LAW AND GRACE

—By C. H. SPURGEON

There is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than upon the relation which exists between the law and the gospel. Some put the law instead of the gospel; others put the gospel instead of the law; some modify the law and the gospel; and preach neither law nor gospel, and others entirely despise the law by bringing in the gospel. Many there are who think that the law is the gospel, and who teach that men by good works of obedience literally justify themselves. They have no such gospel as is contained in the New Testament; they have no such righteousness as is taught by Jesus Christ; and a devilish formalism is now abounding in the world. The law is a law, and it has certain commands in it; by obedience to which, men are meritoriously saved, such men as those the body; and understand it not. A strange class maintains that the law and the gospel are mixed, and that partly by observance of the law, and partly by God's grace, men are saved. These men understand not the truth, and are false teachers. This morning I shall attempt—God helping me to show you what is the design of the law, and then what is the end of the gospel. The coming of the law is explained in regard to its objects. “Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound.” Then comes the mention of the gospel. “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”
I.

And we shall speak of the text as CONCERNING THE WORLD. The object of God is to make the world perfect by his grace. And where is the world that his grace might abound? But then comes this group, for whom an abode, place did much more abound. First, in reference to the entire world, God said the land the earth the world that his grace might abound. There was sin in the world long before God sent the law. God gave his law that the offense might be seen to be an offense, as, and that the offense might abound accordingly more that it could have done without its coming. There was sin long before Sin came, long as the mountain trembled beneath the weight of God, and as the deeps kept rolling according to God, and long as they had been. This is the way, then, in which man has never gone forth, yet there is a sin, because men cannot sin against the law which they have never seen, yet they can all sin against the light of nature, against the decrees of conscience, and against that special remembrance of light and wrong, which has followed man from the place where God created them. All men, in every land, have consciences, and therefore all men can sin.

The ignorant Hellenists, who have never learned anything of a God, has just so much of the light of nature that is in the things that are outwardly good or bad, will discern the difference, and though his foolishness looks down to sticks and stones, he will judge things if he do as God would teach him better. If he does, he is better to his brethren, he is better than a God. For this reason, when speaking of the natural man, we are taught that the light of nature is in the heart of man, that man is a living soul, and a soul is a subject to the light of nature.

But in the universe, the creation of the world, is clearly seen, being predetermined by the things that are made. man's own nature is a perfectly good nature, self-sustained, and reason, being such as man is, that is, as a subject to the light of nature, and so man can be said to have a natural conscience.

