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LAW AND GRACE

BY CHARLES H. SPURGEON (1834-1892)

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*“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.
But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”*

—Romans 5:20

There is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than upon the relation, which exists between the Law and the Gospel. Some men 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 abrogate¹ 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 benevolence, honesty, righteousness, and sobriety, may be saved. Such men do err. On the other hand, many teach that the Gospel is a law; that it has certain commands in it, by obedience to which, men are meritoriously saved; such men err from the truth and understand it not. A certain class maintain 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 offence might abound.” Then comes the mission of the Gospel: “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

¹ **abrogate** – to do away with.

I shall consider this text in two senses this morning. First, *as it respects the world at large and the entrance of the Law into it*, and then afterwards, *as respecting the heart of the convinced sinner, and the entrance of the Law into the conscience*.

I. The Entrance of the Law into the World

First, we shall speak of the text as *concerning the world*. The object of God in sending the Law into the world was “that the offence might abound.” But then comes the Gospel, for “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” First then, in reference to the entire world, *God sent the Law into the world “that the offence might abound.”* There was sin in the world long before God sent the Law. God gave His Law that the offence might be seen to be an offence; ay, and that the offence might abound exceedingly more than it could have done without its coming. There was sin long before Sinai smoked; long ere the mountain trembled beneath the weight of Deity, and the dread trumpet sounded exceeding loud and long, there had been transgression. And where that Law has never been heard, in heathen countries where that Word has never gone forth, yet there is sin—because, though men cannot sin against the Law which they have never seen, yet they can all rebel against the light of nature, against the dictates of conscience, and against that traditional remembrance of right and wrong, which has followed mankind from the place where God created them. All men, in every land, have consciences, and therefore all men can sin. The ignorant Hottentot,² who has never heard anything of a God, has just so much of the light of nature that in the things that are outwardly good or bad he will discern the difference; and though he foolishly bows down to stocks³ and stones,⁴ he has a judgment which, if he used it, would teach him better. If he chose to use his talents, he might know there is a God; for the Apostle, when speaking of men who have only the light of nature, plainly declares that “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom 1:20). Without a divine revelation men can sin, and sin exceedingly—conscience, nature, tradition, and reason being each of them sufficient to condemn them for their violated commandments. The Law makes no one a sinner; all men are such in Adam, and were so practically before its introduction. It entered that “the offence might *abound*.” Now this seems a very terrible thought at first sight, and many ministers would have shirked this text altogether. But when I find a verse I do not understand, I usually think it is a text I *should* study; and I try to seek it out before my heavenly Father, and then when He has opened it to my soul, I reckon it my duty to communicate it to you, with the holy aid of the Spirit. “The law entered that the offence might abound.” I will attempt to show you how the Law makes offences “abound.”

A. The Law Sheds Additional Light on Sin.

First of all, the Law tells us that many things are sins, which we should never have thought to be so if it had not been for the additional light. Even with the light of nature, and the light of conscience, and the light of tradition, there are some things we should never have believed to be sins had we not been taught so by the Law. Now, what man by light of conscience would keep holy the Sabbath-day—suppose he never read the Bible, and never heard of it? If he lived in a South Sea island he might know there was a God, but not by any possibility could he find out that the seventh part of his time should be set apart to that God. We find that there are certain festivals and feasts among heathens, and that they set apart days in honour of their fancied gods; but I should like to know where they could discover that there was a certain *seventh day* to be set apart to God, to spend the time in His house of prayer. How could they, unless indeed, tradition may have handed down the fact of the original consecration of that day by the creating Jehovah. I cannot conceive it possible that either conscience or reason could have taught them such a command as this: “Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work: thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates” (Exo 20:8-10). Moreover, if in the term “law” we comprehend the ceremonial ritual, we can plainly see that many things, in appearance quite indifferent, were by it constituted sins. The eating of animals that do not chew the cud and divide the hoof, the wearing of linsey-woolsey, the sitting on a bed polluted by a leper, with a thousand other things—all seem to have no sin in them, but the Law made them into sins, and so made the offence to abound.

