



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

CONTENTS

3 MEDITATION

5 THE ALCOVE
John Calvin's Articles of 1537

12 HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES
Article 43: The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)



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MEDITATION

And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

—Exodus 12:31–42

It is a night to be much observed.

Observe: In the wee hours of the morning, with his firstborn son freshly slain by the hand of the Lord, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and thrust Israel out of his land. Pharaoh had not intended to. Pharaoh did not want to. But being broken under the stroke of God's tenth plague, Pharaoh must thrust Israel out, according to the decree of the sovereign God. Pharaoh had imagined himself sovereign over Israel, but God showed himself sovereign over Pharaoh. "Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments" (Ex. 7:4).

It is a night to be much observed.

Observe: All the Egyptians pressed their jewels and silver and gold and raiment into the

hands of the Israelites as they hustled the Israelites out of the land. With the tracks of their tears of grief staining their faces, the Egyptians were glad to see Israel go. Israel took all of Egypt's wealth with them. Israel spoiled the Egyptians. "He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength. He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them" (Ps. 105:36–38).

It is a night to be much observed.

Observe: The children of Israel were a vast multitude. Six hundred thousand men on foot; beside women; beside children; beside the mixed multitude of Egyptians who had married Israelites, and their children. A very conservative estimate would be two and a half million Israelites marching from Rameses to Succoth,

but that number is probably low by a few million. All these people with all their flocks and herds and cattle and unleavened cakes and kneading troughs and clothes and jewels and raiment.

It is a night to be much observed.

Observe: The children of Israel had sojourned in Egypt for four hundred thirty years—from the days of Joseph until the days of Moses. After four hundred thirty years of sojourning in the iron furnace, the land of Egypt, the house of bondage, God brought Israel out. All the hosts of the Lord went out from Egypt the selfsame day, for the Lord brought them out.

It is a night to be much observed.

But what does it mean to observe? Not merely to notice. Not merely to behold. Rather, to observe the night means to understand the night. It means to see by faith into the meaning of that night. It means to penetrate to the spiritual truth of that night. It is a night to be much observed because it was a night in which the gospel of God was clearly and plainly and dramatically proclaimed. And what is the gospel of the night in which the Lord brought Israel out of the land of Egypt? It is this: salvation is of the Lord!

For observe: The children of Israel were helpless slaves to the powerful Egyptians, but God brought them out of their bondage by a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm. Salvation is of the Lord!

And observe: The children of Israel were poverty-stricken, but God poured all the riches of the earth into their hands. Salvation is of the Lord!

And observe: The children of Israel had no natural right to life with God, but God hid them under the blood of the passover lamb. Salvation is of the Lord!

And observe: God's salvation of Israel from Egypt was not a historical curiosity, but it was what the salvation of God always is—the salvation of the sinful and helpless by the mighty hand of God through the blood of the Lamb of God. Salvation is of the Lord!

And so “it is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.”

—AL



John Calvin's Articles of 1537

The following document is the *Articles Concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva Proposed by the Ministers at the Council January 16, 1537*. The *Articles* were presented by John Calvin, William Farel, and other ministers in the city of Geneva, Switzerland, to the city council, which, in those days, oversaw certain aspects of the government of the church. Modern Reformed readers will recognize that the *Articles* would have functioned in Geneva the way the Church Order of Dort functions in Reformed churches today.

One cannot overstate how important the *Articles* were for the formation of Reformed church government as we know it today. The *Articles* proposed the recovery of the sacrament of the Lord's supper from the pope's corruption of it in the mass. The *Articles* proposed the re-introduction of Christian discipline and excommunication, which the church in Geneva did not practice. The *Articles* proposed a system of catechetical instruction for the children and youth. And the *Articles* proposed the congregational singing of psalms as practiced by the apostle Paul and by the early church.

The history of the *Articles* is fascinating and instructive. John Calvin had only arrived in Geneva in 1536, six months prior to the presentation of the *Articles*. Although Calvin had only intended to stay in Geneva for a night and although Calvin had had no intention of laboring as a minister in the reformation of the church, God caused Calvin to remain in the city through William Farel's thunderous exhortation to Calvin. Established as a minister in Geneva, one of Calvin's first concerns was to make the church "well ordered and regulated" through the spiritual means that the *Articles* laid out.

