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## THY KINGDOM COME

*"Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven ..."* (Matt. 6:9-10). Those words are part of what is commonly called **"The Lord's Prayer"** and are possibly the most frequently recited words in the whole Bible.

Jesus uttered those words to His disciples in response to their request to teach them to pray, just as John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray: *"And it came to pass that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples'. And He said unto them, 'When ye pray, say 'Our Father which art in heaven ...'"* (Luke 11:1-2).

There is no record in the Scriptures of the prayer that John the Baptist gave to his disciples, but the prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples is recorded in the gospels of both Matthew and Luke. The prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples is more important than the one of John the Baptist because Jesus was *"the only begotten Son"* of God (John 3:16).

### Authority

As God's only begotten Son, Jesus could speak with great authority. Nevertheless He acknowledged that He was subordinate to His Father, Jehovah God. He said: *"...my Father is greater than I"* (John 14:28).

Anyone who is present at the beginning of any event or arrangement is more aware of the intricacies of the situation. And so it was with Jesus; one possible reason why He could speak with such authority was that He was present at the creation of the world - He was *"the beginning of the creation of God"* (Rev. 3:14). As the Apostle John wrote, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God ... The same was in the beginning with God"* (John 1:1-2). However whether His presence with God at creation was a factor that enabled Him to know exactly what God had planned for the Earth is immaterial: the essential point is that He knew that He had come to Earth to do His Father's will. He said *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the*

*will of him that sent me"* (John 6:38). He also said *"The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works"* (John 14:10).

Another reason why He could speak with great authority when He was on Earth was that He had received the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17). The Holy Spirit enabled Him to know God's plan, just as it enables Christians to understand God's plan: *"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God"* (1 Cor. 2:12). However not only did Jesus receive the Holy Spirit, but He received it *"without measure"* (John 3:34). Receiving the Holy Spirit *"without measure"* infers that He was able to know every detail of God's plan whereas Christians today only *"know in part"* (1 Cor. 13:9, 12). He knew exactly why God had sent Him to Earth: *"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (Matt. 20:28), and *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

It was that same Jesus who was with God at creation, and who had received the Holy Spirit *"without measure"*, who told His disciples to pray *"Thy Kingdom Come"*. Consequently Christians today may be fully confident that God will honour the prayer that His Son told them to pray.

### Our Father

The first words of the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples are *"Our Father"*. The disciples' faith

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would have been strengthened by those words because they inferred that Jesus was grouping them with Himself as one of the divine family. Likewise, for the Christian today the words "*our Father*" give a feeling of a spiritual depth that is the privilege only a few can appreciate. They impress on the human mind how great a privilege it is to understand and address almighty God as "*our Father*". That feeling of reverence is increased by the next words of the prayer: "*Hallowed (holy) be thy name*". Jesus was telling His disciples that they were to acknowledge God's majesty, and that they were praying to the greatest authority in the universe. Thus the words that follow were of utmost importance and reliability.

### **The desire for the kingdom**

The next words are "*Thy kingdom come*". They express the very essence of the Christian faith: a hope that promises a world that is free from the sickness, strife and sorrow that plague the present world.

According to the Bible it is approximately 6000 years since Adam and Eve were perfect in the Garden of Eden. Since they transgressed God's law, mankind has experienced the consequences of their disobedience as described in Romans 8:20-23: "*For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 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*".

Those verses explain four important aspects of God's plan.

The first aspect is that "*the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope*". The bondage of corruption that has plagued mankind for 6000 years was imposed by God to accomplish His purpose, and that means that the present distress is not beyond God's control but rather that He engineered it.

The great benefit to the Christian that stems from this understanding is that, if God has engineered the present "*bondage of corruption*", then He is able to stop it when it has achieved His purpose. And that is the second point that the Apostle makes in Romans 8:20-23; that **the creation will be delivered**.

The third point to note in the verses quoted above (Rom. 8:20-23) is that "*the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together*". It does not take more

than a moment to realise the truth of that statement - everywhere one looks in the world today one can see strife and tumult, hardship and suffering, even in the Western or so-called "developed" nations. At the time of writing this article, there are strife torn regions in western Europe, Africa, the middle East, and the far East (Asia). These and several other regions are also experiencing "natural disasters" such as floods, fire, tornadoes or drought.

