

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning.*

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THE BIBLE AND THE MODERN WORLD

II: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (1)

THE term "politics" is regarded by many people as a "dirty" word. It is often used in a disparaging or contemptuous sense. A politician is regarded as one who is without principle, a time-server, "all things to all men", one who trims his views according to the company he is in. This conception of a politician is illustrated by the candidate for parliament who summed up an election speech by saying, "Those are my principles, ladies and gentlemen. If you don't like them — well, I can change them." Artemus Ward, the American writer of the last century, makes a character say in one of his books: "My pollertics, like my religion, bein of a exceedin accommodatin character", while Sheridan in the eighteenth century, says in his play *The Critic*, "Conscience has no more to do with gallantry than it has with politics!"

Guidance in the Bible

All this sounds rather cynical, but it is typical of the view that a great number have of politics and politicians and even of government. Yet government is necessary for the orderly conducting of society, and is the best means we have of ensuring such order. And strange though it may sound, the Bible has much to say for the guidance of God's people, Jews and Gentiles, in the Old Testament and the New, in our attitude and responses to governments and politics. It must be the teaching of the Bible that guides Christians in their everyday relationships in the world we live in.

The classic and most important passage is, of course, Roman 13:1-7. We should read it often, especially in modern versions or translations; but even in the A.V. its language and meaning are crystal clear. There can be no "ifs and buts" about obeying what it says, no side-stepping of our responsibilities. The writer, Paul, had had far more experiences with governors, rulers and other authorities and "powers" than most of us will ever have. Yet he commands us (and, let us remember, under the inspiration of God) to "be subject"; this authority, being from God, is not to be resisted; and tells us that rulers are appointed for the good of men and only the evil need fear them. Those who do right have no need for fear. It is upon the wrongdoer that laws exercise judgement, and this judgement is from God. The man of God

is to obey not only for fear of God but "for the sake of conscience". Finally we are taught to pay our taxes and other dues for the well-being of the country and its people.

Such commands come stranger still when we consider the governments existing in Paul's time, and with which he had so often come into contact, and would even more after writing these words. It was the Roman Empire, the greatest political and military power that the world of that time had known, to which Paul was urging subjection and obedience. We often think of its rule as being one of tyranny and oppression, especially towards those who did not follow its idolatrous religions and mystery-cults, and its emperor-worship. Yet by its strict laws and administration of justice it was a guarantee of the rights of individuals and the defender of the weak and oppressed against the lawlessness and savagery of those who opposed the control of the Empire.

In Col. 1:15-16 Paul states the tremendous truth that Jesus Christ "is the image of the invisible God; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him, and in all things hold together." In our present world it is difficult to remember this glorious fact: many would say that "it takes some believing." It certainly does: but, like Abraham who believed in the face of all seeming facts that God was working His purpose out, the Christian must believe and accept this truth, though many things seem against it, to deny and frustrate it. God is a God of order and love and peace: His ways and works for men, and His purposes, are for our good; and He has set, ordained for our good "thrones, dominions, principalities and powers". Without these ordinances of God the whole world of men would be in chaos. As with everything men handle these divine institutions have been mishandled and corrupted for men's selfish ends, for power and authority over others; and violence and cruelty have been and still are too often the instruments of governments. But in the first place God instituted government, and it remains God's means of ensuring and preserving order and justice in the world.

Application to Christians

The Christian is not to oppose this institution. He is not to be an anarchist or a nihilist (one who believes in the destruction of all political and social systems for the betterment of mankind). In the New Testament we are taught to pray for governments and rulers: "...I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way" (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Our responsibilities to governments are set before us in such passages as 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether...to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should put to shame the ignorance of foolish men. Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. Love the brotherhood; fear God; honour the emperor"; and again in Titus 3:1 Christians are exhorted by Paul "to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient...ready for any honest work".

In the light of the teaching of God's word quoted in the above passages of scripture it would be difficult to justify the participation by Christians in protest marches and other demonstrations, in opposition movements, agitations for reform in political matters, lobbying of M.P.'s and so on, which are so common today. It is true that many matters annoy and anger, injustices which need to be righted, "Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne", as James Russell Lowell wrote. We burn in anger and are frustrated at such things, and we yearn to rectify them. But we recall how the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with the deepest wrongs and injustices and the harshest treatment. In Him Isaiah's prophecy (42:1-4) was

fulfilled: "...I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations: he will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth..." (For the fulfilment read Matt. 12:17-21).