Satan, who is a vigilant opponent of God and his truth, immediately recognized the importance of the principles laid out in the *Articles*. Therefore, almost as soon as the articles had been drafted and presented, the devil used political intrigue to install city councilmen who were hostile to Calvin and his *Articles*. The city council of Geneva imprisoned and then banished one of the ministers who had presented the *Articles*. John Calvin, a friend of the banished minister, recognized Satan's hand in the persecution of his colleague and so announced from the pulpit that the city council was the "Devil's Council."

When Calvin refused to administer the Lord's supper under the prevailing circumstances, many of his opponents in the audience "drew their swords, and drowned out the voice of the preachers, who left the church and went home under the protection of their friends." The council of Geneva met the next day, "deposed Farel and Calvin, without a trial, and ordered them to leave the city within three days."¹ Calvin had labored in Geneva for just short of two years before being deposed from office and banished from the city.

Calvin and Farel went briefly to Zurich, Switzerland. While there, Calvin and Farel "admitted that they had been too rigid, and consented to the restoration" of certain indifferent practices, like the use of unleavened bread in the Lord's supper. However, Calvin and Farel continued to insist on the matters that they had presented in their *Articles* of 1537: "the introduction of discipline, the division of the Church into parishes, the more frequent administration of the communion, the singing of Psalms in public worship, and the exercise of discipline by joint

¹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 8, *Modern Christianity: The Swiss Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1910), 359–60.

committees of laymen and ministers.”² The council in Geneva was unmoved and confirmed its sentence of banishment against Calvin and Farel. It would be three full years before the city of Geneva would realize its error and would recall Calvin in 1541.

Of special interest to readers of *Reformed Pavilion* is the *Articles*' insistence on congregational psalm singing. Congregational singing had been lost for more than a millennium in the Roman Catholic Church, where all the singing was done by trained choirs. If the people spoke or sang at all, it was to mumble something that they did not understand. Worship in Rome was not heartfelt but dead. Even in Geneva Calvin found the prayers of God's people to be shamefully cold. Calvin believed the congregational singing of psalms would be the remedy to cold and heartless religion. Therefore, in the *Articles* of 1537, Calvin proposed congregational psalm singing as “very expedient” for Reformed worship in Geneva.

Further, it is a thing very expedient for the edification of the Church, to sing some psalms in the form of public devotions by which one may pray to God, or to sing his praise so that the hearts of all be roused and incited to make like prayers and render like praises and thanks to God with one accord.

Calvin's principle of congregational singing was not *sing anything* or *sing anything orthodox*, which is the principle of almost every church today, though churches camouflage their principle as *sing the word*. Rather, Calvin's principle of singing was “sing...psalms.” Calvin's principle was not grounded on the shifting whims of this man's or that man's heart, which is where most churches' principles of singing are grounded today. Rather, Calvin grounded his principle of psalm singing in the instruction of the apostle Paul and in the example of the ancient church.

On the other hand there are the psalms which we desire to be sung in the Church, as we have it exemplified in the ancient Church and in the evidence of Paul himself, who says it is good to sing in the congregation with mouth and heart.

For the cause of reforming the church in her singing, Calvin was willing to suffer deposition from the office of minister of the gospel and banishment from the church and city of Geneva. God's people today who are mocked and expelled for their exclusive psalmody can take heart that God's people and prophets have always been treated thus for the Lord's song. From the rivers of Babylon, where the mockers required one of the songs of Zion; to the “Devil's Council” in Geneva, which banished Calvin; to the many devil's councils today that expel God's people with cruelty and brutality and confusion—God's people have always been reviled and persecuted and slandered for Jesus' sake, who is the sweet psalmist of Israel. And in the midst of their persecution and pain, God's people have found a refuge and hiding place in those very psalms; for in those psalms is Christ.

For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak. Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah... But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy. (Ps. 59:12–13, 16–17)

The *Articles* republished here are taken from J. K. S. Reid, *Calvin: Theological Treatises* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1954), 48–55.

—AL

² Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 361.

