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HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE

by

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The Protestant Faith

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### HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE

This week has brought a political upheaval at Canberra about which most of us have strongly held views one way or the other. Tonight is not the occasion for me to make political comments, but rather to remind us all that on polling day each of us electors should be clear in our own minds that we are voting according to what we judge to be the interests of Australia, and not for any partisan or personal reasons.

Christians will find prayer to God very helpful in clarifying their minds and stabilizing their emotions in this affair, as in all other crises of life.

There is, however, a religious comment that can be made, and it is this. We Australians ought to give closer attention to obeying the much neglected command of the New Testament, to honour all men. To obey God here means that we will restrain our language from uncharitable expressions, and from half-truths and such like, which denigrate the character of one another. 'Honour all men' is a clearly expressed and repeated command in the Bible and there is no time like the present for obeying it. This does not mean that we have to approve of each other's actions, or indeed character, but it does mean that we remain in relationship with one another, as we respect and acknowledge the other's worth as fellow men with us.

The giving of honour is not a conspicuous feature of our modern life. The selfish and the arrogant finds giving honour uncongenial. To give honour in a genuine way means that our thoughts are not self-centred, but we recognize the relationship that we have with the other person and that this relationship calls from us a respect and honour and acknowledgement of his worth. In the Bible God commands us to give honour to those to whom honour is due. We have seen that, in a sense, it is due to everyone; but there are certain relationships which especially call forth honour on our part, for example, the well known command, "Children honour your parents". Similarly there is a command in the Bible that citizens should



honour the government. In St. Peter's day the government was the Roman Emperor, not a very respectable character and certainly a dictator, nevertheless the apostle commanded "honour the king". So too we must honour all who have responsibility for governing us. The Bible does not expect us to approve the character of the emperor Nero, any more than the character of some of our modern leaders, nor of their actions necessarily, but we must not fall into the sin of dishonourable language, or thought, or action. There is another command in the Bible about honouring people of which our modern age is quite forgetful, and that is the command to honour women. Women's physical weakness is not to be exploited, but their worth as persons is to be recognized and acknowledged by those who are of the stronger sex. Much of the ferociousness and error of the modern women's liberation movement would be eliminated if husbands obeyed carefully and thoughtfully this clear command to honour their wives. Above all there is the all embracing command to honour God, to acknowledge our relationship with Him in all our thoughts and actions. He is the one from whom we receive life and health and everything. We depend on Him in our private life and in our public life. This dependence ought to be acknowledged by honouring Him, if our public and private life is to be true. The first petition of the prayer Jesus taught us is that God should be honoured, "Hallowed be Thy name". Our generation is not very good at giving honour to whom honour is due. But let us at the present time return to obedience. The command is clear - "honour all men". Above all "honour God", from whom we receive everything we enjoy, and in whose hand and power all our life is placed.

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