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— 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

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MEDITATION

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD. And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast: and they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field: and they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh. And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

—Exodus 10:1–20

How could Pharaoh's heart still be hard? How could Pharaoh still refuse to let the children of Israel go? The only obvious, reasonable, urgent, necessary course for Pharaoh was to heed the word of God and let Israel go

into the wilderness to serve the Lord. Egypt was destroyed. The animals had died in droves. The crops had been smashed and frozen and burned. All that was left in Egypt after seven plagues was a residue of trees and plants and

animals. Famine and starvation and disease were imminent. Egypt could not survive another plague—especially not another plague that would touch the fields. Though Pharaoh’s servants were also hardened unbelievers, even they knew what had to be done: “Let the men go!” But Pharaoh would not let the people go. He sarcastically mocked God and Moses and Aaron and Israel: “Let the Lord be so with you!” He drove Moses and Aaron out from his presence.

Eighth plague: locusts.

The locusts came on an east wind. Not that there is a natural explanation for the locusts, as if some great swarm had been plaguing Persia and Arabia and Sinai and now was blown upon the wind into Egypt. Rather, the cloud of locusts came out of heaven as the wonderwork of God, blown on an east wind as a sign to Pharaoh that the locusts had come by the word of God against Pharaoh when Moses stretched out his hand over the land.

The locusts came as an army. They blotted out the sun in their numbers. They filled the houses. Their larvae crawled over the ground as caterpillars (Ps. 78:46). The locusts devoured the residue of the fields. Every herb was consumed. All the fruit was devoured. There was not a single green thing left in all of Egypt. The land must starve and die.

Pharaoh made his phony confession. Even a hard heart can admit sin. Even a hard heart can

plead for mercy. But there was no truth in Pharaoh. When the locusts were gone, Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel go.

How could Pharaoh’s heart still be hard? There is no earthly explanation. There is only a divine explanation. The hardening of a man’s heart is not of man but of the Lord, just as the softening of a man’s heart is not of man but of the Lord. Pharaoh’s heart was hard because God had hardened it. Oh yes, Pharaoh was responsible for his own hard heart. God remained perfectly holy in the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, even as Pharaoh remained perfectly wicked in the hardening of his heart. Nevertheless, Pharaoh’s heart was hard by the operation of the sovereign and holy God upon that heart to harden it. God’s purpose according to election must stand both in the hardening of the reprobate and in the softening of the elect. So important was it for Israel to know this that God announced it as the purpose of all these plagues. “I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him” (Ex. 10:1).

In the sovereignty of God over the heart of man lies the comfort of the church. For God hath “mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” Thanks be to God in Christ for his sovereign mercy!

—AL



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

One of the chief factors that led to the early destruction of the first world, so we found, was the amalgamation of the sons of God and the daughters of men, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent as they appeared in that prediluvian period. We stated that amalgamation is not identical with being in the world. On the contrary, the child of God must be in the world, and it is his calling to reveal himself as a child of the kingdom in every sphere of life. Neither is amalgamation to be confused with mere contact with the children of evil. For such a contact is not only inevitable, but belongs even to the very calling of the christian in the world. The christian is not afraid. He does not timidly avoid all kinds of contact. He even seeks contact. He is aggressive. Fully convinced of the truth of his own principle as they are based on the Word of God, he is afraid of nothing. And, therefore, as long as by contact we only do not understand alliance; as long as we understand that the contact between the christian and the child of this world will principally always result in a clash, there is nothing wrong in the assertion that the christian does not avoid but as witness of the truth rather seeks contact with the seed of the serpent. He must not always be on the defensive, but must assume the offensive in the spiritual battle of the kingdom. But by amalgamation we understand such a contact, or rather such an alliance between the children of light and those of darkness, that the former surrender wholly or in part the principles of the truth, and adopt the principles of the latter.

This is what took place, according to the brief record of the Word, in the prediluvian period. For we read: “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose.” Gen. 6:1, 2. It is not necessary to discuss at any length the question what is meant by the antithesis “sons of God and daughters of men.” As most of us know, perhaps, these phrases have been explained in three different ways. First of all there is an interpretation that refers the phrase “sons of God” to the higher class of people of that period, to princes and rulers, while the term “daughters of men” is made to apply to the lower classes. Secondly, the explanation has been offered that the “sons of God” are angels, while the “daughters of men” belong to the human family. And thirdly the terms have been explained in such a way as to refer to the antithesis between the Sethite and Cainite generations. It is this last interpretation which we also consider to be the right one. For the first mentioned explanation is not supported at all by the usage of the words. It is an explanation that is imposed upon the text to make sons of God apply to a higher, daughters of men to a lower class of people. And in regard to the second interpretation it may be said that what is told us here of the relation between the sons of God and the daughters of men makes it impossible. Angels do not marry and beget children. Neither is it possible that even evil angels would thus change their very being that they could form physical

connections with the daughters of men. And the explanation of the mighty men of renown, that according to Gen. 6:4 were begotten of this connection between the sons of God and the daughters of men, must not be sought in the supposition that the former were angels, but rather in the simple fact that two different races mingled, by intermarriage. And, therefore, without entering into the detail of the controversy we adopt the last named interpretation. The marriage between the sons of God and the daughters of men is to us the intermarriage of the Sethite and Cainite families.

