

Religious Liberty



*Christ Is Our Master
and
We Are All Brethren*

And Jesus answering said unto them, **Render** to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him. (Mark 12:17)

I exhort therefore, 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. (1 Timothy 2:1–2)

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man 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. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God.

Honour the king. (1 Peter 2:13–17)

❖ Ordinance (1 Peter 2:13)—*ktisis*—the formation or creation of something, the institution, the structure, the governing system or system of authority

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one
is your Master, *even* Christ; and all
ye are brethren. (Matthew 23:8)

Ye call me Master and Lord: and
ye say well; for *so* I am.
(John 13:13)

For whether we live, we live unto
the Lord; and whether we die, we
die unto the Lord: whether we live
therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

(Romans 14:8)

- ❖ Matthew 22:15—The Pharisees sent one of their disciples to Jesus asking about giving tribute to Cæsar.
- ❖ Matthew 22:23—The Sadducees asking about the resurrection
- ❖ Matthew 22:34—The Pharisees came again to him asking about the greatest commandment.
- ❖ Matthew 23

It was the last day of Christ's teaching in the temple. Of the vast throngs that were gathered at Jerusalem, the attention of all had been attracted to Him; the people had crowded the temple courts, **watching the contest** that had been in progress, and they eagerly caught every word that fell from His lips. Never before had such a scene been witnessed. There stood the young Galilean, bearing no earthly honor or royal badge. Surrounding Him were **priests** in their rich apparel, **rulers** with robes and badges significant of their exalted station, and **scribes** with scrolls in their hands, to which they made frequent reference. Jesus stood calmly before them, with the dignity of a king. As one invested with the authority of heaven, He looked unflinchingly upon His adversaries, who had rejected and despised His teachings, and who thirsted for His life. (*DA* 610.1)

They had assailed Him in great numbers, but their schemes to ensnare and condemn Him had been in vain. Challenge after challenge He had met, presenting the pure, bright truth in contrast to the darkness and errors of the priests and Pharisees. He had set before these leaders their real condition, and the retribution sure to follow persistence in their evil deeds. The warning had been faithfully given. Yet **another work remained for Christ to do**. Another purpose was still to be accomplished. (*DA* 610.1)

The interest of the people in Christ and His work had steadily increased. They were charmed with His teaching, but they were also **greatly perplexed**. They had respected the priests and rabbis for their intelligence and apparent piety. In all religious matters they had ever yielded implicit obedience to their authority. Yet they now saw these men trying to cast discredit upon Jesus, a teacher whose virtue and knowledge shone forth the brighter from every assault.

(DA 611.1)

They looked upon the lowering countenances of the priests and elders, and there saw discomfiture and confusion. They marveled that the rulers would not believe on Jesus, when His teachings were so plain and simple. They themselves **knew not what course to take.** With eager anxiety they watched the movements of those whose counsel they had always followed. (*DA* 611.1)

“The scribes and the Pharisees,” He said, “sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.” The scribes and Pharisees **claimed to be invested with divine authority** similar to that of Moses. They assumed to take his place as expounders of the law and judges of the people. As such they claimed from the people the utmost deference and obedience. Jesus bade His hearers do that which the rabbis taught **according to the law**, but not to follow their example. They themselves did not practice their own teaching.

(DA 612.1)

And **they taught much that was contrary to the Scriptures.** Jesus said, “They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.” The Pharisees enjoined a multitude of regulations, having their foundation in tradition, and unreasonably restricting personal liberty. And certain portions of the law they so explained as to impose upon the people observances which they themselves secretly ignored, and from which, when it served their purpose, they actually claimed exemption. (*DA* 612.2)

To make a show of their piety was their constant aim. Nothing was held too sacred to serve this end. To Moses God had said concerning His commandments, “Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be **as** frontlets between thine eyes.” Deuteronomy 6:8. These words have a deep meaning. As the word of God is meditated upon and practiced, the whole man will be ennobled. In righteous and merciful dealing, the hands will reveal, as a signet, the principles of God’s law. They will be kept clean from bribes, and from all that is corrupt and deceptive. They will be active in works of love and compassion. The eyes, directed toward a noble purpose, will be clear and true. (*DA* 612.3)

The expressive countenance, the speaking eye, will testify to the blameless character of him who loves and honors the word of God.

But by the Jews of Christ's day all this was undiscerned. The command given to Moses was **construed** into a direction that the precepts of Scripture **should be worn** upon the person. They were accordingly written upon strips of parchment, and bound in a conspicuous manner about the head and wrists. But this did not cause the law of God to take a firmer hold of the mind and heart. These parchments were worn merely as badges, to attract attention.