Articles concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva proposed by the Ministers at the Council January 16, 1537

Right Honourable Gentlemen: it is certain that a Church cannot be said to be well ordered and regulated unless in it the Holy Supper of our Lord is always being celebrated and frequented, and this under such good supervision that no one dare presume to present him self unless devoutly, and with genuine reverence for it. For this reason, in order to maintain the Church in its integrity, the discipline of excommunication is necessary, by which it is possible to correct those that do not wish to submit courteously and with all obedience to the Word of God. Further, it is a thing very expedient for the edification of the Church, to sing some psalms in the form of public devotions by which one may pray to God, or to sing his praise so that the hearts of all be roused and incited to make like prayers and render like praises and thanks to God with one accord. Third, it is strictly required and quite necessary for maintaining the people in purity of doctrine, that infants of tender age be so instructed that they are able to give reason for the faith, so that evangelical doctrine is not left to decay, and also that its substance be diligently maintained and transmitted from hand to hand and from father to son. Finally out of the tyranny which the¹ exercised in the matter of marriage and the iniquitous laws which he imposed, many controversies persist. To settle them, it would be advisable to make certain ordinances by which they may be controlled, and, if any difference of opinion arise, to take appropriate steps for composing them.

As for the trouble and confusion which existed in this city at the beginning, before the gospel was with one accord received and recognized, it is not possible to reduce everything to good order in a moment, if only because the ignorance of the people would not allow it. But now that it has pleased the Lord a little better to

establish his reign here, it seemed to us good and salutary to confer together concerning these things; and, after having taken counsel of the Word of the Lord, and having invoked his Name and besought the assistance of his Spirit, whose guidance it would be good to follow hereafter, we have concluded by presenting to you in the form of articles what we have deliberated concerning the knowledge which the Lord has vouchsafed to us, praying you in the Name of God that it be your pleasure not to spare yourselves from playing the part that pertains to your office. If, that is, you see that our advice is from the holy Word of the gospel, take good care that these observations be received and obeyed in your city, since the Lord in his goodness has given you this knowledge; for the ordinances by which his Church is preserved are that it be truly and as nearly as possible conformed to his Word, which is the certain rule of all government and administration, but especially of ecclesiastical government.

It would be well to require that the Communion of the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ be held every Sunday at least as a rule. When the Church assembles together for the great consolation which the faithful receive and the profit which proceeds from it, in every respect according to the promises which are there presented to our faith, then we are really made participants of the body and the blood of Jesus, of his death, of his life, of his Spirit and of all his benefits. As for the exhortations made there, we are to recognize and magnify by professing his praise the marvellous things graciously vouchsafed by God to us; and finally we are to live as Christians, being joined together in one peace and brotherly unity as members of one and the same body. In fact, it was not instituted by Jesus for making a commemoration two or three times a year, but for a

¹ The reference is to the pope, but the ministers of Geneva refused to write his name here out of loathing. They left an exclamation point in the blank space to witness to their strong abhorrence of the pope.

frequent exercise of our faith and charity, of which the congregation of Christians should make use as often as they be assembled, as we find written in Acts ch. 2, that the disciples of our Lord continued in the breaking of bread, which is the ordinance of the Supper. Such also was always the practice of the ancient Church, until the abomination of the mass was introduced, in which, in place of this communion of all the faithful, there was set up the horrible sacrilege that one man sacrifices for all. In this the Supper has been wholly destroyed and abolished. But because the frailty of the people is still so great, there is danger that this sacred and so excellent mystery be misunderstood if it be celebrated so often. In view of this, it seemed good to us, while hoping that the people who are still so infirm will be the more strengthened, that use be made of this sacred Supper once a month in one of three places where now preaching takes place, viz., St. Pierre, Riue or St. Gervais, in such a way that once a month it take place at St. Pierre, once at Riue, and once at St. Gervais, and then return in this order, having gone the round. It will be always not for one quarter of the city alone, but for all the Church; and for it a convenient hour will be chosen and announced everywhere on the previous Sunday. So that there be no cause for contempt, but this high mystery be treated with the greatest dignity possible, it has seemed to us the more advisable course, that the ministers of the Word, on whom the office of administering all that pertains to the mysteries of God properly belongs, distribute the bread and the wine, the form and sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord. And so that this take place with fitness and without confusion or impropriety, we have proposed to make it our duty to show and indicate such order as the people ought to observe; to advocate one that avoids confusion, and will supply you with means that will be found expedient, that things be well conducted and we come with such particular reverence as Paul commands us.

