

# MODERN SOCIETY IN THE LIGHT OF THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

Our subject will be: s o c i e t y. Society is the whole of forms, made and ruled by man, within which mankind lives. It is the d i k e protecting life, as the ancient Greeks saw their p o l i s. It is above that the structure of man's e n v i r o n m e n t, within which human life can evolve to its meaning, to its true significance.

So we are dealing with the second term of a main distinction: m a n and s o c i e t y. Although our aim is society, the first term, man, as an individual, or as a group or community, cannot be neglected, because man and society are interdependent. They exert mutual influence upon each other.

We will discuss to-day:

1. Why society is a problem for a Christian.
2. What is the particular problem of modern society.
3. How can we solve that problem.

These three points are the frame of the distributed theses. I do not intend to say everything about everyone of these theses. That would be tiresome and confusing. Of course, everyone of them can be made the subject of a discussion. But in this lecture a general survey and the clearing up of some crucial points will suit our purpose best.

## I. Why is society a problem for the Christian?

Is not this problem merely a typical Dutch invention, more than one in this conference will ask? Does not this problem and its answer, the formation of a Christian society, bring us on to the wrong track? All these Christian activities of the Dutch, in Christian schools, university, radio, Christian press and all kinds of associations, with their role in the formation of a Christian from his main task, the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the winning of people for His service?

Perhaps these brethren will say about this social noise of the Dutch, kindly of course: What a waste of time and energy! To get a clear picture, I would like to add that a Dutch Calvinist, observing these brethren dealing only with what they call their main task as Christians and leaving society alone - I repeat that a Dutch Calvinist would say, about this social silence, kindly of course: What a waste of time and energy!

When society is no concern of Christian activity, then either society is merely an instrument of the devil, or it is neutral territory, or it is the domain of Christ, without necessity of interference by us.

1. However much Satan may have to do with society, it is too good to be merely his instrument. And moreover, how would it be possible to exclude society from the Kingdom of the Lord, which is victoriously coming to this world? Up to the catastrophic end of this world, the devil will never get beyond parasitising the creation and its significant developments.

2. Then, perhaps, society is neutral territory, where it does

not make any difference to be a Christian or not. But in history the appearance of Christianity has made all the difference to society. Even worldly philosophers admit this difference upon society. Everyone who compares Western society with that of other cultures, dead or alive, is struck with the essential differences in liberty, authority, organization, cultural level, etc., marking Western society. And again the neutrality of society excludes it from the Kingdom of the Lord. There is nothing in this world without a religious meaning. The Lord has made everything for his own sake. In fact, neutrality cannot exist. We will not forget that a lack of difference or a slight difference between the activities of a Christian and a non Christian is no argument for neutrality, but an assertion of a cultural unity in our Western world, built on Christian principles and activities.

3. Finally it is possible to look upon society as a given structure, being such as it is by the guidance of Jesus Christ. He has put everyone in his place in this society, and we can trust him that this very place will serve His kingdom and our salvation. Certainly this is true, but it is only half the truth. The other half is that no one can act in life without changing society. And we have already seen that such activity can never be neutral. So this changing of society has to result from Christian activity.

But perhaps someone will object: you are simplifying things. Of course we all change society, but how can we know that it is changed by us in a Christian sense? To such Christian irrationalism, I would answer: Let us avoid both extremes: knowing everything about God's commandments, and knowing nothing about them. It is clear to us all that the Lord forbids us injustice, slavery, revolution, lies: and that he commands us to do justly, to defend freedom, to obey authorities, to speak the truth, etc. Our difficulties begin when we try to apply such laws. But to give up in the face of the difficulties is not only to put the laws of God aside, it means also that we replace them by laws of our own making, because no one can act without law and norms. Now, even such laws, even the laws invented by non-Christians, cannot exist without a relation with the laws of God. Where else would they come from? It is the difficult task of a Christian to analyse the laws he uses concerning that relation. Even the structural laws of society.

But you will have observed that we have encountered a serious difficulty in our last argument. Is Jesus Christ shaping society as it is, or are we shaping it, or both? Where does society come from?

1. First of all society arises from a continuous sequence of past society. But, compared with that past society, ours has changed.

