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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 have no other gods before me.

—Exodus 20:3

First Commandment

The world was awash in gods. Egypt—from whence Israel had come—had many gods: the god of the sun and the god of the Nile and the god of the afterlife and many, many more. Canaan—to which Israel went—had many gods: Baal and Ashteroth and Molech and Dagon and many, many more. Babylon and Cuth and Hamath—the nations near and far from Israel in Canaan—had many gods: Bel and Nebo and Succoth-benoth and Nergal and Ashima and Nibhaz and Tartak and Adrammelech and Anammelech and many, many more.

The world is always awash in gods. The god of health and the god of wealth and the god of pleasure and the god of work and the god of leisure and the god of status and the god of entertainment and the god of self and the god of man and the gods of the pagans and many, many more.

Man cannot help himself. He must have a god. He must worship his god. His heart churns out one idol after another as he contrives objects in which to place his trust.

There be gods many and lords many.

But at Sinai God swept away all those gods: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

It was the first commandment. And what a commandment! For the first commandment rested upon the abiding truth that God alone is God. Man churns out his idols, but they are no gods. Though man has invented thousands upon thousands times ten thousand gods, every last one of them is empty and vain. Eyes have they, but they see not. Ears have they, but they hear not. Hands have they, but they handle not. They

are nothing but wood and stone and gold and silver and wisps of men’s diseased imaginations. The gods are blind, and so are the men who make them. How foolish that men should worship the works of their own hands. The gods depend upon men to make them, and men depend upon the gods they made to bless them. What folly! What vanity!

But whereas the idols of men are no gods, God is God. The gods of the nations are idols, but God made the heavens (Ps. 96:5). Their idols are silver and gold, but God is the help and the shield of his people (115:4, 9). The idols of the heathen are the works of men’s hands, but God’s name endureth forever (135:13, 15). “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (I Cor. 8:5–6).

Underneath the commandment “thou shalt have no other gods before me” lies this blessed truth: there are no other gods besides me!

The first commandment is holy and just and good. But it reveals that men are neither holy nor just nor good. For God’s *thou shalt not* exposes exactly what man has done: made to himself many gods before the Lord his God.

What shall be done for us idolaters? Hear now the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ obeyed the first commandment perfectly. All his life he had no other gods before Jehovah but perfectly cried to Jehovah alone, “O LORD, my

God” (Ps. 7:1). And in our place Jesus Christ shed his blood, by which our sins against God’s first commandment were covered.

And how shall we redeemed people give thanks? This way: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

—AL

EDITORIAL

Soldier Sunday

How have the saints of the *Afscheiding* in Ulrum, the Netherlands, fared since we last left them? Our last glimpse of them through the long corridors of history was one of resounding joy. For on October 13–14, 1834, those long-suffering people of God had finally been freed from the spiritual bondage of the apostate Dutch Reformed Church. By the Act of Secession or Return, God had broken their tie to the state church and had formed the saints in Ulrum anew as a true church institute upon the earth. God had come to his captive people and had done great things for them, whereof they were glad. God had opened their prison, rent their net, broken their snare, and turned their captivity. God had set them free!

Yes, it is true that man still labored to keep Ulrum in bondage. The Dutch Reformed Church and King William I had every intention of bringing those stubborn dogs in Ulrum to heel. The state church had sent its own minister to Ulrum. And the king had sent a few soldiers to lock the door to the pulpit against Rev. Hendrik de Cock. The state did not recognize the *Afscheiding*. The state still considered Ulrum to belong to the Dutch Reformed Church.

But whom the Lord makes free is free indeed. So it was that, on Sunday, October 19, 1834, God had given his people a blessed Lord’s day of rest in the pure gospel of Jesus Christ and in the sweet psalms of Jesus Christ. Though Reverend De Cock had had to preach from a church pew under the gaze of the soldiers in the morning and though he had had to preach from a hay wagon in his barn in the evening, God’s people

had had a glorious Lord’s day. Though the state had labored to disrupt and harass the weary but exuberant saints of Ulrum, God’s people had enjoyed their sabbath rest in the gospel.

