

allegiance that is to govern where duties clash. In the New Testament Epistles loyalty to the state is repeatedly urged and the early Christians were loyal to the Cæsars that sat upon the throne of Imperial Rome, however unworthy many of these men were. But when they were commanded to offer sacrifices to a Cæsar, they could not but refuse. Divine honors were due only to God. So Nebuchadnezzar, when ordering the three Hebrew youths to fall down and worship the golden image, and Darius, when ordering the people to worship him, were demanding the things that were God's, and not theirs, and the three young men and Daniel were right in refusing obedience. When the choice must be made between being loyal subjects and

loyal Christians, there can be no hesitation on our part. We must be the latter. "We must obey God rather than men."

Our allegiance to God lies at the foundation not only of our duties as citizens, but of our duties in every sphere of human activity. Our home life will be sweet and true, if God is our first thought there. Our relations to others will be kindly and helpful if they are governed by our relation to God. When God has the supreme place in our hearts, our loyalty to Him will purify and enrich every service. Old Jeremy Taylor likens our sinful hearts to clay on which God's image may be impressed. "Stamp it, and on this sordid metal make Thy holy image and it shall outshine The beauty of this golden mine."

### THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

#### For Teachers of Bible Classes

This is the first of three questions by the Jewish rulers. (See vs. 23-33 and vs. 34-40 for the other two.) Show that the recent teaching of Jesus had been so searching that His enemies were now determined to put Him to death. Their questions were for the purpose of getting some hold upon Him which might bring Him within the range of law, and hence subject to the Roman authorities. Call out these lessons:

1. *That sin and hatred unite enemies against a common foe.* Show that the Pharisees and Herodians were enemies and their union is a striking testimony to the powerful influence of Jesus. Deal with their procedure. See Luke 20 : 20 for further light. Point out how this same unity of evils always confronts the kingdom of God. Notice how quickly Jesus detects their plan. What does it indicate concerning His character?

2. *The subtle question.* To appreciate the full force of this question as to tribute it is necessary to remember that Jesus was now in Judea, which, unlike Galilee, was subject, and paid taxes directly, to Rome. Bring out the main facts to the effect that the use of Roman money by the Jews was regarded as a reflection upon them, being an admission that they were subject to Roman rule, also

they hoped Jesus would refuse to sanction such tribute thereby implicating Him before the Roman authorities.

3. *The master's answer.* Take up the various elements involved:

(a) He reminded them of their obligation to their government. Jesus always insisted upon the necessity of authority in society. Pause to bring out the force of this saying. Are there times when revolution is necessary and justifiable? If so, when? Does He urge loyal support to governments which are doing unchristian things? Distinguish between the necessity of government and any particular form of government.

(b) He reminded them that the kingdom of God was not national nor bound up with the life or authority of any form of government. It was "not of this world," a true, spiritual democracy.

(c) He called them back to the service of God. Follow out this most important principle and get at the true balance of life. Show how Jesus insisted upon duties rather than upon rights. In the light of this consider what is involved in the duties of citizenship, and also what rights are involved. Bring into the circle the duties we owe to God as part of a complete life. Show how intimately service enters into life. Take Paul's method as a commentary, 1 Cor., ch. 8.