2. Where does the change come from? It is man, who changes society, within the space of his freedom, motivated by his belief. What he believed to be the essence of life motivates him to change society. He is looking to the past, to continue the historical trend, and he is looking to the future to establish such novelties as will suit his conception of the meaning of life. Thus, the belief that they lived in a hostile and threatening nature, built the ancient societies as a defence system. Thus the belief that the meaning of life was to escape from this world (by means of asceticism) into the spiritual Kingdom of God, and the belief that God is subject to reason, built the society of the Middle Ages as a hierarchical, rational unit, as a static system.

Thus, the belief of being God's appointed, each equal to everyone, and responsible to God alone, of having the all-embracing, adventurous task of governing and exploring creation to God's honour, all this built up the democratic dynamic society of the calvinistic reformation: the society of free citizens, ascetic in attitude, with the world as their goal.

3. But by no means we have said everything about society by pointing to the historical trend and to the building men. In every detail and feature, society belongs to God. It exists by Him, under Him, and unto Him. He has set in creation the structural plan for society. That is why a family is always a family and nothing else, a state always a state, a school. They can deteriorate, but they never go beyond their own structural plan. A deteriorate family is still a family or nothing at all.

But not only this starting point is important. God is, in Jesus Christ, guiding and governing society at every moment and in every respect. Society belongs to Him. He uses and directs it, even with its deterioration, for his own purposes. As such, society has always been, is, and will always be, in every respect, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We cannot alter this fact.

But our difficulty is yet far from being solved. There does not exist in society a sanctuary from the hand of the Lord. And on the other hand society is man's responsibility. Our problem is that of an Almighty God and responsible man. It is the problem of freedom. It is the most crucial problem of life, of churches, of thought, and in a general sense of all philosophies: however, only in Western countries it arose with freedom.

Let me hasten to state that this problem cannot be solved earth. The erroneous efforts to liquidate it have always resulted in limiting the power of God or in the loss of human freedom. Such efforts have brought about heresies and schisms in churches; they stand at the origin of humanism, and the problem itself govern modern Western philosophy in a secularized sense, in the conflict Dooyeweerd observed as that of nature and freedom.

Sometimes this very fundamental problem is solved in a catechism class, but luckily most students forget the solution easily.

Although our question cannot be solved by reason, it is even conflicting on that level, we are able to give warning of some blind roads. To such a road leads the idea that the unrestricted power of the Lord compels us to freedom as a fiction. Also the

idea that the power of the Lord is restricted by human freedom is erroneous. So is the idea that each governs a separate territory, or the idea that they are competing in the same field.

In a positive sense, one can say that they do not operate on the same level; or, perhaps better, that the guidance of Jesus Christ has a new dimension, compared with the free activity of man. Thus one can state, not by reason but by belief, that the guidance and government of Jesus Christ is carried out by free man. But I hasten to add: not all of this guidance.

So, finally, we have arrived at a conception concerning the problem of society that can be summarized as follows:

Society belongs to Jesus Christ. He guides and rules it to the honour of God. Society is an instrument for the formation of the Kingdom of the Lord. Jesus Christ allows and commands man to build society in his freedom, in accordance with the laws of God, and in view of His honour. It is an exploration

and development of creation. Man can know His Laws and in faith he will be guided in the fulfilment of this task by the Holy Spirit.

We are now in the position to return to the objection that society is no concern of a Christian as such, that the task of a Christian as such is located in the spiritual field of relations between Jesus Christ and mankind.

The idea that this is the task of a Christian or even only his main task is faulty, because Jesus Christ did not come on earth to save souls of men in a lost world, but to save the whole creation with its dynamic potentialities. And he did not come for man's sake but for the glory of God.

So there exists a broad, all-embracing task for mankind. I even dare say that you cannot notice, in this integrated task, a main part, for instance evangelization. There will always be preference, and that depends upon the historical time, the place, the person involved, the sociological and spiritual situation, etc. However, we learn from the Bible that in reality there is a priority for the building up the community of the Saints, the body of Jesus Christ, including the winning of people for this community.

Due to the threat of sin, about which we have to deal now, that community will always be a crucial point in Christian life. Do not forget that it has a very important practical social aspect, and that its structure is also a part of society.

I mentioned sin. Perhaps someone has thought when I dealt with the problem of the Almighty God and the freedom of men, that I forgot to introduce this aspect of sin. I did not forget it. Our problem exists without influence of sin. Of course sin complicates things, but in fact it suggests a new problem. I do not intend to deal with it in general. For our purpose it is sufficient to discuss it under the aspect of secularization. Because this secularization is the background of our second subject: that is the particular problem of modern society.

