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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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Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

—Exodus 20:17

Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet.

The tenth commandment reveals the heart. To covet is to desire, and desire has its seat in man's inner life of the soul. A man can covet without lifting a single finger or taking a single step. A man can covet without a single person around him knowing it. In the recesses of his soul, in the folds of his heart, he desires for himself what God has given to his neighbor: house, wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, ass, riches, opportunities, looks, abilities, and every other thing. And no one is the wiser! Except that God knows man's heart and except that God's commandment reveals man's heart: thou shalt not covet.

The tenth commandment reveals the law. The law was never merely an external code of behavior but always addressed the heart. The prohibition of the first commandment was never merely about Baal worship but was about idolatry in the heart. The prohibition of the sixth commandment was never merely about first-degree murder but was about murder in the heart. The tenth commandment, addressing the heart, reveals that all ten commandments address the heart. Thus Paul: "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7). And again: "covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

The tenth commandment reveals what God requires: perfection! And not perfection merely in our actions but perfection also in our hearts and our souls and our minds; not perfection merely in what we do but perfection also in what

we are in our inmost being; such perfection "that even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God's commandments never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness" (Lord's Day 44, Q&A 113).

By the tenth commandment every mouth is stopped, and all the world becomes guilty before God. The man who boasts that he has never bowed to Baal must keep quiet when the tenth commandment is read. The man who boasts of his pure religion according to the regulative principle of worship must keep quiet when the tenth commandment is read. The man who boasts of his marital fidelity must keep quiet when the tenth commandment is read. The man who boasts of his great love for the pure truth of the gospel must keep quiet when the tenth commandment is read. For if a man would foolishly boast of his law-keeping, in the tenth commandment that man meets a law that he has not kept: the law of perfection.

What shall be done for us covetous sinners? Behold the man who never coveted but who at all times perfectly desired God's will alone. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). Behold Jesus Christ, who, even with the weight of God's wrath pressing out of him the bloody sweat in the garden, submitted his heart and desire and will to the will of his God. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). And behold him who took all our coveting upon himself

in order to redeem us from the curse of the law by his death on the cross. And all this obeying and atoning he did in our place.

How shall we redeemed sinners show our gratitude for such mercy? This way: “Thou shalt not covet.”

—AL

FROM THE EDITOR

A warm and cordial greeting to all the readers of *Reformed Pavilion* as the year draws to a close. God has been good beyond measure to this little publication here in our corner of the kingdom. As the writers will readily attest, each article must be given to the writer as a gift from our gracious God; without his blessing we cannot write a single word. And as the readers will readily attest, understanding must be given to the reader as a gift from our gracious God; without his blessing we cannot process a single word. As week followed week and month followed month this year, God gave both the writing and the reading. As we stand at the end of 2024, both writers and readers can confess together that God has been to us the overflowing fountain of all good.

A special thanks to our readers for your interest in the magazine. The undersigned is keenly aware that a digital-only magazine can be a barrier to the reader. When the reader cannot set a physical magazine on the kitchen table or on the arm of his chair to pick up later, it takes a little extra effort to remember that the magazine has been posted and then to look up the magazine online. As editors and writers at *Reformed Pavilion*, we are grateful to God that our readers have been willing to put up with this inconvenience for another year—and without a word of complaint! In this, too, God is good.

Now and then we hear of this one or that one who is new to the magazine. Therefore, the end of the year gives the undersigned opportunity to remind all our readers that you can subscribe to *Reformed Pavilion* at www.reformedpavilion.com.

At the bottom of that web page is a box where you can enter your name and email address. What does subscription to *Reformed Pavilion* entail, you ask? Well, it just means that you will be added to the email list of those who are notified when the magazine is posted each week. There is no fee involved, and subscription is not required to read the magazine. Anyone can go to the website at any time to access the new issues and all the past issues. The advantage of subscribing is really a matter of convenience—subscribers receive an email notification when a new issue has posted. Whether you subscribe or simply visit the website, we are thankful for your interest in the magazine.

And what interest there may be in *Reformed Pavilion*! Not because we as writers or readers are anything but because God has given us the grandest topic about which to write. Allow me to conclude this end-of-year greeting with the conclusion from last year.

We may occupy only a little corner in the world of religious publishing, but God has given us this great truth about which to write: God is God! In salvation God is God, and man is not God! In worship God is God, and man is not God! There is nothing grander than this.

