

Home Page

Superior Authorities

The Divine Plan of the Ages (SS-1) 1916 ed., p. 266

“Knowing this to be the purpose of God, neither Jesus nor the apostles interfered with earthly rulers in any way. On the contrary, they taught the Church to submit to these powers, even though they often suffered under their abuse of power. They taught the Church to obey the laws, and to respect those in authority because of their office, even if they were not personally worthy of esteem; to pay their appointed taxes, and, except where they conflicted with God’s laws (Acts 4:19; 5:29), to offer no resistance to any established law. (Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 22:21.) The Lord Jesus and the apostles and the early Church were all law-abiding, though they were separate from, and took no share in, the governments of this world. Though the powers that be, the governments of this world, were ordained or arranged for by God, that mankind might gain a needed experience under them, yet the Church, the consecrated ones who aspire to office in the coming Kingdom of God, should neither covet the honors and the emoluments of office in the kingdoms of this world, nor should they oppose these powers.”

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The Watchtower, June 1, 1929, p. 167

“This proves that the higher powers are Christ Jesus and Jehovah and that the supreme power is Jehovah God...The apostle could not mean that the ‘higher powers’ are the Gentile powers...Those who have insisted that the apostle referred exclusively to the Gentile powers when he said, ‘The powers that be are ordained of God,’ cite in support thereof the words of Peter, to wit; ‘Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man [human creation, Greek] for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.’”

Riches, 1936 ed., p. 219

“A misunderstanding of what constitutes ‘the higher powers’ has caused many persons to be held in restraint or in Babylon’s prison...Those inspired words do not refer to the governments or rulers of the nations of earth. That scripture is addressed ‘to all that be...called to be saints’ (Romans 1:7) and to no others, and the ‘higher powers’ over such are Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, that is, God and his royal house in heaven.”

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Salvation, 1939 ed., p. 255

“But the ‘higher powers’ herein named are not the kings and dictators and presidents or other political rulers of the nation, nor are the religious leaders any part of the ‘higher powers’. Not one of them represents God and Christ Jesus, but, on the contrary, they are under the control of Satan, who is the invisible ruler of this world...Who, then, are the ‘higher powers’? Jehovah God is supreme, and Christ Jesus is his Chief Officer, to whom he has committed full power and authority to carry out his purpose; and therefore the ‘higher powers’ are Jehovah God and Christ Jesus.”

“The Truth Shall Make You Free”, 1943 ed., p. 312

“In 1929 the clear light broke forth. That year *The Watchtower* published the Scriptural exposition of Romans chapter 13. It showed that Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, rather than worldly rulers and governors, are ‘The Higher Powers’ and that the Christian souls must ‘obey God rather than men’; and that ‘every ordinance of man’ to which they must submit is every Scriptural ordinance of men who are servants within God’s organization under the King Christ Jesus. (I Peter 2:13)”

“Let God Be True”, 1952 revised., p. 248

“So the ‘higher powers’ the apostle mentioned are Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, and Christ Jesus is Jehovah’s great Minister.”

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Make Sure, 1953 ed., p. 369

“Rom. 13:1-4 ‘Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities [Jehovah God and Christ Jesus], for there is no authority except by God [only Christ Jesus and his theocratic organization recognized by God]; the existing authorities [not political governments] stand placed in their relative positions by God [not ‘divine right of kings’]. Therefore he who ranges himself up against the authority [Christ Jesus] has taken a stand against the arrangement of God; those who have taken a stand against it will receive judgment to themselves [annihilation from Christ Jesus].’”

**Jehovah’s Witnesses In The Divine Purpose,
1959 ed., p. 91**

“There were many false doctrines and practices that had not yet been cleaned out of the organization. Not all of them were recognized at once, but gradually over the years that followed it became evident to what extent the brothers had been in Babylonish captivity at that time. With considerable misunderstanding they had accepted earthly political governments as the ‘superior authorities’ that God had ordained according to Romans 13:1...”

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The Watchtower, November 15, 1962, p. 690

“So, when Christians subject themselves to Gentile ‘superior authorities’ with their different systems of government and law, they conform themselves to those laws that show the work of conscience according to what God originally wrote in man’s heart. Since the Christians’ subjection to worldly ‘superior authorities’ is only relative, it does not obligate them to obey any worldly laws that go contrary to the laws of the Supreme Lawgiver, Jehovah God...From our look into Bible history and from our study of Bible prophecy as fulfilled among the Gentile nations, we find Romans 13:1 truthful in saying: ‘The existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God.’ Jehovah the Most High is not the God of the worldly nations and of their ‘superior authorities,’ and yet he has a control over them.”

“Babylon The Great Has Fallen!”, 1963 ed., p. 548

“In spite of the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, God permitted the political authorities of this world to continue as the ‘higher powers’ or the ‘powers that be,’ which are ‘ordained of God.’”

Make Sure, 1965 ed., p. 474

“Humans Exercise Authority Only by Permission of Jehovah; Rom. 13:1 ‘Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God.’”

The Watchtower, May 15, 1980, p. 4

“At Romans 13:1 we read: ‘Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities,’ that is, to governments.”