But how would they fare now? It had become plain to both church and state that the *Afscheiding* would not return to the Dutch Reformed Church. How would the church and state respond? The Dutch Reformed Church and King William I responded as the kingdom of man always responds to Jesus Christ and his people: by reproaching them, casting them away, and persecuting them. Exactly 190 years ago today, on Sunday, October 26, 1834, a large contingent of King William’s soldiers prevented any assembly of the saints in Ulrum. God’s people spent their Lord’s day confined to their homes, patiently suffering Christ’s reproach for the sake of Christ’s gospel and Christ’s psalms. How grievous! But how lovely! Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. God visited his lowly people of the *Afscheiding* and granted them the blessed privilege of losing all things for the sake of their Lord. On this October 26, 2024, let us revisit Sunday, October 26, 1834—Soldier Sunday.

We resume our story in the week leading up to Soldier Sunday. For the happy people of the *Afscheiding*, it was a week of heavenly joy. After so many months of being unable to come to church, they had just completed their second Lord’s day in a row assembled with God’s people. Oh, sure, they had lost everything. They were alone ecclesiastically, severed from the safety and stability of the grand, established Dutch Reformed Church institution. They were

hated by their neighbors, former friends, and even family members. They were even more impoverished than they had been, for the rich funds of the Dutch Reformed Church were entirely dried up to them. The support of their poor and the support of their minister now fell entirely upon their shoulders alone. And their poor! So many poor! There was a reason they had more deacons (three) than elders (two) or ministers (one). And their minister! What if he would fall sick or become incapacitated? The saints of Ulrum had nothing. And they were about to discover that for those who have lost everything, there is always still more to lose.

But what is the loss of all things when one has gained Christ? Had not the pure doctrine of the gospel been restored to them? Whether that gospel be preached from a pulpit or a pew or a wagon, it was the glad tidings of heaven by which God lavished upon them the unsearchable riches of Christ. And had not the blessed psalms of David been returned to them? Whether those psalms resounded in a church building or a field or a barn, they were the strains of heaven by which God refreshed their souls. Oh yes, the poor, suffering saints of Ulrum were happy indeed.

And Sunday was coming! What anticipation, what zeal, what longing must have filled their hearts as they looked forward to the coming Lord's day. How they must have counted the days until the first day of the week would dawn again. They knew that they could never go back to the church building in Ulrum. The soldiers had made that very clear. But they had the fields of Ulrum, and they had the parsonage barn. With great anticipation Reverend De Cock and the *Afscheiding* congregation made their plans to meet in the barn for services on the coming Lord's day. The Lord's day, when they would be fed the manna of heaven through the preaching of God's appointed earthen vessel! The Lord's day, when they would sing with the sweet psalmist of Israel by his Spirit! Sunday could not come soon enough.

But while the saints in Ulrum were glad, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Dutch

government were not. The week leading up to Sunday, October 26, was one of high tension for them as they decided how to deal with the rebels in Ulrum. It had become clear to the state that the people of Ulrum were never going to return to the Dutch Reformed Church. At the last service the people of Ulrum had raised such a cry against the state church's minister—Reverend Van der Helm—that he had had to leave the building. In Van der Helm's place, De Cock had preached a sermon and led the service, even though the state church had deposed him from the ministry. At that service the Act of Secession or Return had been read aloud, along with the names of all who had signed it. And even when the soldiers had locked the church doors, those stubborn people of Ulrum had met anyway, in the parsonage barn.

In the state's eyes the people of Ulrum were breaking the law of the land and casting off the lawful authority of their government. The government was wrong in its view of the *Afscheiding*. The saints would demonstrate time and again through the years that they were not lawless and that they were not revolutionary. They never took up arms against the king. They suffered every fine and imprisonment that the king handed down. All that they wanted was to worship God in spirit and in truth. All that they wanted was the gospel of salvation without the Arminian mixture of man. All that they wanted was to sing the psalms without the mixture of man's hymns. All that they wanted was a church that confessed and worshiped and was organized according to the Reformed faith. But the Dutch government would have none of it. In the week leading up to Soldier Sunday, the king decided that those despicable people in Ulrum needed to feel the government's boot.

