

CHAREP - May 3, 1928

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I want to talk to you again this morning about the great teacher who was a great psychologist. These people were determined in some way to catch this man in some of his teachings. The Jews were under the government of the Roman people; the Roman Empire had jurisdiction over them, and there were many conscientious and honorable Jews who felt that it was wrong for them to contribute anything to the support of the Roman government. If they failed to contribute, the power of the Roman Empire was brought to bear upon them; if they said that it was right to contribute, a great and influential element among the Jews would say that they were not good Jews. They must contribute, but they did not think it was right. That was the situation that confronted the people at the time about which I read in the lesson ~~to you~~ this morning.

These Pharisees came to Jesus, and at first they complimented him highly. They said to him: We know that Thou art true and carest for no man, for Thou regardest not the person or man, but teschest the way of God in truth. I do not know how they could have said any more about a person, but they did not mean it. Then they asked him: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar? It is a problem with us whether we can obey God and pay this tax to the Roman government. But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them: Show me a piece of tribute money. They gave him a penny. He took it in his hand and looked at it and said: Whose image is on this? There was no question about that. Of course, Caesar's image was on the coin. The money with which they paid taxes was the established money of the Roman Empire, and it had the image of the head of Caesar on it and the inscription was written in Latin; the language of the Roman Empire, making it an official coin, the money of the realm. Jesus said to them: Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. Jesus always gives a universal rule. Here he gave a rule to follow as a good citizen, a rule for every right minded man and woman to line his life up by so far as his relationship with God and his government is concerned. You cannot be a good citizen unless you are willing to contribute to the support of the government. There are certain obligations that every citizen owes to his government. That is the way human society is organized. A person may live in a monarchy or a democracy or in any one of almost

a thousand forms of government, but it is the way the people in a given territory organize themselves to live together, and when they are so organized it becomes necessary for every citizen to conform to the laws and support the government. We must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Give to the government the things you ought to give to it, and make it the best government possible.

Give your best thought to government matters. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Give to the United States government the best that you have as a good citizen. Give to the State of North Carolina the best that you have as a good citizen. Give to the county in which you live the best that you have as a good citizen. Give to the town in which you live the best that you have. It is the command of Jehovah. It is necessary. To have good government it is necessary that each person in the government does the best he can to see that the government is the best that it can be, and in America it behooves us to use our efforts as far as we can to correct the defects of our government and see that we have the best government possible so that each individual can make the most out of his life and have the greatest amount of freedom under the law.

Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. The two do not conflict. The Jews at that time thought they did conflict, but Jesus told them to pay their taxes and be good citizens in helping to support the government. Do not forsake your religious principles. The government will not interfere, and it did not then. The Roman government let the people in the different parts of the Roman Empire worship as they pleased. The Roman government did not keep a man from being a follower of Jehovah.

Support your church, your religious organization; work in it. Keep your heart and soul clean. Follow the dictates of your conscience in matters of religion. Let God be your guide in life, and render unto God the things that are God's. When a man has done these two things that Jesus told those people to do, he reaches the highest plain in life. As I see it, this is one of the most important passages in the Bible. It shows us what our human relationships should be, tells us of our government obligations and holds us to our religious obligations.

Make the most out of your life spiritually. There is no conflict between that and your duty to your government. Jesus laid that principle down, and when the nations of the world realize it we will have a better world in which to live; we will have better governments and a much more conscientious, right minded citizenship and it will be world-wide. The Principle that was laid down that day in answer to the question of the Pharasses is one of the great principles of life, and I hope the time will come when it will be world-wide and people will get the significance of it and live in keeping with it. It means that you girls in college should give to your Student Government Association the best that you have; it means that you should give to the organization of this college the best you have; it means that you should do the same when you go from here to teach school; it means that you should support the ~~government~~ superintendent and the principal of the school in which you teach and put into operation the law that is necessary to conduct the school successfully. It touches every phase of our lives.

This passage of scripture bears ~~reading~~ studying and restudying: Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. If we will take this into our lives and make it a part of us, it will make us better citizens and will help us in our spiritual lives.