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The Watchtower, May 1, 1996, p. 13-14

“Neither Jesus nor the Apostles interfered with earthly rulers in any way...They taught the Church to obey the laws, and to respect those in authority because of their office,...to pay their appointed taxes, and except where they conflict with God’s laws (Acts 4:19; 5:29) to offer no resistance to any established law’...This book correctly identified ‘the higher powers,’ or ‘the superior authorities,’ mentioned by the apostle Paul, as human governmental authorities...This was understood by some to mean total submission to the powers that be, even to the point of accepting service in the armed forces during World War I...In 1929, at a time when laws of various governments were beginning to forbid things that God commands or demand things that God’s laws forbid, it was felt that the higher powers must be Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. This was the understanding Jehovah’s servants had during the crucial period before and during World War II and on into the Cold War, with its balance of terror and its military preparedness. Looking back, it must be said that this view of things, exalting as it did the supremacy of Jehovah and his Christ, helped God’s people to maintain an uncompromisingly neutral stand throughout this difficult period. In 1961 the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was completed. Its preparation had required an in-depth study of the textual language of the Scriptures. The precise translation of the words used not only in Romans chapter 13 but also in such passages as Titus 3:1,2 and 1 Peter 2:13,17 made it evident that the term ‘*superior* authorities’ referred, not to the *Supreme* Authority, Jehovah, and to his Son, Jesus, but to *human governmental authorities*. In late 1962, articles were published in *The Watchtower* that gave an accurate explanation of Romans chapter 13 and also provided a clearer view than that held at the time of C.T.Russell. These articles pointed out that Christian subjection to the authorities cannot be total. It must be *relative*, subject to its not bringing God’s servants into conflict with God’s laws.”

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blood. And the prophets declare that because of the increase of knowledge a still more general and wide-spread dissipation will finally express itself in a world-wide revolution, in the overthrow of all law and order; that anarchy and distress upon all classes will be the result; but that in the midst of this confusion the God of heaven will set up his Kingdom, which will satisfy the desires of all nations. Wearied and disheartened with their own failures, and finding their last and greatest efforts resulting in anarchy, men will gladly welcome and bow before the heavenly authority, and recognize its strong and just government. Thus man's extremity will become God's opportunity, and "the desire of all nations shall come;"—the Kingdom of God, in power and great glory.—*Hay, 2 : 7.*

Knowing this to be the purpose of God, neither Jesus nor the apostles interfered with earthly rulers in any way. On the contrary, they taught the Church to submit to these powers, even though they often suffered under their abuse of power. They taught the Church to obey the laws, and to respect those in authority because of their office, even if they were not personally worthy of esteem; to pay their appointed taxes, and, except where they conflicted with God's laws (Acts 4 : 19 ; 5 : 29), to offer no resistance to any established law. (Rom. 13 : 1-7; Matt. 22 : 21.) The Lord Jesus and the apostles and the early Church were all law-abiding, though they were separate from, and took no share in, the governments of this world.

Though the powers that be, the governments of this world, were ordained or arranged for by God, that mankind might gain a needed experience under them, yet the Church, the consecrated ones who aspire to office in the coming Kingdom of God, should neither cover the honors and the emoluments of office in the kingdoms of this world, nor should they oppose these powers. They are fellow citizens and heirs

of the heavenly kingdom (Eph. 2 : 19), and as such should claim only such rights and privileges under the kingdoms of this world as are accorded to aliens. Their mission is not to help the world to improve its present condition, nor to have anything to do with its affairs at present. To attempt to do so would be but a waste of effort; for the world's course and its termination are both clearly defined in the Scriptures and are fully under the control of him who in his own time will give us the kingdom. The influence of the true Church is now and always has been small—so small as to count practically nothing politically; but however great it might appear, we should follow the example and teaching of our Lord and the apostles. Knowing that the purpose of God is to let the world fully test its own ability to govern itself, the true Church should not, while in it, be of the world. The saints may influence the world only by their separateness from it, by letting their light shine; and thus through their lives the spirit of truth reproves the world. Thus—as peaceable, orderly obeyers and commenders of every righteous law, reprovers of lawlessness and sin, and pointers forward to the promised Kingdom of God and the blessings to be expected under it, and not by the method commonly adopted of mingling in politics and scheming with the world for power, and thus being drawn into wars and sins and the general degradation—in glorious chastity should the prospective Bride of the Prince of Peace be a power for good, as her Lord's representative in the world.

The Church of God should give its entire attention and effort to preaching the Kingdom of God, and to the advancement of the interests of that Kingdom according to the plan laid down in the Scriptures. If this is faithfully done, there will be no time nor disposition to dabble in the politics of present governments. The Lord had no time for

according to God's law? They could not know except by faith and by the fruits of those who are actually engaged in the work of the Lord. Jesus said: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 7:20, 21.

²⁸ If, therefore, we find one who is devoted to the Lord and is bending his efforts to do what the Lord has assigned him to do, and is faithful and true to the Lord and not compromising with the enemy, and who has the Lord's manifest blessings upon his efforts, then his fruits are being manifested and such is proof that he is pleasing to the Lord and going in the right way. (John 15:8) If one is being used of the Lord in harmony with his Word, that is the evidence that his course of action is pleasing to the Lord. Being imperfect, such will make mistakes, but each one who has faith in the Lord will leave it to the Lord to do the chastening and the correction and to rectify the mistakes. (Heb. 12:6; Rom. 8:33) This same rule, because it is the Lord's rule, must apply to all who are in the "Society". If the "Society" is pursuing the wrong course or policy, then all of God's people must depend upon the Lord to correct that policy and change it into the right one. It is not the prerogative of any individual to set himself up as the judge to take action and oppose the work of the Lord. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."—Rom. 14:4.

²⁹ If Romans the thirteenth chapter applies to the church, does that mean that the elders and deacons have authority to do judging and to determine the course or policy of the church? No, certainly not. The elders are the advisers or counselors in the ecclesia and have no jurisdiction to act except within the scope of the authority conferred upon them by the Scriptures. The deacons are servants in the church and possess no authority other than that conferred by the Scriptures. The Scriptures do not confer authority upon elders or deacons to judge or determine the course of action of the ecclesia. If there is disorder in the church the ecclesia, composed of those who are God's children, may take certain action. The Lord himself laid down the code of procedure. Matt. 18:15-18.

