

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*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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## DEBTORS

*Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*      *Romans 8:12*

Many murders have occurred over the course of man's history on the account of unsettled debts of a monetary nature. No lender is happy when someone refuses to pay an amount of money which they owe him. For this very reason, Solomon, in the Proverbs, warns against the practice of both, loaning money indiscriminately and/or guaranteeing (i.e. cosigning a note) such a loan to another. *"My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend."* (Prov 6:1-3)

Yet the practice of loaning money is quite an ancient one and, in itself, is not a bad thing and is even commendable in many cases, especially when it is done as unto the LORD without any demand for return. *"A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion."* (Psa 112:5) *"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."* (Prov 19:17) This principle is at the heart of the LORD's instructions to Moses concerning lending without "usury" (i.e.; interest) among the household of faith. *"Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother."* (Deut 23:19) Such "loans" were not to be done for profit but rather as a means of helping brethren in places of need. We see the same instruction given by Paul, *"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."* (1Tim 6:17-18) It is also alluded to in James' stern admonition, *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"* (Jas 2:15-16) *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* (Gal 6:2)

There are debts which a man may incur that he must repay. Servitude in the OT was quite often the result of the necessity of paying off such a debt. In colonial times this was called being an indentured servant. We think of Jacob's indenture to Laban, and of the prodigal's foray into the hog pen as such a consequence. Modern bankruptcy laws have made it possible to incur debts and then by the stroke of a judge's pen having those debts written off. But in reality there must be an accounting or satisfaction of these debts even if be by the fiat decree of a judge or the institution of the Year of Jubilee in Moses' Law, which wiped the slate clean every fiftieth year. This debt must be satisfied.

Yet there are "debts" which a man cannot repay even though he may owe them. These are those debts wherein the lender expects no payment or as a surety has settled the debt with his own money. This is the debt of love. Love does not demand payment, yet love desires to pay. This is that debt which is spoken of by Paul when he says, *"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."* (2Cor 5:14-15) *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."* (2Cor 8:9)

This is the sort of debt that Paul has in mind when he writes *"we are debtors not to the flesh"*. All men are born as debtors to this "monster" which inhabits their body and would possess them completely. We have been its willing subjects since the day of our conception and have come forth from our mother's womb speaking lies. *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."* (Psa 51:5) *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."* (Psa 58:3) We shall be plagued with its presence until it is completely consumed in the grave and the worms have utterly destroyed it. *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."* (Job 19:25-27)

Job expressed the HOPE of those whose every debt is paid by that ONE whom he rightly describes as "my REDEEMER". Our body and our flesh are closely related though not exactly synonymous. Where you find one in this world you will find the other. Yet just like the WORD of GOD, divides between the *"soul and the spirit"* (see Heb.4:12); so too is there a division between the body and the flesh. Job does not make this distinction in his remarks as he has regard to the consumption of the body and the subsequent "resurrection" of it in the day when CHRIST shall open the graves of those that sleep causing HIS elect to behold HIM in HIS glory, not in the body of another but in the same body that HE deposited in the Earth, but is then raised in a glorified body which is incorruptible, without the "flesh" which demanded their allegiance while they dwelt in this lowland of sin and sorrow.

We owed a debt which we could not pay, as the Law demanded our total destruction, for the soul that sinneth shall surely die since the wages of sin is death. We were gladly the bondslaves of sin and our innate corruption was not even a concern to us when we walked according to the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. By nature we were no different than they. In such a state, we embraced the flesh and acted in a fashion which manifested our allegiance (i.e.; debt) to it.

CHRIST JESUS the LORD, came into this world in the likeness of sinful flesh, on the account of the sin of HIS elect. In order to cancel their debt of sin which the Law demanded to be paid, HE did gladly and fully pay every jot and tittle which was owed by them, satisfied that Law completely and demonstrated HIS ability and desire to be their JUSTIFIER. Therefore, it is clear that the debt which HIS people had incurred has now been settled and there is nothing left for them to pay.

Religious men often speak of CHRIST dying for sin, yet they are reluctant to give HIM the glory due unto HIS NAME as the ONE who has removed the sin of HIS elect quite apart from any activity or act of faith on their part. They tell us that it is true that CHRIST paid for our sin, but in order for HIS payment to take effect the LORD yet requires something from us, which they call faith, and is a debt which we must take care of or perish. This is a false gospel which gives glory unto men and, in reality, denies that CHRIST has *"obtained eternal redemption"*, for every one for whom HE bled.

The TRUTH is; that redemption, justification, and sanctification are complete in CHRIST who has not only satisfied the sin debt of every one of HIS children but has set them free from the Law of sin and death which ruled in their members from the very beginning. HE has cancelled any debt which even in their imagination they could have owed. By the power of HIS SPIRIT which works in them both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure, HE has delivered them from the power and ability of the flesh to condemn them in any wise. Therefore, those who are awakened by HIS SPIRIT and brought out of darkness and into the LIGHT are no longer "debtors" to the flesh, which at one time ruled in their minds. They are free from the "obligation" to serve this sinful flesh, being inhabited by the same SPIRIT which raised CHRIST from the dead and are now constrained by the love of CHRIST. *"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) *"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."* (Rom 6:17-18) Whereas the sons of GOD were willing bondslaves to the flesh, being born again they are now even more willingly "debtors" to CHRIST alone. Whom do you serve? *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* (Rom 8:9)

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