B. The Law Tends to Make Men Rebel.

It is a fact, which you can verify by looking at the workings of your own mind, *that law has a tendency to make men rebel*. Human nature rises against restraint. “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Rom 7:7). The depravity of man is excited to rebellion by the promulgation⁵ of laws. So evil are we that we conceive at once the desire to commit an act, simply because it is forbidden. Children, we all know, as a rule, will always desire what they may not have,

² **Hottentot** – the label given by the European settlers in 1652 to the Khoisan ethnic group, the native people of southwestern Africa.

³ **stock** – a tree trunk or stem.

⁴ **stocks and stones** – In the old days men used to worship stocks and stone and idols, and prayed to them to give them luck.

⁵ **promulgation** – publishing; making known by open declaration.

and if forbidden to touch anything, will either do so when an opportunity serves, or will long to be able to do so. The same tendency any student of human nature can discern in mankind at large. Is then the Law chargeable with my sin? God forbid. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence...For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" (Rom 7:8, 11). The Law is holy, and just, and good; *it* is not faulty, but *sin* uses it as an occasion of offence, and rebels when it ought to obey. Augustine (354-430) placed the truth in a clear light when he wrote, "The Law is not in fault, but our evil and wicked nature; even as a heap of lime is still and quiet until water be poured thereon, but then it begins to smoke and burn, not from the fault of the water, but from the nature and kind of the lime which will not endure it." Thus, you see, this is a second sense in which the entrance of the Law causes the offence to abound.

C. The Law Removes All Excuse.

Yet again, the Law *increases the sinfulness of sin, by removing all excuse of ignorance*. Until men know the Law, their crimes have at least a palliation⁶ of partial ignorance, but when the code of rules is spread before them, their offences become greater, since they are committed against light and knowledge. He who sins against conscience shall be condemned; of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who despises the voice of Jehovah, defies His sacred sovereignty, and willfully tramples on His commands. The more light the greater guilt—the Law affords that light, and so causes us to become double offenders. Oh, ye nations of the earth who have heard the Law of Jehovah, your sin is increased, and your offence abounds.

1. The Devastations and Injurious Deeds of Sin

Methinks I hear someone say, "How unwise it must have been that a law should come to make these things abound!" Does it not, at first sight, seem very harsh that the great Author of the world should give us a law which will not justify, but indirectly cause our condemnation to be greater? Does it not seem to be a thing which a gracious God would not reveal, but would have withheld? But, know ye, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1Co 1:25); and understand ye that there is a gracious purpose even here. Natural men dream that by a strict performance of duty they shall obtain favour, but God saith thus: "I will show them their folly by proclaiming a law so high that they will despair of attaining unto it. They think that works will be sufficient to save them. They think falsely, and they will be ruined by their mistake. I will send them a law so terrible in its censures, so unflinching in its demands, that they cannot possibly obey it, and they will be driven even to desperation—and come and accept my mercy through Jesus Christ. They cannot be saved by the law, not by the law of nature. As it is, they have sinned against it. But yet, I know, they have foolishly hoped to keep My Law, and think by works 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—it shall be a black and heavy one—a burden which they cannot carry; and then they will turn away and say, 'I will not attempt to perform it; I will ask my Saviour to bear it for me' ". Imagine a case: some young men are about to go to sea, where I foresee they will meet with a storm. Suppose you put me in a position where I may cause a tempest before the other shall arise. Well, by the time the natural storm comes on, those young men will be a long way out at sea, and they will be wrecked and ruined before they can put back and be safe. But what do I? Why, when they are just at the mouth of the river, I send a storm, putting them in the greatest danger, and precipitating them ashore, so that they are saved. Thus did God. He sends a Law which shows them the roughness of the journey. The tempest of law compels them to put back to the harbour of free grace, and saves them from a most terrible destruction, which would otherwise overwhelm them.

The Law never came to save men. It never was its intention at all. It came on purpose to make the evidence complete that salvation by works is impossible, and thus to drive the elect of God to rely wholly on the finished salvation of the Gospel.