But the principal rule that is required, and for which it is necessary to have the greatest

care, is that this Holy Supper, ordained and instituted for joining the members of our Lord Jesus Christ with their Head and with one another in one body and one spirit, be not soiled and contaminated by those coming to it and communicating, who declare and manifest by their misconduct and evil life that they do not at all belong to Jesus. For in this profanation of his sacrament our Lord is gravely dishonoured. Hence it behoves us to be on our guard that this pollution, which abounds with such dishonour to God, be not brought amongst us by our negligence, in view of the so great vengeance, mentioned by Paul, on those who treat this sacrament unworthily. It is then necessary that those who have the power to frame regulations make it a rule that they who come to this Communion be approved members of Jesus Christ.

For this reason, our Saviour set up in his Church the correction and discipline of excommunication, by which he desired that those who were disorderly in their life and unworthy of the name of Christian, and who, after being admonished, despise coming to amendment and returning to the right way, should be expelled from the body of the Church, and, like decayed members, should be cut off, until they come to repentance and recognize their fault and error. This manner of correction was commanded by our Lord for his Church in Matt. ch. 18. We ought then to use it, lest we despise the commandment which he has given us. We have an example of it in Paul, 1 Tim. ch. 1 and 1 Cor. ch. 5, with grave warning that we keep no kind of company with those who call themselves Christians and yet are notoriously lewd, avaricious, idolatrous, slanderous, or drunken and given to robbery. Hence if there is in us any fear of God, this ordinance must have place in our Church. Again, the same reasons on which it is founded and the profit which it yields, ought to move us to make use of it, were there no such express command. First, that Jesus Christ be not blasphemed and dishonoured as if his Church were a confederation of evil persons, dissolute in all vices. Second, that those who receive such correction, being

ashamed and disturbed by their sin, should come to know and amend themselves. Third, that others be not corrupted and perverted in their way of life, but rather by their example be turned from manifesting like faults.

This use and practice persisted in the ancient Church for some time with particular usefulness and profit for Christianity, until some wicked bishops, or rather robbers taking the place of bishops, turned it into a tyranny and abused it for their evil cupidity. So that nothing today is more pernicious and evil in the dominion of the pope than excommunication, though it is in fact one of the most profitable and salutary things which the Saviour vouchsafed to his Church.

Now this fault appeared because the false bishops took from the assembly of the faithful and attracted to themselves the right and power of excommunication. This in fact according to the Word does not belong to them. And after having usurped this domination, they converted it into all kinds of perversity.

Having then considered that a Church cannot retain its true condition without observing this ordinance, and that it is greatly to be feared that contempt of it may be punished by the mighty vengeance of God, the expedient thing seemed to us to be what was committed to the Church and exercised according to the rule which we have in Scripture. And yet on the other hand, one is to take good care not to fall into any impropriety which depraves and corrupts it by ill usage.

To do this, we have deliberately required of you to be pleased to ordain and elect certain persons of good life and witness from among the faithful, persevering and not easily corrupted, who should be dispersed and distributed in all the quarters of the city, having oversight of the life and government of each of them; and if they see any vice worthy of note to find fault with in any person, that they communicate about it with some of the ministers, to admonish whoever it is that is at fault and to exhort him in brotherly fashion to amendment. If it be found that such remonstrances have no result, he must be advised that his obstinacy will be reported to the

Church. And then if he recognize his error, how great is the profit of this discipline! If he do not attend to it, the time has come when the minister appointed by those who are in charge of the case should announce publicly in the assembly what has been done to bring him to amendment and all without result. By then it will be realized whether he will persevere in hardness of heart, and this is the time for excommunication. That is to say, he is to be held as expelled from the company of Christians and left in the power of the devil for his temporal confusion, until he give good evidence of his penitence and amendment; and as sign of this he is to be barred from the communion of the Supper, and denounced to other believers that they have no intimate dealings with him. But he is never to omit coming to sermon to receive teaching, in order to prove whether it will please the Saviour to touch his heart and turn him into the right path.

The vices which are to be corrected in this way are those which you have had already named by Paul and others similar. When others, such as neighbours or parents, have knowledge of the vices before the said disputes are perceived, they themselves would be able to make the remonstrance; and when they realize that they have no effect, they should turn the matter over to those deputed to proceed according to their office.

