" (5:12), and later the jubilation that now "the power has become of the Christ" (12:10). The Hebrew letter tells us that the Christ "carries all things by the word of His power." It is the apostle's fervent prayer that "the power of Christ" may dwell in him, and where he strikes the apostolic spell, he says he does so "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 5:4). Already during his walk on earth we read repeatedly that "the power went out from Jesus" (Luke 8:48) and that he commanded "with power the unclean spirit" (Luke 9: 1). And at his departure from this earth he leaves us the word of comfort: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. However, although this series of statements establishes the conviction that the Christ, in order to carry out his royal office, has at his disposal an all-sided power, such a general statement is not satisfactory, and it is therefore worthwhile to examine the exercise of power by the Christ in more detail. Not, of course, as if we could ever succeed in analyzing this exercise of power in such a way that we could see through its entirety. Even in all physical power, there always remains, at the end of the day, an inexplicable something that we have to accept without being able to explain it; and especially in all spiritual power, there always lies at the bottom a certain mystery that defies further explanation. The power of love, the power of faith, the power of heroism fascinate us without our being able to peep into their essence, and how could we ever succeed in tracing back to their roots the wonderful power that once worked and still works in Christ? But even though we know in advance that the riddle we are facing here is not entirely amenable to solution, the limited nature of our knowledge need not prevent us from striving for a general conception of the manner in which Christ exercises power as our King.

It is obvious that we must distinguish between the actions that Jesus performs directly Himself and those that He performs through His appointed servants and subjects. With those servants we should not only think of human persons, but also of angels. An earthly king uses an army of officials to carry out his reign and has an armed force at his disposal. Through these officials he has his orders conveyed to whom it may concern, and with the strong arm he enforces obedience to his orders. To a certain extent this is the same as the fact that Christ, by virtue of his royal majesty, also gave some people to be apostles, others to be evangelists, to be overseers, to be shepherds and teachers, in order to pasture his flock. These ministers are not only charged with proclaiming the Gospel and communicating the command to believe, but they are also vested with a certain power, with which they exercise discipline, and by means of which a certain spiritual regiment is maintained on earth. If one now adds up all these ministers of the Word, all these bishops and deacons from all churches throughout the world, then one finds an immense army of thousands and tens of thousands of ministers who stand at the service of Christ in His royal regiment, and in so far as they are faithful, actually exercise a part of that regiment in Jesus' name. Yet this host of human servants is still small compared to the vast host of angels who are always ready to serve Him in the spirit world. These angels are always faithful servants who skillfully obey the commands that emanate from the King's mouth; they are not bound by any earthly impediment, and they are always "sent out for the sake of those who will inherit salvation". It is therefore quite wrong to think of the position of our King at the right hand of God as an isolated one. On the contrary, there is no emperor or king on earth who can even remotely compare the wide range of his officials and the rich development of his armed forces with the phalanx of the servants and agents and subjects of our King. Even if we were to learn nothing more about the mystery of the miraculous power exercised by Jesus himself, we would not be able to form too comprehensive a picture of his regiment. His twelve disciples have increased in the course of the centuries to thousands and tens of thousands, and the twelve legions of angels, of whom he spoke shortly before his death, have now expanded to include all the hosts of heaven. His is in no way an isolated position, but even in the higher spheres he appears surrounded by "the angels of his power".

Yet this exercise of power by his servants on earth and by the angels of his power requires further explanation. After all, the usual machinery of the civil service, which the earthly king has at his disposal, is absent here. With an earthly king, his highest advisers appear in person in order to hear his wishes and to advise and

consult him; written orders are prepared; and there is a broad service of clerks and messengers who, by couriers, by post and telegraph and printing press, bring the king's will and orders to the knowledge of his subjects. And also, with an earthly King, the appointments of the servants and the appointments of the heads of his armed forces are made by written orders, and between all the servants there is a hierarchical relationship that passes from person to person. With King Jesus, on the other hand, all this falls away. He is not on earth. He is enthroned in the heavens. And no servant on earth has ever seen the King, heard his voice or received a personal order from him. It is true that on earth there is a certain organization in the Church through which the appointment of His servants is made and supervision and discipline is exercised over the congregation, but all of this goes beyond personal, visible contact with the King. He remains in heaven, and all this organization of his Church takes place on earth, among men, if we may so express it, on his own accord. Hence the abuse that constantly crept in and so often perverted this organization. So perverted, that all too often His servants on earth not only fell asleep and became idle, but finally organized themselves into a mass that opposed the King and persecuted and oppressed His loyal subjects. Compared to the governmental organization that a king has on earth, the organization of his servants on earth makes a very poor impression. It lacks personal contact, it lacks a direct ad hoc command, it lacks a direct personal appointment, and the possibility exists that this earthly organization might turn against its goal. Our King did leave his Word to the Church on earth, with the demand that his Church should live by that Word and draw its strength from it, but that Word is not a Khoran. That Word is a historical product. It has arisen in Israel in the course of the centuries and therefore bears an Eastern historical type. It does not give a concrete series of laws and decrees, but it tells history, it tells about God's power, and it gives statements and testimonies of prophets, but not in such a concrete form that it could be considered a book of law, in which one only has to store the applicable article for every case. However great the power of this Word may be, it is of an entirely different nature than the code of an earthly ruler; it exerts its influence in an entirely different manner; and it moves the spirits to conform to the will of Jesus, but in an entirely different manner than a law or decree on earth. It follows that all kinds of disputes may arise concerning the meaning and significance of this Word; that both scientific and spiritual studies are required in order to understand it and apply it to life's situations; and that a high level of spiritual guidance is therefore required in connection with this Word, which cannot originate with men, but must originate with the King Himself. Even if we limit ourselves to the normal

organization of the Church on earth and the government that it exercises in Jesus' name, an invisible intervention by the King himself is already necessary and indispensable here, one that has a completely mystical character and cannot be explained by the earthly institution. With the angels, this mystical intervention by an act of the King is equally indispensable. The King must know his guard of angels, know for what service each angel is suited. He must communicate his command to each angel so that he knows what his task is, and the King himself must protect his angels and lead them in such a way that they carry out his high command in the manner that he desires. This part of the Royal Regiment, which is served by ministers or by servants from the angels or from mankind, thus demands a power in the King to know to the smallest detail what is going on on earth, and to arrange, direct and regulate everything in such a way that his will is carried out, his command carried out, and his Royal authority maintained.

And next to this exercise of Jesus' royal power by means of subjects, office bearers and angels, there is the direct influence of the King on the entire course of our human life, bathed in a much deeper mystical glow. Our King is not a passive King, who, seated at the right hand of the Fathers, merely watches and waits to see what will develop on earth from the service of his followers, but he actually reigns, interacts with the things of this world and personally exercises his royal rule. Many people do not see this. They think of Jesus as ascended into heaven and now residing in the Father's house, in contact with the angels and the blessed, but deprived of direct influence on things here below. He established his Church, he gave us his Word, he blessed us with the Sacraments, and furthermore he makes the fruit of his sacrifice valid with the Father, but furthermore, in their view, he is awaiting what is happening on earth, watching how things are going on earth, passively tolerating what is happening, and so anticipating the end of things, as if he will once again intervene in the course of things. There are those who then still accept a certain free and strong communion between Jesus and the redeemed soul, and who enjoy themselves in that supposed communion with their Savior, but, all this goes beyond His royal power, even beyond His royal office. It is in all things the High Priest of their confession, whom they seek here, who now lives to pray for them and will prepare a place for them in the Father's house, but as King Jesus is also to them a *roi fainéant*, i.e., a King in name, who awaits what is to come, but without actually exercising a reign on earth. Others do not even admit to this mystical community, and imagine that Jesus left behind only the memory of his appearance, that the impression of his life, suffering and death still lingers, that his

example still wins and attracts, and that his Word, which he left behind, as an illustration of a holy ideal, still endears itself to our hearts, but that there is no question of any direct influence, which Jesus would exert on earth, even now, in a thoughtful and fully conscious way. In their view, a Kingship of Jesus may await his return, but in the centuries that elapse between his ascension and his return on the clouds, there is no question of it. It is an honorary title, and also among the angels and the blessed above, but not as far as our human life on this earth is concerned. Now on earth we have a certain fellowship with Jesus' spirit through the word and example he left us, and through the memory of his entire appearance, and one day in the Father's house we shall see a completely new fellowship with Jesus unlocked, when we see him as he is; but during the years we spend here on earth there is nothing for us but history and the ideal, and all personal contact with Jesus rests on imagination and fiction. In fact, the destruction of Jesus' Kingship, or at least the inactivity of that Kingship, and the assimilation of Jesus' position to that of every one of the saved who went away from us and was taken up into the deserts of glory.

However, this idea runs completely counter to what Scripture has revealed to us. You only have to read the series of letters of Jesus to the churches in Asia-Minor in the second and third chapter of Revelation to feel the contrast. In those letters Jesus himself speaks to the churches in such a way that he shows he knows them in detail; that he judges their doings right down to the smallest and most distinguishing details; that he has their destiny in his hand; and that he has such a disposition over their future that he already now executes all kinds of judgments on them with royal power, punishes and blesses them, threatens them or enriches them with promises and has their future in his hand. There is no question of a wait-and-see, passive attitude here. Jesus is present in the congregation, Jesus knows her, Jesus assesses her past and her present situation, He even knows the few erring teachers who have arisen in her midst, and He tells her that if she does not repent, He will intervene, make her feel His power, and finally take her lampstand away from her. And the apostles give the same presentation in their letters on every point and in every area. Jesus is the King, Jesus is the Lord, who gives power to those who need it in order to do His will. Jesus rules as King over every person, over every servant, in every sphere of life. It is always the Lord, the King, who comes to the fore and experiences His workings and effects in the persons and in the congregation. Yes, did not Jesus himself cut off all pretense that his kingship would be merely nominal and titular, just before his Ascension, when he

introduced the baptismal command for the incorporation of the nations with the solemn declaration that all power in heaven and earth had been given to him? Note, not only in heaven, but also on earth. Not only in the realms of salvation would he shine in majesty, but that majesty would also be revealed on earth. Just as his apostles openly declared after the first miraculous healing that not they, but Jesus had performed that miracle of healing.