Sin is fundamentally the lack of belief in Jesus Christ. Secularization is the lack of religious relations. Before dealing with their connection, we have to make a comparison with other cultures.

In the heathen world and in ancient cultures, there existed still a pseudo-religious relation with idols, thought of as existing in another world.

Now Western culture, under the guidance of Christianity, has brought man to the fore in his royal office. So when the apostasy enters this culture, an entirely new idol enters with it: man himself. That is why such apostasy leads for the first time in history to a complete secularization. God is dead, Nietzsche says, and there are no other gods. Man himself is God. The religious ties with God exist only in the way of Jesus Christ. To believe in Him is to have religious relations with God. Not to believe in Him is the core of sin. And at the same time, it is the loss of real religious relations. And when finally the pseudo-religious relations with the God of Kant, Spinoza, Descartes, for instance, are lost, life is secularized. The world then leads to a completely closed system, it has become only *dies-seitig*.

Here we get a broader insight into secularization. Not only the heart of man is secularized. The world he builds, his society, his

science, his technique, his literature, everything has lost its religious meaning. There is no place in it for God. It has become merely wordly, secularized.

The most important spiritual feature of our time is that in the last two hundred years and gradually, an accelerating process of secularization has developed, embracing everything and every fact, the attitude of non-Christians and even the behaviour of Christians in many fields. This secularization is now characterizing life.

We have shortly dealt with the neutrality. It will be clear now that the stamp of neutrality, wherever it is put, is the stamp of secularization.

Secularization in Western culture has been that the fruit of Christianity has been stolen from its Giver, to serve as instrument for man in his trial for self-redemption, in his grasp for sovereignty. The result has been, and inevitably would be, cultural confusion and decline. Our crisis of humanistic secularization.

We will now switch over to the second question:

## II. What is the particular problem of modern society?

I have told you that man and society are interdependent. We will look both ways. What is modern belief, that is responsible for the specific society of our days? Which influence has society on the belief of the present-day man?

A. The belief of modern man is secularized. Even the belief of many Christians, not concerning their hope in Jesus Christ, but concerning their task in practical life, is secularized. They too think that they work to survive, or to get a good living, or at most when they are not self-centred, they believe that they help to make the world livable, and to reach a higher standard of living. Not a thought about the real meaning of their work for the Kingdom of the Lord, not a view on the religious ties of the result of their work. They have two separated lives: one of the world, one of another aeon. One on Sunday, one weekly. And of course Church and Sunday lose their significance in this isolation, so that finally the division gets to be: outer, practical life, and an inner life, hidden, gradually more drained and disappearing under the subconscious level.

In the world we can in general observe a belief of the elite and a belief of the masses.

The belief of the leading elite, that is in the main responsible for present society, is that finally mankind can operate such instruments in technique and science, especially the social sciences, that a definite human control society is at hand. In other words, that world miseries can be conquered and that self-redemption, the ideal of humanism finally will be a fact. This society will of necessity be centrally controlled in its strategic points, it will be hierarchic in building, and thoroughly organized. Man in this society will be an object of change, to adjust his attitude and behaviour to the new collectivist society.

This firm belief in self-redemption has of late been subject to serious doubt as to whether problems of world-size could be mastered that way. But on a smaller scale this belief is still very strong. It is so strong, because the alternative is the defeat of humanism. And then remains the choice between something like Sartre, that is to be lost in nihilistic self-isolation, or Jesus Christ, that is to lose

yourself, to be a lost and dishonoured man, in order to be saved and honoured by Christ.

2. The belief of the masses too is a real mark of secularization. They have lost motives of Christian vocation, then they have lost the adventurous worldly motives of a conquering mankind, then they have lost the ideal of the great revolution carrying mankind in a glorious state of salvation as Marx predicted. What remains is a little circle of interest around man himself, within which he is motivated by his needs, looking after his own pleasures, driving at security, pointing at consumption, never looking far away or far ahead, because war and death threaten there: They are the institutes of punishment for his secularization and institutes of grace to alarm him in his securities.

Remarkably, but not unexpectedly, he lives in the same little circle as Sartre constructed, the circle within which man is a god, whilst outside only enemies exist.