This, it seems to us, is a good way of reducing excommunication in our Church and yet of maintaining it in its entirety; and without this correction the Church is quite unable to proceed. But if there be anyone so insolent and abandoned to all perversity that he only laughs at being excommunicated and does not mind living and dying in such rejection, it will be your duty to consider if you must for long tolerate and leave unpunished such contempt and mockery of God and his gospel.

Further, because there are grave suspicions and even obvious evidences that there are again several inhabitants in this city who have not at all fallen in with the gospel, but deny it, so that in their heart are harboured all the superstitions

conflicting with the Word of God, it will be expedient to make a beginning with this first, to get to know who desire to acknowledge the Church of Jesus Christ and who do not. For if there is need to expel by excommunication from our assembly those who truly with good reason would have been taken as members of it, how much more necessary to discern those who ought to be received as members from those who should not be accepted.

Second, it is certain that there is no greater distinction than that of faith, and hence if those who join with us in the faith are for their vices alone to be excommunicated, there is stronger reason why those should not be tolerated within the Church who are in everything contrary to us in religion. The remedy for this which we have thought of is to suggest to you that all the inhabitants of your city have to make confession of and give reason for their faith, in order to recognize those in harmony with the gospel, and those loving rather to be of the kingdom of the pope than of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It would be then the act of Christian magistrates if you, Gentlemen of the Council, each for himself, would make in your council a profession, by which it would be shown that the doctrine of your faith is really that by which all the faithful are united in one Church. For by your example you would show what each following you would have to do; and after, you would ordain some of your company, who, joining with some minister, would require each to do the same. Let this be done for this once only, though it has not at all been settled yet what doctrine each holds to be proper for setting up a Church.

On the other hand there are the psalms which we desire to be sung in the Church, as we have it exemplified in the ancient Church and in the evidence of Paul himself, who says it is good to sing in the congregation with mouth and heart. We are unable to compute the profit and edification which will arise from this, except after having experimented. Certainly as things are, the prayers of the faithful are so cold, that we ought to be ashamed and dismayed. The psalms

can incite us to lift up our hearts to God and move us to an ardour in invoking and exalting with praises the glory of his Name. Moreover it will be thus appreciated of what benefit and consolation the pope and those that belong to him have deprived the Church; for he has reduced the psalms, which ought to be true spiritual songs, to a murmuring among themselves without any understanding.

This manner of proceeding seemed specially good to us, that children, who beforehand have practised some modest church song, sing in a loud distinct voice, the people listening with all attention and following heartily what is sung with the mouth, till all become accustomed to sing communally. But in order to avoid all confusion, you must not allow that anyone by his insolence, and to put the congregation to derision, should come to disturb the order you have adopted.

The third article concerns the instruction of children, who without doubt ought to make a confession of their faith to the Church. For this purpose, in ancient days, a definite catechism was used for initiating each one in the fundamentals of the Christian religion; and this might be a formula of witness, which each could use to declare his Christianity. The children were individually taught from this catechism, and had to come to testify their faith to the Church, to which they were unable at their Baptism to render witness. For we see that Scripture has always joined confession with faith; and it has told us that, if we truly believe with the heart, it is right that we ought also to confess with the mouth to that salvation which we believe. Now if this ordinance has ever been proper and appropriate, it is more than ever necessary now, in view of the neglect of the Word of God which we see in most people, and the contempt of parents in instructing their children in the way of God, from which one sees a remarkable rudeness and great ignorance which is quite intolerable in the Church of God.

The order which we advise being set up is that there be a brief and simple summary of the

Christian faith, to be taught to all children, and that at certain seasons of the year they come before the ministers to be interrogated and examined, and to receive more ample explanation, according as there is need to the capacity of each one of them, until they have been proved sufficiently instructed. But may it be your pleasure to command parents to exercise pains and diligence that their children learn this summary and that they present themselves before the ministers at the times appointed.

Finally, inasmuch as the² has so confused matrimonial cases, by making degrees at his pleasure, determining differences iniquitously and against all reason, it is required and necessary to review the controversies that often ensue from this in the light of the Word of God. So we seriously suggest to you, to make the matter more certain, that you give charge and commission to certain persons of your company to judge and decide all cases which may come before them, joining with them some ministers the better to secure that what is done is in accordance with the Word of God. These commissioners with the council of ministers aforesaid will first make ordinances from the cases commonly occurring, and they will have these to judge by.

But these are afterwards to be presented to you for approval before proceeding further.