In his contacts with powers and authorities Paul, understandingly, failed to attain the standard of his Master. He claimed his rights as a Roman citizen, justifiably so. But his anger got the better of him when (Acts 23:2-5) it burst out in indignation against Ananias the High Priest.

Some Questions

Does what we have written mean that Christians always are to support or at least fail to rebuke or oppose those things which governments wrongfully legalise or do? Are the politicians infallibly right? Are we to let evils pass without raising our voice against them? Did not Christ Himself denounce the hypocrisy and evil of the rulers of His day? Did not James, the Lord's brother, inveigh against the oppressors of the downtrodden in his time? And did not Peter, whom we have quoted as exhorting us to be subject to every human institution, kings and those in high authority also fearlessly declare to those high authorities that it is wrong to listen to or obey men rather than God (Acts 4:28)? Must Christians fawn upon the "powers that be" although conscience, informed by God's word, revolts against many things? When is a Christian justified in the sight of God in refusing to do that which, though lawful, is contrary to God's law, "the law of Christ?"

We shall endeavour to demonstrate this aspect of a Christian's attitude to government and politics in our next article, God willing

EDITOR

PROBLEMS FOR THE "MIRACLE HEALERS"

THOSE who claim the power to perform miracles today are open to challenge on several grounds. For them to dismiss the objections in arrogant unconcern is always possible. The "True Believer" is blind to all things he dislikes; those not obsessed with their belief will be of a more open mind.

(1) *"Miraculous Healers" seldom if ever meet the Biblical pre-requisite for the healing powers they claim to exercise.* The pre-requisite for possession of the healing ability was belief (Mark 16:17) but the preceding verse indicates that belief *must* be expressed in baptism in order to be of spiritual value. Hence baptism must precede the healing power. The significance of this is two-fold. The text (verse 16) indicates that the baptism is to be *for* rather than because of the remission of sins. Any other purpose for being baptized would not result in securing healing powers. Furthermore, the word "baptize" means immerse as even the non-Greek student can see in such passages as Colossians 2:12 and Acts 8:38. Any other act than immersion could not qualify a man for the gift of healing power. Since both the right motive and the right act (immersion) are required, a fatal stumbling block is thrown in the path of "healing" advocates.

(2) *Healers emphasize the healing rather than the preaching.* What is advertised in the paper and what message is spread by word of mouth when a "healer" comes to town? "A faith healing meeting." That preaching will go with it is little mentioned; it is almost an irrelevancy. Yet in the first century the emphasis was considerably different. Miracles were used *to illustrate* the message being taught (1 Pe.

4:48; 11:38-44). Indeed, John wrote his gospel out of the conviction that even a written account of Christ's miracles could convert (John 20:30-31). But in today's society, the healings have seemingly become an end in themselves.

(3) *Healers emphasize monetary contributions rather than the service they are providing.* It may not be true of all of them, but haven't you noticed a tremendous "push" to have their listeners contribute? If passing the plate once doesn't yield a satisfactory amount, they'll pass it a few more times. Then there are the "healing" pens, handkerchiefs and such like—all of which (let us be honest) are little more than gimmicks.

In their preoccupation with money, they seem more like the corrupt elements of the medieval Catholic clergy than like the apostles of Christ.

To support a man who is providing *you* the service of preaching is approved (1 Corinthians 9:3-12), as is supporting destitute Christians (Romans 15:25, 31). But giving support for men to travel about "healing" is something unknown to the New Testament. Peter's first post-resurrection healing found him without any money to his name (Acts 3:6) and there is no evidence that his healings *ever* earned him a penny.

(4) *Healers often fail.* In the New Testament we find only two cases where healings were anything but spontaneous. In one case the apostles could not heal an epileptic. Christ promptly pointed out that it was *their* lack of faith, not the epileptic's that made the healing impossible (Matthew 17:20). Modern "healers" are the opposite: they place the blame for their failure on the person they are trying to help.

In the other instance (Mark 8:22-26) a blind man's eyesight was restored. Although he could now see, he still could not focus his eyes right; Christ touched the man's eyes again and the problem immediately corrected itself. The delay was a mere matter of seconds. Even if the eyes had *never* been able to focus rightly the healing was such that no modern healer could imitate it.

Contrast these two "difficult" healings (both of which resulted in complete recovery) with the ignoble record of modern "healers". When we compare the thousands who come for healing with the few who are "healed", we can only conclude that the successful "healing" is the exception not the norm. Modern doctors have a far better record.

