

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume VI

Issue 24

*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*

---

## THIS BODY OF DEATH (part 2)

*Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.*

*Psalms 119:2*

It is almost universally accepted among the world's religions that a man will be blessed if he obeys GOD and unblessed if he does not. This is called conditionalism. The writer of the Proverbs described this widespread belief when he said *"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* (Prov. 16:25) It is impossible to convince men otherwise until the LORD is pleased to change their heart through the quickening of HIS SPIRIT in them producing the new birth and making them into new creatures, where all things are become new.

When this occurs, the dominion of sin is broken and those things which were once a duty have now become a delight. This is the whole principle of grace in a nutshell. What HE has required, HE has provided. This is described by Paul when he says, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* (Rom 8:2) The law (or principle) of sin and death has always operated in us without rival since we were born. That principle is one which says "do this and live". It is this very principle (or law) which drove us to despair once we were quickened by the SPIRIT because *"the commandment, which was ordained to life, I (we) found to be unto death."* (Rom 7:10)

There is nothing at all wrong with the law for it is holy, just, and good. The problem is that this sinful flesh which plagues us even now is not subject unto the law but is at odds with it and cannot keep it. But GOD who is rich in mercy towards HIS own has provided a remedy and relief for them. *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* (Rom 8:3-4)

What JESUS CHRIST did for us in condemning *"sin in the flesh"* (crucifying the old man) is threefold in nature. Primarily HE has made atonement for HIS people by HIS redemptive work in taking their guilt upon HIMSELF and imputing HIS righteousness to their account, in satisfying the claims and condemnation of the law which they had broken with impunity. Yet there is another benefit which HE has purchased for those elect children: HE has "condemned sin in the flesh" by causing the principle of grace to become operative in them, who all their lives were subject unto the law of sin and death. Now because of the gift of HIS SPIRIT creating them a "new man" they are described as those who have the righteousness of the law fulfilled (i.e.; demonstrated) in them because the righteous principle of the law is written in their hearts and minds and not just applied externally.

What no amount of "duty preaching", "guilt trips", or "promises of reward" could accomplish, the LORD JESUS CHRIST in one act of redemption has wrought and can never be overturned. HE has made his children delight in HIS word. The flesh still whispers from time to time about duty and responsibility, and even lays the law quite heavily upon their conscience, but this flesh has no more power now to perform the law of GOD than it

did before the new birth. In fact it has grown weaker. But oh the glorious truth is that now we have a PERFORMER who works in us both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. *"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."* (Gal 2:19-21)

That demonstration of the law's righteousness in us is the very fruit of HIS labor, we cannot add one whit to it by any supposed "law keeping" on our part. So it can be seen to be a fruitless (though not painless) endeavor to lay the lash of the law upon the backs of the freeborn sons of GOD. Those who love the truth of GOD have no need of such threatening. Grace has conquered their heart causing them to desire conformity to HIS way and all of the promises of GOD are yea and amen in CHRIST. We are quite aware of the penchant for such "duty preaching" that the flesh still has but we are not under that dominion.

We do not expect that the blessings of GOD shall come upon us in relation to our obedience. Neither do we look for a "reward" for walking in HIS truth. We can now plainly see that the blessings of GOD are upon those who are made to delight in HIS truth. They look not for a "reward" because they have walked in HIS way, rather their "reward" IS walking in HIS way. There is no greater blessings for the sons of GOD than for them to be found keeping "HIS testimonies" and seeking HIM "with their whole heart. *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* (Rom 6:14)

Then the third benefit to the sons of GOD which is conferred upon them by the redemptive work of CHRIST is the "adoption". *"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* (Rom 8:23) It has pleased the LORD JESUS CHRIST to impute righteousness to us, to demonstrate HIS righteousness in us in these mortal bodies; and then to glorify HIMSELF in the raising of these mortal bodies from a corruptible state to an incorruptible one. *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."* (1Co 15:50-54)

HE is the "firstfruits" of those that sleep. Because HE arose from the dead HE has demonstrated HIS intent to raise the bodies of all of HIS saints and has given them this blessed hope of the resurrection even as HE said to Mary at the tomb of Lazarus. *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* (John 11:25-26) Yes dear friend even that weakest of HIS children who can only say with trembling voice, LORD I believe help THOU my unbelief, has reason to hope in HIM who works in HIS people to call them by HIS grace. HE is the AUTHOR and FINISHER of our faith.

- 1 "I am," says Christ, "your glorious Head," (May we attention give,) "The Resurrection of the dead, The life of all that live.
- 2 "By faith in me the soul receives New life, though dead before; And he that in my name believes, Shall live to die no more.
- 3 "The sinner sleeping in his grave Shall at my voice awake, And when I once begin to save, My work I'll ne'er forsake."
- 4 Fulfil thy promise, gracious Lord, On us assembled here; Put forth thy Spirit with the word, And cause the dead to hear.

#193 Gadsby's Hymns by John Newton