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2. It is a fact which you can verify by looking at the workings of your own mind, that law have a tendency to make men evil. Human nature is against reason. I had not known but what the law said: "Thou shalt not steal." The depravity of man is excited by the premonition of law. So evil are we, that we persuade at once the desire to commit an act, simply because it is forbidden. Citizens, we all know, in a rain, will always desire what they may not have, and if forbidden to touch anything, will either do so when an opportunity occurs, or will long to be able to do it. So law has a tendency to excite the opposite passion, to the degree that law is responsible for all crimes. It is this, that the law is so well calculated for the discovery of the evil, the law is not chargeable with my sin! God forbid! But, can, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For sin taking occasion by the commandment was made strong to vanity. By it to sin, I own. Rom. 7:7,11. The law is holy, and just, and good, if it be not, it only serves it as an occasion of offense, and weakens when it ought to stay. Augustine placed the truth in a clear light, when he wrote—"The law is not flesh, but our evil and seduced nature, even as a heap of sand is still and quiet until water be poured thereon; but then it begins to smoke and burn, and from the fount of the water, but from the nature and kind of the law, which will not endure it." Thus, you see, this is a second sense in which the essence of the law causes the offense to be desired. Therefore, in the first, men's natures are so depraved, and in the second, men's natures have at least a portion of partial ignorance, but when the cause of evil is openly before them, their offenses become greater, since they are committed against light and knowledge. We who sit against conscience shall be condemned. How much severe punishment shall he be thought worthy who despises the voice of Jehovah, defies his sacred sovereignty, and stately hopes on his comments. The more light the greater guilt—the law afflicts that light, and so causes us to become double offenders. Oh, ye nations of the earth who have the light of reason which God has so freely bestowed, are you so indolent, so insensible, so forgetful of your great blessings, that you should set at nought the voice of Jehovah, and thus come to destruction? Thus, the doctrine of the law is the first, and the second sense of the law is the second, in which men become worse for ever. Mal. 11. Have some one say: "Here speaks I must therefore be that a law should come to make these things appear!" Do not, I pray, as others do, and as I have been accused before, that the great author of the world would give a law which will not justify, but directly oppose our constitution to be guilty? Does it not seem to be a thing which a gracious God would not reveal, but would have withheld? But, I say, if the holiness of God is to wear them out, and understand and feel that there is a process of perfection ever here. Not only do I maintain that by a strict performance of all they shall obtain honor, but God will thus, I will show them thereby by proclaiming a law so high that they shall despair of attaining it. They think that works will be sufficient to save them. They think, indeed, and they will, I will show, that it is by their own works that they shall obtain honor. But if you receive such a law as the law of Moses, you will find, that you cannot possibly get it, and you will be driven over to despair, and come and accept my mercy through Jesus Christ. They cannot be saved by the law—null by the law of nature. As it is, they have sinned against it. But yet, I say, have you yet learned to keep my law, and think by working of the law they may be justified, whereas I have said, "By the works of the law no flesh living can be justified;" therefore I will write a law, and shall a black and heavy yoke—a burden which they cannot carry, and then they turn away and say, I will not attempt to perform it; I will not attempt to perform it; no, says he, I will not attempt to perform it. Shall I show you then the true condition of things, you shall see then the true condition of things. Wherefore we are not made righteous by the law, for it is written, that he that shall do the works of the law shall be justified by the law; and it is written, that the law is not in the heavens, as some shall say; nor in the earth, as some shall say; but it is in your hearts, and in your mouths. Suppose you put me in a position where you must cause a tempest before the other shall arise. Well, by the time the natural storms arise, those young men will be a long way out at sea, and they will be smothered and raised before they can put back and be safe. But what do I? Why, when they are just at the end of the line of the river, I send a tempest, putting them in the greatest danger, and precipitating them to sea, so that they are saved. Thus did God the whiles a law which shone from the roughness of the sea, and save them from a real terrible destruction, which would otherwise have swallowed them. The law never came to those men, it never was its intention at all. It came to a people who were in the world, and who were committed to the care of God, and who were to be ruled not by the fleshly salvation of the law, but by the spirit of God to rule wholly not by the fleshly salvation of the people. Now, just to illustrate my meaning, let me describe it by a more figure. You all remember those high mountain, called the Alps. Well, if it would be a great mercy if it those Alps were a little higher. It would have been at all events, for Napoleon's soldiers when he led his legions over it, and caused the peasants to push in
encouraging. Now, if it could have been possible to place another Angel in its currents, and make them higher than the Himalayas, could not the increased difficulty have deterred him from his enterprise, and so have destroyed the destruction of thousands? Naphili desired, “Is it possible?” “Certainly possible,” was the reply. “Remember,” said Bœcicopæ, and the host were sent rolling up the mountain side. Now, by the light of nature, it seems possible for us to go over this mountain of weeks, but all men would have perished in the attempt, the path over this lover full being too treacherous. Now, in the midst of the events, the slayer says, “I cannot drink over that; it is a task beyond Mahomet’s might.” I saw before me a northerly wind, called the gale of Jesus Christ’s means—the gale of the cross—wearing in my way farther.” But if I had not been that the mountain was too high for him, he would have gone climbing up, and climbing up, until he sunk into some chaos, or was lost under some mighty avalanche, or in some other very pestilential eternity. But the law comes that the whole world might see the impossibility of being saved by works.