Thus, Jesus has the power to approach souls, to act on people's minds, to lead, direct and steer them according to His will. All distance here is lost. As our Catechism expresses it: "According to his human nature he is no longer on earth, but according to his divinity, majesty, grace and Spirit he never leaves us. In the spiritual there is no distance. Spiritually, earth and heaven are one spiritual unity. Nothing separates us from our King or our King from us. He knows not only that there is a Church on earth, but in that Church he knows each one of his own head by head. He shares with divine compassion in their sufferings and in their struggles. Their lives are hidden in him. And every morning and every evening his guiding power from High goes out to the souls. And not only does this royal regiment apply to individuals, but it also encompasses the course, fate and development of an entire congregation, indeed of the entire Church on earth. And since the fate of his Church on earth always depends on and is controlled by the destiny of the nations and peoples, his influence and effect likewise extends to the history and the destiny of the peoples. The latter is not only, and not even especially, taken in view of the wars they are engaged in and the transformation they undergo, but also in view of their inner degeneration, development and deformation. The destiny of a people is controlled by the spirits that rule that people, religiously, morally, scientifically, artistically and socially. The struggle of these spirits has as its outcome the mood of the people, their aspirations, their spiritual collapse or elevation, and with this is inextricably linked the mood of the spirits that will rule in the Church of that country. Thus, the fate of the Church is most closely related to the spiritual development of each people. If, therefore, Jesus is to reign as King in his Church, he must also rule over the entire spiritual development that such a people undergoes. The one is inseparable from the other, and whoever nullifies Jesus' royal power over the peoples and nations, automatically nullifies his royal power over his Church as well. And therefore, we must hold unconditionally to what we profess in our Catechism: "That Christ therefore ascended into heaven, that he might prove himself there as the Head of his Christian Church, through whom the Father rules all things."

Thus, our King has a governing, directing and guiding power, not only over the individuals of the faithful, but over the life of the world as a whole, over individuals and situations, over the course of history and events, over the development of nature and over the spirits that present themselves as having power among the nations. The after-effects of Jesus' appearance or the memory of his life and death are not relevant here. The mystical communion of the faithful with their Savior is soul-searching, but it is not the Royal Regiment. In order to grasp that Royal Regiment as a necessary truth, which controls the destiny of the world, Jesus, as he is seated at the right hand of the Father, must be served by a power, a force, an influence, an effect, which can be stopped by nothing, which finds no limits to it, and which, working through everything, in fact subjects all things to him, makes them accessible to him, unlocks them for him, and allows him to rule by his Royal Authority. Whoever honors in our King nothing else than the faculties that were put into human nature at the creation of the first man, cannot find that strength, that power, that might in him, even if one expands those faculties of our human nature to their highest tension. That is why the Apostles, as often as they explain this Royal Regiment to us, constantly refer back to the Godhead of the Mediator, of whom it is to be confessed that "he is before all things and that all things exist together through him."

XXIV. - The Superman.

Therefore God also exalted him supremely, and gave him a name which is above all names. PHIL. 2:9.

The royal regiment of the Christ proceeds from a certain place. As our Mediator, the Son of God cannot be conceived apart from his human nature. In body he has risen from the dead, in body he has ascended into heaven. He has not discarded this body either during the ascension or afterwards. In that body he lives. In that body he has appeared. In that body he will return in judgment. Now a body must be somewhere, is bound to a certain place, and if it were to discover itself to our eyes, the body of Jesus, and therefore also our Mediator in that body, would also appear to emanate from a certain place in the universe. It is not disputed that a created spirit, and thus also the soul of a human being, does not occupy a certain place somewhere; but, if there is talk of a spirit, there is so much else involved that it so easily confuses our understanding. Hence the special emphasis we lay on Jesus' being in the body, because this immediately establishes Jesus' local existence for everyone. Where we have to imagine this holy dwelling place is not open to much further description. To say that our King is "seated on his throne at the right hand of the Father" does not give us any local definition. The expression "right hand" is nevertheless figurative. God is a spirit, entirely disembodied, and thus does not possess a right hand. This metaphorical expression expresses the majesty and power of the Lord, but does not indicate any particular place to which the searching eye can turn and where our gaze can rest. It is no different with the expression "Father's house. And whether we say that our King is enthroned "in heaven" does not give us a clear, fixed idea either. We are pointed upwards and upwards, and this remains the same even though we know that our counterparts on the other side of the globe also point upwards and upwards, even though they think of a region of heaven that sinks into the depths for us. We need not be uncertain about this, provided we only remember that we have no language for expressing the spiritual other than metaphorically, in images derived from the material. We therefore know almost nothing about the distances which separate the heaven of God's glory from this earth, and the idea that the heaven of God's glory, also called the third heaven, arches far above the last fixed stars, has no basis whatsoever for this idea. It even has something that runs counter to our feelings. Those last fixed stars lie so immeasurably far away that even their light beam needs thousands of years to penetrate us. Therefore, when the psalmist sings: "I lift up my soul, O God of hosts, unto thee," it cannot be intended that our soul should walk that

immeasurable distance in its outpouring in order to find its God first. God's omnipresence is not enough for us. We also need to think of a central point of God's majesty, to worship our God as our Father in the heavens, and with the *sursum corda*, i.e., the heart upwards, to think of our God in the majesty of His palace. But we can go no further. Where, in what sphere, in what direction these heavens of God's glory are situated, how far they are from this earth, and anything that resembles further local definition, escapes us entirely; nor can we say anything definite about the manner in which the transition from this world to these heavens of glory takes place. We do not know how Christ's ascension to heaven took place, nor do we know how the soul of one who has died in Christ reaches the Father's house, nor do we know the course of his prayer when it leaves our lips and goes out to the Highest. All this escapes us because it concerns an entirely different order of things, of which we have neither knowledge nor imagination. These are mysteries, which only the future will reveal to us. And so, it is also entirely impossible for us to establish anything more about the place where Jesus, our King, lives; about the environment in which he finds himself; about the sphere that surrounds him; about the physical existence that he leads. We do know that he is surrounded by his holy angels and that the blessed enjoy his presence, but both these angels and the blessed lead a purely spiritual existence, and therefore they too tell us nothing whatsoever about the material existence of our Savior and King. The only thing that can be established on the basis of Scripture is that the material existence of our King is not the same as his material existence on earth once was. For the Apostle expressly tells us that "flesh and blood do not inherit immortality. Although the body remains one, it is still in a completely different form. It is a bodily existence in glorified form. And the appearance on the road to Damascus to Paul and that to John on the island of Pathmos already tell us how much, although the basic type remains one, the appearance of the earthly body differs from the revelation of the heavenly body.

Two things come into play here. First, the difference between the physical in its germ and in its completion, and second, the difference between what the human body derives from its earthly and what it derives from its heavenly sphere of life. The first difference between the physical body in its first and in its final development is even evident in the persons, when we compare the appearance of a savage, man-shaped negro with the noble figure of Solomon on the throne. Both are human beings, but in their appearance, they are so completely different and divergent. And this already applies to the external appearance, even more so to the

knowledge, the effect and the revelation of power of a human being in his first and lowest development, compared to a human being at a high level of development. We will not discuss Adam's situation in paradise. Mankind is now in its degraded state, and the Christ, too, did not assume the paradisiacal form of man out of Mary, but the flesh and blood of children, i.e., our humiliated body. If we now compare the knowledge, the workings and the revelation of power of a savage tribe, which is still at the lowest level, with the knowledge, the workings and the revelation of power we have in Christianized Europe and America, we immediately sense the profound difference between man, in whom the development of his faculties is still hidden, and this other man, in whom the first hidden faculties have already been revealed. If you now compare the situation of mankind before 4000 years with the situation today, you will notice an immeasurable progress in man's power. But it is by no means said that the end of this development has already been reached. Rather, the last century shows how significantly man's power and ability have risen again in that one century. We can therefore very well imagine how much more powerful that development will be when another two or three centuries have passed, and how amazing that development will be even then, once it has reached its completion point. If you now think of the human existence of Jesus our King in the heavens, then it goes without saying that in him you have to think of human development as entirely completed, and that the strongest development of power to which we have now arrived on earth gives us only a faint idea of the human development of power in which the Christ is enthroned in the kingdom of glory. You must not, therefore, think of your King as our own, nor measure his knowledge, activity and revelation of power in terms of what is available to us, but you must think of his human existence in its perfection, in the full development of all the gifts and powers that are seeded in our human nature.

This becomes even stronger if you think away humiliation completely. If the paradise condition of mankind had been developed without hindrance, our existence would have shown even more wonders than is the case at present. And yet, that is precisely what you have to think of in the glorified Christ. The Christ thus lives not only in the highest state of development to which mankind on earth will have attained at the end of the ages, but his existence is even more glorious. Everything that was seeded by God in Adam before the fall and that would have developed in us on this earth had it not been for sin, has come to its full and glorious development in the Christ. There is nothing more that lurks in Him; His unfolding in glory is complete. That is why it is not possible for us to form even a

slightly correct idea of the knowledge, the working and the revelation of power which the Christ as our King also has at his disposal according to his human nature. In Adam we see a power over the nature around him, which was lost in us. And even in that humiliated state in which we now find ourselves, our knowledge has gradually expanded to such an unprecedented extent, our power over nature has increased to such a marvelous degree, and what once separated mankind from one another has been rendered so utterly useless by telegraph, telephonics and wire-less telegraphy, that we cannot but envisage the glorified physical existence of our King triumphing over almost everything that still hinders us and restricts our vital functions. Already at his appearance on earth we read time and again that a power emanated from Jesus to triumph over nature, and his miracles show us how completely different he was from nature. If we now think of this in its completion, it already shows how we may not picture the Christ in any other way than in a human existence, which in knowledge, operation and revelation of power completely surpasses our own.