³⁰ The church as a body has jurisdiction to hear and determine matters relating to those who are members of the body; but no individual has been clothed with such power or authority, aside from the twelve apostles, who were clothed with special authority from the Lord. If Romans thirteen has any application to the powers in the world, with much stronger reasoning must it apply to the church, because it is addressed to those who are in God's family. Consider now the apostle's instructions verse by verse.

THE TEXT

²¹ "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." (Verse 1) At once the question arises, To what shall God's people be subject? It is written: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15:28) This scripture really answers the question. This proves that the higher powers are Christ Jesus and Jehovah and that the supreme power is Jehovah God. The apostle uses the husband and wife to picture Christ and the church, and by his argument he shows that the church is subject to Christ: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." (Eph. 5:23, 24) The inspired testimony of James supports this conclusion: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." (Jas. 4:7, 8) These scriptures show beyond a doubt that the anointed can be pleasing to God only by an undivided and complete devotion to him. The apostle could not mean that the "higher powers" are the Gentile powers. It is not possible that these are higher than and have control over God's arrangement of his own people.

³² The apostle says: "The powers that be are ordained of [arranged under, *Diagtott*] God." Can this be properly applied to the Gentile powers on earth and not applied to the church? The words of the apostle are in answer to that question: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1 Cor. 12:18, 28) Those who have insisted that the apostle referred exclusively to the Gentile powers when he said, "The powers that be are ordained of God," give in support thereof the words of Peter, to wit: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man [human creation, Greek] for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." A careful examination of this text shows that it does not apply to the powers exercised by the Gentile governments.

³³ The phrase "ordinance of man" in the above text means "human creation". How then could it be said that any ordinance of the church is of human creation? When the man Christ Jesus appointed the apostles and sent them forth as leaders and governors

Jehovah shows his mercy toward those in Babylon who seek to find God's provided way for their escape. Now, since the Lord has built up Zion and those who are on Jehovah's side recognize and appreciate the truth that Jehovah and Christ Jesus are their Teachers and Shepherds, no more are the "elective elders" or the clergy class permitted to act in the capacity of leaders and teachers. "For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17) "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—John 4:10, 14.

The Lord hath not forgotten Zion! Says the prophet: "The children [the Ruth and Esther class] which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other [the 'evil servant' class], shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell." (Isaiah 49:20) This clearly indicates that there shall be a great multitude of "children" that come out from Babylon. Many people will come to the Lord, and blessed are the remnant, Jehovah's witnesses, who are commissioned to bear the fruits of the kingdom before them that they may be sustained. As the prisoners are released they must join with others in making proclamation to the name of Jehovah, advertising his King and his kingdom.

"HIGHER POWERS"

A misunderstanding of what constitutes "the higher powers" has caused many persons to be held in restraint or in Babylon's prison. It is written: "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. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."
—Romans 13:1-3.

Those inspired words do not refer to the governments or rulers of the nations of earth. That scripture is addressed "to all that be . . . called to be saints" (Romans 1:7) and to no others, and the "higher powers" over such are Jehovah God and Christ Jesus that is God and his royal house in heaven. The powers that rule the present wicked world and which are known as "temporal powers" are not ordained of God. Jesus plainly said: "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) Also he said that Satan the Devil is the prince or ruler of this world and that Christ Jesus has no part with him. (John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4) Those who are devoted to God will obey the laws of this world when those laws are not in conflict with God's law.

Jesus commanded that his followers render "unto Caesar [the temporal or worldly governments] the things which be Caesar's; and unto God the things which be God's". (Luke 20:25) When God commands

know at Armageddon. Both the political and religious leaders are blind and find themselves in the same class named by the Lord when he said that they would "both fall into the ditch"; meaning destruction. (Luke 6:39) The rulers of the nations know that the witnesses of Jehovah are proclaiming within their hearing the facts concerning the approaching disaster of Armageddon. They do not want to hear God's warning, because it is bad news to them. Hence they willingly join the religionists in the persecution of Jehovah's witnesses, and because of their fear they rush off to the pope, hoping to there find some consolation. Exactly as God foretold by his prophets, these worldly rulers form leagues and build strong cities, hoping thereby to protect themselves. They put the state above God and even indulge in the persecution of little children to compel them to recognize the state above God, and the Devil induces them to use this as a means of persecution of Jehovah's true witnesses.

"HIGHER POWERS"

Are not all persons commanded to obey the "higher powers"? and are not the rulers in the various nations the "higher powers"? All who have agreed to do the will of God must obey and be subject to the "higher powers"; as it is written: "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."—Romans 13:1, 2.

But the "higher powers" herein named are not the kings and dictators and presidents or other political rulers of the nation, nor are the religious leaders any part of the "higher powers". Not one of them represents God and Christ Jesus, but, on the contrary, they are under the control of Satan, who is the invisible ruler of this world. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Further instructing those who would know the right way, the scripture reads: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."—Romans 13:3, 4.

Everyone knows that the rulers of this world are evil and do many evil things and, instead of aiding good works, they persecute those who do good works. This shows that they are not the "higher powers" mentioned in the Scriptures. Who, then, are the "higher powers"? Jehovah God is supreme, and Christ Jesus is his Chief Officer, to whom he has committed full power and authority to carry out his purpose; and therefore the "higher powers" are Jehovah God and Christ Jesus. (Matthew 28:18) The scripture above quoted concerning the "higher powers" is addressed specifically to those who have agreed to do God's will and whom God has accepted and called into his organization. (Romans 1:7) God is not dealing with the rulers

cerning the "higher powers" has long caused the ignorant bondage of professing Christians to worldly officials at the expense of the interests of God's work and of true freedom.