Medical doctors have
ROLAND WORTH

WHAT IS LOVE ?

IN Romans 13:8-14 we find two wonderful topics. From verses 8 to 10 Paul writes of love being the fulfilment of all law, and in verses 11-14 he speaks of the nearness of Christ's second coming.

Love

Although it is a failing on our part, we seem to like a person who makes us feel secure or important. It is difficult to try to pinpoint what it is that prompts that person to show such regard for us. It might be various things; but then it could be simply *love* towards us. If it be love that directs this type of person, we find that this great quality makes him have a regard for everyone. This in turn makes him a friend to many. This was a characteristic of Jesus when on earth. He made friends with the poor, the downtrodden, the sinners, people so unlike himself. We of course tend to disregard people unlike ourselves. Like Jesus we need to be more aware of people

who need *love* — our love — more than we need theirs. In a previous chapter of Romans (chap. 5) we find the Christian's duty towards those regarded as enemies, we know the lesson that comes to us here — that we must *love* each other. This includes our brethren, our neighbours and even the enemies of Christ. In doing so we are told that *love* is a fulfilling agent of the Royal Law of Christ.

There are actually three words meaning love, and we should not confuse one with the other. The first word *love* is a translation of the Greek *agape*, and means, in a sense, reverent esteem. The second term is *fileo*; this relates to family affection. And the third, *eros* expressing the sexual love. Today when many people hear the word *love* they identify it with *eros*; but the early Christians spoke of *agape* and today Christians still use it in this sense.

In our Christian *loving* and life we must show our love and esteem for all, regardless of whom they might be. It is of course difficult at times, but with Jesus's help we can succeed.

In Rom. 13:8 we read "owe no man anything": of course we should pay our way and just dues. We must not hold anything back, whether in cash or kind. We must not be in debt to the world and its ways. It is right that the Christian should set an example, in speech, dress and in living in general. It is not wise to dabble in worldly practices, for the finger of scorn is always ready to be pointed at the Christian. This can lead the Christian to fall away and the devil takes delight, and seizes the chance to take over. The Christians motto should be "Don't dabble with the Devil". There is a due, of course, that every christian finds himself having to pay. This is the debt of *love* towards the brethren in the church, and in fact everyone we come in contact with. "Thou shalt *love* thy neighbour as thyself." We can never fully discharge this debt or due, as love is an infinite obligation.

Thus by showing love and esteem as Christians, we find ourselves in the happy state of fulfilling Christ's desire. If we continue to love others as instructed, it then follows that no desire of hurting anyone arises in us.

In verses 9-10 we read: "If there be any other commandment it is summed up (brought to a head) in this word: thou shalt *love* thy neighbour as thyself". Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law. Someone has written: "What is hateful to thyself, do not to thy fellow." The writer felt that this alone could constitute the law and the rest of the "Thou shalt not's".

It is imperative that we should not use love for the sake of collecting friends. This in fact would not be love, or *agape*. In his duty to love others the Christian does not look for anything in return. We then by our every action are to be to our neighbours living proof that it is possible to follow Jesus in obedience and love. Perhaps then in due course the neighbour will turn to the word of the Lord for they see and distinguish the love and blessings of God in that person.

Paul says "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not *love* I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal". We all know the truth of this.

Let us look at the seven elements mentioned in the Roman letter. They are virtues which we hear about every day; things that can be practised by everyone in every walk of life:—

The Characteristics of Love

- 1 *Love is patience.* This is the normal attitude of love: to be of a meek, quiet nature.
- 2 *Kindness.* Love is active it is action. How easily it is done; how instantaneously it acts! It is always remembered and it has a remembering quality for the recipient.
- 3 *Generosity.* "Love envieth not." There is only one need the Christian should envy: that is the large generous soul which "*envieth not*".

4 *Humility*. Love hides even from itself; it avoids self satisfaction. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

5 *Courtesy*. This is love in society; politeness; is love in little things. "Love does not behave itself unseemly."

6 *Unselfishness*. "Love seeketh not her own desires." There is no happiness really in having or getting; it is in the giving. "He that would be great among you", Christ said, "let him serve." Let those who would be happy remember "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

7 *Good temper*. "Love is not easily provoked"; we must be of good temper. Bad temper is made up of many things: jealousy, anger, pride, inhospitality, cruelty, self-righteousness, touchiness: all these and many more are the cause of bad temper. They are to be avoided.