And here in the second place we come to the far-reaching difference between what is ours from our earthly sphere of life, and what is available to our King in the much higher sphere of life to which he has entered. Our lives are controlled much more than most people realize by our environment, the nature in which we live, the atmosphere in which we live, the influence that the earth that we live on has on us. Just compare the poor life of the Eskimo in the polar regions, the life of the Negro under the scorching heat of the tropics, with the life of the European in the temperate regions, to see how much the region we live in already affects us both physically and mentally. And that is still the case on this same earth, only different in region. How much more powerful must the difference be if you compare a human being on this earth with a human being living in completely different regions of the universe? In the heavens the situation is of an entirely different nature than here on earth. Both are almost incomparable. Even though there is a material nature in the blissful west, it cannot be otherwise than that this material nature must have an entirely different, a much more ethereal character. If there is air, then that air must be an entirely different, much finer nature. A completely different light must shine there. The institution of the body will not be nourished by it, for the belly, says the Apostle, will be destroyed. There is no marriage given, nor taken in marriage. The distances are completely eliminated. It is not the earthly, but it is a heavenly paradise, where everything shines in glow and glory, and the most beautiful things our earth produces sink into insignificance compared

to the majesty and splendor in which life shines in the blessed realms. Nevertheless, mankind in its basic type is also geared to that glory. Jesus did not change his body, but his one and whole physical existence passed from what this earth made of that existence to what could become of it in the higher spheres. Not partially, but completely. The transition from the caterpillar to the chapel may give us a faint outline of such a transition, yet it by no means fully explains the transition from this earthly existence to the heavenly one, for caterpillar and chapel both belong to our earthly conception. Everything earthly falls away in the realm of glory, and this with all the limitations, impediments and hindrances that result from it. One no longer dies there, but also, one has no need of rest and sleep. Life watches over it in full clarity and continues undisturbed throughout the ages. It is an eternal existence, which knows no reduction or weakening. There is no sorrow and no suffering. There is no tear, but an eternal angelic smile. And how can you even remotely form an idea, an idea of the everlasting knowledge, of the all-embracing effect and of the all-pervading revelation of power, which your King already has at his disposal according to his human nature at the right hand of God?

This should be emphasized, because nothing so much as thinking of Jesus in our earthly form stands in the way of recognizing his royal power. We are limited, we are earthly, we are bound in every way. And even if one imagines a child of man, shining at the highest level among his fellow men, it still remains a man in his earthly limitation. If you imagine your King in the same way, as ours, as subject, just like us, to all kinds of earthly limitations and imperfections, then it cannot be otherwise than that you get such a poor impression of Jesus' majesty that it is difficult to explain His sovereignty over all things. And then you have to do one of two things: either interpret His kingship purely spiritually, and thus destroy it as real power, or else derive His kingship exclusively from His divine nature, and thus entirely separate it from the Mediator, from the man Jesus. And this is precisely what is prevented, if you do not think of the human existence of your King according to the earthly model, but understand it to be that high, perfect existence of human nature, in which all the hidden faculties of our nature have been fully developed, and which has obtained from that completely different sphere of life of the heavens a power and majesty that far surpasses anything that a human existence, at its highest, can be on this earth, in the sphere of life that governs it.

Undoubtedly the human existence of our King is and remains of a creaturely nature, and therefore of a finite nature. After all, the power at his disposal as

Mediator and therefore also as our King, is not original, but was given to him by the Father. And it must be acknowledged just as surely that the background of his divine nature must never be lost sight of in the exercise of this power. But the human nature of the Christ is always in the foreground, and, as we saw, it is always emphasized in Scripture that he is our King as "Son of Man". If one loses sight of this, there is no question of exaltation. The "therefore God exalted him exceedingly" from Phil. 2:10, falls away then. And that is precisely why it is so important not to form an abstract idea of the human existence of our King in the state of glory and exaltation, but to think away from all earthly limitations and all earthly determinations, in order to perceive that human existence in its completion and in the full development of the powers that inhabit it. This applies not only to Jesus, but will also apply to ourselves, once "our humiliated bodies have also been made like His glorified body, by the action with which He can also subdue all things to Himself." How much more then must this not be kept in view where there is mention of the Christ. For although ours will one day be the glorified human existence in all its perfection, so that we will reign with Jesus on His throne as kings, the Son of Man still far exceeds us. Already among us we see how one person's gifts and talents far outweigh another. There is no equality among men. What is a quiet housewife compared to a philosopher like Augustine when it comes to knowledge? What is a farmer who drives the plow compared to men like Plato or Kant? The same is true of the difference in artistic sense and artistic power, of willpower and resilience, of courage and determination. No two people are alike, and among us there are lowly people, there are ordinary people, there are people of a higher order, and finally there are geniuses and heroes who stand out above all others. Now this difference cannot be eliminated in the state of heaven, for it is connected with what God put in oak man as a seed at creation. And even though this different disposition will appear completely different in the state of glory than it does here on earth, there will also be those in the state of glory who in knowledge, action and revelation of power will exceed others. And this naturally applies to a much greater extent to the Head of mankind, the Son of man, the one who was destined to become the King of all in the Kingdom of God. What Jesus received in his human existence far exceeds anything the noblest and best among us have ever received. He became one of us, but not one of us can be compared with the Son of Man in germ and in origin. Only in him does human existence possess its complete and highest perfection. He is not merely appointed our King, but he is by nature the superior of all. In him dwells the absolute highest thing for which our human existence, by virtue of God's order, is susceptible. He is the King

of all through his indwelling majority. He is the genius of all geniuses, the hero of all heroes, the wisdom of all wise men, the strength of all strong men, the nobility incarnate of all that among men could ever shine with nobility and ideals. Thus you must think of his human existence in the state of glory not only as completed, compared to the incompleteness of our development; and as not only glorified by the transition from the earthly to the heavenly paradise; but also as completed and fully developed in that wholly exceptional sense in which only the "Son of Man", who exceeds all mankind in talent, must reveal that highest glory. Only those who one day see the King as he is now will fully understand the depth of humiliation into which he has entered for our sake. And once he appears on the clouds of heaven at his return, then a glorious man will be seen, who will overshadow all other human existence by far and blind all human eyes by the human majesty that radiates from him.

In recent years there has been so much talk of a Superman. Well, the only Superman is our King.

XXV. - Knowledge and Power.

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when he shall be revealed, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 1 JOH. 3:2.

In what our King already knows, is able to do and does as the Son of Man, i.e. according to his human nature, we can never form too high an idea of it, and on no account must our human existence on earth may serve as a criterion for this. In the exalted King is the end, and no longer the gradually developing. In him is the form that corresponds not to this earthly sphere, but to the sphere of heaven. In him shines not the ordinary, but the highest that our nature is potentially capable of. And in him everything shines with that special highness and excellence, with that singular majesty and excellence which comes from the "extremely exalted" Messiah. He is King also because he excels royally above all else, and in every statement of his royal regiment, therefore, this completely unique highness of his humanity must always come to the fore. Did Jesus Himself declare that He would soon come to judgment as the Son of Man (see Matt. 15:31), then it must be understood that also as reigning King He will carry out this reign first of all humanly; but then it must also be clearly understood how much higher knowledge and power arises in man when he has passed into the state of glory. Especially with regard to knowledge, 1 Cor. 13 gives instruction here. The Apostle says that we do not take our knowledge, acquired here, with us when we die in order to learn even more up there, but our knowledge and expertise acquire a completely different character in glory. Here we know in part, we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, all that is in part will be destroyed." Prophecies, languages, knowledge, he says in vs. 8, they will all be destroyed. Just as a grown man overturns the ideas he had as a child and now sees and understands things in a completely different way, so too there will be a difference between the knowledge and science we have acquired here on earth, some more, some less. Between our present knowledge and our knowledge in the state of glory there will not only be a difference in degree, but a real difference in essence. We must be content here with the knowledge of an appearance. We now see only the image of things in a reflection, and therefore unclear (in a dark reason). But in the state of glory, it will be so very different; then we shall see the essence of things "facially, we shall know as God knows us, that is, immediately, by direct perception. Immediately we are known, and just as immediately we ourselves will then know. We shall know as we are known. The only thing that goes with us in the state of glorification is our faith, our hope, our

love. Everything else was in part, and therefore falls away, and it is true that in the state of glory we will also have knowledge and learning, but of an entirely different kind and obtained in an entirely different way.

Instinct and what Scripture calls Wisdom (the Chokmah) already give us some idea of that completely different kind of knowledge and knowing. Even among animals we observe this kind of immediate knowledge. A spider that spins out her web for the first time, and does this immediately with perfect proportions, has never been to school for this, has not given up anything, has not used a pattern or a calculation, but accomplishes this work of art, which no human being imitates, of her own accord and by herself. And likewise, among uncivilized peoples of nature, this instinctive rule is still much greater than among us. And in connection with this, the Proverbial poet constantly refers to Wisdom, as something that is not learned from books, and not collected by scholars, but in social life among ordinary people reproduces itself as if by itself. It is precisely the scholars, the sorcerers and the learned who lack this wisdom so much, and therefore are often so wrong about practical life. In anecdotes this may be exaggerated, but it contains a grain of truth. And still today the wisdom, meant by Solomon, is found spiritually much more in our villages, than in our highly intellectual city life. In the vision of art, as it is called, i.e. in the immediate soul-searching of the artist, we are faced with a similar phenomenon. And when we read of Adam that, looking at the various animals, he gave each one its own name, then no one thinks of zoological study, which would have been done in paradise, but we all understand by this that Adam still possessed the instinctive capacity to directly understand each animal in its nature. Every animal knows its enemy. The young mouse, which has never seen a cat kill a mouse, flees into its den, scared at the first sight of a cat, and it is no different with the swallow versus the sparrow hawk. Even in the bold guessing, and in the ancient oracles, in the so-called mind-reading, and in the premonition of approaching storm among the savages we find a whole series of phenomena that are analogous to these. All point to an immediate knowledge of things at first sight and through direct! vision. But among us this is diminishing. We humans on earth can only get a first grip on things through instinctive knowledge. And if we want to penetrate further into the knowledge of things, then this instinctive knowledge wears off, and we see ourselves obliged to walk the difficult and often painful path of learned study through constant dissection, comparison and combination. What a swallow, ant or beaver does automatically, an architect must first learn by trial and error: building a house.