The final point that the Apostle expresses in so few words in Romans 8:23 is that Christians "*groan within themselves waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body*". Christians groan because they empathise with the suffering world and because they realise that the suffering will not end until the kingdom of God is established on the earth.

### **Deliverance nigh**

The thought of God's will being done in Earth as it is in heaven is a very attractive one. However the disciples' question to Him just before He returned to heaven indicates that the disciples might not have realised exactly what His prayer meant. They asked Him "*Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6). They were Israelites and they knew the glory that Israel had enjoyed centuries ago, and they expected Him to restore that glory to them.

It is now approximately 2000 years since Jesus told His disciples to pray in this manner and still God's will is not done in Earth as it is in heaven. The question may well be asked, when will the prayer be answered?

Jesus gave His disciples some clues as to when the kingdom would be near: "*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh*" (Luke 21:28).

Many of those signs exist in these early years of the 21st century and so Christians should be encouraged "*to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus ...*" (1 Thess. 1:10).

The suffering currently being experienced by the human creation will end when God's purpose in subjecting mankind to it has been accomplished. Meanwhile the Christian continues to pray "*Thy kingdom come*".

## TO SEEK AND TO SAVE

When Jesus was on Earth He declared that He had come to "seek and to save that which was lost". The record continues: *"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear"* (Luke 19:10-11).

Those verses reveal two aspects of the people's belief at that time: firstly, that it would be His kingdom that would recover the qualities and conditions that the people knew they had lost, and secondly, that the kingdom would soon be established. Jesus did not dispute the first point (that it was He who would restore that which they had lost) because it was correct; however their belief that the kingdom was near was incorrect and Jesus considered it necessary to explain by way of a parable that the kingdom was not imminent. He likened the delay to a nobleman who went into a far country, which, in view of the transport available in that day would have inferred a considerable delay.

### That which was lost

In order to correctly indentify what Jesus meant when He said that He had come "to save that which was lost", it is necessary to consider the context of the verses.

These words of Jesus were recorded by both Matthew and Luke. However the verses that precede His words differ in the two records: Matthew 18:1-11 records Jesus explaining the need for humility amongst His followers as exemplified by the humility of a little child, while Luke 19:2-9 records Jesus' dealings with Zacchaeus. However there is one lesson that can be learned from both records, and that is the message of salvation – "... it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye ..." (Matt. 18:9) and "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9). In the broadest sense the one thing that was lost and which Jesus came to save was eternal life.

### Eternal life lost

An understanding of Jesus' words that He had come to "save eternal life" requires an understanding of God's purpose in creating mankind. The Scriptures declare: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth ... And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed"* (Gen. 1:1; 2:8). Then "... God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth'. So God created man in his own

image ... And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it ...'" (Gen. 1:26-31). Those verses speak only of Man's dominion on the Earth and make no mention of his death.

### Death

Death entered the scene when Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in contravention of God's commandment: *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Gen. 2:17). The entry of death is the first component of God's plan that must be understood in order to understand Jesus' words that He had come "to save that which was lost".

The second component of God's plan that ratifies Jesus' claim that He had come to "save that which was lost" is that God deemed all of Adam's progeny to be guilty because of Adam's transgression. The Apostle Paul explains it in these words: *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"* (Rom. 5:12). The condemnation to death of all men on the basis of Adam's transgression might seem to be harsh and unjust. However God had a grander plan, as Paul goes on to explain: *"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"* (Rom. 5:12-19).

Thus God's arrangement is that, by condemning all of mankind to death because of Adam's transgression, He could justly grant all mankind life because of the righteousness of one man, Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul expounded God's plan to the Christians at Corinth in similar terms: *"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"* (1 Cor. 15:21-22). The words

*"as in Adam all die"* are very important, but the words *"in Christ shall all be made alive"* are more important. Every human being can testify to the truth of the first part of the statement: *"all are dying"* - the rich, the poor, the struggling, the kings - all are dying. The last part of the statement - that *"all in Christ will be made alive"* - is yet to be fulfilled and the hope of Christians is that it will be fulfilled. The Christian's faith that Jesus will bring it about is based on Jesus' declaration after He had been resurrected that *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* (Matt. 28:18).

### Examples of His Power

Jesus' statement that *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* gives assurance that the promise that *"all will be made alive"* will come to pass. God's power is infinite and Israel's exodus from Egypt illustrates that power. The record is in Exodus 12.

