

October 30, 1928

I read the passage of scripture that I did this morning in part because it deals with Sunday School work and because it deals with us as a nation. We people in America are in the midst of one of the most exciting campaigns that there has ever been. The two leaders are fine honorable men but if one reads the political advertisements he would believe that the American people were the biggest bunch of fools in the world for selecting such men.

This book of Romans written by Paul to the church of Rome is a most interesting book. The first ten or eleven chapters deal with the spiritual side of the people and they give most clearly the concept of the religion of Paul which is in a large measure the religion of the Christian churches today. Beginning with chapter twelve or thirteen Paul is writing these people how they should conduct themselves with reference to their government. Paul was a Jew but was also a Roman citizen. He was born a Roman citizen. In other words, his father was a Roman citizen and as Paul said he was free born, he meant that he was born a citizen of Rome and he is writing to these people in the city of Rome, the center of the government that controlled all that part of Europe and Asia. He is telling them to obey the laws, to pay their tribute, tribute to whom tribute is due and custom to whom custom is due. Those people above us are authorized of God and Jehovah is allowing the powers that be. Then he is telling them that the law is for their good and will not interfere with their liberty if they will do the right thing.

Law is not for the good man but the law is for the person that wants to do something that ought not to be done. It is a splendid lesson in government for us today and Paul makes it rather strong. I do not know whether you noticed the significance of the first part of this chapter.

Paul says that those people who resist the Roman law are going to be arrested and prosecuted. He did not mean that their souls will be lost necessarily, he is talking about temporal affairs not spiritual. He is telling them that the Roman government is going to enforce the Roman laws and that if they have no more sense than to disobey them then they will be punished.

Then he goes on to say that the law is not made for the right minded man, the person who loves his neighbor will not get in trouble. Have the right attitude towards the government and the right attitude towards your fellow man and you will stay out of trouble. It is a good chapter on citizenship and it is good advice to every person whether you be Christian or not. It is a lesson in government, it is a lesson in civics and it is also a lesson on one's attitude towards his fellow man. It is included in government, it is included in civics. I wish we could read this book of Romans in the spirit in which it was written by Paul and get the truths that he was trying to preach to those people in the center of the greatest government at that time on the face of the earth. It would help us in our present day life.

You know in this book we call the Bible there is almost an unlimited number of guides for a person's temporal conduct as well as the spiritual guide for one. If we could realize as Paul fully realized that government is absolutely necessary and that certain regulations are absolutely essential for human beings to live together and that freedom is not license to do as one pleases but that real freedom is that latitude that comes to one if he has conformed to the general regulations that are good for the whole body. In other words, it is freedom under the law and not license against the law. The greatest amount of freedom in this world comes to one when he conforms to the great principles of government that must be conformed to in

order to control human relationships. It is freedom under the law instead of violation of the law. That is also true in one's spiritual life. There are persons who honestly believe that if a mother throws her first born child into a river her highest spiritual freedom is reached. They do that in some parts of this world. It does not give her freedom for if she is a real mother she never gets over it. A parent who takes a child and throws it into the Ganges to his god does not find spiritual freedom. Spiritual freedom comes when one finds the laws of Jehovah and shapes his life according to His great laws.

And that is the reason we are continually insisting upon your obeying the laws. It is the best way to be free. It is the only way to be truly free. You get your real freedom and happiness by conforming to the laws. Do it with love towards your fellow man.

---Robert H. Wright, President