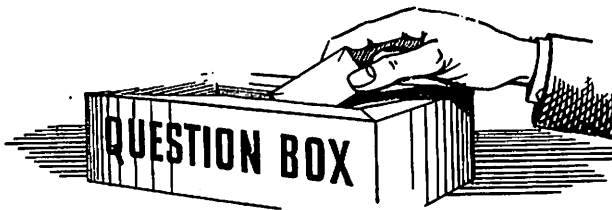
We are urged by Paul to continue in love, because we know not when Christ will return. In perilous times like today it may be that the advent is very near — too near for some, such as the children of the Devil. We are urged in verses 11-14 to be on our toes, to be alert. We are to be more Christlike, to show more love.

In verse 12 we read that we must "cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light". The works of darkness relate to sin in all forms. The works of light are the actions of righteousness. We are directed to walk honestly and in love: that is act in a genuine manner without guile or falseness.

Some time has passed since the Lord was on earth and the time of His return draws steadily near. We are urged by the word, to take up the weapons of Jesus Christ, such as love, and to cease giving attention to our own sinful nature, and to satisfying its desires.

Brethren let Love abound in us all. let Jesus's love take over.

ANDREW P. SHARP



Conducted by
James Gardiner

(It is remarkable that the query dealt with below is on exactly the same subject as dealt with in our editorial this month. It might be asked why the two articles have been published together. This is pure coincidence: There has been no consultation of any kind between Bro. Gardiner and myself. My editorial was sent for publication several days before I saw Bro. G's contribution, due to my being absent from home when his article was delivered at my address. At first I thought of holding over one article or the other. But the title of our editorial had already been announced in the "S.S.", so that I thought it wisest to publish it. On the other hand I did not wish to give any impression of selecting one rather than the other for publication this month. And no doubt the brother making the queries was looking for a quick answer. Hence I decided to publish together. One thing we are thankful for:— that the two articles agree so closely with each other. It would have been disastrous if any contradictions, or even differences, had been apparent in the expositions! Editor)

COULD you give some explanation of Romans chapter 13, verses 1-2? Does this mean "subject to higher spiritual powers," (*i.e.* church government), or does it

mean "subject to *state governments*"? Verse 2 states that we must not resist powers ordained of God. Does this mean that we would have to submit to a communist power in this country, if such came about before the Lord's return?

The verses, referred to, read, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

To get the full import of Paul's instruction we should read on to verse 7 at least. I shall refer later to these verses.

Our Duty To Government

Generally speaking we enjoy, in Britain, a well ordered society, and church members rarely come into open conflict with "the powers that be"—the administering authorities. Certainly there are signs that revolutionary elements are at work, in trying to destroy law and order; but so far we can say that, by and large, we live in great freedom and enjoy the common law freedoms of speech, action and worship. Thus these verses in Romans 13 do not carry the significance they might otherwise have if we lived in some other countries in the world *e.g.* in communistic or Roman Catholic dominated ones. This is because Rom. 13:1-2 refers to *citizenship*, and Paul is saying to church members that they must be *good citizens*. This, to my mind sums up the two verses. Disciples of Christ must be *good citizens* of whatever land or city they inhabit. In Britain it is relatively easy to be a follower of Christ and also a "law-abiding" citizen. In some countries it may not be so easy. Thus we tend to overlook the implications of Rom. 13 until circumstances arise which send us scurrying to the N.T. to ascertain our precise obligations. I am sure this happens during war, when the question of bearing arms in battle had to be decided in the conscience of each individual concerned. History shows that the problem has beset every generation, and in the past Christians have either granted the ruler too much latitude or refused to concede him what he was fully entitled to claim. Sometimes we too allow no satisfactory place in our thought for the function of the state. There has always been a strain on our thinking, which needs little provocation, to repudiate temporal rulers and claim that we owe sole allegiance to King Jesus. Indeed there is one worldwide religious sect which does not allow its members to "salute the flag", stand up for the national anthem, or recognise "earthly" government in any way. Some of the early Christians may have had doubts as to their exact responsibilities to the Roman authorities, or even as to whether they had any responsibilities at all to civil governments, and so prompted this teaching on the subject from the apostle Paul. He left them in no two minds on the matter. They were in the church but they were also in the world. They had a responsibility to Christ, but they also had one to their fellow men. They had joined the brotherhood of Christ, but had not ceased to be part of the brotherhood of men.