During my recent visit to universities in the United States one thing struck me particularly in the research of human relations in industry. When the researchers try to understand the motivation of a man in industry, they nearly always point to the needs of the individual, motivating him in society need of survival, need to achieve, need for social contacts etc. Firstly, this suggests that their objects of investigation, such men, are really declined to such secularized self-centred motivation. But secondly it suggests that these research-men themselves are not aware of the fact that this self-centering is the very cause why human relations are breaking down. They even do not consider that it is possible for man to have a motivation in his work, outside himself, outside this word, that he can be motivated by a v o c a t i o n.

Let us return to the masses. As to their belief, they are in need of the same society as the one the elite is building, motivated by its belief in human control of society of security and human welfare.

These masses like to exchange their freedom to be responsible for this security in a collectivistic society, because they do not know anymore why and to whom they should be responsible. So the freedom to bear responsibility is shifted upwards towards the centralized control-system, not only because the elite is driving that way, but also because the masses like to transfer their responsibility in that direction.

Of course, there arise reactions against such a passive life and loneliness of the heart. An outlet is offered by various mass-movements with a makeshift activity and community, for instance in sport, politics and the like. But now also the belief in the role of such mass-movements is in decline. That is why the rise of a special type of primary, face to face group, can be observed. A professor of Harvard has analysed this group in an interesting book: *The human group*. It is a defense-group, within the collectivistic society. It is the street-gang, or the informal group in an industrial organization; a closed system, setting its own norms, being without spiritual harmony with the goals of society or the organization, within which it operates to meet the human need for real social relations. However all this does not alter the fact that in our century a collectivistic society is rapidly coming into existence.

B. Let us now look at the other side: this collectivistic modern society influencing people in their belief.

As you know, the influence of belief upon society is neglected in

Marxism. Most Christians, however, overlook the fact that society is one of the influences shaping man's belief. So I am convinced that the dialectic theology, the last schism in the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, differences in content of belief in the reformed body, new movement in the Roman-Catholic church, cannot be explained without bearing in mind the important change of society in our age.

1. I will give three illustrations. When society, the state, the company, etc., offers a foolproof security, then man is seduced to expect security from nowhere else. Then even a Christian is seduced to withdraw this territory from his belief in Jesus Christ, who is our trust in life and death. How can one pray earnestly for one's daily bread, when from experience it seems to be completely guaranteed!

2. The second illustration comes from the loss of freedom in daily life. When a man gets used to passive life, he will not believe anymore that the meaning of his life is in his vocation, a unique man, created as such unique by God for His Glory.

3. Finally our society is one of abundance. This is already very clear in the States. This abundance is given us by God to enjoy our life. But at the same time it is a seduction to change the roles in life. Riesman has observed that the former man was a producer. Modern man is a consumer. Abundance added to the growing leisure-time suggests to us to believe that man's role on earth is not that of an instrument, but that of life's goal itself.

Here finally I can explain why I said, it is a waste of time and energy to concentrate on evangelization, leaving society alone; a loss even if this would be really our only task, what we saw to be a faulty conception of Christian life.

It is, even for Evangelization, necessary to change society in such a way that the Gospel again can be heard, makes sense in a man's life.

Christian belief, a Christian way of living, and a Christian society belong together. When one of them is in decline it will draw the others toward decline.

I have not elaborated my thesis of the structure of our collectivistic society. I gave merely some impressions. To enter our third question I will add some main points.

Andre Siegfried says that the remarkable fact for our century and society compared with former ages is the loss of freedom. Perhaps this statement is something of a surprise to some of you. Nevertheless it is true. Such a surprise arises perhaps from the fact that the social, man-made ties of our age, are increasing and intensifying gradually, impersonally and unobserved. Moreover some of us erroneously think of freedom as the rising of standards of living, and welfare. But is not the same.

Many a philosopher and sociologist is in agreement with Siegfried. One of the two main motivations for existentialism is the wish to escape this prison of the "Dasein".

In fact, in an exaggerated saying, the individualistic society of the 19th century can be compared with the jungle, whereas our century can be compared with a prison.

The communistic society is in fact such a prison. But do not forget that it is not an anachronism. Burnham has shown that the same kind of society is under way in the Western World. Mannheim, a socialist, has said that our collectivistic society can be compared with that of the Middle Ages, however with one exception. The latter

was bound by a common belief. Ours is bound only by organization and economic planning, because a common belief is lacking. And he admits that when we cannot interpret our society in a spiritual sense, our future will be a communistic society.