In the same way, we must never compare the knowledge and scholarship available to our King at God's right hand with our knowledge and scholarship and much less with our way of acquiring knowledge. In the state of glorification his human knowledge is, now entirely apart from his divine omnipotence, a once perfect, an immediate, a direct knowledge of persons, things and situations. And where similar immediate knowledge is already the part of all the saved, as 1 Cor. XIII: 8 expresses it, this knowledge has been raised to the highest level of perfection with our King, and has also been raised to the highest level again. How far this knowledge extends, and within what limits it is bounded by distances, we do not know; just as little as we know how far this knowledge extends among the angels and among the saved. For us, in our earthly beginnings, the limitation of distance is a very painful one. We are often unaware of what is happening right next door to our door, to our neighbors. Every wall that separates room from room closes off our perception. Only in clairvoyance, and now most recently in the radiance of radium, do we know of phenomena that enable us to see through walls and at distances; and so, it may be noted that for us this limitation by distance is far less of a problem than for previous generations. We have now reached the point that in the evening of each day we can take cognizance of events that took place all over the world on the previous day. And it can certainly be assumed that in the state of Glory this limitation of our knowledge due to distance will also disappear to a very large extent. Already we read of Jesus in his

We already read of Jesus in his earthly appearance that he said to Nathanael: "When you called Philip, and were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nor would there be any conceivable communion of saints among the blessed, who will one day form a multitude of millions and millions, if their intercourse were bound by this limitation. We must therefore imagine that for our King in the state of glory, these boundaries will also disappear to a significant degree. And if an angel already has knowledge of people and places here on earth, which is shown by the fact that they were sent to certain people and places and knew how to find them, - then the question must at least be asked whether our King, through the gift of his human nature, does not already have a much higher knowledge of our earthly situations than we usually imagine.

We will be careful not to delve any deeper into this than has been revealed to us. The knowledge and understanding, which human nature is capable of in the state of glory, remains a mystery to us here on earth. We are too ignorant to form a clear idea of it. All we can do is to pay attention to the phenomena of a similar nature

that we observe in nature, and relate to them what Scripture reveals to us in this regard, for example, in 1 Cor. XIII. But it should not be forgotten that another Apostle says in the same way that believers have the anointing of the Holy One, and therefore know all things (1 John 2:19). And on the basis of these data we may and can come to no other conclusion than that the knowledge and learning of the saved, and to a much greater extent the knowledge and learning of the Son of Man in his state of glorification, is different from our earthly knowledge, is obtained in a different way, and far exceeds all our knowledge. An earthly king, in his palace, sees nothing of his people, but must first be made aware of their condition by all kinds of reports from his officials, it is certain that our King, at God's right hand, has no need of all these intermediaries, but himself immediately and directly perceives the whole situation of his Kingdom. Nor does he need intermediaries to come into contact with the angelic world. That world, too, he knows and sees through with immediate vision. And the same naturally applies to the world of demons. Our King is not waiting for reports that will tell him what is going on in the satanic world and what is being prepared. He also penetrates that demonic world, sees it through and knows it through direct observation. In the state of glory, all secrecy disappears here as well.

Now the same thing that applies to the knowledge of the Son of Man in his state of royal majesty also applies to his power and might. In this respect, too, we see already at his earthly appearance that the power which resides in him exceeds the ordinary power and capability of man in the state of his humiliation. Power went out from him to heal, we read. And Jesus knew this when such power emanated from him, for when the bleeding woman was healed, unnoticed by the multitude, Jesus himself testified that power had emanated from him. The power we possess varies greatly among us. In the case of the animal trainer, we even see a power come to light that is completely alien to most of us. The personal strength of each individual also varies greatly. There are those who, with their single glance, can restrain and completely overpower another. There are those who know how to fascinate in the most literal sense of the word. In the heathen period of their history, whole peoples also showed a resilience and a strength to act, which later faded and finally died away. Just think of what our people also experienced in the period of its highest prosperity in the 16th and 17th and compare this with the despondency and the powerlessness of the same people in the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. It may even be pointed out, how the strength and power of the adult man, in the vagueness of his life, far exceeds the strength of the child and

the old man. It should even be noted how in the same man, in perilous moments, such strength sometimes comes out that we say he has surpassed himself. This is a slumbering force that suddenly arises in a given moment and surprises everyone, including himself. But this already shows that the strength and power that can emanate from our human nature can hardly be measured by a fixed yardstick; it is in the nature of things that the glorified power must also in this respect far exceed man in the state of humiliation, since in the state of glory almost everything falls away that binds and hinders us here on earth. Just as the child is inferior to the adult man, so also in that respect the adult man on earth will be inferior to the glorified man, when he will shine in the body of glory with a sanctified spirit.

But there is more. Just as we gather our knowledge through all kinds of intermediate links, so our earthly situation compels us to exert our strength and power over nature and over our fellow men through all kinds of intermediate links. A worldly King does not rule his country and people with his own hand, but through all kinds of intermediaries whom he appoints for this purpose, through his officials, his police, his warriors and his bureaucrats. And when it comes to our strength and power over nature, it is no different. Miraculously and surprisingly our strength and power over nature have risen, and there is almost nothing that mankind recoils from in his struggle with nature. His dominion over nature has become almost gigantic in comparison with before, and since there is nothing to indicate that this process has come to a halt yet, and it is rather to be expected that our dominion over nature will still increase, and in the next few centuries reach a hitherto unknown height, it is clear that the dominion over nature, which was given to man in the seed of his creation, knows almost no limits, even though it is certain that there are such limits. But however far man's power over nature has progressed, the exercise of that power is and remains bound up with intermediate links. It is the whole army of coarser and finer instruments that we employ, by which we ensure our control over nature. It is through these instruments of a coarser and finer nature that we make the power itself of nature subservient to us, in order, through it, to subject nature to our will. Without an instrument, without an intermediate link, naked with his physical strength facing nature, man is and remains powerless. When shipwrecked on a flat sea, without a rudder, without an oar and without a compass, the most skillful sea captain is helpless and at the mercy of the sea. Without a locomotive for the train, or without rails on the road, the cleverest conductor cannot get his train moving. All power, therefore, depends on these tools, these intermediate links; and without these auxiliary means every attempt to

exert power is thwarted. Even the farmer can do nothing in his field without plough and spade, and without teeth and rein the best rider falls off his horse. There may still be direct exertion of force with the animal trainer and with those who mesmerize or hypnotize others, but for the rest we see ourselves, in all exertion of force without intermediate links, without tools and without all kinds of other resources, limited to that little we can push with our foot and lift or twist with our hand; the most unhelpful method of exertion of force.

If now, in the state of glory, the intermediate links in this field also disappear, so that the force that emanates from the glorified man is directly and immediately directed to the object chosen by him, then it becomes obvious how here, too, his exertion of force is increased. What the heroes of antiquity in their miraculous heroism, the animal trainer, and the biologist have only a faint after-effects now, then becomes the rule and is raised to its highest perfection. The image of God in mankind will then first shine forth fully in him. Always in his final and therefore limited circle, he will nevertheless control nature for his share, only by his willpower, and nature in the kingdom of glory will no longer struggle against man, but be pliable under his scepter. Now transpose this to our King and you will understand how this King actually rules and reigns and carries out his will. Then you no longer have the image of a glorified King, who sits at God's right hand, lost in thought and in earthly confinement, waiting for things to come, but of a Potentate of Potentates, of a King of kings, who, equipped with immediate knowledge and understanding of his kingdom, not only issues his command to be carried out by his subjects, but also acts himself, acts with power, and brings about what pleases him. He is then not merely a Savior from the curse, who makes his offering to the Father on behalf of his redeemed and who, furthermore, watches how the struggle between the good and the evil spirits develops in the course of time, but a King who has power and exercises power, who sees it all, examines it all, directs, guides and controls it all, and at any given moment, wherever it is necessary, asserts his power and carries it through as irresistibly as it is immediately. That all this only comes to its completion through the background of His divine nature remains, of course, indisputable. We will also deal with this intentionally. The only thing that had to be avoided was the idea that the entire Royal Regiment of the Christ should be explained almost exclusively in terms of His divine qualities, and that the human nature of the Son of Man remained bound to our earthly limitations even in the state of glory, so that we had to imagine that our King on the throne was ours as far as His human existence was concerned,

according to the standard of our earthly life. If this were so, nothing would have been granted to Christ, nothing would have been given to him, and there would be no question of elevation, because as the Son of God he possesses all his divine qualities of his own accord. The Mediator, the Son of Man, would only be an incidental element in him, from which no power emanated, and it would be to the Son of God, to the second person in the Trinity, separated from his humanity, that we should turn with our prayers. In the glorified King both natures would stand apart from each other, and the human existence of our King would, as far as his Royal Regiment is concerned, have lost almost all meaning for us.

We can only escape this misconception if we clearly see the very great difference between our human existence here on earth and our human existence as it will be given to us one day in the Kingdom of Glory, when we will be resurrected in the glorified body. How this will be is still a mystery. Beloved, writes the Apostle, it has not yet been revealed what we will be. But this we know; when he shall be revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Our King now sits already in the glorified body. His is already the full glory, which awaits us only at the consummation of the ages. And not only this, but in so far as there will be any difference of talent among the saved in the state of glory, our King is clothed with the supreme glory, and his knowledge and ability are the perfect revelation of the Image and Likeness of God, after which mankind was created. Thus, it is that in Christ we have not only the Prophet who gave us his Word, and not only the High Priest who lives to pray for us, but also our King, who lives for us in glory and majesty, who not only through angels and his servants and subjects on earth, but also himself, directly and instantaneously, demonstrates his power and strength and exercises his royal regiment, without any creature power being able to stop him in his dominion.

XXVI. - Divine Power.

And He is before all things, and all things exist together through him.

And he is the head of the body, namely the church, he who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that he may be first in all.

For it is the Father's will that in him all the fullness should dwell.

COL. 1 :17,18,19.