In verse 1 Paul says, "Let every soul be obedient unto the higher powers ruling authorities". There were to be no exceptions; every individual disciple of Christ was to obey the rightfully constituted government of the land. Not the church government, but the *civil authorities*. The following verses emphasise this fact, when Paul talks about paying taxes and so on. Paul does not specify the *form* or *character* of the ruling authority, whether it be *monarchic* (rule by a king); *oligarchal* (rule by a few); *republican* (rule by elected representatives); *democratic* (rule by the people); *communistic* (workers' dictatorship) or even a dictatorship itself. The type of government is not important and this perhaps answers that part of the question which asks if we, as followers of Christ, would have to submit to a communist power if it ever existed in this country. The answer is, "Yes", we ought to be good citizens in any country under any type of government.

Reasons For Submission

Paul goes on in verses 1 and 2 to explain *why* we ought so to submit ourselves to earthly rulers. Because *God* wants it so. Human governments have God's authority and His complete sanction for their existence. Indeed they are ministers (or servants) of God (v. 4). God approves of law and order and the administering of justice in the world at large, and we must co-operate with the lawfully installed officers of government. Generally speaking and all things being equal, civil governments endeavour to protect their subjects and grant them the natural rights of the person, property and liberty. Good governments also seek to preserve freedom of worship for all the people. This is the kind of good civil government that Paul certainly had in mind, for he envisages one which would promote good and come down heavily on evil. He says if Christians are well behaved then they need not fear the civil authorities, indeed they would be commended by these civil authorities (v.3) for being good citizens. It is only if one does that which is evil that one need fear the civil authorities and then one must take what one gets from the full rigour of the law. Paul would have little sympathy for any such, it seems.

Therefore, says Paul, we must be obedient citizens *on two counts* (v.5) (1) to avoid the wrath of the legal officer (for the judge bears not the sword in vain, v.4);

(2) for conscience' sake towards God, for God will also require it of us if we disregard the civil powers decreed by Himself.

Indeed Paul goes a little farther in verses 6 and 7, instructing that we not only *obey* but we must also *pay*. Obey the powers that be and also pay for their support and upkeep. We must pay our taxes and all dues and tributes. We must honour those to whom honour is due, and fear those to whom fear is due.

We may have misgivings about how some of our taxation is being used (perhaps to further a war) but our responsibility is to pay our taxes when called upon.

Good and Evil Government

The early Christians perhaps wondered about their responsibilities to the Roman authorities. Roman law and order was admirable and even today our legal system is partly based upon that of the Roman Empire. But later in history the Christians suffered much persecution at Roman hands (they were burned alive and thrown to the lions). Paul however, spells out the responsibility of *all Christians in all ages to all governments*.

It should be noted that while God approves of civil order and government, and indeed gives it His authority, He only does so while it remains *good* government. We don't believe for a moment, for instance, that God approves of all kings, queens, dictators, presidents etc. Some have been despots, tyrants, and have brought much suffering, misery and death (Adolf Hitler is one example). God approves of civil order and justice and goodness, but He no more appoints governments to do evil, or sanctions wrong in them, than He sanctions sin in men. God tolerates many rulers, but does not necessarily approve of them. The best form of government for Israel was a theocracy: but the Israelites, to be like the nations around them, cried out for a king and God gave them a king. God did not, however, approve of their having a king. Our duty to evil rulers and governments diminishes in proportion to their evil intentions. We must still obey all *lawful* instructions, but we must refuse to comply with anything not in keeping with God's word. This must, in fact, be our attitude to any government, good or bad – that we humbly obey all lawful rules and instructions but refuse compliance with all instructions which conflict with the scriptures. The difficulty, of course, sometimes is deciding exactly when an instruction is violating God's word. Thus if we are punished (by the law) for breaking a good law we *suffer as an evildoer*, but if we are punished for non-compliance with an evil instruction we *suffer as a Christian* (1 Peter 4:15-16). Daniel disobeyed the ruling monarch of his

day when the instruction he received was incompatible with his responsibility to God. The civil authorities commanded Peter and John to stop preaching about Jesus but their answer was "whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye". They were prepared to hearken unto men, but *more* prepared to hear God. Thus our strict obedience to invested authority is qualified always by our doing only that which God approves.