Now he observes a way out. The Christians have to furnish the spiritual key-stone. But the collectivistic society will remain, in his system. He calls it planning for freedom. But he forgets that you cannot eat your cake and have it.

We will now discuss our last question.

### III. How can this problem of the collectivistic society be solved in a Christian sense?

The door to the problem cannot be opened when the collectivistic society as it is at present is inevitable, is our fate. That is the starting point for the socialist theory. But I believe that many Christians in the depth of their hearts are convinced that our society is determined, cannot be changed. If this were true, you and I would have wasted our time to-day. Then only resignation remains as our attitude.

But it is not true. Our collectivistic society is a sequence and a reaction against the individualistic society of the 19th century. Moreover it is built by man, guided by his modern, secularized, belief, and by - as Jaspers calls it - ~~the complete lack of any belief, typical of the masses.~~ Finally it is in its crisis, in its secularisation, anxieties, loss of freedom and threatening perspectives, a punishment of mankind by the Lord, who is a jealous God.

As man built this society, he can rebuild it into another society of the future. All depends upon his belief.

A Christian society will arise from an integral Christian belief. What will be the structure of such a society? It is to be the social condition for Christian life, that is for a life of vocation of everyone, for a life within which the address of responsibility of response, can be the Lord Jesus Christ. That condition is real freedom. A Christian society is the social sequence of the Bible's commandment to man to be free.

Such a society began to develop in the time and in the countries of the Reformation. Our collectivistic society can be seen as a reaction in the positive process of Christian liberation in Western history.

We have to break through this collectivistic society in order to arrive at a dynamic Christian society as the condition of a dynamic, free Christian behaviour of men and communities. Our program has to be the re-establishment of the Christian principles of society.

In the development towards collectivism, in my opinion, three principles are violated. They are a guide for the social structure within which men operate together.

1. The first one is the principle of a proper balance between authority and freedom. It is a principle for social relationships within which a community or group lives. For instance, a state, an enterprise, a school, a family, etc.

2. The second one is the principle of real communities or groups. They can be built up within a social relationship or they can exist without it.



3. Whilst the first two principles are dealing with qualified social units, seen from within, the third principle regulates the relations between different social units. It is the principle of s p h e r e s o v e r e i g n t y, developed by Kuyper.

It states that between social relationships of different qualification or nature, the relation is n o t o n e o f s u b o r d i n a t i o n but one of c o o r d i n a t i o n. In common language, the state is not superordinated to the enterprise, nor is the Church to the family or the school. They are coordinated.

This principle forbids a hierarchical structure of society as is essential in the Roman Catholic conception of society as well as in that of socialism. The essential difference is that both of them eradicate the typical nature (by creation) of different activities and relationships, in order to construct a hierarchical society.

The collectivistic society has such a hierarchy. Moreover in it the proper balance of authority and freedom is shifted towards more power to the authority and less freedom of the subordinates.

In order not to confuse you in a short time with too many notions and arguments, I will leave the principles of sphere sovereignty to the theses and eventually to the discussion.

#### 1. What is the proper balance of authority and freedom?

A u t h o r i t y as a delegation of the absolute authority of Jesus Christ, has as its task to a) c o o r d i n a t e the activities of the members of a community in the qualified meaning of it. It is to make a unit of it. And moreover it has b) to prevent the breaking down of the community, resulting from the i n d i v i d u a l i s t i c behaviour of the members. Such sinful behaviour of one or more of the members has as its aim to put the community at the service of these members. c) Finally and most important, authority has to use its powers in order that the community as such attainst its good.

Now it is necessary to know what m e a s u r e of regulating and executive power authority has to operate for a proper balance. Because the meaning of the social relationship is, to get the maximum of the combined activity of the members for its special vocation in one of the fields of creation, the proper balance requires that amount of the power of the authority that "maximalizes" every member's contribution.

It is the problem of m a x i m a l i z a t i o n of the freedom for everyone's capacities in the specific sense of the community. Every authority has to serve freedom, not for freedom's sake, but because this freedom is the condition for man's vocation, the service of God.

This principle of the maximalization of freedom by authority is not a rigid and leveling principle. It is a principle which is fluent in its application and pointing to variety. The measure of freedom must be neither more nor less than a man can bear. So this measure depends upon the man concerned; and it changes with time.

2. Let us now discuss the second principle. The idea of a real community requires a proper balance of authority and freedom for everyone of the members.