As the Lord brings us into a new year, may he continue to establish us upon his truth and give us the joy and happiness of our salvation in Christ.

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations” (Ps. 90:1).

—AL

On the Eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches' Centennial (1)

At the end of 2024, we stand on the eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches' centennial. For at the end of 1924 and the beginning of 1925, God brought the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) forth out of her mother, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC).

We are currently in the thick of the significant dates: December 12, January 24, January 29, and March 6. For on Friday, December 12, 1924, Classis Grand Rapids East of the Christian Reformed Church suspended Rev. Herman Hoeksema from his office of minister of the word of God and severed the consistory of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, where Hoeksema was the minister, from any connection with the CRC. On Saturday, January 24, 1925, Classis Grand Rapids West of the Christian Reformed Church deposed Rev. Henry Danhof from his office of minister of the word and sacraments and deposed the members of the consistory of First Kalamazoo CRC, where Danhof was the minister, from their office of elder. On the same date Classis Grand Rapids West deposed Rev. George M. Ophoff from his office of minister of the word and sacraments and deposed the members of the consistory of Hope (Riverbend) CRC, where Ophoff was the minister, from their office of elder. On the same date Classis Grand Rapids West deposed the members of the consistory of Coopersville CRC from their office of elder. On Thursday, January 29, 1924, Classis Grand Rapids East deposed the already-suspended Rev. Herman Hoeksema. And on Friday, March 6, 1925, the four consistories that had been cast out of the CRC signed the Act of Agreement—by which Eastern Avenue, Kalamazoo, Hope (Riverbend), and Coopersville officially banded together—and adopted the name Protestant Christian Reformed Churches. The Act of Agreement was the birth of the denomination that is known today as the Protestant Reformed Churches.

The Protestant Reformed Churches' centennial is a significant event in the ecclesiastical world, though the ecclesiastical world will pay it no mind. Perhaps a few denominations here or there might note the centennial, but in the broader church world it will be as little regarded as the PRC themselves have been over the last century. However, the worth of the Protestant Reformed Churches' centennial is not measured by whether the ecclesiastical world acknowledges it. Rather, the value of this centennial is measured by God's word, which interprets and explains the centennial for God's people.

And what does God's word have to say about the Protestant Reformed centennial? This: the Protestant Reformed Churches, in this world for a century, have been a woman—cast out at birth and despised by her mother—miraculously made to live by the sovereign grace of God alone—joined to God in the unconditional covenant of marriage and bedecked with the perfect comeliness of Christ—become an unfaithful harlot in grievous apostasy—rebuked and rejected and confounded by her jealous husband—and saved in her children, whom she in turn cast out and despised.

This interpretation of the Protestant Reformed centennial is God's interpretation in Ezekiel 16, which is God's explanation of his way with his church in the world. The church is always helpless and unfaithful; God is always sovereign and faithful. Therefore, the Protestant Reformed centennial is the age-old story of sin and grace. It is the recurring story of reformation and apostasy and reformation again. It is the same story that has been from the beginning and shall be to the end: God's gracious salvation of his elect remnant in Christ from the sin and folly and unfaithfulness and death of the remnant.

On the eve of the Protestant Reformed Churches' centennial, let us view it in the light of God's interpretation in Ezekiel 16.

To be continued...

—AL

PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

The Five Books of the Psalms (2)

In these articles we are investigating the interesting fact that the book of psalms is composed of five smaller books. Last time we focused on God's inspiration of the psalms in general. We saw that God's sovereign inspiration of the psalms included two main stages. The first stage was God's breathing the very words of the psalms onto the page by moving the psalmists to write exactly what he had determined. The second stage of inspiration was God's directing his chosen instrument—probably Ezra—to select and compile the psalms and to arrange the book of psalms into its final form. The result of both stages was a completed songbook from God. The book of psalms, both in its words and in its final form and organization, is a divine book. The book of psalms, both in its words and in its final form and organization, is the inspired and infallible word of God.

This time we focus more specifically on one aspect of God's compilation of the psalms: the five books of the psalms. God infallibly guided Ezra (or another) to group the one grand volume of 150 psalms into five smaller books. The books are as follows:

Book 1: Psalms 1–41

Book 2: Psalms 42–72

Book 3: Psalms 73–89

Book 4: Psalms 90–106

Book 5: Psalms 107–150

In this article let us simply note certain features of the five books. In future articles, the Lord willing, we will investigate the purpose and significance of the psalms' being grouped into five books.