On Saturday, October 25, 1834, the wrath of man descended upon Ulrum. King William I sent 150 hardened soldiers to occupy the town. The entire *Afscheiding* congregation was only 250 or so people, and that included women, children, and the aged. One hundred fifty soldiers was overkill. One hundred fifty soldiers was a brutal

show of force. One hundred fifty soldiers descended upon Ulrum but not to keep the peace; the lowly saints of the *Afscheiding* had broken no peace. Rather, 150 soldiers descended upon Ulrum to make war upon the hard-pressed people of the *Afscheiding*.

The soldiers' first stop was the home of Reverend De Cock and his family. Twelve soldiers were posted inside the home to threaten the De Cock family and to keep them confined to the house.

Several soldiers occupied the home of De Cock and his family, who were placed under house arrest. De Cock's papers were seized.

Soldiers stood guard in the house, by the front door, and in the yard. This was done not to protect or prevent rebellion, but to harass and to intimidate.¹

How terrifying the soldiers' presence must have been for the three young De Cock children, all ten years old and younger. How oppressive the soldiers' presence must have been for Reverend and Mrs. De Cock, who had suffered the death of a child within the preceding month and who now must suffer violent men among their living children.

A schoolteacher by the name of Douwe J. Vander Werp was lodging with the De Cocks at the time. Vander Werp had lost his teaching job in a neighboring town because of his support of Reverend De Cock, and the De Cocks had taken Vander Werp into their home. When the soldiers arrived in the De Cock home, they treated Vander Werp—who had nowhere else to go—roughly.

Vander Werp, working on some correspondence, was asked if he was a member of the family. When he said no, they pushed him out the door and told him to get out of town.²

The remaining soldiers fanned out throughout Ulrum and took over the town. Martial law was declared. The soldiers were billeted in the homes of many of the oppressed saints. The saints had to give up their beds, their food, and their privacy to house the king's men. The soldiers did not treat the people courteously but were unkind and rough with them.

These soldiers often acted obnoxiously, and with a crude, haughty confidence they took over the homes of these oppressed saints of God. This too was the intent of the authorities of church and state, for they knew what kind of men they had sent.³

The wrath of man was unleashed in Ulrum on Saturday, just in time to prevent the assembly of God's people on Sunday. The flock in Ulrum had been so looking forward to gathering at the parsonage for worship. In the crisp fall air, assembled in the barn, they would again breathe in their Lord's gospel and breathe out their Lord's psalms. But Sunday, October 26, 1834, dawned upon an empty field and an empty barn at the parsonage. The De Cocks were confined to their home under house arrest. And throughout Ulrum the soldiers prevented God's people from leaving their homes to assemble as a congregation. There would be no sermon delivered from the farm wagon that day. It was Soldier Sunday, the day the king's soldiers had control of the town of Ulrum.

Or so the soldiers thought.

Unbeknownst to the soldiers and unbeknownst to King William, who had sent them, the living God had brought the soldiers to Ulrum. The heart of the king was in the hand of the Lord, who turned it whithersoever he willed. As the stream in the field meanders this way and then that way, so the Lord turned William's heart to send the brutal soldiers to Ulrum.

¹ Marvin Kamps, 1834: *Hendrik de Cock's Return to the True Church* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2014), 193.

² Janet Sjaarda Sheeres, *Son of Secession: Douwe J. Vander Werp* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 37. Vander Werp would end up teaching in the first Christian day school of the *Afscheiding*, in the town of Smilde, the Netherlands. See Andrew Lanning, "The *Afscheiding's* First Christian School" *Sword and Shield* 3, no. 11 (February 2023): 7–13.

³ Kamps, 1834, 193.

And the soldiers, for all their ill will toward God's people in Ulrum, were nevertheless the unwitting servants of the Most High God. For men and devils and "all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move" (L.D. 10, Q&A 28).

What were mighty soldiers next to the mighty God? Though 150 soldiers—or ten thousand times ten thousand—should descend on Ulrum, they remained the creatures of the everlasting God, and they must serve his eternal purpose in spite of themselves.

What could the soldiers hope to accomplish by their occupation? The soldiers may have occupied the homes of the people of Ulrum, but God occupied his people's hearts and filled them with the comfort of his love.