Intentionally we tried to explain the exercise of the royal regiment of the Son of Man in the first place from the data of his human nature. It is not as if, in our King, we had to do with a human person who was linked to persons. The Son of God has taken on a human personality. In the deepest sense, the self in the Mediator always remains the Son of God. However, this does not alter the fact that the Son of God, as the Son of man, was bound for his revelation of power by the boundary of the finite, which our human nature never leaves out. It therefore seemed advisable, in order to gain a clearer insight into the way in which the Christ exercised his royal rule, to ascend from the lower to the higher, and thus first to consider and think about the knowledge, effect and revelation of power to which human nature could lend itself in him. At no time should the idea be allowed to gain ground that by and after the Ascension the human nature of the Mediator had lost its significance, and that only divine nature was at work. In view of this, we pointed out broadly that the human nature, as assumed by Christ, must not be measured in terms of what it is in the ordinary human child, especially in the state of his humiliation. Is human nature already richer among us in some people than in others; is our human nature already capable of much more in the 20th century after Christ's birth than it was in the 20th century? If we had remained unsaved, our human nature would be capable of even greater things; and it must finally be assumed that in the state of glory it will one day prove to be even more richly endowed; - it follows that it is difficult for us to form an overly impressive idea of the function of human nature in the unsaved, perfected and glorified King. The knowledge, the inner working and the revelation of power, which could fall into the human nature of the Mediator, far exceeds anything that is accomplished by human nature on earth, among men, even in the greatest heroes and geniuses. Jesus' human nature also remains finite in its functions, but it moves over much wider and richer ground than it can among us, also as far as distances are concerned, which have already shrunk so much for us than for our fathers, but of course still constitute much less of an obstacle for the Christ in his "extremely great exaltation".

However, we cannot and must not delve deeper. We lack the data to distinguish clearly and precisely what part of the Royal Regiment of Christ was created by the functions of his human nature and what other part must be traced directly to the Divine nature in the Medium. Already during his appearance on earth one gets easily lost in this distinction. If we think that the human nature in Jesus, in the performing of miracles, is just as strongly restricted as it is in us, then we are so easily tempted to deduce all the extraordinary things in the Christ exclusively from his divine nature, while it is clear that his human nature was also active and in function here; that the ability to do extraordinary things is also attributed to the believers; and that it is even predicted of the Antichrist that he will be able to increase his influence just as much by extraordinary signs. With human nature, too, a distinction must always be made between what it has innate ability to do and what it already possesses in its execution. And where it then continually appears that there is much more in our capacity than was previously apparent, it must always be understood that with the Mediator, in the state of his elevation, the function of his human nature fully and completely discharges all that, according to the original creative order, has been laid down as capacity in human nature. That which is contained in this capacity is called a potential and that which is worked out so far or in a certain person is called the active. According to this terminology, it must be confessed that all the potential of our human nature is fully actualized in our glorious King, whereas with us here on earth in the state of our humiliation this actual is always far, far below the potential. In the potential, God's image and likeness are complete, in the actual they are still only extremely deficient, both in their holy intentions and in their knowledge and exercise of power. This can also be expressed in such a way that the image and the likeness of God in man's being, in his knowledge and in his ability, are only present in the elevated King, according to the rule pronounced by Himself in these words: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. Only the Son of Man is the Image of the unseen God.

But no matter how high we place the function of his perfect human nature in the exercise of power by our King and his Royal Regiment, it is certain that this is by no means sufficient to fully explain his exercise of power. The Royal Regiment of Christ is by no means concerned exclusively with certain individual acts that he performs with regard to human beings, spirits and inanimate nature, but is equally concerned with the integration and incorporation of these particular acts into the general providential government that pertains to the whole of this earth, indeed to

the whole of the universe. But if one separates the two completely, so that the general Providential government over peoples and nations, over mankind and over the whole of nature, has its own course, completely apart from Christ; and if one then places next to that what the Christ does in particular to carry out His royal regiment, then one loses the unity and the connection and the history of the world, at least after the Ascension, becomes completely inexplicable. The Church of Christ has therefore always confessed that, in the Royal Regiment of Christ, we have to distinguish between His general Kingdom, which is concerned with all things, and the special Kingdom which concerns His Church and His faithful, and our Catechism also confesses in the 50th answer: "That is why Christ ascended into heaven, that there He may prove Himself to be the Head of His Christian Church, through whom the Father rules all things. Only in this way, then, do the statements of Jesus come into their own, "that all things have been given to Him by the Father", and that "all power is given to Him in heaven and on earth." From the very first reading one feels that this does not refer to the functions of His human nature, but rather to the background of His divine nature. In the broad measurement we give of the function of his human nature, it was in no way our intention to deny the knowledge, working and power exercise of the Son of God in our King. As we said, whoever sees clearly that the Son of God has not taken on a human person, not Jesus, but only our human nature, cannot be in doubt for one moment whether the Son of God is and remains in the Son of Man what is called the subject, the object, the self. Now this is not the place, either to discuss the mystery of the Holy Trinity or the mystery of the unification of the two natures in the Christ in the broadest sense, but it is certain that our King, also as the Son of Man, is and always will be the Son of God, the second Person in the Holy Trinity. And although the glory that is His as such was already hidden from us in the state of His humiliation on earth, Scripture teaches emphatically that this hiding, this humiliation, this self-destruction came to an end with His Ascension. That he, then exalted, was even extremely exalted, so that the full radiance of his Sonship of God shone through again.

Now, what is most prominent in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, as far as the exercise of power is concerned, is this: that all things are of the Father and through the Son. It was so in Creation, and it remained so in Providence. That is why the Apostles, in order to give us the right insight into the Royal Regiment of Christ, constantly refer back to the creation of all things, in order to make it clear how first through the Son all things received their being, their form, their mode of existence

and their effect. The Apostle John even prefaces his entire Gospel with the statement that in the beginning the Word was with God, how that Word was God Himself, and how through that Word, i. e. through the Son of God, all things were created. And the apostle Paul also goes to great lengths to make us understand how the fullness of God dwells in the Son of God, how he alone is the pure image of our God, how all things in heaven and on earth, whether seen or unseen, were created through him and for him, and how all things exist together through him. It is true that all wisdom, all decision, all strength and power, all government and administration emanate from the Father, because in the Father is the fountain of life, the source of power, the starting point of all that will be, but it is always confessed that nothing emanating from the Father comes about except through the Son. In the Father, all things are one; it is only through the Son that things are developed in their separate existence and in their multiplicity. Thus, nothing is excluded from the action of the Son of God. He puts His signature on all created things. And everything that goes on in this world and in the whole universe, goes on through him. Things are not only created by him, but they also exist in their present form and shape only through the Son of God.

Before the time of his humiliation, this may present us with an unsolvable riddle, because we cannot understand how the Christ, at the very moment that he succumbed to his deathly grief in Gethsemane, nevertheless carried all things through the Word of his power, but in the state of exaltation this insubstantiality falls away for us. In that state of exaltation our King is the Son of Man and our Mediator, but at the same time he is magnificent in his majesty as God, all-knowing and all-powerful! Of course, our King possesses his spiritual subjects only in the brought elect, but in a broader sense all mankind and all spirit is subject to him. There is not one human being, or one angel, over whom his scepter does not rule as over his subject. Of course, only the angels and the faithful recognize that they are his subjects, but in fact all creatures have been placed under his power as subjects. And as it is with the animated and conscious creature, so it is with the inanimate creation; it is subject to Christ on this earth and beyond, and he has complete power and authority over it. With the functions of his human nature we pointed out that his knowledge and understanding as such already extends much further than is the case with us; yet the knowledge and understanding that he possesses as the Son of Man always remains limited. With the Son of God, on the other hand, all limitations and boundaries are gone. Nothing is hidden from him. He sees and surveys everything, and also in your personal life nothing remains a

secret to him. It is only through this that the rule over His Church and over His faithful is clarified. Divine omniscience ensures that every person here on earth is known to Him by name. Known in his past and present. Known in his inner existence and outer destiny. And it is only through this that the intimate relationship that exists between him as our King and each of his spiritual subjects becomes possible. He lives to pray for us, not only in the general sense that he prays for the Church as a whole, or for the faithful as a group, but so that he knows the needs of each heart and dedicates these needs to each of his own. In his Church his servants are appointed by him, although through the intervention of men, but nevertheless in such a way that each one of them is elevated by him to the ministry, destined for this ministry, and placed in this ministry. And this also would be utterly unthinkable, if each person was not known to him personally and by name. There is no trace in the Gospels of any personal contact between Paul and Jesus before his appointment, while Jesus was still on earth. Yet what happened on the road to Damascus shows that Jesus knew Saul of Tarsen, understood him, knew what was in him, knew that he was beating his ankles against the prickly pear, and also knew that at that moment he was on the road to Damascus. And that is how determined and how literally we must take it in the appointment of a Servant of Oaks.

But that knowledge of his own and that knowledge of those whom he will call is not enough. All kinds of external influences affect his Church and his faithful. Influences of a national character, influences of a historical character, influences of a social character, influences of public opinion, influences of science and art, influences of the spirit of the age. His believers do not float on the waters like a drop of oil, but live in the world, and through all kinds of ties of birth, family, office, business, etc. they are involved in the life of the world and are connected to it in all kinds of ways. If you think that your King does not know about all this, is unaware of all this, how can he bring about for his Church and for his faithful what they need in view of these many influences? It is therefore only fair to assume that our King also sees through all this, sees the dangers, knows where it will all lead, and sees, with divine certainty, how all these dangers can be counteracted, and how all this must be turned around, guided and adapted in order to reap the benefits for his own people. If our fate, as believers, depends much on the history of our people as a nation, and on what is going on in the world among the peoples, in connection also with our own national life, then how would the regiment of our King be conceivable, without the "bubbling up of the nations, like the rivers bubbling up"

being clearly open before him? The regiment in the spiritual sense cannot be practiced without omniscient knowledge disclosing every secret to our King, and it suffers from inner contradiction whenever it is asserted that our King's regiment is spiritual, but goes beyond the regiment of the world. The one cannot be separated from the other in our personal lives, and therefore not to be separated either from the high government of Christ's Church on earth.