At that time Egypt was a mighty power. Verses 37 and 38 state that the number of Israeli men that came out of Egypt was *"about 600,000"* plus *"a mixed multitude ... and flocks and herds and much cattle"*, all *"on foot"*. Even with modern means of transport, providing for their travel would have been a mammoth task. However there were several other factors that added greatly to the difficulty of the task. They did not have motorised transport, there was no means of communicating with large groups and there was no infrastructure that would provide for their food and water *en route*.

An early obstacle of a different kind was presented by the Red Sea (Exodus 13:18). However God divided the sea and they crossed on dry land, but when the Egyptians followed, Pharaoh and his army drowned. The Israelites' crossing was a miracle - that is, the power of God in action.

Israel went over the Red Sea into the desert. They were faced with hunger and thirst, however God provided for their needs. For 40 years manna fell from heaven (Exodus 16:35); in the Hebrew language *"manna"* (*Anlwa*) means *"gift of heaven"*. The miraculous feeding of such a large number of people and livestock for a period of 40 years is a miracle that warrants reflection; it is a feat that only God's power could accomplish, and Jesus now has that same power.

Not one person died from thirst during their 40 year trek through the wilderness. When there was *"no water for the people to drink"* (Exodus 17:1), God provided water from a rock, a substance that is normally devoid of water: *"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel"* (Exodus 17:6). Such

examples of God's power should assure every Christian that He is able to provide for all of Man's needs, and Jesus Christ has been given that same power - *"all power in heaven and in earth"*.

### Virgin birth

Another miracle that demonstrates God's power and superiority over the "natural" powers of mankind is Jesus' conception in the virgin Mary's womb, as recorded in Matthew 1:18: *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost"*. The authenticity of the miracle is attested by the fact that it was prophesied more than 600 years previously: *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel"* (Isa. 7:14).

### Jesus' miracles

Another miracle that illustrates God's power through Jesus was the feeding of the *"5000 men apart from women and children"*, from only 5 loaves and 2 fishes. The miracle was performed when Jesus was on Earth even before He had been given *"all power in heaven and in earth"*. Not only did *"they eat and were filled"* but 12 baskets were filled with the fragments that remained (Matt. 14:14-21).

### Jesus' death

The events that occurred when Jesus died on the cross further testify to God's power: *"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour"* (Matt. 27:45). The darkening of the sun from noon until mid-afternoon exemplifies God's power over every component of the universe that He created, and is similar to His action in making the sun stand still in Joshua's day (Joshua 10:12).

Another event that occurred at the time of Jesus' death and which exemplifies God's power was the rending of the veil of the temple: *"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent ..."* (Matt. 27:51). A man would not have had the strength to do that because the veil was 4 inches (10 cm.) thick. This remarkable event convinced the Roman centurion and the other soldiers who had guarded Jesus that He was the Son of God. Jesus now has the same power that rent the veil.

The events referred to above give Christians every confidence that God has the power to establish the kingdom for which Jesus taught His disciples to pray *"thy kingdom come"*. Because God has given the same power to Jesus, Jesus' statement that He came *"to seek and to save that which was lost"* will not suffer due to a lack of power or authority.

## RESURRECTION CHALLENGES

At the present time (the year that is commonly called 2008AD), Jesus' coming to Earth and His death on the Cross have not had any apparent effect or influence on the affairs of mankind - the nations continue to fight each other, people still get sick and die and seemingly "... all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation ..." (2 Pet. 3:4). It appears to be as Solomon said, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever" (Eccl. 1:4).

Nevertheless the Scriptures are clear that Jesus' first advent will have an effect on the affairs of mankind at His second coming ("second advent"): "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20-21). The work of His First Advent was a prerequisite for the work that He will accomplish when He comes again when there will be "a time of restitution of all things".

### Resurrection

However if the benefits of His coming are limited to those who are living when He returns, the benefits will be enjoyed by only a fraction of those who have lived since the beginning of time, and that would be a shallow fulfillment of the angels' message "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

In order for the benefits to extend to those who have lived and died before He returns, there will have to be a resurrection, that is, the dead will have to be brought back to life. Such a resurrection is promised and is a key element of God's plan. Jesus declared "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth**; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (judgment)" (John 5:28-29). At first glance Jesus' words "all in the graves shall come forth" present a challenge to the human mind because many have been dismembered by bombs, violence or accident, and also because it is approximately 6000 years since the creation of Adam and Eve and hence the large majority of those who have died would have "returned to dust" (Gen. 3:19).