What could the soldiers take from the saints of Ulrum? Their freedom, yes. Their earthly comforts, yes. Their dignity, yes. But they could not take away Christ. Though the soldiers might prevent a sermon and a psalm, they could not prevent Christ. For God had laid his church in Ulrum upon the stone which the builders had refused. And set upon that cornerstone, Jesus Christ, the church of Ulrum stood fast. Let the Dutch Reformed Church rage; let King William open his gates and march out his troops; Ulrum was built upon the rock, and the gates of hell could not prevail against her.

Indeed, God turned the assault of the gates of hell to the good of his people in Ulrum. The persecution of the wicked against the just was God's gift to his beleaguered people. It is a gift that can only be perceived by the eye of faith. It is a gift that can only be received by faith. And when faith receives it, faith leaps and shouts for joy. For to be reviled by the wicked for the sake of the gospel is to suffer the reproach of Christ. The wicked had no room for Jesus. The wicked reviled Jesus. The wicked numbered Jesus with the transgressors. The wicked abused and spitefully used Jesus. The wicked carried Jesus outside the camp and crucified him outside the city. And the servant is not greater than his Lord! On Soldier Sunday the saints who had already

lost everything were privileged to lose some more for the sake of their Lord. Here they had no continuing city—even their homes were occupied!—but they sought the city to come. In that hope the persecuted people of Ulrum could face all their persecutions that were still to come.

Soldier Sunday it may have been, but it was still the Lord's day; and the Lord blessed his people indeed.

Let us return now to the parsonage in Ulrum to see what would become of Reverend De Cock and, along with him, the other saints in Ulrum after Soldier Sunday. As if the soldiers' show of force against God's people had not been brutal enough, the government decided to come down even harder on De Cock. While under house arrest, Reverend De Cock was summoned to the courthouse in nearby Appingedam to be examined on criminal charges. There the government convicted him of creating civil unrest, which was as far from the truth as possible. De Cock was fined an exorbitant sum and sentenced to three months in prison. Thus it was that, on November 29, 1834, Reverend De Cock was locked behind bars in the miserable prison in Groningen. How grievous! Yet how happy! For Reverend De Cock had the privilege of being numbered with the transgressors, as his Lord had been, and being imprisoned for the gospel, as the Lord's apostles had been.

The state was not finished with the De Cock family. While Reverend De Cock was imprisoned and helpless to assist his wife, the government suddenly evicted Mrs. De Cock and her three young children from the parsonage. The parsonage, after all, was the property of the state church. And De Cock, after all, was no longer in the employ of the state church. Without an ounce of pity for the battered family living there, the state church came grabbing after the state's things. A widow of the congregation, one Martje Wierenga Oosterhuis, opened her home to the homeless family of the imprisoned pastor. The De Cock family would stay there until Reverend De Cock's release from prison at the end of February 1835.

These and many other persecutions attended God's people for many years in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, God continued to reform his church by causing other congregations to secede from the state church and join the *Afscheiding*. The *Afscheiding* churches remained pathetically tiny—only 5 percent of the churches in the Netherlands were *Afscheiding*; 95 percent of the people stayed in the apostate state church, imbibing its Arminian doctrine and singing its shallow hymns. But God was faithful to his chosen people and continued to pluck brands out of the fire. Not only in Ulrum but also all through the Netherlands, God visited his lowly people and reformed his church.

And not only in Ulrum but also all through the Netherlands, God's lowly people were despised and cast away by the powerful state and its state church. The essence of what had happened on those three Sundays in Ulrum—Farm Wagon Sunday, Church Pew Sunday, and Soldier Sunday—would be repeated through the years in many villages and towns of the Netherlands.

And just as God had given the persecuted saints of Ulrum great joy in the gospel—even though they must lose their lives on this earth—so he would bless his people throughout the Netherlands, who also loved not their lives unto the death. Thus God always blesses his church, from that day to this. For blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christ's sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Now, shall we peer down the corridor of history a little longer? For we would like to know what became of our persecuted brethren in the Netherlands, now that they were free from the apostate church and now that they suffered the loss of all things for the gospel. We will find that what happened next, too, is a happy tale. For it is the story of God's transplanting what he had reformed.

To be continued (on November 16, the Lord willing)...

—AL



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REFORMATION DAY LECTURE

THE ACTIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST

OCTOBER 31, 2024 | 7:30PM

Jesus is “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:6).

