

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.