Now, just to illustrate my meaning, let me describe it by one more figure. You all remember those high mountains called the Alps. Well, it would be a great mercy if those Alps were a little higher. It would have been, at all events, for Napoleon's soldiers when he led his large army over, and caused thousands to perish in crossing. Now, if it could have been possible to pile another Alps on their summit, and make them higher than the Himalaya, would not the increased difficulty have deterred him from his enterprise, and so have averted the destruction of thousands? Napoleon demanded, "Is it possible?" "Barely possible," was the reply. "*Avancez*," cried Bonaparte; and the host were soon toiling up the mountain side. Now, by the light of nature, it *does seem possible* for us to go over this mountain of works, but all men would have perished in the attempt, the path even of this lower hill being too narrow for mortal footsteps. God, therefore, puts another Law, like a mountain, on the top; and now the sinner says, "I cannot climb over that. It is a task beyond Herculean might. I see before me a narrow pass, called the pass of Jesus Christ's mercy—the pass of the Cross—methinks I will wend my way thither." But if it had not been that the mountain was too high for him, he would have gone climbing up, and climbing up, until he sank into some chasm, or was lost under some mighty avalanche, or in some other way perished eternally. But the Law comes that the whole world might see the impossibility of being saved by works.

⁶ **palliation** – cloaking or concealing by excuses and apologies.

2. *The Superabundance of Grace*

Let us turn to the more pleasing part of the subject: the *superabundance* of grace. Having bewailed the devastations and injurious deeds of sin, it delights our hearts to be assured that “grace did much more abound.”

Grace excels sin in the numbers it brings beneath its sway. It is my firm belief that the number of the saved will be far greater than that of the damned. It is written that in all things Jesus shall have the pre-eminence; 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 written that the redeemed are a number that no man can number, it is *not* recorded that the lost are beyond numeration. True, we know that the visible elect are ever a *remnant*, but then there are others to be added. Think for a moment of the army of infant souls who are now in heaven. These all fell in Adam, but being all elect, were all redeemed and all regenerated, and were privileged to fly straight from the mother’s breasts to glory. A happy lot, which we who are spared might well envy. Nor let it be forgotten that the multitudes of converts in the millennial age will very much turn the scale. For then the world will be exceedingly populous, and a thousand years of a reign of grace might easily suffice to overcome the majority accumulated by sin during six thousand years of its tyranny. In that peaceful period, when all shall know Him, from the least even unto the greatest, the sons of God shall fly as doves to their windows, and the Redeemer’s family shall be exceedingly multiplied.

What though those who have been deluded by superstition, and destroyed by lust, must be counted by thousands—grace has still the pre-eminence. Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten-thousands. We admit that the number of the damned will be immense, but we do think that the two states of infancy and millennial glory will furnish so great a reserve of saints that Christ shall win the day. The procession of the lost may be long; there must be thousands, and thousands, and thousands, of those who have perished, but the greater procession of the King of kings shall be composed of larger hosts than even these. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more *abound*.” The trophies of free grace will be far more than the trophies of sin.

Yet again, grace doth “*much* more abound”—because a time shall come when the world shall be all full of grace; whereas there has never been a period in this world’s history when it was wholly given up to sin. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, there was still a display of grace in the world; for in the garden at the close of the day, God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). 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 fifties in the caves, but they have never been utterly cut off. Grace might be low; the stream might be very shallow, but it has never been wholly dry. There has always been a salt of grace in the world to counteract the power of sin. The clouds have never been so universal as to hide the day. But the time is fast approaching when grace shall extend all over our poor world and be universal. According to the Bible testimony, we look for the great day when the dark cloud which has swathed this world in darkness shall be removed, and it shall shine once more like all its sister planets. It hath been for many a long year clouded and veiled by sin and corruption; but the last fire shall consume its rags and sackcloth. After that fire, the world in righteousness shall shine. The huge molten mass now slumbering in the bowels of our common mother shall furnish the means of purity. Palaces, crowns, peoples, and empires, are all to be melted down; and after, like a plague-house, the present creation has been burned up entirely, God will breathe upon the heated mass, and it will cool down again. He will smile on it as He did when He first created it, and the rivers will run down the new-made hills, the oceans will float in new-made channels; and the world will be again the abode of the righteous forever and forever. This fallen world will be restored to its orbit; that gem which was lost from the scepter of God shall be set again, yea, He shall wear it, as a signet about His arm. Christ died for the world; and what He died for, He will have. He died for the whole world, and the whole world He will have, when He has purified and cleansed it and fitted it for Himself. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”; for grace shall be universal, whereas sin never was.