Nevertheless such a hope was proclaimed by the Apostle Paul in his defence before Felix: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the

*prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that **there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust***" (Acts 24:15).

### With what body?

As mentioned above, the first challenge to the concept of a resurrection is the physical body - what bodies will the resurrected persons be given? The question is particularly relevant to those people who have been blown apart in warfare, been disfigured by disease or injury or have other disabilities.

The answer to that question was given by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians so that they could respond to any who might ask them the same question: "But some man will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?' Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body ..." (1 Cor. 15:35-39). And so it will be in the resurrection - the body that existed in this life and which goes down into the grave, either wholly or in pieces, is irrelevant because God will give everyone a new body.

### Accommodation

The concept of a resurrection for everyone raises some conceptual issues. The first one is whether there would be enough room for everyone to live on planet Earth.

According to the United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (February 2008), the world population reached 6 billion (6,000,000,000) on 12 October 1999, and in February 2008 it was 6.65 billion. There have been a number of attempts to estimate the total number of people who have ever lived, and the results vary widely. However one estimate is that the world population was almost static until about the beginning of the 19th century with the most rapid increase occurring during the 20th century. Based on that premise, it is estimated that the present population of the Earth constitutes about one half of the total number of persons who have ever lived. That estimation suggests that the entire number would be less than 15 billion (15,000,000,000).

The area of land on Earth, including the polar ice caps, is about 148 million (148,000,000) square kilometres.

On the basis of those figures, the population density required when every person is resurrected will be

approximately 100 persons per square kilometre. Some population densities in the Earth today are:

|                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Monaco                       | 23660                          |
| • Hong Kong                    | 6407                           |
| • India                        | 336                            |
| • United Kingdom               | 246                            |
| • China                        | 137                            |
| • USA                          | 31                             |
| • Australia                    | 2.6                            |
| <b>Overall (259 countries)</b> | <b>44.6 persons/square km.</b> |

Thus it appears that the population density after the resurrection will be a little more than double the present overall density. However today there are vast areas of the Earth that are only sparsely populated; 14% is classified as desert, and 35% as “desert region” (a “desert region” is an area that has an annual rainfall of less than 250 mm (10’’)). Antarctica alone comprises approximately 9% of the land area, so an overall density twice today’s average will not mean an overcrowded Earth.

### Food

Another consideration is food; will there be enough food? The question is pertinent because today there are many people dying from hunger.

The Scriptures give unqualified assurance that there will be sufficient food for everyone because the Earth is going to be restored to its former productivity. The promise is recorded in Isaiah 35:6-7: “... *in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes*”. Such an abundance of water will enable the Earth to “*yield her increase*” as prophesied in Psalm 67:6. One of the remarkable phenomena of the Earth today is the prolific growth that occurs in a desert when it receives rain. And that growth is from a cursed Earth (Gen. 3:17); what the earth will be able to produce when the curse is lifted and the deserts have plenty of water is unknown (Rev. 22:3).

Consequently all of mankind will be well fed; it is within God’s power to resurrect every human being who has ever lived, and to restore the Earth so that there will be sufficient food for everyone - no one will be hungry in His kingdom.

### Health

In the kingdom of God there will be many changes health-wise. Today mankind cannot thwart disease and sickness despite amazing progress in medical knowledge. In that day “... *the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick ...*” (Isa. 33:24). “*Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb*

*sing ...*” (Isa. 35:6 ). There will not be any sickness and therefore there will not be any need for doctors, hospitals, medicines, X-ray machines, nursing homes, wheelchairs and other medical apparatus. It will be a totally different world.

### Peace

In the kingdom of God there will not be any politics. Isaiah 2:3-4 reads: “*And many people shall go and say, ‘Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths’: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem ...*”. One important feature of that prophecy is that the nations will all go to the same place - “*the mountain of the Lord*” - to learn “*of His ways*”. They will not try to govern according to their own wisdom and consequently there will not be any conflict of political ideologies.