After the Lord's coming to the temple and freeing the faithful remnant of spiritual Israelites from captivity to modern-day Babylon he began to open their eyes gradually to the truth. In 1929 the clear light broke forth. That year *The Watchtower* published the Scriptural exposition of Romans chapter 13. It showed that Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, rather than worldly rulers and governors, are "The Higher Powers" and that the Christian souls must "obey God rather than men"; and that "every ordinance of man" to which they must submit is every Scriptural ordinance of men who are servants within God's organization under the King Christ Jesus. (1 Peter 2:13) This revelation of vital truth freed the spirits of God's consecrated people as never before.

Such truth enabled them to remain as "the Lord's freeman", even though physically falling into the clutches of worldly officers and being imprisoned and reduced to the condition of bond-servants or slaves. Armed with such truth they could hold fast their unqualified allegiance to God and not bow their necks in servitude to any parts of Satan's organization, religious, commercial, or political. This truth made them realize their God-sanctioned freedom to push on with his "strange work" of witnessing to his Kingdom, regardless of all the opposition and

all the mischief framed by a law' against them. (Psalm 94: 20-22) To them it is written: "You indeed, brethren, were called to freedom"; and they do not use this freedom for selfish gratification of the flesh with the worldly pleasures, but for the loving service of God and the proclamation of his name and Messianic kingdom.—Galatians 5: 13, *Weymouth; Diaglott; Roth-erham.*

The remnant of Jehovah's witnesses endeavor to spread the spirit of freedom throughout the entire earth. This they do by the spread of the truth as contained in God's written Word. Their Leader, Christ Jesus, said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." By continuing in his word and by being doers of the word as his disciples, they have, by God's grace, come to know the truth. They have come to the freedom enjoyed by the true Christians in the days of the apostles. It was Christ's apostles who told the worldly rulers: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. . . . We ought to obey God rather than men."—Acts 4: 19, 20; 5: 29.

So now Jehovah's witnesses refuse to sacrifice God's gift of freedom. They continue to speak the things they see in His Word despite all demonic and human efforts at interference. They follow the example of Christ Jesus and his apostles as to the manner of speaking the Kingdom

religionists insist that those rulers are the "higher powers" mentioned at Romans 13:1-7, and to which all should submit themselves. But the "higher powers" there mentioned are the principal ruling factors of God's congregation, namely, the invisible governing body of God's kingdom. The apostle did not intend his mention of the higher powers to be applied to men visible to human eyes who are rulers of this evil world run by Satan. So the "higher powers" the apostle mentioned are Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, and Christ Jesus is Jehovah's great Minister.

¹⁸Persons who importune them to break their agreement with God contend that Jehovah's witnesses must comply with all commands of officials of the governments of this world because Jesus declared: "Pay back Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Mark 12:17, NW) Perverse-ly and privately interpreting that saying of Jesus for their own purpose, enemies aim at having Jehovah's witnesses render to "Caesar" the things that are God's. But, like Christ Jesus, Jehovah's witnesses refuse to render to "Caesar" the things belonging to God. Even Pilate could find no fault with Jesus because of his claiming to be a King and refusing to give allegiance to pagan Caesar. (Luke 23:2-4) So no fault can properly be found with these followers of Christ Jesus, Jehovah's witnesses, who render like allegiance to God. They rightly quote Peter's words: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29, NW.

26. (a) What interpretation do worldly rulers place upon Jesus' words at Mark 12:17? (b) How does that interpretation compare with the apostolic practice of Jehovah's witnesses today?

CHAPTER XXI

THE END OF THE WORLD

WHAT once sounded fantastic now appears a grim possibility. The people viewed the Scriptural warning of an end to this world thus in 1945 after the second atomic bomb burst over Japan. The appalling loss of property and life caused deep concern to earth's inhabitants as man had at last stumbled on something he might not be able to control and so the end of the human race might result. This is but one of many developments from A.D. 1914 onward which have caused sincere, God-fearing people to wonder if we are not living in the "last days" before the destruction of this world. For proof it will be necessary to turn to God's Word and there search the prophecies relating to such a time and see if events of the day fit them.

¹ Questions concerning the end first arose in the minds of Jesus' apostles, as shown by their question: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3) Showing that this expression "the end of the world" does not mean the destruction of our earthly globe, the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek*

1. What question have recent developments caused people to wonder about, and where may the answer be found?

2. Who first asked a similar question, and how did Jesus answer it?

moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly-enticed, and my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judges: for I should have denied the God that is above."

1 Tim 6:20 "O Timothy, guard what is laid up in trust with you, turning away from the empty speculations that violate what is holy and from the contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge'."

Astrologers, Tools of Demons

Matt. 21-17 "After Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, look! astrologers from eastern parts came to Jerusalem, saying: 'Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we saw his star... and we have come to do him obeisance....' Then Herod secretly summoned the astrologers and carefully ascertained from them the time of the star's appearing.... Then Herod... had all the boys in Bethlehem... killed, from two years of age and under."

Special Revelations Have Ceased

1 Cor. 13-8-13 "Gifts of prophecy... will be done away with... For we have partial knowledge and we prophesy partially; but when that which is complete arrives, that which is partial will be done away with.... Now... remain faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love."

See also: Eph. 4:11-14.

Gal. 1:8 "Even if we or an angel out of heaven were to declare to you as good news something beyond what we declared to you as good news, let him be accursed."

Testing Inspired Expressions

1 John 4:1, 2 "Do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God, because many false prophe-

ets have gone forth into the world.... Every inspired expression that confesses Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh originates with God."