One thought more. Hath the world lost its possessions by sin? It has gained far more by grace. True, we have been expelled a garden of delights, where peace, love, and happiness found a glorious habitation. True, Eden is not ours, with its luscious fruits, its blissful bowers,⁷ and its rivers flowing o’er sands of gold, but we have through Jesus a fairer habitation. He hath made us sit together in heavenly places (Eph 2:6)—the plains of heaven exceed the fields of paradise in the ever-new delights which they afford, while the tree of life and the river from the throne render the inhabitants of the celestial regions more than imparadised.⁸ Did we lose natural life and subject ourselves to painful death by sin? Has not grace revealed an immortality for the sake of which we are too glad to die? Life lost in Adam is more than restored in Christ. We admit that our original robes were rent in sunder by Adam, but Jesus has clothed us with a divine righteousness, far exceeding in value even the spotless robes of created innocence. We mourn our low and miserable condition, through sin, but we will rejoice at the thought that we are now more secure than before we fell, and are brought into closer alliance with Jesus than our standing could have procured us. Oh Jesus—Thou hast won us an inheritance more wide than Adam ever lost by his folly; Thou hast filled us a coffer with greater riches than our sin has ever lavished. Thy grace has overtopped our sins. “Grace doth much more abound.”

⁷ **bowers** – places closed in or overarched with branches of trees, shrubs, or other plants.

⁸ **imparadised** – placed in a condition resembling that of paradise; made happy.

II. The Entrance of the Law into the Heart

Now we come to the second part of the subject, and that is *the entrance of the Law into the heart*. We have to deal carefully when we come to deal with internal things; it is not easy to talk about this little thing, the heart. When we begin to meddle with the law of their soul, many become indignant,⁹ but we do not fear their wrath. We are going to attack the hidden man this morning. The Law entered their hearts that sin might abound, “but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

A. The Law Causes the Offence to Abound.

The Law causes the offence to abound by *discovering sin to the soul*. When once God, the Holy Ghost, applies the Law to the conscience, secret sins are dragged to light, little sins are magnified to their true size, and things apparently harmless become exceedingly sinful. Before that dread searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins makes His entrance into the soul, it appears righteous, just, lovely, and holy; but when He reveals the hidden evils, the scene is changed. Offences which were once styled peccadilloes,¹⁰ trifles, freaks of youth, follies, indulgences, little slips, etc., then appear in their true colour, as breaches of the Law of God, deserving condign¹¹ punishment.

John Bunyan (1628-1688) shall explain my meaning by an extract from his famous allegory:¹²

“Then the Interpreter took Christian by the hand and led him into a very large parlour that was full of dust, because never swept; in which after he had reviewed it a little while, the Interpreter called for a man to sweep. Now, when he began to sweep, the dust began so abundantly to fly about, that Christian had almost therewith been choked. Then said the Interpreter to a damsel that stood by, ‘Bring hither water, and sprinkle the room’; the which when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure. Then said Christian, ‘What means this?’ The Interpreter answered, ‘This parlour is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet grace of the Gospel. The dust is his original sin and inward corruptions that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep, at first, is the Law; but she that brought the water and did sprinkle it, is the Gospel. Now, whereas thou sawest that as soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did so fly about, that the room could not by him be cleansed, but that thou wast almost choked therewith; this is to show thee, that the Law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, doth revive (Rom 7:9), put strength into (1Co 15:56), and increase it in the soul (Rom 5:20), even as it doth discover and forbid it, for that doth not give power to subdue. Again, as thou sawest the damsel sprinkle the room with water, upon which it was cleansed with pleasure; this is to show thee, that when the Gospel comes in the sweet and precious influences thereof to the heart, then, I say, even as thou sawest the damsel lay the dust by sprinkling the floor with water, so is sin vanquished and subdued, and the soul made clean, through the faith of it, and consequently fit for the King of glory to inhabit.”