The situation described in those verses represents what the majority of rulers of this world are striving to achieve - a world without conflict. What a great change that will be! There will not be any ministries of defence or factories producing armaments to kill. At that time the promise given at Jesus’ birth will be fulfilled: “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*” (Luke 2:14).

All the governments on Earth cannot bring about such conditions; they will be brought about only by Almighty God. He has given “*all power in heaven and in earth*” to Jesus (Matt. 28:18), and it will be Jesus’ role to “*put down all rule and all authority and power*” and then “*deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father*” (1 Cor. 15:24).

### Death

The above changes are wonderful to contemplate but they would be somewhat empty and the arrangements would lack purpose if mankind were to continue to die. Therefore a critical change is that there will be no more death and mankind will live for ever - they will have **eternal** life. Revelation 21:4-5 sums it up in a few words: “*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new’. And he said unto me, ‘Write: for these words are true and faithful’*”.

Since God is the all-powerful creator of the universe, there is no task that is too great for Him. And concerning the resurrection of the dead, truly He is “*the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*” (Matt. 22:32).



# THE RULE OF LAW

In simple terms, **The Rule of Law** is that no one is above the law and everyone must abide by it, regardless of whether they be rich or poor, mighty or despised, peasant or king.

Some historians claim that the concept of **The Rule of Law** originated at the signing of the Magna Carta in England in 1215AD. The purpose of that document was to bind Pope Innocent III, King John and the British barons to the same legal principles and so achieve consistency of administration.

## God's Rule of Law

**The Rule of Law** is one of the fundamental principles of God's jurisdiction. The particular Law that He has upheld at all times and which He continues to uphold is the Law of Justice. Moses declared: *"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth ... Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he"* (Deut. 32:1-4). Isaiah declared: *"For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it ... I am the LORD; and there is none else ... I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right ... there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me"* (Isa. 45:18-21). God is just, He has always operated justly and hence He has always complied with His own Rule of Law.

## Old Testament Times

Consistent with the fact that God is just and that He has and always does comply with His own Rule of Law, He has always required His people to operate in accordance with **The Rule of Law**. An example from early times is the keeping of the Passover and the qualifications of those who were entitled to eat the sacrifice. Exodus 12:43-50 reads: *"It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, 'This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger, eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. ... And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses*

*and Aaron, so did they"*. Circumcision was given by God to Abraham and his descendants as a token of their favoured position with God as recorded in Genesis 17:9-11: *"And God said unto Abraham, 'Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you'"*. Circumcision was a special token of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants, and the Passover was also a special observance of which only the children of Israel were entitled to eat. Nevertheless some non-Israelites were permitted to partake of it provided they had first complied with the token of circumcision, and this was an example of the **Rule of Law**: *"One law shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger"*. There were no exceptions.

In keeping with God's law of justice, strict instructions were given to the judges of Israel to ensure that they judged with justice. Deuteronomy 16:18-20 reads: *"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons ... That which is altogether just shalt thou follow ..."*. The judges were not to respect persons; the Rule of Law was to apply - one law for all persons regardless of their status amongst the people.

## Jesus' sacrifice

It was God's unwavering adherence to the Law of Justice that required Jesus to come to Earth and die as a righteous man, a perfect man equivalent to the initially perfect man Adam, and which enables God to justify Christian believers: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness ... To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"* (Rom. 3:23-26). Jesus' sacrifice facilitated God's compliance with His Law of Justice.

## Jesus taunted

The Pharisees taunted Jesus regarding the Rule of Law. The Roman Empire was in power and the Pharisees, perceiving that He deemed God to be a higher power than Caesar, tried to trick Him into not observing the law of the land on the grounds that He

was "above it". The record is in Matthew 22:15-22: *"Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, 'Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?' But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, 'Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money.' And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, 'Whose is this image and superscription?' They say unto him, 'Caesar's'. Then saith he unto them, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's'."*

Their scheme was introduced by falsely stating "we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth". If they had believed that Jesus was true and taught God's way they would not have challenged Him. Their next statement was a form of mockery: "neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men", and constituted an attempt to falsely acknowledge that He considered Himself to be above the law and not bound by it. Jesus used the engraving on a coin to rebuke the Pharisees: "They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's'" (Matt 22:21). Jesus showed that He did not claim to be above the law, and nor should anyone claim to be above the law. Nevertheless there was a distinction between those things that were rightly the province of their earthly society and those that they were obliged to give to God.