The first significant feature of the five books of the psalms is that each book concludes with a doxology of praise to God.

Book 1: Psalm 41:13—Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Book 2: Psalm 72:18–19—Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

Book 3: Psalm 89:52—Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

Book 4: Psalm 106:48—Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

Book 5: Psalms 146–150, all of which begin and end with “Praise ye the LORD.”

As the reader can see, not only do all five books end with doxologies, but the entire volume of 150 psalms ends in Book 5 with five entire psalms of doxology. This feature of the psalms' ending in doxology will help us in future articles to understand the purpose and significance of the five books. For now let it be sufficient to note that God arranged the psalms in such a way that every portion of the book drives toward and culminates in doxology.

The second significant feature of the five books of the psalms is that the entire collection opens with a very specific individual: the blessed man of Psalm 1. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor

standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Ps. 1:1–2). The blessed man of Psalm 1 is Jesus Christ, who prospers in whatsoever he doeth (v. 3). The ungodly are not like the blessed man, Jesus Christ, but they are like the windblown chaff and shall not enter into God’s presence (vv. 4–5). All of God’s elect people are blessed in the blessed man, Jesus Christ, for his righteousness is theirs. All of the reprobate are cursed outside the blessed man, Jesus Christ, for they do not partake of him. “For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (v. 6).

The fact that the entire collection of psalms opens with the blessed man means that the entire book of psalms is about him. The blessed man does not merely happen to make an appearance as the first words of the first verse of the first psalm of the first book. Rather, the blessed man opens the psalms. The blessed man is the fountain out of which the psalms flow. The blessed man is the key that unlocks the psalms. The five books of the psalms are the books of the blessed man.

Because of the importance of the blessed man for the entire book of psalms, Psalm 1 has sometimes been placed in a category of its own as an introduction to the entire psalter. Regardless of whether one views Psalm 1 as the first psalm of Book One or as an introduction to all the psalms, the psalms open with the blessed man.

The blessed man gets us close to understanding the purpose and significance of the psalms’ being divided into five books. Some commentators today see in the five books the story of Christ’s spiritual kingdom, from establishment to apparent fall to promised restoration. It is certainly on the right track to interpret the psalms in light of Christ and his kingdom, though that interpretation should be focused even further yet on Christ. For now, let it be sufficient to note that just as the psalms culminate in doxology, so the psalms open with the blessed man. These two are related, for it is in the blessed man that God has revealed his glory.

The third significant feature of the five books of the psalms is that the five books together make up one complete whole. There may be certain distinctions among the five books, but the five books belong together as a united volume of psalms.

It certainly is true that one can find distinctions among the five books of psalms. For example, commentators have heard a more mournful and anticipatory tone in the first three books and a more triumphant and joyful tone in the last two books.

Or, for example, the length of each book varies widely. Book One is composed of forty-one psalms, Book Two of thirty-one, Book Three of only seventeen, and Book Four of only seventeen; and Book Five is the longest, with forty-four psalms.

Or, for example, it has long been recognized that Book Five contains its own distinct sub-categories of psalms. In Book Five one finds a collection of the Egyptian Hallel psalms (Pss. 113–118), which the children of Israel would sing at the Passover as they celebrated God’s deliverance of them from Egypt. This Egyptian Hallel is what Jesus and his disciples sang when Jesus instituted the Lord’s supper—“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:30). Also in Book Five one finds a collection of songs of ascent/degrees (Pss. 120–134), which psalms the people of Israel would sing as they made their way to Jerusalem to keep the great feasts. In Book Five one also finds the collection of great doxologies that close the entire psalter (Pss. 146–150). In Book Five one also finds Psalm 119, which could be considered a collection of twenty-two individual psalms about God’s word all compiled into one large psalm. In fact, Book Five shows a remarkable variety. Book Five has the five shortest psalms in the Bible (Pss. 117, 123, 131, 133, and 134—the only psalms with four verses or fewer) and the longest (Ps. 119—the only psalm with 176 verses).