They were thought to give the wearers an air of devotion which would command the reverence of the people. Jesus struck a blow at this vain pretense: (*DA* 612.3)

“But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for One is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called master: for One is your Master, even Christ.” In such plain words the Saviour revealed the selfish ambition that was ever reaching for place and power, displaying a mock humility, while the heart was filled with avarice and envy. When persons were invited to a feast, the guests were seated according to their rank, and those who were given the most honorable place received the first attention and special favors. The Pharisees were ever scheming to secure these honors. This practice Jesus rebuked. (*DA* 613.1)

He also reproved the vanity shown in coveting the title of rabbi, or master. Such a title, He declared, belonged not to men, but to Christ. Priests, scribes, and rulers, expounders and administrators of the law, were all brethren, children of one Father. Jesus impressed upon the people that they were to give no man a title of honor indicating his control of their conscience or their faith. (*DA* 613.2)

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one
is your Master, *even* Christ; and all
ye are brethren. (Matthew 23:8)

Matthew 23:1–12

Mark 12:38–40

Luke 20:45–47

John 13:13

- ❖ Rabbi—*rhabbi*—master or teacher
- ❖ Master—*kathēgētēs*—guide, teacher (**the** master and **the** Christ)
- ❖ Romans 12:6–8
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 12:4–11
- ❖ Ephesians 4:11
- ❖ John 13:13—**the** Master and **the** Lord
- ❖ The meek will he guide in judgment: And the meek will he teach his way. (Psalm 25:9)

❖ But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall **teach** you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

❖ It was by cherishing a **humble, teachable spirit** that these men gained the experience that enabled them to go out as workers into the harvest field. . . . If the followers of Christ were but earnest seekers after wisdom, they would be led into rich fields of truth as yet wholly unknown to them. He who will give himself fully to God will be guided by the divine hand. He may be lowly and apparently ungifted; yet if with a loving, trusting heart he obeys every intimation of God's will, his powers will be purified, ennobled, energized, and his capabilities will be increased. As he treasures the lessons of divine wisdom, a sacred commission will be entrusted to him; he will be enabled to make his life an honor to God and a blessing to the world. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Psalm 119:130. (*AA* 283.3)

- ❖ And when it was day, he called *unto him* his **disciples**: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named **apostles**; (Luke 6:13)

- ❖ But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath **sent** me. And the Father himself, which hath **sent** me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath **sent**, him ye believe not. (John 5:36–38)

- ❖ Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the **Apostle** and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; (Hebrews 3:1)

- ❖ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even **so send I you**. (John 20:21)

Jesus came to impart to the human soul the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart; but it is impossible to endow men with the Holy Spirit, who are set in their ideas, whose doctrines are all stereotyped and unchangeable, who are **walking after the traditions and commandments of men, as were the Jews in the time of Christ.**

(1SM 386.2; RH 3–20–1894, par. 7)

Jesus passed by the scribes and the Pharisees, for they felt no need of a Saviour. They were wedded to forms and ceremonies. **These services had been instituted by Christ**; they had been full of vitality and spiritual beauty; but the Jews had lost the spiritual life from their ceremonies, and clung to the dead forms after spiritual life was extinct among them. (Ibid.)

The remnant church is called to go through an experience similar to that of the Jews; and the True Witness, who walks up and down in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, has a solemn message to bear to His people. He says, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:4, 5). (*1SM* 387.1; *RH* 3–20–1894, par. 8)

1. Tradition and commandments of men
2. Services initiated by Christ

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,
Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe *that*
observe and do . . . (Matthew 23:1–3)

- ❖ Observe—*tērēō*—guard, watch, keep, preserve, take care of, obey
- ❖ Do—*poieō*—to carry out, perform

- ❖ Rabbi—*rhabbi*—master or teacher
- ❖ Master—*kathēgētēs*—guide, teacher
- ❖ Ye—With emphasis and in contrast to the ones mentioned before
- ❖ Brethren—*adelphos*—male children of the same parents, brother, brotherly, brotherhood
- ❖ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
(Galatians 3:28)
- ❖ For there is no respect of persons with God. (Romans 2:11)

On the reverse side of the great seal of the United States there is a Latin inscription—*Novus Ordo Seclorum*—meaning “A New Order of Things.” This new order of things was designed and accomplished in the American Revolution, which was the expression of two distinct ideas: First, that government is **of the people**; and, second, that government is of right **entirely separate from religion**. (A. T. Jones, *The Rights of the People* 51.1)

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that **all men are created equal**; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that when any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

(ROP 51.4)

- ❖ And hath **made of one blood** all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; (Acts 17:26)
- ❖ For there is **no respect of persons** with God. (Romans 2:11)
- ❖ If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? **Did not he that made me in the womb make him?** and did not one fashion us in the womb? (Job 31:13–15)

- ❖ For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which **regardeth not persons**, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: (Deuteronomy 10:17–19)
- ❖ But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt **love him as thyself**; (Leviticus 19:34)
- ❖ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt **love thy neighbour as thyself**: I *am* the Lord. (Leviticus 19:18)
- ❖ Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, **do ye even so to them**: for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)