Now, right honourable gentlemen, we beseech you affectionately with one accord, asking in the name of God, if you regard these intimations and exhortations as being truly from the Word of God, and take them not at all as from us, but as from him from whom they do proceed, that you similarly consider of what importance and consequence they are for the maintenance of the honour of God in this State and the conservation of the Church in its integrity. These considerations will forbid you to spare yourselves from putting into diligent execution what you see not only to belong to your office, but also to be so necessary for the maintenance of your people in good order. Nor ought you to be moved by the difficulty which some will allege to be inherent in these matters. For we ought to have this hope, since we attempt to follow what is ordained by God, that of his goodness he will make it prosper and conduct our enterprise to a successful end, as you yourselves have hitherto sufficiently experienced in all the affairs where the Lord has given you grace to seek his glory. May he assist you by his power to bring everything to a successful issue.



² Once again the name of the pope has been omitted.

Article XLIII. The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)

The confusion of tongues in the valley of Shinar, so we found, determined positively that in the end, God would have a people gathered from many nations and tongues and tribes, and reflecting the glory and the power and the grace of God in the New Jerusalem in manifold form. It laid the basis for the development of the human race into various nations and tongues. God's people in this dispensation are in living relationship with the organism of the human race. The development of that race is partly their development. If in Shinar's valley the attempt to form one nation and one kingdom had been crowned with success, the people of God's covenant would have borne the stamp of that event in all eternity. But the same is true with respect to the confusion of tongues. God separates humanity. He determines that men shall develop along the lines of different nations and tongues. And the positive effect for God's kingdom is that in beautiful harmony God's glory and grace shall shine forth from many nations and tribes and tongues of the earth in manifold reflections.

Thus it always is. The sinful attempts of men, the plans and wiles of the devil must serve their purpose in the wonderful plan of God. The devil can never do anything else than serve God's purpose in the realization of his plan, and enhance God's glory!

But this is not all. It is not the effect to which we wished to call your attention especially. The confusion of tongues had its effect first of all upon the development of the fallen king and his kingdom in the history of this world. We have already called your attention to the fact that man

is created king, and that even in his sinful state this becomes plainly evident. The tendency of man's nature is to rule, to establish a kingdom. He wants to have dominion. He cannot rest before he has realized a world-kingdom, before he has gained dominion over all things in every sphere of the life of the world. The difference caused by sin is that while he was created the servant of God in covenant relationship with Him, he has now subjected himself to the dominion of the devil, has become the ally of satan, and is his servant. And, therefore, according to his innate tendency he must naturally aim at establishing a world-kingdom under the devil. The fallen king is principally antichrist. He is the appointed of the devil, and his purpose is to gain a world-dominion that principally receives its authority from the dragon.

Now, the event of Babel, the confusion of tongues, cannot be understood in all its historical significance, unless it is considered as an early attempt to realize this sinful world-dominion in principle, the reign of antichrist.

Let us anticipate a moment to see what this reign of antichrist will mean when ultimately it is permitted to realize itself for a time. The most complete picture of it we possess no doubt in Revelation 13. That remarkable chapter presents us with a picture of the two beasts, the one that rises up out of the sea, and the other that appears from the earth. Without entering into the details of the interpretation of this chapter, we may undoubtedly postulate in the first place, that in the two beasts we have a picture of the reign of the antichrist in the end. The very fact that the first beast receives his authority from

the dragon is sufficient to mark him as the anointed of the devil, that stands in his very being over against the Anointed of God. Neither can the second beast be separated from the first. The two belong together. For the second beast appears as the servant of the first, receives his authority from the latter, and in his presence, while for his sake, he performs his awful wonders. Together, therefore, they present us with a picture of the power of antichrist as he will ultimately appear. The one beast pictures the reign of antichrist from a political point of view, the other from a rather spiritual, religious and scientific viewpoint. In the second place, it may be regarded as plain, that it will constitute a tremendous universal world-power, with sway over many nations and over every sphere of life. This is plain from its appearance. It is a combination of the leopard, the lion and the bear. It appears with seven heads and ten horns. It embodies within itself the consummation and combination of all the world-power, past and present, and appears as a world-dominion with authority over all things. This is plain, too, from many direct expressions in the text. We are told that all the earth follows the beast with wondering admiration, convinced that no power is able to war with the beast. We read that the beast has authority over every tribe and tongue and nation of the earth. Thru the operation of the second beast, he controls religion, for he makes all to worship his image. He evidently controls science and art and performs many wonders. He holds sway over industry and commerce, and determines who may and who may not buy or sell. In a word, it is the picture of an awful power, of a power that is universal in its nature, with dominion over all things in the world. If we ask: How is this power ever to be realized? we would answer: most probably by means of a universal confederacy, embracing at least all the civilized nations of the earth. It does not seem likely, that one single nation will ever gain world-dominion, subjecting all the nations of the earth by the strength of arms and lording it over all the world. In the first place, it may be remarked that this has been the attempt of all the great