Nevertheless, for all their diversity, the five books of the psalms constitute one complete

whole. Just as the five books of the Pentateuch together make up the one grand volume that God's people called "Moses" (see Luke 16:29), so also the five books of the psalms together make up the one grand songbook of Zion. There is one title over the entire collection: *The Book of Psalms* (or, in the original Hebrew, *Praises*).

The fact that the five books of the psalms constitute one whole means that there is a definite trajectory in the psalms from Psalm 1 to Psalm 150, with the book of psalms following one arc from beginning to end. We might say that the book of psalms tells one unified story or delivers one essential message. The five individual books of the psalms are like five chapters or five episodes in the story. Perhaps an even better way to think of the five books is as five "tellings" of the same message, with each telling fleshing out the details of the entire message.

This feature of the psalms' being a unified whole telling one story will help us in future articles to understand the purpose and significance of the five books. For now, let it be sufficient to note that the psalms are a complete whole, opening with the blessed man—Jesus Christ—and culminating with doxology—"Praise ye the LORD." The story of the psalms is the story of God's revealing his glory in the blessed man.

The fourth significant feature of the five books of psalms is their number: five. The number five instantly connects the grand volume of the psalms to that other grand volume of five books in scripture: the Pentateuch. The first written scriptures that God gave to his church through Moses were five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These five books of Moses were prominent in Israel's life. Not only were these five books the first written scriptures that God delivered to his people, but the children of Israel carried these five books with them through the wilderness into Canaan in the ark of the covenant.

And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites,

which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death? (Deut. 31:24–27)

Israel also held public readings of the five books of Moses on certain occasions (see Deut. 31:9–13; II Kings 23:1–2; Neh. 8). As the years rolled by, God added many other inspired scriptures to the five books of Moses: the prophets and the other writings. But wherever the scriptures were known, the five books of Moses remained well-known and even prominent. Even well into the New Testament, the delegates to the Jerusalem Council recognized the fact that all the Jews—including the Jews who had been converted to Christ—were steeped in the five books of Moses. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day" (Acts 15:21).

Therefore, when God delivered the completed five books of the psalms to his people, they would have seen an irresistible and unmistakable connection to those other five books, the five books of Moses.

This feature of the psalms' being related to the Pentateuch will help us in future articles to understand the purpose and significance of the five books. For now, let it be sufficient to note that God arranged the psalms in such a way that the trajectory of the first five books of the Bible is somehow reflected in the five books of the psalms.

The fifth significant feature of the five books of the psalms is that Jesus is the psalmist in all five books. Not only is Jesus the blessed man of Psalm 1, so that all the psalms are *about* him; but Jesus is also the psalmist, so that all the psalms are *by* him. The psalms are Jesus' songs. Jesus is the author of the psalms, and Jesus is the singer of the psalms. Jesus sings, "I acknowledged my

sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid” (Ps. 32:5). Jesus sings, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (22:1). Jesus sings, “The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me” (18:20). And Jesus sings, “Praise ye the LORD” (150:6).

That Jesus is the psalmist is evident from the fact that David was a type of Jesus. When David called himself “the sweet psalmist of Israel,” he was speaking as a type. The reality to which David pointed is Jesus Christ. Jesus is “the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel” (II Sam. 23:1). The scriptures apply the words of the psalms to Jesus as Jesus’ songs. “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee” (Heb. 2:12, quoting Ps. 22:22). The scriptures even point out that in certain places in the psalms, David could not have been singing about himself but was singing, as a prophet, the words of Christ (see Acts 2:25–32, which quotes portions of Ps. 16).

Just as Jesus preaches the sermon in church, so Jesus sings the psalms in church. And just as the minister is the mouthpiece of Christ to preach the sermon, so the congregation is the mouthpiece of Christ to sing the psalms. When the church sings the psalms of Zion, she is singing in and with her head. For Jesus says, “In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee” (Heb. 2:12).

Jesus’ being the blessed man opens the psalms to us. And the psalms’ being the songs of Christ open Jesus to us. Jesus’ internal experience of all things is revealed in the psalms. The psalms are Jesus’ experiences, as he lived them in all his life and work. Jesus sings of his sorrow, his joy, his guilt (which was ours, truly imputed to him), his righteousness, his oppression, his reproach, his shame, his cries, his trust, his victory. Jesus is the singer, and the experiences are all his. The psalms take the church into Jesus’ heart and mind, so that she can look out at all things through Jesus’ point of view. In the psalms the church looks through Jesus’ eyes, hears through Jesus’ ears, speaks through Jesus’ mouth, suffers through Jesus’ hands and feet and side, prays through Jesus’ tongue, trusts through Jesus’ heart, and conquers through Jesus’ body and blood.

