

Obedience to Law.

JUNE 22.

ROMANS XIII: 1-10.

Golden Text Rom. 13: 1.

THE apostle here deals with the general question as to the proper attitude of the Christian towards the government under which he lives. Two reasons may be assigned for giving this advice, (1) because Christianity had erroneously come to be regarded by existing governments as in some sense a revolutionary element, Christians ought to disprove the allegation by being conspicuously law-abiding. (2) Those whom he addresses were living at the seat of government and the reigning emperor, Nero, being notoriously a bad man, the advice was particularly needed by the converts in Rome. There is nothing said about exceptional cases, such as Peter and John before the Council, Acts 4: 18-21, nor as to the right of seeking redress in a proper way, for that is always in order, but submission to constituted authorities as a rule of life is urged upon all. V. 1. *Every soul*—every one capable of reasoning on the matter. *Higher powers*—the governments under which we live. *Ordained of God*—It is the will of God that government should exist and that those who exercise it should be obeyed. Among the wildest savages we find the instinct of obedience to a higher power in some form or other. V. 2. The inference therefore is that those who resist temporal rule virtually resist God and expose themselves to "judgment," as in the R. V. that is to punishment at the hand of the ruler who is disobeyed. Vs. 3, 4. However much governments may err, as in Nero's case, their tendency is salutary and, as a rule, the best way of avoiding punishment is to be obedient. *He beareth not the sword in vain*—the divine purpose in investing the magistrate with authority is the suppression of evil. V. 5. *Wrath*—from fear of punishment. *Conscience*—from reverence for God's authority and that others might be induced to lead peaceable lives. V. 6, 7. The fact of a citizen voluntarily paying taxes is an admission on his part that he owes subjection to the power that imposes the tax. *God's ministers*—deriving their authority from God; and, spending their time in administering government, are entitled to support. *To all their dues*—not only to rulers as such, but also to parents, masters, teachers, Eph. 6: 1, 5; Prov. 5: 11-13. V. 8. *Owe no man*—(1) keep out of debt if you can. (2) Remember there is a debt which can never be fully paid—the love we owe to God and to one another. V. 9. The second table of the law is quoted to prove that love is the fulfilling of the law. He who loves his neighbour as himself will do none of these things. Matt 7: 12. V. 10. Love neither practices nor contrives ill to his neighbour. It is a living active principle of obedience, delighting in the happiness of its objects; it prevents us from injuring those we love, thus fulfilling the law, Christ Himself was a conspicuous example of obedience to law, Luke 2: 51; Matt 22: 17-21.

David King over all Israel.

JULY 6.

2 SAMUEL V: 1-12.

Golden Text, Psalms 89: 20.

COMPARE 1 Chron. 11: 1-9. On the death of Saul, Ishbosheth his son was proclaimed King of Israel in his stead, ch. 2: 8-11. David by command of God removed from Ziklag to Hebron where he was made King of Judah, ch. 2: 4. V. 1. *Then*—B. C., 1048, shortly after the death of Ishbosheth. *All the tribes*—an immense gathering (340,224) who remained three days at Hebron, 1 Chr. 12: 39. *Hebron*—twenty miles south of Jerusalem, one of the oldest towns in the world, where the Patriarchs and their wives were buried, Gen. 49: 29-31. V. 2. Three reasons for offering the Kingdom to David,—(1) He was an Israelite, Deut. 17: 15. (2) He had given proof of his military skill: (3) Because God had chosen him. *Shalt feed*—the shepherd boy becomes a shepherd king. V. 3. *League*—a solemn contract on the part of David to rule according to the laws, and of the people, promising due allegiance. *Anointed*—this for the third time, 1 Sam. 16: 13; 2 Sam. 2: 4. V. 4 His first twenty years were spent on his father's farm near Bethlehem. The next ten were years of great trial, preparing him for the responsibilities awaiting him. V. 6. Jerusalem being more central than Hebron is selected as the seat of government, but it had long been occupied by the Jebusites and was so strongly fortified it was considered by them impregnable, hence the derisive taunt that the *blind and the lame* could successfully resist the Hebrew King. V. 7. *Zion*—the citadel on a rocky eminence. *City of David*—from this date it became so, V. 8 reads like a "forlorn hope" with the promise of a reward to the first man who should scale the walls. Who that was, see Chr. 11: 6. *The blind and lame*—stand for the hated and boastful Jebusites. *Wherefore they said*—it passed into a proverb. V. 9. David made this citadel his residence, called it by his own name, and strengthened the approaches to it. *Millo*—a detached fortification to the north of Zion. V. 10. *Went on and grew great*—taking the fort was only the first act which led to the consolidation of the Kingdom. The secret of success was that *the Lord was with him*—Ps. 84: 5, 7. V. 11. *Tyre*—one of the two great cities of Phoenicia, 100 miles north of Jerusalem and with which a large trade was carried on. *Sent messengers*—to congratulate David on his accession. Cedar abounded in the forests of Lebanon and was prized for its strength and durability. Tyre was ahead of Jerusalem in the mechanical arts. V. 12. *David perceived*—by his unanimous call to the throne, his recent victory and great prosperity. Instead of taking credit to himself he humbly ascribes all to "The Lord," and sees the purpose of it—that His chosen people might be exalted to a first rank among the nations. Short as was their national existence it served an important end in the economy of God.