

which is contrary to the law of God, then the one who desires to live must obey the law of God, regardless of what consequences may result to him by reason of disobeying man's law. The state may inflict the most severe punishment upon one who refuses to obey the law of the state, even though in refusing to obey the law of the state he is obeying God's law. For that reason the person must choose between man or the law of the state and God. The state can destroy your body. God can destroy your very existence anywhere and everywhere. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10: 28) It follows, then, that no state or nation can properly compel a person to disobey God's law.

These words are recorded in the Bible, to wit: "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." (Rom. 13: 1) Do not these words from the Scripture mean that the men who fill the offices of the state or nation are the "higher powers" and that we must all obey them in order to please God?

No; that is not the meaning of that scripture. You will observe that that scripture is addressed to those who have made an agreement to do the will of God, and whom God has called to be saints. (Romans 1: 7) To such the "higher powers" are God and Christ Jesus, the Redeemer of man, and these "higher powers" ordained the apostles to have and to exercise certain powers and authority over the church, meaning over those who have agreed to do God's will. The text

in Romans 13: 1 has no reference to the officers of the state or nation. The laws of the various nations are often in conflict with each other. Thus we see that if we apply the above text, of Romans 13: 1, to the officers of the state or nation such would be entirely inconsistent, for the reason that God does not make one law for Germany and another law for America. In some nations the true followers of Christ Jesus and others are severely and viciously persecuted by the law-makers and the law-executive officers of that nation, and it is certain that such power so exercised is not ordained of Jehovah God. The text in Romans 13: 1 means that all power in the organization of God, including his church, God has ordained and every one of that organization must be obedient to the ordinances or law thereof. Every true follower of Christ Jesus not only will be willingly obedient but will be gladly obedient to every law of the land that is in harmony with God's law; but to obey a law of man which is contrary to God's law, and thereby violate God's specific law, a man thus puts himself in certain jeopardy.

Could not a person outwardly obey the law of the land, even though that law is in violation of God's law, and still be obedient to God's law, merely having a mental reservation that he is on God's side?

No; such a thing would be impossible, for the reason that such an act would be hypocritical and God hates hypocrites. To outwardly obey the law of man merely to please men, and to do so with a mental reservation that one does not mean what he says but is in harmony with God, is gross dishonesty. We can deceive men, but we