The heart is like a dark cellar, full of lizards, cockroaches, beetles, and all kinds of reptiles and insects, which in the dark we see not, but the Law takes down the shutters and lets in the light, and so we see the evil. Thus sin becoming apparent by the Law, it is written the Law makes the offence to abound.

B. The Law Shows Us How Very Black We Are.

Once again, *the Law, when it comes into the heart, shows us how very black we are*. Some of us know that we are sinners. It is very easy to say it. The word “sinner” hath only two syllables in it, and many there be who frequently have it on their lips, but who do not understand it. They see their sin, but it does not appear exceedingly sinful till the Law comes. We think there is something sinful in it; but when the Law comes, we detect its abomination. Has God’s holy light ever shone into your souls? Have you had the fountains of your great depravity and evil broken up, and been wakened up sufficiently to say, “O God! I have sinned”? Now, if you have your hearts broken up by the Law, you will find the heart is more deceitful than the devil. I can say this of myself; I am very much afraid of mine, it is so bad. The Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things” (Jer 17:9). The devil is one of the things; therefore, it is worse than the devil—“and desperately wicked.” How many do we find who are saying, “Well, I trust I have a very good heart at the bottom? There may be a little amiss at the top, but I am very good-hearted at bottom.” If you saw some fruit on the top of a basket that was not quite good, would you buy the basket because they told you, “Ay, but they are good at the bottom”? “No, no,” you would say, “they are sure to be best 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; he would get drunk sometimes, but he is very good-hearted at the bottom.” Ah! Never believe it. Men are seldom estimated 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 impure, you may always be sure the inside is no better. Most of us put our

⁹ **indignant** – affected at once with anger and disdain.

¹⁰ **peccadilloes** – small sins or faults.

¹¹ **condign** – suitable.

¹² **famous allegory** – John Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim’s Progress* while in jail from 1660-1672, in which the man (Christian) seeks to have the heavy burden (of sin) removed from his back, comes to the Cross of Christ and has the burden removed, and journeys through this life in many adventures (progressive sanctification) until crossing the River of Death to the Celestial City. It is the second best selling book of all time after the Bible.

goods in the window—keep all our good things in the front, and bad things behind. Let you and I, instead of making excuses about ourselves, about the badness of our hearts, if the Law has entered into your soul, bow down and say, “O the sin—O the uncleanness—the blackness—the awful nature of our crimes!” “The law entered that the offence may abound.”

C. The Law Reveals the Abundance of Sin.

The Law reveals the exceeding abundance of sin, *by discovering to us the depravity of our nature*. We are all prepared to charge the serpent with our guilt, or to insinuate that we go astray from the force of ill example—but the Holy Spirit dissipates these dreams by bringing the Law into the heart. Then the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the chambers of imagery are opened, the innate evil of the very essence of fallen man is discovered.

The Law cuts into the core of the evil, it reveals the seat of the malady, and informs us that the leprosy lies deep within. Oh! How the man abhors himself when he sees all his rivers of water turned into blood, and loathsomeness creeping over all his being. He learns that sin is no flesh wound, but a stab in the heart; he discovers that the poison has impregnated his veins, lies in his very marrow, and hath its fountain in his inmost heart. Now he loathes himself and would fain be healed. Actual sin seems not half so terrible as in-bred sin, and at the thought of what he is, he turns pale, and gives up salvation by works as an impossibility.