And this intermarriage constituted the amalgamation of the children of light with the children of darkness.

In our time it is often argued that even intermarriage does not necessarily imply spiritual amalgamation. And considered entirely in the abstract this may perhaps be granted. It were conceivable that the sons of God would marry the daughters of men entirely on their own basis, that thruout this marriage they would maintain that basis, and that they would even be a means to transfer the daughters of men whom they married into the generations of the seed of the woman. If the danger was there that by intermarriage they would weaken themselves, deny their own principles, adopt the views and customs of the Cainites, the possibility also existed that the interrelation would have the opposite effect. Could they not be of great influence in the world? Could they, perhaps, not have a far greater effect upon the world of their time by seeking connection and co-operation with the world, than by remaining within the boundaries of their own generations and keeping themselves aloof? Perhaps they could gain some of those daughters of men for the kingdom, and thus the result would be great!

Is it too much to suppose that even the sons of God of that time adduced the same argument, or, at least, some such reason for marrying the daughters of men?

In our time this kind of argumentation is often employed. Even in regard to the school I have

often met with the argument that also our children must be the light of the world; that they could not be the light of the world if we force them into the isolation of the christian school, and that therefore, they must mingle with the children of the world in order to exert their influences upon them! Again, in the sphere of labor some such argument has been employed with regard to the union. The christian must be the salt of the earth. But salt is no good if you do not give it a chance to mix with the substance upon which it is to have its influence. Thus also the christian. He must be the salt also in regard to the union! But if he is to have influence in this sphere he must not stand aloof but first of all join the union, in order to witness for the principles of the truth in their midst! And thus also these sons of God. They could be of no influence upon the daughters of men if they kept themselves in timid isolation, but if they took them to be their wives their influence could be great and beneficent!

A very appealing mode of reasoning, indeed! Fundamentally, however, the argument is wrong from the start and that for the simple reason that in all the cases mentioned an alliance with the world is presupposed and the salt is made to lose its savour. Marriage is not mere contact, it is the establishment of the most intimate relationship conceivable between human beings, so that it is even a reflection of God's covenant with men. It is not merely the coming into contact of two human beings in such a way that the one may have the opportunity to influence the other, but it implies a common basis, and at the same time it presupposes the highest affinity, love. It is in the nature of the case that such a common basis on which both parties could stand did not exist between the sons of God and the daughters of men. And it is inconceivable that the sons of God, as long as they remained conscious of their relation to God, could wish for any such relation as marriage between themselves and the daughters of men. Their loving of the haters of God pre-supposed already a denial of their own relation to God,

a setting aside of the deepest principle of God's covenant. A friend of God cannot become a friend of those that hate Him to the extent presupposed in the relation of holy matrimony. The same is true in regard to the school. To send our children to the public school is first of all to surrender the principle that the duty of educating them rests upon the shoulders of the parents. And materially it implies that we submit the children of the covenant to such an education as it may please the state to give. And again, the same is true of our relation to the existing unions. The influence anyone could possibly exert upon the union by joining is paralyzed from the outset for the simple reason that by becoming member we express agreement with the principles of the union and pledge our support of those principles. Surely, it is a poor way for salt to do its work if it first must surrender three-fourths of its savour!

That in actual fact this was the case at least with the sons of God before the flood, is evident in the first place from the motive that is expressed and which actuated them in marrying the daughters of men. The only reason was that these daughters were fair! This was sufficient. That they were haters of God, that they had developed far in sin and iniquity, these were matters of minor importance, did not enter into their consideration. The daughters were fair, they were attractive because of their beauty, and this beauty was sufficient reason for the sons of God to marry them. And thus they took them wives of all that they chose. And in the second place, that the sons of God did not act as the salt of the earth upon the daughters of men, but rather were influenced by them, is plain from the

ultimate outcome. Had the former been the case, had the sons of God maintained their own principles and exerted a healthy influence upon the daughters of men, in a short time the whole world would have been filled with the seed of the woman. But now they surrendered their own principle, denied their relation to God to start with and made common cause with the haters of God, the outcome was just the opposite. In a remarkable short period the world became ripe for judgment, and the seed of the woman was limited to just one single family!

And therefore, the flood must come to make separation. We must not look upon the deluge as if it found its sole and chief purpose in the punishment of the evil world. Surely, also that. The iniquity of the world had reached its full measure. The world was ripe for the judgment of God's wrath. Nevertheless, if this were all that is implied in the deluge it is difficult to see how it could be mentioned as typical of baptism. Yet, such it is. The flood has saving significance. For upon the waters of the deluge floated the ark, and in that ark was the remnant of the kingdom of God, all that was left of the seed of the woman. The waters of the flood brought the separation that was so necessary between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent, and thru this separation God saves his kingdom and covenant. Even as the waters of the Red Sea in a later period make separation between Israel and the host of Pharaoh and thus save the people of God's covenant, thus the waters of the deluge isolate God's people and save them from being swallowed up by the children of evil.

—Holland, Mich.



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