Rev. 16:13, 14 "I saw three unclean inspired expressions... come out of the mouth of the dragon... the wild beast and... the false prophet. They are, in fact, expressions inspired by demons and perform signs."

God's Word Now Contains God's Complete Revelations

2 Tim. 3:16 "If 'All Scripture is inspired of God... that the man of God may be fully competent, completely, equipped for every good work."

Rev. 22:18, 19 "If anyone makes an addition to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this scroll; and if anyone takes anything away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take his portion away from the trees of life and out of the holy city, things which are written about in this scroll."

Dreams and Visions Not Now Given

Deut. 13:1-5 "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams."

Jer. 29:8, 9 "Let not your prophets that are in the midst of you, and your diviners, deceive you; neither hearken ye to your dreams, which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith Jehovah."

Jer. 23:25-32 "I have heard what the prophets have said that

prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.... The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, and let him speak my word faithfully. What is the straw to the wheat? saith Jehovah. Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?... I am against them that prophesy

lying dreams.... yet I sent them not, neither do they profit this people at all, saith Jehovah. Ezek. 12:24, 25 "There shall be no more any false vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am Jehovah: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall be performed."

Also: Jer. 14:13-16; Ezek. 13:2, 3, 6, 7; Mic. 3:5-11; Zech. 13:3, 4.

Superior Authorities

DEFINITION

In the field of government there are two parties, (1) the superior, the one who makes the law or rules of action, and (2) the inferior, the one who is bound by the rules of the superior to obey them. For divine government God is the chief superior and man the inferior.

Rom. 13:1-4 "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, Jehovah God and Christ Jesus; for there is no authority except by God [only Christ Jesus and His theocratic organization recognized by God]. Therefore he who ranges himself up against the authority of Christ Jesus has taken a stand against the arrangement of God: those who have taken a stand against it will receive judgement to themselves. [annihilation from Christ Jesus!]"

Jehovah God Is Supreme Above All Superiors

Ps. 62:11, 12 "There is one thing God has said: ay, twice have I heard him say it: that power belongs to God."

Job 37:23, 24 "The Almighty is beyond our minds. Supreme in power and rich in justice, he violates no right."

Isa. 40:13, 15 "Who hath directed the spirit of Jehovah, or being his counselor hath taught him? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing."

Rom. 9:20, 21 "O man, who, then, really are you to be answering back to God? Shall the thing molded say to him that

held it, 'Why did you make me thus way? What does not the potter have authority over the clay to make from the same lump one vessel for an honorable use, another for a dishonorable use?'"

Heb. 12:9 "Furthermore, we used to have fathers who were of our flesh to discipline us and we used to give them respect. Shall we not much more subject ourselves to the Father of our spiritual life and life?"

Isa. 33:22 "For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawyer, Jehovah is our king; he will save us."

Christ Jesus Is a Superior Second Only to Jehovah

John 17:1, 2 "Jesus spoke these things, and, raising his eyes to

Reorganizing

CHAPTER 14

for Active

Service

JOHNN: When the Society began to be freed for further preaching work following World War I, they soon realized they had been held in spiritual bondage too in many ways. There were many false doctrines and practices that had not yet been cleaned out of the organization. Not all of them were recognized at once, but gradually over the years that followed it became evident to what extent the brothers had been in Babylonish captivity at that time. With considerable misunderstanding they had accepted earthly political governments as the "superior authorities" that God had ordained according to Romans 13:1; and as a result the Witnesses had been held in fear of man, particularly the civil rulers.^a

Besides, many were putting emphasis on so-called "character development," in the belief that there were certain saving qualities in their self-merit,^b and there was considerable creature worship in the organization.^c Furthermore, such pagan holidays as Christmas were being celebrated,^d and even the symbol of the cross was used as a sign of Christian devotion.^e Also, although the name Jehovah was used from

time to time, it was held in the background and its true significance not brought to light. Organizationally the Witnesses were still practicing the democratic style of local congregation government.^f In other words, it was a time of everyone's doing what was considered right in his own eyes, and the entire arrangement was a loose association without theocratic direction. The change-over in thinking had been so striking in many ways, from the 1870's down to 1918, that these tainted bonds of false conceptions and practices, inherited from the pagan traditions adopted by Christendom, had slipped by unnoticed by the brothers.

Now from the year 1919 a glorious new outlook presented itself. These dedicated servants began to recognize their mistakes and make a public confession of their wrongdoing in their effort to seek Jehovah's forgiveness and be restored to his favor, which they realized had temporarily been lost. They repented of their former course, expressed the desire to change their ways and prayed for Jehovah's forgiveness. They recognized a compromise had been made by cutting out pages 247-253 of *The Finished Mystery* in order to please those who had assumed the position of censor.^g Another compromise was made as revealed in *The Watch Tower* of June 1, 1918.

^a *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. I (1886), p. 250 (1926 Ed.). ^b W 1916, pp. 155-157; W 1926, pp. 131-137. ^c W 1916, pp. 356-370. ^d W 1919, p. 31; W 1946, p. 361. ^e W 1906, p. 274. ^f W 1913, p. 381. ^g W 1918, p. 77.

science is bearing witness with them and, between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused."—Rom. 2: 13-16.

³⁸ So, when Christians subject themselves to Gentile "superior authorities" with their different systems of government and law, they conform themselves to those laws that show the work of conscience according to what God originally wrote in man's heart.

Since the Christians' subjection to worldly "superior authorities" is only relative, it does not obligate them to obey any worldly laws that go contrary to the laws

of the Supreme Lawgiver, Jehovah God. Even during the Gentile Times the prophet Daniel refused to obey the Medo-Persian law that forbade him to pray regularly each day to Jehovah. The miraculous deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den proved that he had done right in not subjecting himself to King Darius to the point of breaking God's law.—Dan. 6:1-23.