Jesus is “made unto us...righteousness” (I Cor. 1:30).

Jesus is “Christ our righteousness” (Belgic Confession 22).

But what can it mean that Jesus is our righteousness? Certainly it means that Jesus himself is righteous, and how glorious is his righteousness! When the law said, “Do,” Jesus did. When the law said, “Don’t,” Jesus didn’t. Jesus stood under all the strict commandments of the righteous God’s holy law, and Jesus perfectly obeyed. Oh, yes, Jesus is righteous!

But Jesus is *our* righteousness? What can it mean? Listen to this lovely explanation: “Jesus Christ, imputing to us all his merits and so many holy works which he has done for us and in our stead, is our righteousness” (Belgic Confession 22).

How wonderful! How unexpected! It is the language of substitution. It is the language of one’s doing something instead of another and for another. Jesus stood in the place of us ungodly sinners and obeyed God’s law “for us and in our stead”!

And the result of Jesus’ substitutionary obedience? We are righteous before God! Not because we obeyed a single commandment but because Jesus obeyed every single commandment for us. Yes, we are righteous before God! Because Jesus is our righteousness.

We call Jesus’ substitutionary obedience for us his *active obedience*. This Reformation Day, come hear the glorious gospel and blessed comfort of Jesus’ active obedience. Come rejoice in the wonderful news that Jesus is our righteousness!

HOST

Remnant Reformed
Church

SPEAKER

Rev. Andrew Lanning

FORMAT

Lecture followed by
Q&A and Refreshments

VENUE

Pavilion Christian School, 9181 Kenowa Avenue Southwest, Grand Rapids, MI 49534

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Article LXXXI. The New King and His Kingdom (continued)

Last time we called the attention especially to the fact how already in creation as it originally came forth from the hand of the Almighty we may discover signs of adaptation to the future King that is to have possession of all the ends of the earth according to God's eternal good pleasure: Jesus Christ.

Man, so we found, was created after the image of God, a fact which, indeed, does not postulate the necessity of the Incarnation if sin had not entered into the world, but which nevertheless does establish the possibility of the Word's becoming flesh. Just because man is originally created after God's image, just because there is affinity between God and man because of that image, it was possible that the Son of God entered into personal union with the human nature. Moreover, man was created in such a state that the possibility of sin was not excluded. It were in itself conceivable that God had placed man in the state of complete perfection so that he could sin no more. But this He did not do. He made man good, able to live in God's communion. He endowed him with knowledge, righteousness and holiness. God did not make man sinful. But the possibility of man's fall was there. He could sin. And lastly, the human race is created in one man. It is an organism of which Adam is the head and the root. If all men were created at once, like the angels, so that every individual would absolutely stand and fall his own master, it were inconceivable that Christ should become the New Head and King. Now it is different. Mankind is a race, an organism. It is possible that they fall in one head. But the possibility of salvation in One, namely Christ, is also given.

Now, after the fall it is only gradually and slowly that the New King and His Kingdom are revealed and historically realized. Not suddenly and immediately, not in the full light of His revelation does God reveal the King He ordained and does this King appear on the scene. Christ does not immediately come into the flesh after the kingdom as it originally existed had fallen in Adam and become a kingdom of darkness. He does not atone for sin the moment sin entered the world. He does not overcome the devil and his dominion the moment the prince of darkness gained possession. On the contrary, all this must abide the fulness of time. The historical realization of the kingdom as well as the revelation of the New King follow the organic development of the human race. It is gradually that the light of grace, streaming centrally from the Christ, the Lion of Judah's tribe, breaks through the darkness of sin and misery. At first there are only a few rays breaking in upon the dark scene of the fall, the dim dawn of a new morning. Never, indeed, is the darkness complete. From the very moment of the fall does the light of the New Kingdom, that is to replace and conquer the dominion of the devil, fall into the night of sin and shame. But at first the light is dim. Gradually it becomes brighter and brighter. The King that is to have the victory assumes more definite features in revelation as history advances, the Kingdom He is to establish appears in more definite and vivid outlines and colors, till in the fulness of time the Word becomes flesh, God of God enters into human nature, and we stand face to face with Immanuel, the Son of Man. At first that Son of Man appears on the scene as the suffering servant of Jehovah. He bears the sins of

many. There is no glory of countenance that we should desire. The splendor of His royalty hides itself behind the misery of His suffering and humiliation. Then, He appears as the Victor over sin and death, breaks the bonds of the grave, approaches the Ancient of days to receive out of His hands the Kingdom and have power over all things in heaven and on earth. At the right hand of the Father He is in control of all things till the end of this world. Then He shall come to gain the final victory and manifest Himself in all the glory of His appearance, gather His people into the glory of His Kingdom completed, surrender the Kingdom to the Father and also subject Himself to Him who did put all things in subjection under Him.