Moreover the c o m p a s s of the community may not exceed a certain size. For instance a church with two thousand seats cannot contain a real community of believers. They do not know each other, they even cannot elect a church council of elders known to everyone, they cannot be active as a unit, they do not know the cares and distresses of every member, so they cannot pray for everyone; they cannot guard all the members, so a member can manoeuvre himself in the position

to follow his own way, without being observed, and finally, when he has already made considerable progress on the wrong track, the way to death, it may be that the interference of the community comes too late.

All these features can be observed in a different sense in social relationships of different qualifications, for instance a big city or enterprise.

Now let us consider a free active community from a viewpoint of one of the members. He is obliged to maximalize his own freedom in order to get to his vocation. But does not the same obligation hold for the freedom of his neighbour? And are there not competing obligations?

This question is closely related to the commandment that you have to love your neighbour as yourself. Is this, too, a conflicting commandment? Is it confusing, for us believers, altruism and egoism? No, it is not. We have to love ourselves and the other, not as man for his own sake, but as man created by God and called by Him to His service as called man. We have to see this commandment in the light of the first commandment.

Now let us use this insight for our problem. When I extend my freedom in a factory, e.g., or in family, it can occur that I narrow the range of freedom of my neighbour in the community. By that, I hinder him in his vocation. But the other way around, I will hinder myself. What is the solution to this problem?

We have forgotten that both of us belong to a community, are instruments in this community. I have to measure my space for freedom and that of my neighbour in such a way that the goal of the community as a unit is served best. So we meet again with the principle of maximalization, of freedom.

Of course, here and in the case of the proper balance of authority and freedom, this maximalization cannot result essentially from rules and prescriptions. It is a matter of experience and intuition. But above all it can only result from a proper attitude, from belief that every man is called by God to His service. That is the meaning of life. That is why a man ought to be free to bear his own full measure of responsibilities.

I have dealt with society as a condition for practical freedom of man and communities. I have moreover shown that our society is moving in the other direction. And I have concluded that why and how in this process every Christian has a very important task.

Many of us are under the impression that this process cannot be altered. Not in general, and especially not by our own weak forces. And they conclude to leave it alone.

1. They are wrong in two respects. The formation of a Christian society is an order. The success of our trials and errors is not our care. When we look at history, we observe that single men and little groups with real vocation, time and again, have changed the course of history and have reshaped society. This holds especially for Christian activities. They did not succeed because they were strong, nor because they had a complete insight. Western culture has not developed due to that. They succeeded because the Lord heard their prayers, and blessed their action, because the Holy Spirit guided them.

2. In the second place, since the second world war, in industry, where society deteriorated first to collectivistic society there is the beginning of a successful movement against collectivism. Bear in mind that, in general, it did not start from a Christian spirit. In

industry, collectivism has especially been the result of the scientific management, originated by Taylor, with its very large enterprises, its autocratic leadership, its conveyorbelts, its devaluation and specialization of labour. The counter-movement has such features as: job-enlargement, suggestion-plans, decentralization, furthering of good communications, science and staff as advisers and not as directors, and the like. The success is both in the field of morale and productivity. All this is the application of at least the trial to come in the direction of the proper balance of authority and freedom and of the real community. And the result is (you can compare it with the collectivistic society): rigid the collectivistic society, dynamic this new society. It is on the move as a Christian has to be always on the move. The collectivistic society is complicated, the new society and the Christian society has to be simple for every one, so that every one can act in his own place. The collectivistic society the socialist aims at is leveling the new society in these industries and Christian society has to have variety because every one is unique.

Let me finish. To deal with society, to form society, is an obligation of every Christian as such; it is he who acts, guided in faith, moved by love, based on knowledge; of course each one of them tied religiously to God in Jesus Christ.

The negative source of this obligation is, that nothing in heaven or earth can be withdrawn from the sovereignty of God. The positive source is that everything in heaven and earth is created and maintained to serve God. The real meaning of everything, of men, hearts, stones, social relationships, starts, cities, science, technique etc., is the service of God.

The effect of a Christian society will be, that thereby is moulded the condition for men and human groups to serve God in every field of life. On the other hand, the formation of a Christian society can only be originated in a Christian attitude.

Our present serious crisis of the Western world is one of man's belief and of the form of society. To conquer this crisis it has to be attacked from both angles. The attack has to come from one source, has to follow different ways and means (for instance mission and politics), and it has to point at one aim; integrated human life as a service of God.