Much more can be said on the matter but our space has virtually gone. We notice, for instance that Paul says *obey* the ruling authorities. Is it also a duty to *assist* the ruling authorities, by voting, jury service, prevention of crime, etc.? If civil government is God's appointment ought not Christians to *participate* with the ruling authorities *e.g.* as a police officer, judge, town councillor, member of parliament, etc.? One would imagine perhaps that followers of Christ would be great assets in public life. Many remain aloof from such activity because of political corruption and party strife; while some have entered the "corridors of power" to the detriment of their faith.

Summing Up

Could I sum up then the verses referred to by our brother? All civil governments derive their origin and authority from God, and while doing right and good, have His sanction and approval. Therefore God requires us to obey them, and when we refuse or fail we resist not only the government but God Himself. Civil and law officers are ultimately for our good and we need not fear them, nor should we resist them. Consequently there are two reasons for obeying the properly constituted government, firstly that we may avoid being punished, and secondly that we might please God. Moreover for these same reasons we must pay our dues, taxes and customs. We must also respect and even honour those in authority. By this means says Paul, we shall be well pleasing to God and shall promote the earthly happiness of all.

(Questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JULY 1972

2—Leviticus 19:1-18	1 Cor. 13
9—Nehemiah 8:5-18	1 Cor. 14:1-19
16—Isaiah 8:5-22	1 Cor. 14:20-40
23—Psalm 16	1 Cor. 15:1-19
30—Daniel 12	1 Cor. 15:20-34

LOVE, THE CHRISTIAN'S SUPREME DUTY

YES! We write *DUTY*. We hear often the warning that to do something just because it is a duty may be a low sort of motive. We must rather act on the motive of *love*. It is so true that for instance the attendance at the Lord's Table can become merely a mechanical obedience to a tradition. We look upon much of the ceremonial of the Roman and Anglican Com-

munions as formalities. The constant repetition of fixed forms of prayer tends strongly that way. There is something so much more sincere and heartfelt in the spontaneous *ex-tempore* prayer even when offered in ungrammatical language. Yet even this, encouraged by our "mutual ministry" ideas, can become a stringing together of the same forms of words. The all-pervading motive of love is needed to cut out lower motives, and bring reality into all our thoughts, words and actions.

So the supreme duty, when practised, works for absolute purity of heart. Jesus, preceded by Moses, and no doubt earlier servants of God, has given us the first commandment—to love God with all the heart. From the day man first disobeyed God, no one has kept this commandment perfectly—"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). God is love, but God is also righteousness, justice, perfection, and love not

consistent with these is not the love we must show. The wonder of God's love is that He Himself has made it possible for sin to be forgiven as it were *in spite of his justice and perfection*. This is expressed in the words "that He might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). For justice to be done sin must be punished; so "God has set forth [Jesus] to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." In other words God, manifest in the flesh, took upon Himself the burden of sin. In a stupendous sacrifice of suffering "He bare our sins in His own body upon the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Love To Others

The second commandment is of course to love our neighbour as ourselves, and "neighbour" does not mean simply the man next door but *every* man. The Lord has made this even more searching: "Love your enemies." If our love must be like His, it must be for "the world" (John 3:16), but this cannot mean the world's sinful ways or behaviour. We must somehow hate the sin and love the sinner. We must "abhor that which is evil" (Rom. 12:9), "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23). Yet must our hearts be full of love for all. The dictionary meanings of love are "affection; strong liking; mutual sympathy and goodwill; fondness and care; benevolence; charity; devoted attachment to one of the opposite sex; passion." It is almost impossible to define this force in the inner most recesses of our make-up, which so much controls our outward actions. Like electricity it can only be known by its effects, and we believe that Paul's outpouring in 1 Cor. 13 is unexcelled in literature.

Love in the Church

In the church of those days special inspiration and miraculous powers were distributed in the membership. Without this the spreading of the truth about the Lord Jesus would have been impossible; but His promise, made to His apostles while with them, He fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). His prom-

ise to the apostle Paul by separate divine appointment. The letter we are reading most fully sets out the facts in chapter 12 and gives instruction for the correct exercise of the gifts in chapter 14. But in chapter 13 the over riding and continuing needs are set forth, namely faith, hope and love, Prophecies, tongues and knowledge (which must mean knowledge specially revealed, not available normally) are specifically mentioned from among the various special gifts (12:28-30) as being temporary. The word used in v. 8 for "fail" and "vanish away" (A.V.), "done away" (R.V.) "should rather be rendered 'be brought to an end, literally, be worked out'" (J.J. Lias, *Cambridge Bible for Schools*). Kenneth Taylor paraphrases the passage, "All the special gifts and powers from God will some day come to an end, but love goes on for ever." When the work of the apostles and inspired prophets was put into permanent form in the New Testament, all that was necessary for the guidance and work of the church was completed; no further revelation was necessary: Individually, of course, we never reach complete maturity; but the provision is there for the exercise of our powers of mind and heart, *plus* (and this is so vitally important) our consecration: "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God... and this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23-25).