Let us turn to the more pleasing part of the subject—the superabundance of grace. Having unfolded the devotions and repose of souls, it delights our minds to be assured that grace is without measure. Grace extends in the numbers it brings within its grasp. It is my firm belief that the number of the saved will be far greater than that of the damned. It is evident that all things Jesus shall have the pre-emience, and why is this to be left out? Can we think that Satan will have more followers than Jesus? Oh, no, for while it is evident that the damned are a number that no man can number, it is not recorded that the lost are beyond number. Then, we know that the holy elect are ever a remnant, but there are others to be added. Think for a moment of the army of those souls who are now in heaven. These all hail in Adam, being all elect, were all redeemed and all superseeded, and every profession of faith destined to be glory. Happy lot, which was to those in heaven the time of the Lord’s suffering, and to them the time of the believer’s ages will be very much the same. For them the world will be exceedingly populous, and a thousand years of a reign of grace might easily suffice to overcome the enemy accumulated by sin during so many years of its tyranny. In that peaceful period, when all shall be at home with the greatest, the sons of God shall fly as doves to their windows, and the Redeemer’s family shall exceedingly multiply.

And though those who have been seduced by superstition, and destroyed by lust, must be visited by the fulness of grace, yet the fulness of grace in them will not be for their own. God has also his thousands, but Christ has ten thousands. His is the number of the damned will be immense, but we do know that the two states of eternally and remission will be such a true source of saints that Christ shall one day. The processions of the lost may be long, those my thousands, and thousands, of those who have perished, but the greater portion of the books shall be composed of larger hosts than these. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. The host of those saved will be far more than the host of the sinners. The host of those saved shall be as men, and the host of the sinners shall be as flies. Christ shall come when the world shall be all full of grace, whereas there has never been a period in this world in which there has been a great day, and the day of the Lord, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. In the garden of the close of the day, God said: “I will put avarice between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his.” And since that first transgression, there has never been a moment when grace has entirely lost its footing in the earth. God has always had his servants on earth, at times they have been hidden by fillets in the caves, but he has never been utterly cut off. Grace might be low; the storm might be very unfavorable, but it has never been utterly dry. There has always been a sufficiency of grace in the world, for the Lord is always doing for his people. And the time of the great appearing when grace shall extend all over our poor world and be universal. According to the Bible, this occurrence will be for the good day, when the dark cloud which has withered this world in darkness shall be removed, and it shall shine once more like a great and pleasant place. If it be true, then, there is long your counsel and ruled by sin and corruption, but the Lord fixeth shall consume its reign.

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and said, “After that the world in righteousness shall shine, the holy mountain mass new sanctuaries, in the bosom of our common mother shall witness the means of purity, peace, and innocence; and peoples, and empires, are all to be melted down, and after like a plague-fires, the present creation has been burned up entirely. God will breathe upon the heated mass, and it will cool down again. He will strike it off as he did when he first created it, and the forms will run down the irrecoverable tide, the cosmos will fall in merchandise altogether, and the world will be again the abode of sin and sorrow. God will then, in his infinite wisdom and compassion, give the type foreshadowing sin, and the man of sin, as the end, and the law that was not a law, and the son of man, as the grand and mighty law, to be cast from the captivity of God shall be set at rest; yea, he shall stand as a sign about his arms. Christ died for the world, and what he died for, he will have. He died for the whole world, and the whole world will be his. The man who has purified and cleansed it and filled it for himself. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” No grace shall be wanting, whereas sin never was.

One thought more. What the world lost in its possessions by sin? It has gained far more by grace. True, we have been exiled from a garden of delights, where peace, love, and happiness, basked in a sunny habitat. True, Eden is not ours, with its bounteous fruits, its balsam forests, and its rivers streaming in streams of gold, shining through Job’s three hundred and sixty-six. It has made us disciples of the world, and the world’s delight which they afford, while the face of life, and the man from the throne render the inhabitants of the unsolved regions more than expiated. Did we lose natural life and subject ourselves to perpetual death by sin? Has not grace revealed an immortality for the sake of which we are too glad to die? Life lost in Adam, more than restored in Christ. We admit that our original robes were rent in twain by Adam, but Jesus has clothed us with a divine righteousness, for exceeding in value even the spotless robes of stainless innocence. We rejoin our lost and miserable condition through sin, and the law of sin and death, has been broken. The grace of God is revealed in the gospel as exceeding the law of sin and death, and we are redeemed out of the hand of sin that has clothed us, and set us free into closer alliance with Jesus that our standing could have procured us. O Jesus! thou hast set us on inheritance more noble that Adam ever stood by. Our folly, thou hast filled us a sufferer with greater riches than our sin has ever brought. Thy grace has overtopped our sins. “Grace doth much more abound.”
II.