³⁹ Despite their being captives to Babylon, Daniel's three Hebrew companions did not obey the emperor's law that required them to bow down in worship before a golden idol. Their coming out alive, unsinged, from the superheated fiery furnace proved that they had done right in conscientiously refusing to obey the emperor and break the law of the Most High God against idolatry. (Dan. 3:1-30) Like those witnesses of Jehovah of ancient time, Jehovah's witnesses of today refuse to

38, 39. (a) When Christians subject themselves, what do they do regarding the laws of the "superior authorities"? (b) What does the case of Daniel under Medo-Persia and his three companions under Emperor Nebuchadnezzar show regarding obedience, and how do Christians today show they are not lawless to God?

obey man-made laws that are against God's law. They are not lawless to God; and so all the laws of the Gentile "superior authorities" that are not contrary to God's law they obey. Thus they can be in subjection as law-abiding citizens.

⁴⁰ From our look into Bible history and from our study of Bible prophecy as fulfilled among the Gentile nations, we find Romans 13:1 truthful in saying: "The ex-

isting authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God." Jehovah the Most High is not the God of the worldly nations and their "superior authorities," and yet he has a con-

trol over them. In arranging them or in placing them in their relative positions and in determining their succession to world power, Jehovah did not arrange for them to be higher than himself or his Christ. But do the authorities have a relative superiority on earth? Yes, even toward Christians. They are allowed to wield an authority that true Christians do not have. How so? In that such Christians take no part in politics and do not seek any worldly authority as emperors, kings, governors, mayors, and so forth. These present-existing authorities are an operating part of this world that is soon to be destroyed at Armageddon; and Christians are no part of that doomed world. But as long as authorities exist by God's permission, Christians must be subject to a relative degree.*

* See *Zion's Watch Tower*, as of June, 1882, page 8. Also *The Watch Tower*, as of May 15, 1914, pages 158, 159.

40. (a) If standing placed by God, how do the "existing authorities" stand in relation to God himself? (b) Do those authorities have a superiority on earth, and why cannot Christians be anything but subject to them?

ARTICLES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- BENEFITING BY SUBJECTION TO AUTHORITIES and CONSCIENCE AND SUBJECTION TO AUTHORITIES—Further studies on a Christian's relation to God and to human rulers.
- UNDERSTANDING THE BEASTS OF REVELATION—Do you understand them? Read this article.

prove to be no "sun of righteousness" with true "healing in its wings." (Malachi 4:2) Their message proved true.

In spite of the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, God permitted the political authorities of this world to continue as the "higher powers" or the "powers that be," which are "ordained of God." Hence men held God responsible for the unbearably hot state that scorched them. As foretold, "they blasphemed the name of God, who has the authority over these plagues."—Revelation 16:9; Romans 13:1, 2, 4V.

At this time God's personal name began to come to the fore. In harmony with the resolution adopted at the Indianapolis general convention in 1925, the dedicated, baptized Christian Bible Students were lifting up the "standard of God's truth and righteousness" in his name and spirit. After that resolution began to be circulated throughout the earth in millions of copies in many languages, the leading article of the *Watch Tower* issue of December 15, 1925, had the following to say under the heading "His Name":

The world, particularly the governing factors of the nations, have pushed the name of God aside. Now the time is come when God will make for himself a name in the earth. . . .

Now Satan and his evil allies are gathering all their forces for the great and final conflict. . . . In that fight the Lord God will make for himself a name, that the peoples and nations of earth may know that he is God. —Page 375.

As a fitting, timely follow-up to that, the very next issue of *The Watch Tower*, that of January 1, 1926, carried as its feature article "Who Will Honor Jehovah?" The opening paragraph said:

These [Psalm 135:21a] are the words for our text for the year 1926. Blessed or bless, as used in this text, means to venerate, to adore, to worship, to honor and to glorify. Who will come within the class that thus honors Jehovah God? They that abide in Zion will do so with gladness.

At once the anointed remnant yet on earth of the 144,000 determined to be found "within the class that thus honors Jehovah God." From then on the *Watch Tower* publications quoted and directed to the remnant the words of Isaiah 43:10-12, in which Jehovah tells his dedicated people that they are his witnesses. Now these came to appreciate their relationship and responsibility toward God. At last, on Sunday, July 26, 1931, at the international assembly in Columbus, Ohio, they adopted the resolution in favor of the Scripturally backed name for themselves, "Jehovah's witnesses."

With all this publicizing of God's name, from 1926 onward in particular, the worldly men who were "scorched with great heat" from the "sun" of their world could directly blasphemize the "name of God." They called down evil upon His witnesses who did not join the worldlings in worshipping and idolizing the "sun" of this old world, and who ascribed the scorching heat to this worldly "sun."

One tantalizing instance of this occurred when Pope Pius XI of Vatican City, who was a Concordat partner of dictators Mussolini and Hitler, proclaimed 1933 to be a holy year. When he inaugurated it on April 2, he held out hopes of peace and prosperity as a result of observing that year as holy. In quick succession came the startling broadcast on April 23, 1933, over 55 radio stations, with WBBR of Staten Island, New York, as the key station. This hour's address by President Rutherford of the Watch Tower Society was on the subject "Effect of Holy Year on Peace and Prosperity." This exposé of Holy Year was transcribed on phonograph records, and a broadcasting of these was made on the following June 25 over 158 radio stations. Among other things, the president's speech said:

" . . . With all kindness and sincerity I remind you who listened to the 'Holy Hour Service' held in New York on the 2d of April that the name of man was there

Superior Authorities

11. "Why did you make me this way? What? Does not the potter have authority over the clay to make from the same lump one vessel for an honorable use, another for a dishonorable use?"