But even this comprehensive knowledge of things would not suffice if our King could not at the same time influence and direct all this. If the providential government were entirely outside of him, he could try again and again to avert the danger that threatens us, but he would continually be powerless in the face of it, and would have to let it come to pass. That is why our Catechism points out so emphatically that "the Father rules all things through Him. This providential government is also not something separate that belongs only to the first Person in the Holy Trinity, but something that, although it emanates from the Father, nevertheless works through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Our King thus has his own hand in that providential government, and it does not work except through him. When, in our struggle with Spain, the fate of his Church in these countries depended on the outcome of a single battle or a single naval engagement, he did not simply wait to see how it would all turn out, but took part in it himself, managed it himself and ensured the outcome himself. It is the same with your personal life. Your spiritual growth is always controlled by what happens to you in life. If this fate of your life were to happen completely without your King, so that he knew about it but could not lead or change anything in it, your spiritual guidance would also completely slip out of his hands, and he would again be powerless to do anything about it. And for this reason alone, he is in the full sense your spiritual Shepherd and Guide and your Mediator who leads you to salvation, because as the Son of God he also cooperates in the administration of Providence for your personal life, and is not in the least passive towards it. Here, too, omniscience is not enough; here, too, omnipotence must be united with omniscience in order for the purpose of its spiritual guidance to be achieved. The same applies with regard to the spirit world. From this spirit world, too, all manner of influences steadily act upon the spirit of the times, upon your people, upon your own circle of life and upon your heart. If your king only had the knowledge and understanding of all these things, but lacked the power and strength to act upon them and to react against them, that spirit world might corrupt and destroy everything that it has worked to bring about in our spiritual education. That is why

the Scriptures so emphatically point out to us that all power that is called, not only in this present but also in the world to come, is subject to its feet with all things.

Now it seems to contradict this, that in this world, in the Church, and in the spirit world, there is so much to 'lament', that not all opposition is immediately broken, that so much infidelity is to be lamented even in His servants; and that it constantly seems as if our King were incapable of averting all this calamity and danger, - so here too it must be pointed out that the Royal Regiment of Christ does indeed have our salvation as its objective, but that its primary objective is the glorification of the Triune God. And since, as we have explained extensively, it is God's honour not to destroy any opposition by brute force and force majeure at once, but to overcome any opponent and any enemy in a principled struggle, it is also explained here why our King always disposes of it in such a way that this opposition arises, yes, lets it become opposition, precisely in order to win the principled enmity more gloriously. He is doing the same in your personal life. He will also have you continually opposed by all kinds of spirits, he will first exhaust your strength, he will also lead you through oppressive distress, precisely in order to ripen you better and more holier for the harvest of his Kingdom of God. Thus, everything hangs together in his royal regiment. The fate of the world with your personal fate. The fate of your people with your own spiritual existence. The alternating rise and fall of the destiny of His Church on earth. Now days of thriving and of glory, and then again days of infidelity, waste and collapse. And the threads of all this are not in the hands of the children of man, but in the firm hand with which our King rules all things. And this all-pervading and all-embracing regimen he carries out, now as our Mediator, in order that, once the last enemy has been subdued at his feet, he himself will remain the Head of salvation, but that he will cause the royal regiment to return to the divine all-embracing.

XXVII. - The Holy Spirit.

If any man love me, he shall keep my word; and my Father shall love him, and we will come to him and dwell with him. JOH. 14:23.

A special, peculiar, and entirely mystical character bears the Royal Regiment of the Christ over His spiritual, i.e., His actual subjects, the members of His mystical Body, the redeemed by His blood, the ransomed of the Lord. This special relationship came about through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit would be poured out, and that this outpouring would take place shortly after Jesus' departure from this earth, as well as that it would take place through our King, is clear from what Jesus himself said about this in the last conversations with his followers. He would pray to the Father that another Comforter might be given to His disciples, who would never leave them again, but would remain with them forever (John 14:16). That Comforter would be the Holy Spirit, whom they knew, who would remain with them and be in them (17). They would then no longer be orphans, for, so he said: "You shall be in me and I in you" (20). The Father Himself would love them and the Christ would come with the Father and dwell with them (23). All this speaks of a very special relationship in which our King would enter into contact with his own; a relationship that would be much more intimate, much more tender and much more important than the relationship in which the King would be in contact with the indifferent and with his enemies. A distinction that arises above all from the fact that his reign is conducted only among his spiritual subjects in their own inner existence; and this penetration of the inner life of his is expressed in all manner of ways, but in increasingly stronger terms. We hear of the vine with its tendrils; we hear of the members and of the head of the one body; we learn that Christ himself dwells with them, yes in them, as they are in him. And all this is brought to life in the apostles' letters in the image of the temple. The heart, the soul of the redeemed by Christ has become the temple of the Lord. Man's separation from his God has been done away with. God Himself lives in the believers. The house of God, the temple of God, the dwelling place of God are no longer in Zion, but in the hearts of those who belong to Jesus because they have been bought with His blood.

The turning point in history is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the tenth day after Jesus' ascension. At first there was nothing between God and man in Paradise. There was fellowship, there was communication, there was interaction, and everything was ready from the start for the most intimate life together. In the soul of man, the bud only had to open and the breath of the Spirit would have

penetrated his soul and realized the being of God in us and of us in God. But it did not come to this. The calyx did not open but bent with the whole twig on which it had sprouted, even to the side. Thus, not only did the intimate life together not take place, but even the external contact was broken off. God and man were separated, instead of man drawing nearer to God. Sin is separation from God, turning away from God, closing the heart to God. What we read in Isaiah (18:4), that the Lord says: "I will be quiet and see in My dwelling place," however referring to Moorish land, expresses so fully the relationship in which God and man stood to each other after the fall. Man goes his way and God sees him go, but follows him and lures him back. But the chord that connected man's heart to the heart of his God has become weaker, almost completely broken. There is no longer any intimate fellowship. It loosens everything up, and in the end, mankind closes himself in on himself, and it has become two completely separated inner lives, the full-blessed inner life in the Holy Trinity and mankind's soul subject to death and curse and sin. Man wants to perpetuate this state. He defies God. He does not want to go back. As through a Chinese wall man's life must and will remain separated from the life of his God. Therefore, he will have gods, but he will invent them himself, depict them himself, make them himself. In paradise it was: a world of God with mankind in it, but now in the wider world it would become: a world of mankind with gods in it. Until he had had enough of those gods as well, shattered his own idols, did without gods, and, having lapsed into utter atheism, would be content with himself. Thus, the sharp and direct contrast between God and man. First in paradise it was God on the throne and man as a subject kneeling on the footstool of His feet, but now it must be man on his own throne, and God Almighty high above in His dwelling place, locked away and doomed to silence. The separation, the closure between God and mankind pushed to the extreme. So, it was under the rule of lust for life and false philosophy in the pagan world of antiquity, and so it is now, to a great extent, under the same rule of the crudest materialism. And it is true that the idealists of our day are getting out from under it. But with them, too, it is again: A god formed in the image of man, instead of man created in the image of God.

The work of Christ cannot be completed until sin, the curse and death have been conquered at their root. It is not finished with the Cross, nor with the Resurrection. The Cross takes away the curse and brings the ransom for our sin debt, and in the Resurrection life conquered death. But all this has not yet put an end to separation, nor has it yet replaced the intimate fellowship of God's "life in us" and our "life in God". In Christ Himself, but not yet in us. And yet, it had to come to that. That was

the original intention and the original existence. And that original had to be restored, and, after being restored, raised to its highest development and perfect completion. Not only did the breakthrough have to be annulled, but unity had to be so completely restored that nothing more reminded us of the breakthrough, and that it was replaced by a close fellowship that was much higher than that which had begun in paradise, and which henceforth excluded new breakthroughs. And this could only come about if, through Christ, exalted at God's right hand, God the Holy Spirit were to enter into the circle of his own, never to leave that circle again, and thus to bring about a completely new situation, the hallmark of which would be this wonderful fact that the Christ would "come into the hearts of his own with the Father", and thus that the hearts of God's children would be a temple, a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. This is the most profound thing imaginable. When our hearts have become the habitation of God, and God Himself dwells in the hearts of His own, all separation and all estrangement are done away with, and replaced by the highest intimacy that can be imagined between the life of God and the life of man. It then becomes Immanuel, not only in the person of the Mediator, but through him in his whole mystical Body. No longer a God from afar, but a God from near, yes, a God indwelling our own heart.

This could only come about through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ. In the wonderful mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is always that person of the Divine Being who enters into the creature. All things are of the Father, are through the Son, but one's own life only arises from what the Holy Spirit works. This applies not only to man, but to all creation. It is true of plants and animals, it is true of all talent and gift, it is true of everything that moves among the creatures on earth, and the same is true of the world of angels. But in all these things the effects of the Holy Spirit remain. These are forces that emanate from Him, effects that move from the Holy Spirit toward the creature and sustain the energy of its life. It is not the penetration of the Holy Spirit into man himself, to plant the life of God in him and to make his life blossom in his God. Wherever people live or have lived on this earth, the Holy Spirit has always been active in them, for their natural life, for their talents and gifts. Even now, the activity of the Holy Spirit is by no means limited to the circle of the faithful, but extends to all children of man, even to atheists and crude sinners. Never could a man fall so far or wander so far, but always he owed to the Holy Spirit every spark of light that shone in him, even in his sin. No human life is conceivable without the Holy Spirit. But this in itself brings us no further than an external influence of the Holy Spirit,

which has nothing in common with man's inner existence, is completely beyond his awareness and consciousness, and in no way annuls his separation from God. The entrance of the Holy Spirit into mankind, the dwelling of the Holy Spirit with mankind, and the establishment of holy communion between his heart and the heart of his God are of an entirely different and distinct character. For this purpose, a temple to his God first had to be prepared and opened in the heart of man. And this was given in Christ according to his human nature. At no time during His life on earth was the Christ separated from the Holy Spirit. He was given the Holy Spirit without measure. In him was the temple. In that temple lived the Holy Spirit. And thus, for the first time in the person of Jesus, the separation also according to his human nature was annulled and the full, intimate communion with God, also according to his human nature, was completed. Not gradually, but immediately. From the moment the Virgin Mary received him in her womb.

Yet the approach of God to man, who had removed and separated himself from Him, did not end at the manger of Bethlehem. Rather, the entire history of the Old Testament is one continuous attempt by the Holy One to approach His humanity again. To come closer in His Word, which He revealed, in the visions with which He enriched His messengers, in the wonderful deeds He accomplished, in the calling of the patriarchs, in the sending of Moses and the other prophets, in the foundation of His people Israel, in the election of Jerusalem, in His holy service on Mount Zion. But all this could only be preparatory. On the one hand, however, all this remained a work of art, directed at a few individuals, and left the crowd untouched. On the other hand, everything remained suspended in the external and the imaginary. In particular, the dwelling of God in Zion was the clear expression that He had not yet again made His home in the hearts. A service like the one in Zion would have been unthinkable in paradise, and of the New Jerusalem we read that there was no temple in that city. This speaks for itself. A temple of stone, built high on Zion, and hiding the Holy of Holies behind the veil, was the clear indication that the inner and intimate fellowship between God and the child of man was not there, and that therefore in a temple of stone the union of God and man could only be visualized. That is why Jesus deliberately said that his body replaced the temple on Zion. That could not be otherwise. From the very moment that the unity between God and man had been established in the human heart of Jesus, even if only in a single human heart, the temple in Zion had served its purpose. And when, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the disciples on Pentecost, God Himself had taken up residence in the hearts of the faithful, that temple itself no

longer had a reason to exist. The tent is abandoned when the permanent dwelling is ready and prepared.