### **The Christian and the Rule of Law**

The Christian is to observe **The Rule of Law** in matters that pertain to "their Caesar" just as Jesus did. The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy *"that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior"* (1 Tim. 2:1-3). The Christian is not to be lawless but is to comply with the laws of the land just as the law applies to every other citizen.

Paul also instructed the brethren in Rome to observe the laws that existed in that day. The instruction has not been superseded by any later edict and therefore continues to apply today. Paul's instruction was: *"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* (Greek: *krima* - a decision)" (Rom. 13:1-2).

The inference from both Jesus' and the Apostle Paul's teaching is that God permits governments to exist until they have accomplished God's purpose. There is a saying that "a bad government is better than no government at all" - the alternative is anarchy - and the Christian is to endeavour to live peaceably which is a condition that is not possible when anarchy prevails. Christians are to be law abiding citizens.

### **The Rule of Law in God's kingdom**

**The Rule of Law** (which may be summed up as "one law for all") will apply in the kingdom of God when it is established on Earth. It is incorrect to assume that the love that all people will embrace at that time will mean that there will not be any need for law.

The conditions that will exist at that time are recorded in Isaiah 2:2-4: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths': for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"*.

Those verses state that the law will go forth from Zion; a simple statement but one that is very important: there will be law in God's kingdom.

Additionally *"all nations shall flow unto it"*. There will be one law for all: it will apply uniformly to all nations, whether they were powerful empires, socialist republics or struggling third-world countries. God's law will apply to all and no nation or people will be "above it" (exempted from it).

Isaiah 45:22-23 confirms that God's law will be universal: *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear"*. The law of righteousness will apply to "all the ends of the earth": there will not be any exceptions - *"every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear"*. God's law of righteousness will apply to all as stated in Psalm 98:9: *"Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall*



he judge the world, and the people with equity". The statement "He will judge the world with righteousness and the people with equity" is vital - there will not be any partiality, just as the judges of Israel were "not to have respect of persons".

Isaiah 28:16-17 tells of the law that will prevail at the setting up of the kingdom: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place'". God's law of righteousness and justice - the law that He established at the beginning - will apply to all people. The standard will be righteousness.

Acts 17:31 further attests that the standard of God's judgement will be righteousness: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in **righteousness** by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead".

Divergence from the righteous law will not be permitted: "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:27).

However, as is not the case today, everyone's fate will be in their own hands and they will be fully aware of their choice. The prophet Jeremiah declares: "In those days they shall say no more, 'The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge'. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge" (Jer. 31:29-30).

Likewise the prophet Ezekiel wrote: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and

in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, 'The way of the Lord is not equal'. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, 'The way of the Lord is not equal', O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (Ezek. 18:20-32). The Lord declares that His ways are equal, that a righteous man shall live but the sinner shall perish for their own iniquity - a totally just judgement and one that will apply equitably to everyone. The Rule of Law will apply.

In the kingdom of God there will be justice; the law will be just and applied equitably to all. There will not be respect of persons. In the words of Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; **just and true** are thy ways, thou King of saints'".

### The kingdom complete

When humanity reaches perfection Jesus Christ will hand over the kingdom to His father as stated by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:24: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power". Of that time John was given a vision: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away'" (Rev. 21:1-4).

## INCREASE OR PERISH

The concept of "increase" is mentioned many times throughout the Bible, and is applied in a variety of ways. "Increase or perish" seems to be a principle of God's dealings with planet Earth and His human creation on it.

An increase is implied in God's blessing to Adam and Eve: *"be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"* (Gen. 1:28). Likewise He said to Noah and his sons after the flood *"Be fruitful and multiply"* (Gen. 9:1).

### Be fruitful and multiply

The instruction *"to be fruitful and multiply"* has been complied with; today the Earth can barely support the teeming millions who have descended from Adam and Eve. However Christians should not be concerned because when Christ's kingdom is established on Earth, *"then shall the earth yield her increase"* (Psa. 67:6) and consequently there will be plenty for all. The ecology will be returned to the delicately balanced arrangement God designed, referred to as the *"bounds of their habitation"* (Acts 17:26); "the bounds" being the temperature limits within which Man can survive, combined with the concentration of oxygen and water (both liquid water and water vapour) in the atmosphere, and the intensity of the sun's rays.