Isa. 33:22 "Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Statute-giver, Jehovah is our King; he himself will save us."

Heb. 12:9 "We used to have fathers who were of our flesh to discipline us, and we used to give them respect. Shall we not much more subject ourselves to the Father of our spiritual life and live?"

Jesus Christ Is Next in Position to Jehovah

John 17:1, 2 "Jesus spoke these things, and, raising his eyes to heaven, he said: 'Father, . . . may glorify you, according as you have given him authority over all flesh.'"

1 Pet. 3:22 "He is at God's right hand, for he went his way to heaven; and angels and authorities and powers were made subject to him."

Phil. 2:5, 9-11 "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus. . . . God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Eph. 1:20-22 "In the case of the Christ . . . he raised him up from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above every government and authority and power named, not only in this system of things, but also in that to come. He also subjected all things under his feet."

Humane Exercise Authority Only by Permission of Jehovah

Rom. 13:1 "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God."

John 15:11 "Jesus answered [Pharisee]: 'You would have no authority at all against me unless it had been granted to you from above.'"

Dan. 4:25 "The Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind, and 'to the one whom he wants to he gives it.'"

Gen. 45:8 "So now it was not you who sent me here, but it was the true God, that he might appoint me a father to Pharaoh and a lord for all his house and as one dominating over all the land of Egypt."

Acts 17:24-26 "The God that made the world and all the things in it, being, as this One is, Lord of heaven and earth, . . . created the appointed seasons and the set limits of the dwelling of men."

Deut. 32:8 "When the Most High gave the nations an inheritance, when he parted the sons of Adam from one another, he proceeded to fix the boundary of the peoples with regard for the number of the sons of Israel."

Jehovah Foretold the Course of Worldly Governments Empowered by Satan. Rulers Still Held Accountable to God Who Allows Them Authority

Dan. 7:1-24 "Daniel was speaking up and saying: 'I happened to be beholding in my visions during the night and see here! the four winds of the heavens were stirring up the vast sea. And four huge beasts were coming up out of the sea, each one being different from the others. . . . As for these huge beasts, because they are four, there are four kings that will stand up from the earth. . . . As for the fourth beast, there is a fourth

Superior Authorities Christians to Be Law Abiding, Respect Those in Positions of Authority

Titus 3:1 "Continue reminding them to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers."

1 Pet. 2:13, 14 "For the Lord's sake subject yourselves to every human creation: whether to a king as being superior or to governors as being sent by him to inflict punishment on evildoers but to praise doers of good."

Dan. 6:5 "These able-bodied men were saying: 'We shall find in this Daniel no pretext at all, except we have to find it against him in the law of his God.'"

Neh. 9:37 "Its pride is astounding for the kings that you have put over us because of our sins, and over our bodies they are ruling and over our domestic animals, according to their liking."

Acts 26:2 "King Agrippa, I count myself happy that I am before you I am, to make my defense this day." Acts 26:25 "I am not going mad, Your Excellency Festus, but I am uttering sayings of truth and of soundness of mind."

"See also the main heading 'Caesar's Things to Caesar,' pages 59-62.

When Human Laws Conflict with God's Law, Worshipers of Jehovah Put Obedience to God First

Acts 4:19, 20 "In reply Peter and John said to them: 'Whether it is righteous in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, Judge for yourselves. But as for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard.'"

Acts 5:18-20 "They laid hands upon the apostles and put them in the public place of custody. But during the night Jehovah's angel opened the doors of the prison, brought them out and said: 'Be on your way, and having taken a stand in the

In particular must the dedicated Christian be on guard against being too kind to himself when he should be exercising discipline. How easy it is to let inclement weather serve as an excuse for staying away from meetings of the Christian congregation or from having an active share in the work of preaching and making disciples! A TV program may beckon one to neglect the obligations of the Christian ministry. Popular periodicals or novels may prove so absorbing as to cause one to neglect one's spiritual needs. All such short-range kindnesses to oneself are bound to have long-range harmful effects. The rhyme is to the point, "When duty and pleasure clash, let pleasure go to smash." Wait for a time when pleasure does not clash with duty.

Could you be unkind to yourself in an unrewarding way? Yes, if you are ambitious to be rich, love of money can goad you on to work, sweat, strain and scheme. It can cause you to break laws or can bring about a nervous breakdown. That such pursuit of riches is being unkind to yourself God's Word makes clear, for it

says: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin." They stab "themselves all over with many pains." Truly, to take such a course is being unkind to oneself, if not also to one's family.—1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

The second great commandment that Jesus Christ noted—"love your neighbor as yourself"—is very much to the point here. We are to love ourselves. We are to show kindness to ourselves. But we are not to do so selfishly, unwisely. Loving ourselves is qualified by the first commandment, which requires us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Carrying out that commandment will mean time and again being "unkind" to ourselves. And loving ourselves is also qualified by the second commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Mark 12:29-31) If we bear in mind our obligations to our God and our neighbor, we will be able to draw the line between when we should and when we should not be kind to ourselves.

WHY "BE IN SUBJECTION"?

AMONG the many commands found repeated in God's Word, the Bible, is, "Be in subjection." At Romans 13:1 we read: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities," that is, to governments. Younger men are counseled to "be in subjection to the older men." (1 Pet. 5:5) Then, again, the apostle Paul admonishes: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands."—Eph. 5:22.