This was also the reason why, in the days of the Patriarchs and Israel, there were special outpourings of the Holy Spirit, but it always remained only light that radiated, only power that emanated; and even though it often came to a hidden contact, it did not yet enter into the heart. God does not leave Israel alone, but continually presses in with His near approach into Israel's life; yet the temple of God is not yet prepared in Israel's heart. Rather, you see the people of Israel steadily drifting towards the idolatries of the heathen peoples. Isaiah the prophet even sees himself forced to cut himself off from the people, to withdraw into a small circle of believers, and to "tie up the testimony", as Scripture expresses it. Only the fearful exile brings improvement in this. For when at last the hour of redemption arrives in that exile, the eradicated part of Israel remains behind in Babylon, and only those who fear the name of the Lord return. But also in the new Jewish state, which was founded by Ezra and Nehemiah, and later elevated to great splendor by the Maccabean princes, the separation from God continues. Even the prophecy gradually ceased. The special effects of the Holy Spirit are diminishing. And when, at last, prophecy is revived in John the Baptist, it still turns out to be the old contrast: a large mass of people who are deaf and dead to spiritual things, and only small groups here and there who hunger for righteousness. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is therefore something entirely separate. All the workings of the Holy Spirit that preceded it in the days of the fathers were of a completely different nature. And even where there is mention of a baptism of the Holy Spirit after the great feast of Pentecost, this never results in a repetition of the entirely unique Pentecostal miracle, but only in the consecration of a few to salvation, or in a deepening of their spiritual life in those who have already been consecrated. Previously, the workings and powers of the Holy Spirit, revelations, visions, dreams, the giving of gifts and talents, the raising of heroes and courageous witnesses, and the leading of the few into the path of righteousness; but on the Day of Pentecost, something quite different. Now the descent of the third Person of the Holy Trinity, the entry of God the Holy Spirit into the circle of the redeemed, in order to remain in that circle henceforth, to make it his dwelling place, to mold his heart into a dwelling place, and to bring about in reality the union between God and man. And this in such a way that "God in us and we in God" now became the motto of all higher life.

Let us note Jesus' supreme prayer, sent to the Father at the fearful hour when he was about to leave for Gethsemane: "Father, I pray for them, that they may all be one, as we are, Thou, Father, in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us. I in them, and Thou in me." Add to this the promise given to his disciples in that same hour: "that he would come with the Father to make his home with them." Combine this with the promise that it was to their advantage that he went from them, because only by going from them could he send them the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and that this would take everything from him to bring it to them. And everything tells you how the Christ was fully aware that only as King seated on the throne of glory could he do away with the separation between God and mankind and restore the intimate fellowship between God and his people. For that full fellowship between God and man could not be restored unless first all sin, all that was unholy, was driven out of man's heart. The holy God could not dwell where sin dwells. Hence the first communion between God and man could only be established in the Christ Himself, in the One who had assumed our human nature, but without sin. In itself, therefore, this fellowship could only have taken place after our death, when we had died to all our sins. This means that, until the return of the Lord, no intimate fellowship with God, no indwelling of God in the temple of our hearts would have been conceivable. The disciples, however intimately united with Jesus through faith, and however clothed with the gifts of the Spirit, would not have had a dwelling place in their hearts if this had not been the case, and if the great and mighty miracle of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had not taken place shortly after Jesus' ascension.

How was this outpouring possible and conceivable in the circle of the faithful, who, however much they revered Christ, still "had sin in their hearts? To this question John, the apostle, gives the following answer: "Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, because his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God"; such people "have the anointing of the Holy One". And the apostle Paul explains it to us from his own soul experience thus: "If I now do that which I do not want, I no longer do it, but sin that dwells in me." Words, shrouded in mystery to you, if you do not know and understand the mystical union of the faithful with Christ. But it is precisely this mystical union that matters, and it is this mystical union that Christ established as our King, and which He maintains among us, royally. First as our King, he is the Head of the Body. As Head of the Body, He makes His life flow out into all the limbs of that Body. In all of that Body there is only one life, the life of Christ, which the Apostle therefore testifies is hidden in

Christ with God. Since the Holy Spirit is the spirit of the Mediator, this Holy Spirit dwells not only in the Head, but in the whole Body and in each one who is incorporated into this mystical Body as a living member. Insofar as the Christ reigns as the Head of the Body in that believing congregation, there is no sin in that congregation, it is a holy congregation, they are "saints", as they are always called, and the temple is prepared, which God can choose as a dwelling place. The data for that mystical Body were prepared before Jesus' ascension, but only when he ascended and received the Holy Spirit from the Father for his own, was that Temple ready. Only then could he, as Head, pour out the Holy Spirit in that temple, i.e., in that Body, and thus on Pentecost, once and for all, the approach of God to us became complete, after all separation and estrangement had been annulled. And this not only for the then living, but for all who would one day become members of that body.

Or did not the Christ in the supreme prayers express his supplication, not only for his disciples, but also for those "who would believe in him through their word"? Election determines the mystical Body, and the Covenant of Grace makes it grow throughout the ages in the afflicted humanity. Thus, it is the Royal Regiment of Christ, now understood in a spiritual sense, through which the mystical Body is established; through which the living members of that Body, hidden in Christ, possess a holy life, separated from all sin; through which they have prepared in their hearts the dwelling-place, the temple, for the Holy One, and now also in that temple they receive the presence and indwelling of God in their inner soul existence. In the struggles that must then necessarily arise in the believers between this their holy existence and the sin that still remains in them; in the struggles that the very progress of grace creates in them; and in all the struggles they have to engage in with the world, - their King is close to them, leading and supporting, comforting and sanctifying them. So also, it is his royal regiment, through which is brought about that no one, even if he falls, can fall from grace. And likewise, that the Body of Christ grows again and again; that His congregation, however oppressed, saddened and persecuted, yet endures, and that the word is sealed, that no one, neither His own nor His congregation as a whole, can ever snatch it out of the hand of the Father.

XXVIII. - Resumption.

For he must reign as King, until he shall have put all the enemies under his feet.

1 COR. 15:25.

So, we now, at the conclusion of the second series, return to the road we have travelled, the Kingdom of Christ will be revealed in its full majesty.

The starting point is and remains the Kingship of God, Triune to man.

Triune to mankind in paradise. That Kingship was lost to mankind by his apostasy from God. And it is this same Kingship that returns and is restored in Christ, yes, raised above its original glory.

Now about this Kingship conferred on man in paradise, it is certain that it will be restored in Christ.

It is now clear that this kingship, which was granted to man in paradise, included man's dominion over all of nature, i.e., over everything that belongs to this earth outside of man. The majesty with which Adam had all the animals appear before him and expressed their character and essence in a name was a symbolic representation of the majesty of this dominion. But this dominion stretched further still. It is true that in his first appearance man was placed below the angels, but the end would be that we would judge the angels and be above them. This can be explained by the fact that an angel is ready at once, whereas man has a long road of development to go through, and only at the end of that road does he reach the full revelation of his power. He therefore begins by being less than the angels, but ends by being above them. In relation to mankind, the angels are not the objects of our worship, but "serving spirits" who try to see salvation in us, but cannot fathom it themselves. Thus, for the original human being, the authority over the spirit world is added to the authority over the whole earth. Even though Creation consists of parts, those parts are nevertheless interconnected, and the unity of that interconnection must, according to the original order, be expressed in the fact that man becomes the creature that brings all other creatures under his dominion, in order to priestly dedicate the whole of this creation to God and to consecrate it to Him for all eternity. The fact that mankind could be destined for such a high lordship in paradise is explained by his creation in the image and likeness of God. Through that creation in God's image, it was possible for man, as he was of God's lineage, also to become perfect one day, as his Father in heaven is perfect. Thus, man was prepared to be, both in man alone and in mankind as a whole, a temple to

God, a dwelling place of the Holy One, so that God would be in man and man in God. God all in all, through man as vicegerent under God the Triune.

Thus, man stood extremely high in the plan of creation and in the ideal to be realized, which this plan referred to. Yes, it is impossible to imagine a higher position for the creature than that which, according to the Scriptures, was given to man. If, therefore, man had progressed without hindrance from his first creation to the complete fulfillment of his divine purpose, his immediate dominion over all things visible would have transferred him to a world of wonders; in that world of wonders he would have been sanctified in his own being; Even the spirit world would have been subjected to him; and in the end, earth and heaven, the material and spiritual world, all that is visible and all that is invisible, would have sung a single Hallelujah to God Triune, because all had been voluntarily submitted to God through man made in God's image, in such a way that it would have been a sacred thing: God all in all" became a reality.

In this creation program of the Kingship of unsung mankind, the holy program of the Kingship of Christ is also given. God remains the same. He does not change. Therefore, even if there is a disturbance in His creation, this does not invalidate His counsel. That disorder is also included in His counsel. And when that disorder sets in, and the whole original plan of Creation seems to be frustrated, God's work nevertheless goes on calmly, and in the end we see how, in the end, the original plan of Creation is carried out precisely as ordained by God. The Kingship of Christ simply replaces the lost Kingship of mankind; and this not as a different kind of thing but as entirely the same. Therefore, the Word becomes flesh and this King assumes our human nature, equal to us human beings in every way, except, of course, for the sin that brought about the breakdown. The Kingship of Christ, in His Mediatorial form, is also a dominion over nature and over the spirit world; it is a dominion that encompasses all of creation in unity, that priestly dedicates it to God and that submits it royally to the Triune God. And the end is also now, that in mankind the dwelling place of God, the holy temple, is opened, and that, when everything is accomplished and finished, this Kingdom too is given over to God, that God may be all and in all.