In essence, the lower orders of the earthly creation, the herbs and trees, were "commissioned" to *'be fruitful and multiply'* before Man was created (Gen. 1:11-12). Some species are now extinct, either because of changed conditions on Earth or because of the brutality and greed of mankind. Man's plundering of Earth's bounties has changed the conditions to the extent that these species have been unable to increase and so they cease to exist; they have perished.

### The flood

When the wickedness of the human family, aided by the wrongdoing of the angels (Gen. 6:1-5), had reached such a state that the *"thoughts of their hearts were only evil continually"*, God sent the Flood to end the lives of all except righteous Noah and his family (Gen. 6:17-19). After the flood God said to Noah *"Go forth of the ark, thou and thy wife and thy sons and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, and of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth"* (Gen. 8:16-17). In order to facilitate the increase God ordained that *"while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat,*

*and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"* (Gen. 8:22). And so it continues to this day.

### The seed of Abraham

Later God made a wonderful promise to Abraham: *"In blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore"* (Gen. 22:17). At the beginning of the 21st. century there are millions of Abraham's descendants throughout the Earth, comprised of descendants from both the seed of the bondwoman and the seed of the free woman (Gen. 21:12-13).

### The Spiritual Seed

The principle of "increase or perish" applies to God's plan for His Son. Just before His crucifixion Jesus said to His disciples *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"* (John 12:24). He was teaching His disciples that it was necessary for Him to die and that unless He died He would *"abide alone"* because He was the only righteous Man on the Earth.

However Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15:20 that when He was resurrected Jesus became *"the first-fruits of them that slept"*. His footstep followers also are regarded as *"a kind of first-fruits of his creatures"* (James. 1:18). Thus, through the laying down in death of the 'corn of wheat', Jesus "increased", God deeming His followers to also be His sons: *"For it became him ... in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings"* (Heb. 2:10).

The "other sons" to whom Hebrews 2:10 refers are elsewhere referred to as "the seed of Isaac": *"In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh (natural or fleshly Israelites), these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed"* (Rom. 9:7-8). *"Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise"* (Gal. 4:28). Had Jesus' sacrifice been deficient He would not have been resurrected and He would not have had any increase; He would have "perished".

### The Christian's increase

Christians must increase or they too will perish. The Scriptures contain several exhortations regarding the increase that Christians must achieve during their time on Earth. Three of the increases required are knowledge, love and faith. Colossians 1:10 exhorts the Christians at Colosse to *"increase in the knowledge of God"*. Knowledge is increased by studying God's

Word, both privately and with other Christians. Paul wrote to Timothy: *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). The studentship referred to in that verse is wider than a study of the Bible because it includes self-examination and a conscious awareness of one's actions. Nevertheless it also includes study of God's Word because it is through the Bible that God gives the Christian the knowledge as to how to be approved unto God. That knowledge is obtained by *"rightly dividing the word of truth"*. In similar vein Paul wrote to the Thessalonians with the admonition *"... we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business ... that ye may walk honestly towards them that are without ..."* (1 Thess. 4:10-12).

### Love

The Christian must increase in love. Quoting again from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians: *"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love towards one another, and toward all men"* (1 Thess. 3:12).

### Faith

Luke 17:5-6 reads: *"And the apostles said unto the Lord, 'Increase our faith'. And the Lord said, 'If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, 'Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea'; and it should obey you'"*.

Hebrews 11:1 defines "faith" as *"the substance (that is conviction) of things hoped for"*. A Christian cannot have too much faith because it is by faith that he *"overcomes the world"* (1 John 5:4), and it is by faith that he is saved (Rom. 8:24). Also the Apostle Paul says: *"above all take the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one"* (Eph. 6:16).

The Apostle Peter writes that there are many things to be added to faith: *"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet. 1:5-8). Again the principle employed is "increase or perish".

### Accurate knowledge required

2 Peter 3:18 reads: *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ..."* The Christian is to increase in knowledge - knowledge of God's plan and of His requirements for them. However it is an accurate knowledge of God's plan that is required, as shown by the error of the Israelites:

*"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"* (Rom. 10:1-3). Israel's failure was not due to a lack of zeal but to an inaccurate knowledge, and Christians are vulnerable to error due to a lack of knowledge: *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"* (Eph. 5:17). *"This I say therefore ... that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart"* (Eph. 4:17-18). *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light"* (Eph. 5:8). The Christian's understanding must increase as they walk the narrow path to life: *"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"* (Prov. 4:18).