D. The Law Brings Home Condemnation.

Having thus removed the mask and shown the desperate case of the sinner, the relentless Law causes the offence to abound yet more by *bringing home the sentence of condemnation*. It mounts the judgment seat, puts on the black cap, and pronounces the sentence of death. With a harsh unpitiful voice it solemnly thunders forth the words, “Condemned already” (Joh 3:18). It bids the soul prepare its defense, knowing well that all apology has been taken away by its former work of conviction. The sinner is therefore speechless, and the Law, with frowning looks, lifts up the veil of hell, and gives the man a glimpse of torment. The soul feels that the sentence is just, that the punishment is not too severe, and that mercy it has no right to expect; it stands quivering, trembling, fainting, and intoxicated with dismay, until it falls prostrate in utter despair. The sinner puts the rope around his own neck, arrays himself in the attire of the condemned, and throws himself at the foot of the King’s throne—with but one thought, “I am vile”; and with one prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luk 18:13).

E. The Law Brings the Discovery of the Powerlessness Occasioned by Sin.

Nor does the Law cease its operations even here, for it renders the offence yet more apparent *by discovering the powerlessness occasioned by sin*. It not only condemns but it actually kills. He who once thought that he could repent and believe at pleasure, finds in himself no power to do either the one or the other.

When Moses smites the sinner, he bruises and mangles him with the first blow, but at a second or a third, he falls down as one dead. I have myself been in such a condition that if heaven could have been purchased by a single prayer, I should have been damned, for I could no more pray than I could fly. Moreover, when we are in the grave which the Law has dugged for us, we feel as if we did not feel, and we grieve because we cannot grieve. The dread mountain lies upon us, which renders it impossible to stir hand or foot, and when we would cry for help our voice refuses to obey us. In vain the minister cries, “Repent.” Our hard heart will not melt; in vain he exhorts us to believe; that faith of which he speaks seems to be as much beyond our capacity as the creation of a universe. Ruin is now become ruin indeed. The thundering sentence is in our ears, “*condemned already*”; another cry follows it, “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Eph 2:1); and a third, more awful and terrible, mingles its horrible warning, “*The wrath to come—the wrath to come*” (Luk 3:7). In the opinion of the sinner he is now cast out as a corrupt carcass; he expects each moment to be tormented by the worm that never dies and to lift up his eyes in hell. Now is mercy’s moment, and we turn the subject from condemning Law to abounding grace.

III. Grace Excels Sin in Its Measure and Efficacy.

Listen, O heavy laden, condemned sinner, while in my Master’s name I publish super-abounding grace.

A. Grace Excels Sin in Measure and Efficacy.

Grace excels sin in its measure and efficacy. Though your sins are many, mercy hath many pardons. Though they excel the stars, the sands, the drops of dew in their number, one act of remission can cancel all. Your iniquity, though a mountain, shall be cast into the midst of the sea (Mic 7:19). Your blackness shall be washed out by the cleansing flood of your Redeemer’s gore. Mark! I said *your* sins, and I meant to say so, for if you are now a Law-condemned sinner, I know you to be a vessel of mercy by that very sign. Oh, hellish sinners, abandoned profligates,¹³ off-casts of society, outcasts from the company of sinners themselves, if ye acknowledge your iniquity, here is mercy, broad, ample, free, immense, *infinite*. Remember this O sinner—

¹³ **profligate** – recklessly depraved and immoral.

*“If all the sins that men have done, In will, in word, in thoughts, in deed,
Since words were made, or time began, Were laid on one poor sinner’s head.
The stream of Jesus’ precious blood Applied, removes the dreadful load.”*

B. Grace Shows Us the King of Kings.

Yet again, grace excelleth sin in another thing. Sin shows us its parent, and tells us our heart is the father of it, but *grace surpasseth sin there, and shows the Author of grace—the King of Kings*. The Law traces sin up to our heart; grace traces its own origin to God, and

“In his sacred breast I see Eternal thoughts of love to me.”

Oh Christian, what a blessed thing grace is, for its source is in the everlasting mountains. Sinner, if you are the vilest in the world, if God forgives you this morning, you will be able to trace your pedigree to Him, for you will become one of the sons of God, and have Him always for your Father. Methinks I see you a wretched criminal at the bar, and I hear Mercy cry, “Discharge him!” He is pallid, halt, sick, maimed—heal him. He is of a vile race—lo, I will adopt him into My family. Sinner! God taketh thee for His son. What, though thou art poor, God says, “I will take thee to be Mine forever. Thou shalt be My heir. There is thy fair Brother. In ties of blood He is one with thee—Jesus is thy actual brother!” Yet how came 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 outdoes sin, for it lifts us higher than the place from which we fell.