To be in subjection goes against the grain of many imperfect humans, so much so, in fact, that all manner of social movements are formed to rebel, often violently, against being in subjection. For example, the *New York Times*, not so long ago, on one day alone, reported the following examples of violent rebellion against authority: "Two bombs exploded in Central London early today." 'Nine persons

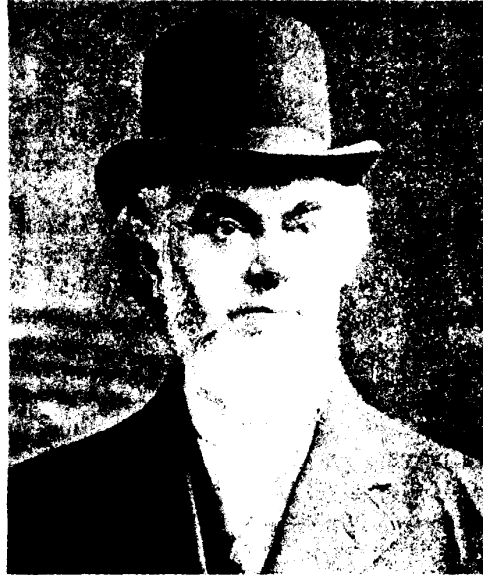
**Russell wrote that true Christians
"should be found amongst the most
law-abiding of the present time"**

tle over 20 years after Christ's death, the apostle Paul told the Christians in Rome: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities." (Romans 13:1) About ten years later, shortly before his second imprisonment and his execution in Rome, Paul wrote to Titus: "Continue reminding them [Cretan Christians] to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers, to be ready for every good work, to speak injuriously of no one, not to be belligerent, to be reasonable, exhibiting all mildness toward all men."—Titus 3:1, 2.

Progressive Understanding of "the Superior Authorities"

¹² As early as 1886, Charles Taze Russell wrote in the book *The Plan of the Ages*: "Neither Jesus nor the Apostles interfered with earthly rulers in any way. . . . They taught the Church to obey the laws, and to respect those in authority because of their office, . . . to pay their appointed taxes, and except where they conflict with God's laws (Acts 4:19; 5:29) to offer no resistance to any established law. (Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 22:21) Jesus and the Apostles and the early church were all law-abiding, though they were separate from, and took no share in the governments of this world." This book correctly identified "the higher powers," or "the superior authorities," mentioned by the apostle Paul, as human governmental authorities. (Ro-

12. (a) What did Charles Taze Russell view as the proper position of a Christian relative to the governmental authorities? (b) Regarding serving in the armed forces, what varied positions did anointed Christians take during World War I?



mans 13:1, *King James Version*) In 1904 the book *The New Creation* stated that true Christians "should be found amongst the most law-abiding of the present time—not agitators, not quarrelsome, not fault-finders." This was understood by some to mean total submission to the powers that be, even to the point of accepting service in the armed forces during World War I. Others, however, viewed it as contrary to Jesus' statement: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) Obviously, a clearer understanding of Christian submission to the superior authorities was needed.

¹³ In 1929, at a time when laws of various governments were beginning to forbid things that God commands or demand things that God's laws forbid, it was felt that the higher powers must be Jehovah

13. What change in understanding of the identity of the higher powers was presented in 1929, and how did this prove beneficial?

God and Jesus Christ.* This was the understanding Jehovah's servants had during the crucial period before and during World War II and on into the Cold War, with its balance of terror and its military preparedness. Looking back, it must be said that this view of things, exalting as it did the supremacy of Jehovah and his Christ, helped God's people to maintain an uncompromisingly neutral stand throughout this difficult period.

Relative Submission

¹⁴ In 1961 the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was completed. Its preparation had required an in-depth study of the textual language of the Scriptures. The precise translation of the words used not only in Romans chapter 13 but also in such passages as Titus 3:1, 2 and 1 Peter 2:13, 17 made it evident that the

* *The Watchtower*, June 1 and 15, 1929.

14. How was increased light shed on Romans 13:1, 2 and related scriptures in 1962?

Can You Explain?

- Why does subjection to the superior authorities not mean subjection to Satan?
- What was Jesus' attitude toward the politics of his day?
- What counsel did Jesus give his followers as to their dealings with Caesar?
- How did Paul counsel Christians to deal with the rulers of the nations?
- How has the understanding of the identity of the superior authorities developed over the years?

14 THE WATCHTOWER—MAY 1, 1996

term "superior authorities" referred, not to the Supreme Authority, Jehovah, and to his Son, Jesus, but to *human governmental authorities*. In late 1962, articles were published in *The Watchtower* that gave an accurate explanation of Romans chapter 13 and also provided a clearer view than that held at the time of C. T. Russell. These articles pointed out that Christian subjection to the authorities cannot be total. It must be *relative*, subject to its not bringing God's servants into conflict with God's laws. Further articles in *The Watchtower* have emphasized this important point.*

¹⁵ This key to the correct understanding of Romans chapter 13 has enabled Jehovah's people to balance due respect for the political authorities with an uncompromising stand on vital Scriptural principles. (Psalm 97:11; Jeremiah 3:15) It has allowed them to have a proper view of their relationship with God and their dealings with the State. It has ensured that while they pay back Caesar's things to Caesar, they do not neglect to pay back God's things to God.

¹⁶ But just what are Caesar's things? What legitimate claims can the State make on a Christian? These questions will be considered in the following article.

* See *The Watchtower*, November 1 and 15, December 1, 1962; November 1, 1990; February 1, 1993; July 1, 1994.

Interestingly, in his commentary on Romans chapter 13, Professor F. F. Bruce writes: "It is plain from the immediate context, as from the general context of the apostolic writings, that the state can rightly command obedience only within the limits of the purposes for which it has been divinely instituted—in particular, the state not only may but must be resisted when it demands the allegiance due to God alone."

15, 16. (a) What better balance did the new understanding of Romans chapter 13 lead to?
(b) What questions remain to be answered?