Such is, in brief, the line of development. And it is this line of development on the basis of God's Word we must study more or less in detail in the future.

Naturally, we turn first of all to Gen. 3 in order to catch the very first rays of light that fall into the dark night of sin. We must remember all the while that whatever light there is after the fall somehow streams forth from the Christ that is to come. But for Him, and the darkness would have been complete. But for the fulness of His grace, and there would have been no grace whatever. Even as, following a certain track of light in the hollow of the night, you must finally reach the body from which the light is streaming forth, so following the track of light visible all through the old dispensation we will arrive at the Source of it: Christ, the Incarnate Word. And even as when you follow a certain track of light in the darkness that light becomes stronger as you approach the course, so also the light of revelation becomes brighter as you approach God manifest in the flesh. If we bear this in mind we are happily surprised to find so rich a revelation of grace in Scripture as early as in Gen. 3. There is, indeed, a danger that we who live in the new dispensation with its fulness of truth and grace project the brighter light of the New Testament into that dawn of history and that thus we find more of grace than is actually revealed.

But there is also a danger that we minimize the significance of the revelation of grace the saints of the Old Testament received and gradually view them as realizing next to nothing of God's plan of salvation. However this may be, so much is certain that grace is revealed immediately after the fall and that with surprising clearness.

First of all there is the fact that Adam and Eve do not perish immediately on the spot after they ate of the forbidden fruit. This is against all that might be expected without grace. God had threatened death upon the violation of His specific command that they should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This penalty of death that was threatened certainly must be viewed as a punishment inflicted by the Almighty and not simply as a natural result of the sin of our first parents. Yet, it should never be forgotten that it was a punishment that was very closely connected with the nature of their sin. Man was created after God's image. There was creaturely likeness of God in man. This certainly implies that man could live in the true sense of the word only in the covenant relationship in which God had placed man to Himself. Because of the very fact that man was created after the image of God he was adapted to that particular relationship. To wrest himself out of that relationship was nothing short of suicide on his part. Yet so man did. He faced right about. Instead of choosing to be the friend of God and living in His communion, he chose to be the friend of Satan and turned in enmity against his God. What else than death, immediate death, could possibly be expected? It is inconceivable that Adam could have lived for the slightest possible, the smallest conceivable moment without the power of grace after he wrested himself out of that relationship in which alone life was possible for him. When he stretches out his hand to eat of the forbidden fruit we expect nothing but instant destruction. We expect that he and the kingdom over which he was appointed to have dominion will perish there and then. Yet, this does not take place. Adam and Eve are not cast into hell and the world does not change of a sudden into chaos.

Outwardly the consequences of their sin do not appear to be as serious as might be expected. They remain. The kingdom remains. For that particular moment nothing seems to happen at all. Surely, spiritually they have changed. They are not in the same condition as they were before their sin. Their relation to God, their relation to each other, their relation to the world round about them has changed. But at all events they are not immediately cast into outer darkness. They continue to exist, to live in a sense. The sun continues to shine, the rivers of paradise continue to flow, the trees continue to grow. Nothing serious seems to follow upon their sin at that particular moment. Now, as we have explained in a different connection, this

plain fact is to be explained only by one other fact, namely that the power of grace began to operate the moment Adam sinned. It is inconceivable that the human race existed, at least for some time after the fall, without grace. Christ stood back of Adam according to God's eternal counsel, and when Adam fell he fell upon Christ Jesus. The simple fact that man and the world did not meet with immediate destruction is the first manifestation of the operation of the power of grace.

The light of the New Kingdom was, as it were, waiting to fall into the dark night of sin the moment its darkness lowered over the world.

It was the light of grace.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.



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