### Peace in the kingdom

In spite of the fact that many political leaders have a knowledge of history and the downfall of their predecessors, none has been able to formulate policies that have brought world-wide peace. All systems of government that are available to Man - democracy, communism, socialism, dictatorship, imperialism - have been adopted at various times. However, even if they had tried to do so - and it is acknowledged that some have not tried to do so - none has increased to the extent of bringing universal peace, harmony and happiness and so all have perished.

The kingdom of God will be a stark contrast to the kingdoms of the world that have existed under Man's rule. Isaiah 9:7 reads: *"Of the **increase of his government and peace** there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this"*. What a wonderful promise is contained in those words: it will be established for ever and ever; there will be no end to its increase. As Isaiah later declared: *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"* (Isa. 11:9). In order to reach that glorious condition the people of the world will have to walk up the *"highway of holiness"*: *"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein"* (Isa. 35:8). The kingdom of God will be totally different from the present world and it will last forever - it will not perish.

## LOVE DOES NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY

The Apostle Paul wrote *"Love does not behave itself unseemly"* (1 Cor. 13:5). Those words present the Christian with a far-reaching challenge that requires the continual exercise of spiritual wisdom.

Some standards of conduct that are acceptable and appropriate for non-Christians are unacceptable and inappropriate for the Christian as explained by the Apostle Peter: *"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind ... That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you"* (1 Peter 4:1-4).

Peter's words relate to preserving the health of the Christian's spiritual mind whereas the context of 1 Corinthians 13:5 is love - *"love does not behave itself unseemly"*. The question is, why or how is unseemly conduct contrary to love?

### Meaning

The Greek word rendered *"unseemly"* in 1 Corinthians 13:5 is *"aschemoneo"*. The only other occurrence of *"aschemoneo"* is in 1 Corinthians 7:36 where it is translated *"uncomely"*. In that verse it relates to the behaviour of a man towards a woman and is irrelevant to its use in 1 Corinthians 13:5.

In order to comply with the admonition that *"love does not behave itself unseemly"* it is necessary to have an understanding of what is meant by *"unseemly"* in the context of 1 Corinthians 13:5.

Some translations of the New Testament translate *"aschemoneo"* in 1 Corinthians 13:5 as *"rude"* (NIV), *"indecent"* (Concordant), or *"arrogant"* (RSV). Strong's Concordance defines it as *"unbecoming"* and Vines' Dictionary (listed under "Behave No.4") defines it as *"to be unseemly"*.

The Macquarie Dictionary definitions of the various English words that are used to translate *"aschemoneo"* include *"inappropriate"* and *"improper"*. Those words embrace a wide range of situations and it is within that wide sense that unseemly behaviour is contrary to love.

### Examples

Inappropriate behaviour is contrary to love because it has the potential to harm another. James 2:2-6 gives

an example: *"For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, 'Sit thou here in a good place'; and say to the poor, 'Stand thou there', or 'sit here under my footstool' ... ye have despised the poor ...".* Despising anyone is not exhibiting love towards them.

The Apostle Paul advised Timothy of another aspect of *"unseemly behaviour"*: *"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel ... not with braided hair ... or costly array ... but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works"* (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Costly array is unbecoming for the Christian woman because such extravagance has the potential to belittle others who do not have material wealth. The creation of a feeling of inferiority is contrary to love because it tends to destroy the unity of the body, the church: *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4:1-3).

Inappropriate behaviour may also arise even when One has the best intention. Paul wrote: *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"* (Gal. 6:1). Helping another to overcome their weakness requires great wisdom because inappropriate words or actions may unintentionally be said or done. Even quoting verses of Scripture of which the weak one is unaware might be wrongly interpreted as an attitude of superiority and might therefore have the opposite effect to that which was desired or intended.

The decision whether any conduct would be inappropriate and therefore contrary to love is a personal one and requires continual application of spiritual wisdom. In all cases the guidelines must be that *"... love edifieth"* (1 Cor. 8:1) and *"... let all things be done unto edifying"* (1 Cor. 14:26). Every action that has an adverse effect on the spiritual welfare of another is contrary to the fruit of love.

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