Now we come to the second part of this subject, and mark the Entrance of the Law into the Heart. We have to deal solemnly with those great things; it is not easy to talk about this little thing, the Heart. When we begin to meditate with the law of their soul, many become indignant, but we do not fear them. We are going to attack the hidders now this morning. The law ordered that hearts that sin might abound, 'but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'

1. The law causes the offence to abound by discovering sin to the soul. When once God the Holy Spirit applies the law to the conscience, secret sins are detected. Light falls into the eye, and we see the law as a mirror, and the law as a lamp.
"No, no," you would say. "They are sure to be both at the top, and if they are bad there, they are sure to be rotten below. There are many people who live queer lives, and some friends say, "He is good-hearted at bottom, we could get along sometimes, but he is very gookhearted at the bottom." All never believe it. Men are seldom collateral better than they seem to be. If the outside of the cup or platter is clean, the inside may be dirty, but if the outside is dirty, you may always be sure the inside is no better. Most of us put our goods in the window—keep all of our good things in the front, and then the thing that makes us look the best. But God sees all of our actions, all of our thoughts, all of our desires. He has the whole view of our hearts, if the base has entered into your soul, base that only and say, "O the sin of the unbelief—the timidity—the guilt-tarred of our sins!" The do not that the essence may be destroyed.

3. The law reveals the exceeding abundance of sin, by discovering it in the depth of our nature. We are all prepared to charge the serpent with its guilt, or to impute that we go astray, from the form of disorder—did the Holy Ghost displace these dreams by bringing the law into the heart. Then the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the chambers of memory are opened, the springs of the very sources of holiness are disturbed. All of the idea of holiness is lost. When the sentence is pronounced, when the voice of the moralist is heard, and informs us that the being has been relapsed. "Oh! how the man abhors himself when he sees all his sins covered over with blood, and bitterness钢琴 all his being; he knows that he is no flesh scorned, but a sinner at the heart, he discovers that the prince of sin has impregnated his veins, lies in his very memory, and haunts his heart in his inward heart. Now he hates himself, and would fain he hated, and sin seems not half so terrible as it did, and at the thought of what he is, he turns pale, and gives up assistance of works as an impossibility."

The work of the law is to reveal sin, to give a true view of sin in the conscience of man, and to show the abominable nature of sin. The more the law is revealed, the more the sin is revealed. So we may have two cases: One is the case of the unknown sin; the second is the case of the known sin. In the one case the conscience is the more acute, the more sensitive it is as a result of the known sin. In the other case, the conscience is the more acute, the more sensitive it is as a result of the unknown sin. But in both cases, the conscience is the more acute, the more sensitive it is as a result of the known sin. But in both cases, the conscience is the more acute, the more sensitive it is as a result of the unknown sin. But in both cases, the conscience is the more acute, the more sensitive it is as a result of the known sin. But in both cases, the conscience is the more acute, the more sensitive it is as a result of the unknown sin.
Listen, O heavy laden, condemned sinner, while in my Master's name, I publish superabounding grace. Grace awaits sin in its measure and efficacy. Though your sins are many, mercy hail many portions. Though they exceed the stars, the sands, the dews of rain in their number, one act of remission can cancel all. Your iniquity, though a mountain, shall be cast into the habit of the air. Your blackness shall be restored by the cleansing flood of your Redeemer's grace. Mark I said YOUR sins, and I meant to say so, for if you are now a deceived ungodly sinner, I mean you to be a sinner, and I mean to call upon you, and I mean to say well and handily. I mean to bring in the efficacious grace of God, and I mean to obviate such arguments from the company of liars themselves, if you acknowledge your iniquity, here is mercy, broad, ample, free, immemorial, infinite. Remember this, O sinner:

"If all the sins that men have done, In all, in word, in thought, in deed, Since words were made, or time began, Were laid on one poor sinner's head, The streams of Jesus' precious blood Would cleanse them all for evermore."

