

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume IV

Issue 7

*Published occasionally for Zion's mourners*

*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## DUTY

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Romans 7:18*

Many of the early settlers (in fact most of them) which came to the shores of what is now our great nation came here as indentured servants. Since there were no bankruptcy laws in England at the time, if a man incurred a debt that he could not pay he either had to go to a debtors prison until that debt was settled (where many died in utter poverty) or sell himself into slavery to someone willing to pay off his debts. In view of the fact that the need for laborers of all types in the colonies was great, there were many businessmen who would gladly pay off the debts of any who agreed to come to the new world and work for them for a certain period of time. Basically this was a form of slavery even though these people willingly agreed to the terms of service. They essentially became the property of those who held their indenture bonds and were not free men until this period of indenture was over at which time they were no longer bound.

Now these indentured servants were bound by law to serve under the will and purpose of those who were their masters. Their service to these masters, though entered into according to their will, was nonetheless a "duty" they were by law bound to fulfill. There was little reason for them to rejoice in the fulfillment of these requirements because when they had done all that their master required of them they had still only done what was expected of them. (see Luke 17:10) Today our bankruptcy laws have basically made it acceptable to owe large sums of money to others without having to pay those debts. This has encouraged fraud and irresponsibility among many and is essentially the same as legalized theft. A man's debts cannot be actually settled by the decree of a judge even though our law allows it. The only way for those debts to truly be settled is for someone to pay the price that is owed.

Many teach that GOD's people are to serve HIM because they are "duty bound" to do so. They picture the redeemed as those who owed a debt which was paid by the REDEEMER, but they think that those for whom HE died have now been brought into an indenture where they must now continue to labor out of a legal duty to do so. They reason that the debt was paid, but it is (somehow) necessary to continue to labor in order to fulfill a duty laid upon them by that same REDEEMER. Now one would have to be ignorant of the scriptures not to recognize that the law requires of men certain duties. And a man cannot argue that the law does not require that these duties be fulfilled in their "jot and tittle" (see Mat.5:18). But that man who stands in the perfect righteousness of CHRIST has already had that law completely fulfilled for HIM by that REDEEMER. "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*" (Gal 3:13) So there is left no "duty" to be performed which has not already been performed for those for whom HE shed HIS precious blood.

We are not free from the law simply because of a decree by the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, though HE is able to do as HE wills with HIS own. No, HE has fulfilled HIS own righteous law and the children of GOD stand before HIM as justified on the basis of the fact that JESUS CHRIST paid

the price for the debt of sins that we owed and cancelled any "obligation" which we have to fulfill the law in the future. HE is both "just and the JUSTIFIER" (see Rom.3:26) of HIS elect having imputed HIS perfect righteousness to them at Calvary.

Now those who are certain that GOD's people must still serve HIM out of "duty" fail to see that service out of "duty" is no real service at all, it is but the fulfilling of a requirement or the paying of a debt. Those whose debt is settled have been made free to serve HIM with a glad heart without the fear of the law's condemnation. (see Rom.8:1) Some erroneously conclude that what we are now saying is that the people of GOD are now free to do as their flesh dictates without any restriction. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not only is our debt to the law cancelled but so is the indebtedness of our flesh to serve sin. *"Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."* (Rom.8:12-15) The sons of GOD can be recognized by the fact that they have been born again, they are new creatures who have not inherited a spirit of bondage but the SPIRIT of adoption.

There will always be some who being unlearned and unstable shall wrest the scriptures to their own destruction even denying the LORD who bought them. (see II Pet.3:16-18) They will do despite unto the gospel of grace and turn a holy thing into that which is fit for swine. But the freeborn sons of GOD shall continue to follow their MASTER and LORD not out of fear and duty but out of love and a sound mind. *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."* (2 Tim 1:7)

GOD's children delight in the instruction of HIS word and the holy precepts of HIS law. They have learned as Paul did that even though they have a desire to perform the law they find in their own flesh no ability to keep it. The SPIRIT of GOD works in them to look outside of themselves for this perfect obedience which they long for and enables them to constantly discover that JESUS CHRIST is their righteousness and law keeper. What can be added to it?

*"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."* (Heb 9:14-15)

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