C. Grace Can Never Be Reversed.

And again, “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”; because *the sentence of the Law may be reversed—but that of grace never can*. I stand here and feel condemned, yet, perhaps, I have a hope that I may be acquitted. 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 once justified; *fully* absolved I am by grace. I defy Satan to lay hands on me, if I am a justified man. The state of justification is an unvariable one, and is indissolubly united to glory.

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh 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? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved 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 other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:33-35, 37-39).

Oh! 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 laid to your charge again. The justification of the Gospel is no Arminian sham,¹⁴ which may be reversed if you should in future turn aside. No, the debt once paid, cannot be demanded twice—the punishment, once endured, cannot again be inflicted. Saved, saved, saved, entirely saved by divine grace, you may walk without fear the wide world o’er.

D. Grace Makes Us Joyful and Free.

And yet, once more, just as sin makes us sick, and grievous, and sad, so does *grace make us far more joyful and free*. Sin causeth one to go about with an aching heart, till he seems as if the world would swallow him, and mountains hang above ready to drop upon him. This is the effect of the Law. The Law makes us sad; the Law makes us miserable. But, poor sinner, grace removeth the evil effects of sin upon your spirit, if thou dost believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; thou shalt go out of this place with a sparkling eye and a light heart.

Ah! Well do I remember the morning when I stepped into a little place of worship, as miserable almost as hell could make me—being ruined and lost. I had often been at chapels where they spoke of the Law, but I heard not the Gospel. I sat down the pew a chained and imprisoned sinner; the Word of God came, and I went out free. Though I went in miserable as hell, I went out elated and joyful. I sat there black; I went away whiter than driven snow. God had said, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be whiter than snow” (Isa 1:18).

Why not this be thy lot, my brother, if thou feelest thyself a sinner now? It is all He asks of thee, to feel thy need of Him; this thou hast, and now the blood of Jesus lies before thee. “The law has entered that sin might abound.” Thou art forgiven, only believe it; elect, only believe it; ‘tis the truth that thou art saved.

¹⁴ **Arminian sham** – the doctrinal error that man is instrumental in his own salvation by moving of his own free will to invite Christ into his heart, and correspondingly, that he can lose his salvation by similarly deciding to reject Christ when returning to a life of sin.

E. Grace Renders Us Fit Companions for Angels!

And now, lastly, poor sinner, has sin made thee unfit for heaven? *Grace shall render thee a fit companion for seraphs¹⁵ and the just made perfect.* Thou who art today lost and destroyed by sin, shalt one day find thyself with a crown upon thy head, and a golden harp in thine hand, exalted to the throne of the Most High. Think, Oh drunkard, if thou repentest, there is a crown laid up for thee in heaven. Ye guiltiest, most lost and depraved, are ye condemned in your conscience by the Law? 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. Thou art an object of His eternal affection; the Law is but a schoolmaster, to bring thee to Christ. Cast thyself on Him. Fall into the arms of saving grace. No works are required, no fitness, no righteousness, no doings. Ye are complete in Him Who said, "It is finished" (Joh 19:30).

*"Ye debtors whom He gives to know That you ten thousand talents owe,
When humble at His feet you fall, Your gracious God forgives them all.*

*"Slaves, that have borne the heavy chain Of sin, and hell's tyrannic reign,
To liberty assert your claim, And urge the great Redeemer's name.*

*"The rich inheritance of heaven, Your joy, your boast, is freely giv'n;
Fair Salem your arrival waits, With golden streets, and pearly gates.*

*"Her blest inhabitants no more Bondage and poverty deplore!
No debt, but love immensely great; Their joy still rises with the debt."*

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¹⁵ **seraphs** – the hisghest order of angels (Isa 6:2).