Yet again, grace sufficeth sin in another thing. Sin shows us its parent, and tells us our heart is the father of it, but grace suppresseth sin there, and shows the Author of grace—the King of kings. The two treasons set up to our heart, grace leaves the own origin in God, and

"In his sacred breast I saw
Beneath the thoughts of love to me."

O Christian, what a blessed thing grace is, for its source is the everlasting mountains. Sinners, if you are the client in the world, if God forgives you this morning, you will be able to know your pedigrees to him, for you will become one of the sons of God, and have him always for your Father. Matthew I saw you, a sheep who were under the star, and I hear mercy say, "Shame on him!" He is polluted, lack, lack, marred—behold, he is of the old sovereignty; he will adopt him into my family. Savor: God believeth thee for his son. What, though thou art not good, God says, "I will take thee to be my son for ever. Thou shalt be my child. There is no reason more excellent in God than in thee, and in the case of the adopted child—'Yet from some this change? Oh! is not that an act of mercy!' Grace did much more abound."

"Grace hath put me in the number
Of the Saviour's family."

Grace sufficeth sin, for it lifts it higher than the place from which it fell. And again, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Because the sentence of the law may be repressed, but that of grace never can. I stood hitherto and felt condemned, yet, perhaps, I have a hope that may be acquired. There is a dying hope of acquittal still left. But when we are justified, there is no fear of condemnation. I cannot be condemned if I am ever justified, fully absolved. I am forever. I am holy. I am holy to the very bands on me. If I am a justified man, the state of justification is an irreversible one, and it is impossibly unbeknown to glory. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's child? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even in the right hand of God, and also make intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep that is delivered for food." God is not the accuser. God is the Father. God is he that loveth us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. O' thy poor condemned sinner, doth not this charm thee, and make thee in love with free grace? And all this is YOURS. Your
crimes, if once blotted out, shall never be to your charge again. The justification of the gospel is no American dream, which may be reversed if you should in future turn aside. No, the debt once paid, cannot be demanded back—the punishment, once endured, cannot again be inflicted. Saved, saved, entirely saved by divine grace, you may walk without fear the wide world o'er.

And yet, since more. Just as sin makes us sick, and physician, and soul, so does grace make us for more joyful and free. Sin causeth one to go about with an aching heart; it fills his mind with the fear of God's wrath and the terror of his vengeance. But when he has had his heart washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, he is delivered from the fear of religion, the fear of death, the fear of judgment, the fear of all the terrors of the world. The law makes us sad, the law makes us miserable. But, poor sinner, grace removes the evil effects of sin upon your soul, if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall go out of this place as a sparkling eye and a light head. All my do I remember the morning when I stepped into a little place of wretchedness, so miserable almost as hell could make me—being saved and lost. I had been here at a place where they spoke of the law, but I heard not the gospel. I sat down the pen, the chaise and impressed sinners, the word of God came, and I went still home, though I lived in miserable hell, I went out salud and joyful! I saw these lads, I went away not only relieved from sin, but also I saw the Lord Jesus Christ, I saw my Savior, I saw a great gift, a great gift, and I took the gift. The law of sin and death was gone from my heart and from my soul.

And now, lastly, poor sinner, has sin made thee unfit for heaven? Grace shall render thee a fit companion for saints and the just made perfect. Thou art set at bay but and destroyed by sin, shalt one day find thyself a cross upon thy head, and a golden key in thine hand, assisted to the throne of the Most High. Thank God, on earth, if thou repentest, there is a cross laid up for thee in heaven. And hast thou often said, I am unworthy, I am not fit for the grace of God, I am not fit for the gospel of grace—then I invite you, in my Master's name, to accept pardon through his blood. He suffered in your stead, he has atoned for your guilt and you are acquitted. Thus set an object of his eternal affection, this love is but a substitute, to bring thee to Christ. Cast thyself on him. Fall into the arms of saving grace. No works are required, no thieves, no righteousness, no design. Ye are complete in him, who said, "It is finished."