powers in the world's history, but their attempt has always met with complete failure. Besides, we do not receive that impression from the picture of the beast in relation to all the world. The beast presents the picture of a combination as well as of a consummation of all the world-powers together, rather than that of a single nation lording it over the rest. Neither are the nations pictured as groaning under the terrible yoke of antichrist. On the contrary, they admire the beast. They worship him. They praise his appearance. They look upon him as the very climax of an imposing civilization. And, therefore, it is far more probable, that the ultimate realization of the antichristian world-power will present the aspect of a league, with a central head, either committee or individual, that will gradually gain control of every current of human life. It will be a powerful confederacy, a league of various nations. And finally, it is plain, that this universal world-power will place itself antagonistically over against the people of the kingdom of God. For them they will be terrible times. The beast makes war upon the saints, according to the nature of the authority he received from the dragon. He controls all things in such a way, that the faithful in Christ will have no standing room on earth. They will be boycotted, they will be social outcasts, they will not be able to buy or sell, they will be allowed no room in the midst of that imposing world-power. In a word, when that antichristian world-power shall finally be realized, the kingdom of God shall be able to develop no more.

Now, then, we said that the attempt in Shinar's valley was principally nothing else than a manifestation of the ambition in the human heart to realize that world-power. This is plain first of all from the nature of the individual kingdoms that develop soon after the confusion of tongues. When God confuses the language and separates mankind into different groups, these different groups separately are formed into kingdoms. And what is the spiritual character of these kingdoms? It is antichristian. They oppose the kingdom of God throughout the old dispensation. Especially may we call to mind the

kingdoms of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria. What becomes manifest in their individual character would also have been revealed in the universal world-power of Shinar, had God allowed it to realize itself. But this is also the impression we receive from the very account in Gen. 11. Not as if we consider their purpose to build a high tower, whose top would reach into heaven, as an attempt to make a direct attack upon heaven and its God. But the entire record of their purpose and speech is a manifestation of man's self-exultation and sinful pride. Jehovah is forgotten. Directly against his manifest will that man should develop and fill the earth, they purpose to remain together as one body in the kingdom. And the expressed purpose is that they should make themselves a name. And, therefore, we are safe in drawing the conclusion that the history of Shinar is a manifestation of the first, but premature attempt to establish the universal kingdom that opposes God. It was an attempt at that confederacy that shall once be allowed temporarily to realize itself, that sin may reveal itself in all the horribleness of its true nature, and God may be justified.

But in Shinar's valley, at that early stage of history, this attempt may not meet with success. If it had, God's kingdom would soon have no place in all the world. And, therefore, God separates the nations. Each of these nations in the

future will strive to realize by force the universal power over the world, and aim at gaining control over the world. But no sooner does one nation rise to power but another gains pre-eminence and disputes the power of the former. Thus, the confusion of tongues is the death-stroke to the beast. Striking it is, indeed, that in Revelation 13 the beast appears with a death-stroke that has been healed. The superstition is not too bold, that this death-stroke it received in Shinar's valley, when the Lord from heaven frustrated the attempt at a universal kingdom. Since that time man has made various attempts to heal that stroke. It has aimed continually at the realization of its highest ideal: the formation of a glorious kingdom under satan, embracing all the nations of the world. But every attempt, thanks to the confusion of tongues, has thus far met with complete failure. In the meantime the kingdom receives room for development, the people of God's covenant are called and gathered. Once, indeed, the death-stroke shall be healed. Antichrist shall realize his kingdom. God's people shall be subjected to most terrible tribulation. But this will be the time of the end, the eve of Christ's appearance in glory.

It will realize itself only to be consumed by the power of the anger of God's Appointed.

—Holland, Mich.