Thus, the Kingship of Christ comes, and it is this that first creates the stability, not as a strange thing in the whole of creation life, but it has grown into it, it is demanded by it, it flowed from it as if by itself, under God's high order. The disorder does not arise from man, but from the spirit world. The spirit world knew

that it was itself about to be subjected to man, and from it arose the impulse to turn God's plan around, so that now it had to be destroyed.

From this arose the impulse to reverse God's plan, so that it would now be reversed: man would be subjected to the mighty Sovereign who ruled over the spirit world. The fall and waste of Satan therefore lie behind the fall of man. Satan rebelled first. It is plausible that, in connection with this, a disturbance of this earth and of nature took place even before man entered Paradise, and that it may be explained by this that this earth was "desolate and empty and darkness reigned on the precipice. Satan's change then resulted in the fall of mankind as well. Man also fell, but he did not fall like Satan. Because there was no process of development in the spirit world, Satan's fall was an instantaneous and complete fall, and salvation and restoration for the world of demons is impossible. But man had such a process of development to go through. His fall, therefore, was not an instantaneous total apostasy. Man's fall allowed for the possibility of his return. Hence, from the moment of his fall, Satan's tremendous spiritual struggle against the saints. From Satan's side, a stubbornly persistent struggle to draw man further and further away from God, and, conversely, a surpassing mercy from God's side, to draw man to Himself again, to free him from Satan's original embrace, and in the end to carry on and complete His plan with man. First, Satan's efforts continue. Sin gains the upper hand. In the curse, the distortion of nature is continued, paradise disappears, and man is introduced to a world that brings him thorns and thistles, but always in such a way that man will be able to draw his life's existence from that world in the sweat of his eyes. At the same time, however, sin permeates his society from his heart, and the whole of man's society in family, tribe, people and nation is increasingly dominated by Satan's influence. So strong, that in the end a situation comes about in which it already appears that the life of this world has been completely withdrawn from God, so that Satan can be called the Prince of this world, thereby standing in direct opposition to the original Kingship of mankind. The kingship of mankind is gone. Instead of being King of creation, man has become the slave of sin and thus the servant of the ruler of the world.

But at the same time the continuation of God's original creation plan begins in paradise. According to God's will, counsel and order, not Satan, but man was to be the ruler of the world below and the ruler of the spirit world above. And thus began in paradise the working of God's grace, which in the end will show how Satan and his power are vanquished, and how mankind triumphs, despite his fall, despite the curse he brought upon himself, and despite the humiliation he brought upon

himself. This could not have come from fallen man himself. The fall broke his strength and devoured his glory. The unity of the generation was destroyed by it, and in its division, weak and powerless, sinful mankind had no defense against the power of Satan. That is why God destined his only begotten Son to enter into the life of this world; to take on our human nature; as the Head of mankind, to gather the divided and disintegrated world back into one unit and unite it in one body; to cancel the sin of the world as a debt to the Holy One through his own blood; and then to re-establish in his own person the Kingship of mankind that had been lost. Thus, to fight Satan and the demons and to drive them back; to implant new life in redeemed man; thereby to make his heart a dwelling-place of God; and thus in the end to realize the original plan of creation, according to which our human race, created in God's image, would exercise dominion over both the visible and the invisible world, so that through man as a link God would be all and in all, in His whole creation, brought together in holy unity. Thus, everything ends in the nullification of the interference brought about by Satan. God, and through God mankind, triumphs, His counsel exists. And in the end, it becomes clear how Satan's interference was not only utterly powerless to undo God's order, but how even Satan's interference only served to make God's virtues stand out more gloriously, and to extend the final triumph even beyond what paradise promised.

This restored Kingship, which in Christ passes from man in general to the "Son of Man", begins with the declaration that the Woman's Seed will crush Satan's head, and later becomes the all-important factor in the history of our generation. When Memphis and Thebes, Nineveh and Babylon, Athens and Rome have played their roles, the spiritual atmosphere emanates from Jerusalem, which first in Europe, and later in America, calls forth a whole new, much higher human life. This time in the history of the world was prepared in the creation of the people sanctified to God in Israel. This nation comes into being through separation, through the separation of a single part from the whole. This begins with Noah, yes even partly with Seth, and in the calling of the first Patriarch and his sending from the heart of Asia to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, the foundation is laid for the Israel that is to come. And finally, under Moses, that Israel begins its career as a people, then the Theocracy under David and his House develops into an exemplary Kingship, which may well fade away again to show that it was only exemplary and not the real thing, but the idea of the King nevertheless takes hold in Israel, the Messianic prophecy hangs on to it, and the impressive declaration: "I have anointed my King over Zion, the mountain of my holiness", raises the expectation of the King among

all those who fear God. It all prays, it all waits, it all feels the nostalgia for the King who is to come, for the King who already existed in the heavens according to God's order, but who still had to wait to enter our human nature. Before he appeared, the history of the nations had to have reached the required point, and the ground had to have been prepared in Israel that would enable the Christ to display his power and to join our human race.

And now the Son of Man appears after his name of Immanuel. He is not a man of man, but the Son of God, who took on our human nature. Herein lay the mystery, but a mystery that gradually revealed itself. Now it appeared that the "God all and in all" could not come about because man approached God, but could only be realized because God Himself pushed His approach to man so far, that in the Son God Himself became united with our family by taking on our human nature. Not "us with God" but "God with us". Immanuel had to be the starting point. It was not man who could take on divine nature, but God who could take on human nature. Not the image of the Image of God could become one with this Image; but he who was the Image of the invisible God could unite with the Image of that Image in one person. And when the end of the ages came, when God would be all and in all, the honor would not be for man, but for God. We had not sought God, but had turned away from Him. And it was He who then moved towards us, approached us, entered into our nature, and transformed our hearts into His temple and dwelling place. For this reason, Bethlehem was so far above Paradise, and only Bethlehem could accomplish what had been promised in Paradise, but not accomplished.

And when the Christ appeared, man's power over nature and the spirit world, the kingship ordained in paradise, was again revealed in Him.

The Evangelist Mark is addressed with the sign of the lion, the king of the forest, and it is especially in the Gospel of Mark that the royal action of Jesus is expressed in his exercise of royal power over nature, over mankind and over the spirit world. Royal power is evident in his words, there is royal majesty in his actions, there is royal power in his miracles and royal power is evident in his dominion over the demons, and royal majesty no less from the way in which he resists and rejects the Petitioner, confronts his enemies, and willingly takes up his cross; and above all, royal power from his breaking of the bonds of death in his resurrection, and later in his ascension in glory. Thus, already during his circumambulation on earth, in this Son of Man, man's original dominion, man's royal power over all creatures, and at the same time his absolute soul union with God Triune, had become true.

Yet all of this still remained local. It was bound to land and place, and therefore shone only in a limited circle among one people among the many nations. But this changed completely with Jesus' ascension. Now he has risen to the throne, high above all peoples and nations, above all spheres of the spirit world, in a word, above all creatures. From now on his twofold regiment begins. On the one hand, His royal regiment over the born-again and believers, and on the other hand, His royal regiment over all of God's creation, over all that is visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth. It is from this moment on that he becomes the Head of the mystical Body, and at the same time that God Triune rules all things through the Mediator. For the first purpose he incorporates his redeemed, takes them in as living members in his mystical Body; causes the life to flow out of him into that Body; and governs, protects and exalts it as the Head of sanctified mankind. He establishes his Church on earth, and even though this Church is only the earthly shell of his mystical Body, insofar as it still resides on earth, yet the born-again members of that Church constitute the true component, so that the Church and the mystical Body often appear to be one and will indeed be one in the triumphant Church above. In this mystical body he pours out the Holy Spirit, thereby already creating a situation on earth in which the unification of man with God, through the action of God in the heart of man, as in his temple, is brought about. But neither that Church nor that mystical Body is singled out from the world, nor isolated from the world. Both stand and live on in the midst of the life of the world, and form, in view of the eternal ideal, the core and the center of it. The dominion of our King over his mystical Body, and the dominion of the Son of Man over all power, are interwoven at every point. Because he bears all things by the word of his power, he can arrange and direct all things in such a way that his congregation will endure and not be pressed to death. And because he is the Head of the mystical Body, he can cause all kinds of forces and influences to emanate from his mystical Body on the development of our gender in the world, which will raise all human life to a higher position. The two very distinct parts of his royal rule interact with each other. He has power over his own in soul and body, in destiny and in inner development. And likewise, he has power over everything that is alive and fermenting in the world and brewing in the spirit world.

This rule of our King is exercised partly by him directly, and partly, under his high command and guidance, by the angels, by his ministers on earth and by his spiritual subjects; but the latter always in such a way that our King himself takes his subjects into his service, appoints his ministers, commands and sends out his

angels, and grants his servants the powers they need to accomplish their tasks. The period in which this action of our King proceeds is the period in which the age-long process of opposing his Kingdom of completion continues, and in which he furthermore creates all possibilities, indeed tolerates, permits and even provokes the strongest manifestations of power on the part of his enemies, in order that this victory may be complete. And once this point has been reached, then consummation will come. That consummation will not come in the orderly course of things, but will break off that course of history. That is the moment when our King will return to this earth, subdue and expel the last enemy at his feet, and, after the judgment, usher in the kingdom of glory. Thus, will he manifest his royal power over all spirits of men and angels and demons. Then he will manifest his power over our bodies by raising them to glory. Then he will manifest his royal power over all this earth, by renewing it under a new heaven. And when everything has been completed, and God's order and counsel will have triumphed on every point, then the Son of Man will also have completed his royal office of mediation, and will hand over the recovered and now glorified creation to God Triune, so that God may be all and in all. Far therefore from the Kingdom of Christ being exclusively a spiritual exercise of power in and among the believers, it is a world dominion, indeed a dominion over all creation, and the history of this world, indeed the history of creation as a whole, moves around that Kingship of Christ as its all-pervading center. The world does not see, understand or know this. Unconsciously it undergoes its influences and its exercise of power, until in the end, to its horror and amazement, it will see with its eyes how blind it has been to what has moved it and controlled its course. And therefore, we pray to him whose eye has already been opened to this royal majesty here on earth; who in his kingdom may serve him here; and who, when the hour of his separation from this earth comes, will be awaited by his King above.