The new birth and the new life imparted by the Spirit of God through the word of God produces in us the capacity for a love described in our reading. While we shall not surpass the A.V. for beauty of language (except that unfortunate "charity" in place of "love"), the more modern versions bring home the full meaning, and therefore the requirements for the practice of love, more forcefully. A constant attention to verses 4 to 7 should help us to practise our SUPREME DUTY.

Let love be our greatest aim.

R.B. SCOTT

WRINKLES should merely show where the smiles have been. — Mark Twain

THIS NEEDED SAYING

(We recently received from Abilene Christian College, Texas, its bimonthly *Mission Strategy Bulletin* for January-February 1972. It contains an article, "Go and Preach" by Harris Goodwin, giving the writer's conclusions on missionary work of the churches of Christ in Mexico. We reprint extracts from this article. How far does the situation described apply in the British Isles today? EDITOR)

PROJECT: GO AND PREACH

by Harris Goodwin

"My analysis of the Mexican church, as well as other churches in Latin America, is as follows:-

"A. Primary importance has been given to adopting forms and procedures from the U.S. churches without considering whether these procedures contribute to or detract from the objective of preaching the Gospel. Often, the supporting church expects that these forms will be adopted, not realizing that a form that is convenient in one area may well be a detriment or an obstacle in another area. Often converts are converted to a system-a procedure - rather than to Jesus.

B. The concept of U.S. churches that each congregation must have a "full time" preacher has been established firmly. However, in too many cases the preacher has become the 'pastor' in everything but name. This 'pastor-priest' takes charge—and keeps the charge—of the congregation, with little or no effort being made to develop leadership and allow the congregation to be in control of its own activities. Persons unwilling to accept this one-man rule are expelled as trouble-makers. The 'pastor' rules the congregation as the appointed representative of the elders of the church in the U.S. who pay his support. These elders have often advised the "full-time" preachers to teach Christian stewardship, but instead the congregation has been taught in many cases to look to the sponsoring church for all of its needs.

C. Buildings have been emphasized so strongly that many preachers feel that the congregation is not a worthy church until it has a building. Again, the sponsoring congregation is expected to provide this building, and the members of the congregation have little to say about what kind of building, where it will be located, etc., nor are they expected to bear a substantial part of the cost.

Usually a home for the preacher is also constructed. The 'pastor' regards this home as his own, and is determined to stay the rest of his life, if possible. He regards this as his 'parish', and only the elders of his sponsoring church can remove him. Most, if not all, of his teaching and preaching will be within the immediate vicinity of this church building/parish home facility. Fifteen years or more pass, the membership averages no more than 30 to 50 persons, and the preacher is still paid from the U.S.

"Is this the New Testament pattern of mission work?"

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Kentish Town: We had the joy of witnessing on April 23rd the confession and baptism of Rainford George Reid. Our brother first heard the New Testament plea on Radio London, and having found our meetings, made his decision. We pray he may be greatly blessed with us in the worship and work of the church.

Mayfield, East Lothian: With great joy we report the baptism on May 28th of Michael J. Wilczynski, a young man who has been attending meetings for some time. While hearing the gospel preached the Lord moved his heart and he decided to put on Christ in baptism.

We pray the Lord will bountifully use him and bless him in the work.

ANDREW P. SHARP

TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE "SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

A MEETING TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF THE
"SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

will be held (God willing) on SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th 1972
commencing 2.30p.m. in the meeting-house at

JACKSON'S SQUARE, SCHOLES, WIGAN.

CHAIRMAN: R.B. SCOTT (Kentish Town)

Buffet Tea will be provided and it is hoped to arrange an EVENING MEETING
commencing 6 o'clock for those able to stay.

It will be appreciated if Church Secretaries will please give an estimate of the
number of persons hoping to attend from their congregation to:—

C. MELLING, 133, LONG LANE, HINDLEY, VIA WIGAN, LANCS.

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