This feature of the psalms’ being Jesus’ songs will help us in future articles to understand the purpose and significance of the five books. For now, let it be sufficient to note that whatever story the psalms tell in five episodes, the believer sees that story and hears that message through the eyes and ears of Jesus. The book of psalms tells and retells the glory of God through the inner experience of the blessed man.

What a book is the psalms! What a savior is the blessed man! Praise ye the Lord!

—AL



Article XC. The New King and His Kingdom: Sons of God

With regard to the expression “sons of God” in Gen. 6:2 we found that the view as if these were men of higher rank while the daughters of men belonged to a lower class of people was quite untenable. The same conclusion we drew with regard to the view that makes of these sons of God angels. For, so we said, though the expression in itself may very well be applied to the angels in heaven, of these “sons of God” we are told that they sought physical intercourse with daughters of men, something which makes it impossible to think of angels in this connection. All the more evident this will be if we look at the text once more. We read: “that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose.” The expression here translated “they took them wives” is the standing expression to indicate the relation of matrimony. Hence, we are told not only that these sons of God had intercourse with the daughters of men, but they entered with them into the marriage relationship. And the Lord assures us, if the very fact that angels are spirits would not be sufficient evidence of this fact, that angels do not marry. Besides, we read in verse 4 that the daughters of men bare children to the sons of God. Now, even if we would grant the possibility, in itself already absurd, that the sons of God in the sense of angels actually entered into the marriage relationship with the daughters of men, it is quite impossible to grant that the result of this covenanting of spirits and human beings could have been the reproduction either of the angels or of the human race. Neither is there any reason to believe that Scripture points to a special race of giants as the offspring

of these sons of God and daughters of men. True, verse 4 reads: “There were Nephilim (giants) in the earth in those days; and also after that when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” But in the first place it may be remarked that these Nephilim were not a special race of beings at all, but as the text has it, mighty men, men of renown, because they were a race of giants, tremendous in their physical strength. But in the second place the text does not present it as if these Nephilim were merely the offspring of the intermarriage of the sons of God and the daughters of men. It tells us that these giants were in the earth even before these intermarriages took place. And, therefore, we conclude that it is in every way impossible to explain “sons of God” as angels. Nor is there any mention of angels in the context. In fact, not even the creation of the angels had been mentioned. Although, therefore, the term may as such be applicable to the angels in heaven, it is not possible in that sense in this passage.

But if this explanation is quite impossible, is there any other interpretation of the expression “sons of God” allowable in this connection? Of course, we all know that in the New Testament the term children of God is used frequently in application to the people of God and, therefore, in a spiritual sense of the word. The people of God are called sons, or children, of God by reason of their adoption as children in Christ Jesus, as well as because of their being born of God. But the question arises whether in this same sense it is already used in the Old Testament. Naturally, higher criticism would never

allow the possibility of such an exalted conception as “sons of God” in that sense would indicate, in such an early period as the one described in Gen. 6. And on that ground they would rule out this explanation. But we may at least note that the expression in application to the people of God is by no means foreign to the Old Testament. In Deut. 32:5 we read: “They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.” The passage has reference to Israel. And the meaning is that the people of Israel are the children of God, but have become corrupt, and do not manifest themselves as children of the Most High. In Ps. 73:15 we read: “If I say, I will speak thus, behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.” There can be little doubt that also here children of God are meant and that in application to men, not to angels. And Hosea 1:10 reads: “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered, and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.” Here the phrases “people of God” and “sons of God” are simply interchanged. The supposition is that Israel as the people of God were the sons of God. But because of Israel’s apostasy it is said to them: “Lo-Ammi, ye are not my people.” However, this condition shall not be lasting. They shall again be accepted, and being the people of God shall be called the sons of the living God. It is plain, therefore, that the expression with reference to God’s people is not foreign even to the Old Testament and that it is not necessary to explain the phrase in Gen. 6 as referring to angels. It is, therefore, in that spiritual sense of the word that we interpret the phrase also in this connection. It refers to men, pious men, to a generation of people that stood in the spiritual relation of children to the Most High, and for that reason were known as sons of God.

This view, that the phrase “sons of God” has reference to the Sethites, is sustained by more

than one consideration. In the first place, mention may be made of the fact that although the exact phrase “sons of God” does not occur before Gen. 6:2, men have been mentioned that evidently lived in that intimate communion with God that is expressed in that phrase. In other words, if the exact term is not employed before, the idea is expressed more than once. Abel, when he offers a better sacrifice than Cain and loses his life in faith, makes us think of such a “son of God.” When we read of Enoch that he walked with God, this can only signify that he exercised most intimate communion with the Almighty, and had friendly, covenant intercourse with Him. He was—there can be no objection to the statement—a “son of God.” And in verse 9 of chapter 6 we read that Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations, and that he walked with God. Again, the very same idea. Moreover, the idea is not so far fetched that there even was a generation, a special group of people, separate from the Cainites, that were known as “sons of God.” We read in Gen. 4:26 that in the days of Enos, the son of Seth, men began to call upon the name of Jehovah. Evidently, this cannot mean that for the first time in history men began to pray and exercise individual communion with God, for Abel, bringing his sacrifice, must also have called upon the name of Jehovah. The meaning is that men began to do so in public worship. Worship, public worship, was instituted in the days of Enoch. The people of God, in distinction from the Cainites, even then began to realize that they possessed a common life, a common faith, a common tie that bound them together. They began to feel the need to exercise that faith and that bond of fellowship in a common worship, however simple this may have been. And while the descendants of Cain undoubtedly banded together in their godless pursuits, they also felt the need to separate themselves unto the worship of their God, and called upon the name of Jehovah together. And thus it is not at all inconceivable that there was a generation, even at that early date, that was known as “the sons of God.” And lastly, that intermarriages took place between the Sethites and Cainites, between the

sons of God and the daughters of men in this sense of the word, is at least suggested by the picture the Savior draws of the times immediately before the flood. Comparing these days with the times immediately preceding the second coming of the Son of Man, Jesus says: "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:38, 39). Or, in a slightly different form in Luke 17:27: "They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." As has been said, the intermarriages between the Sethites and the Cainites are not expressly mentioned here. But they are suggested. Not marriages between angels and men, but between "sons of God" and "daughters of men" in the human sense are rather suggested in these words of the Savior.

If, then, this interpretation is correct, we find that even in that early period there are already people that are known as "sons of God," an expression which denotes an intimate relationship between God and men. Moreover, the expression itself, as well as other parts of the first six chapters in the book of Genesis, give us reason to believe that these sons of God were found among a certain generation, that, indeed, the descendants of Seth were all known as such. The entire generation of Seth was known by that name. Only when the matter is understood in that sense can it be explained that the sons of God entered into intimate relationship with the daughters of men. It is scarcely conceivable that real spiritual children of God would covenant in this way with the people of the world, especially at a period when wickedness evidently abounded.

Only when we understand that the real spiritual children of God were found only in the line of Seth's generations, and that because of this the entire generation of Seth was known as a generation of sons of God, can it be explained that these "sons of God," these Sethites, took them wives of all they chose and thus hastened the development of corruption and iniquity.

Now, then, if we may gather all we have discussed thus far of the pre-diluvian period we find that even then there was already a rather rich manifestation of the life of grace, the life of God's covenant, the life of the New Kingdom. God's covenant was there. It was there ever since the fall. It was present in Abel and Seth, in Enoch and Noah. These men had intimate communion with God. They walked with God and manifested themselves in their testimony as God's party over against the Cainites. True, that covenant was as yet not formally established in any sense. Neither was it expressly indicated that this covenant should follow the line of certain generations. But historically it was realized in just this way nevertheless. The "sons of God" were found among the children of Seth. In the line of Seth's descendants God caused his covenant-grace to become manifest, while from the very first the line of Cain was rejected. And thus it became plain that although the line of grace is marked by the decree of election, it also was to follow the organic development of the human race.

The New Kingdom is not to consist of separate individuals plucked from the organism of the race.

But a new race is to develop. That race finds its spiritual root in Christ, from which it derives its new life of grace. And that new race of the New Kingdom develops historically along the line of generations before the deluge in the generations of Seth.

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