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***“IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.”*** ***COL.3.1***

**ROMANS 13.**

***An Address (revised) at***

***61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate.  
28<sup>th</sup> July, 1918***

***by***

***PERCY W. HEWARD***

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**ROMANS 13.**

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,  
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The Holy Spirit in Romans 12 shows a number of principles all expressing one root principle in connection with which children of God may have godly relationships with one another, and bring glory to God in their daily life. Now in the 13th chapter we have a continuation of the same subject, but different aspects are before us, even as yet further aspects in chapter 14. In chapter 12 you have saints generally; at the end of chapter 12 you have position as to an enemy, and with regard to all the persecution and all the unkindnesses which children of God will meet. In chapter 13 we have primarily relationship to earthly authority. At the outset, be it noticed, that this chapter is of one piece with all other similar Scriptures, for the present dispensation in that it definitely implies believers will take no part in authority. 1 Cor. 6 and Tim. 2 have the same striking message. The believer is amid authority. He acknowledges authority, but he does not take any part in authority. We saw last time that subjection is commanded, not only advised. The man of the world lives in a sphere of expediency, "I will do this, it is advantageous. I will avoid that, what will people think? I shall not do a third thing else I shall get into trouble". Here we have the laws of expediency which govern men, so that they are considerably affected by the condemned principle, "Let us do evil that good may come". The child of God lives in a sphere of absolute right or wrong. Is it right and the will of God? Let it be believed and done whatever be the consequences. If it is wrong whatever be its advantages, whatever be something of the reasons in favour of it, it must be set on one side. The believer's desire, therefore, is to know the will of God. In this sphere he necessarily comes across myriads who are not actuated by the same motive, he is surrounded by those who are of the earth, and are connected with the providential arrangements of God, as Dan. 4 shows. The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will. Now here is the problem for a child of God. How can he, a heavenly person, go about in relationship to those who are

within the sphere of God's governmental providence. If he could dare to say, "The Lord has forgotten the earth, and I am simply a heavenly person down here, and have nothing to do with the affairs of earth", he might expect that very soon he would run so counter to them that he would be put to death, and by "very soon" I mean in a matter of a few moments. But though absolutely willing to be put to death he has his Lord's own statement, "All authority was given unto Me in heaven and on earth, Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations". He has the extraordinary position of being a heavenly person on earth, with a commission from a heavenly Lord, and he comes across those who are in themselves enemies of the Lord, and yet who are within the governmental providence of the Lord. Those who have no legal standing before God, but have a governmental standing, these who have no righteousness standing, but who have a providential(or shall I rather say, providentially-appointed) position, while God holds back in His forbearance. How to run up against that which is in God's providence appointed, is to speak against God's providence. To ignore that which God allows to continue, while the heavens do rule, is to ignore the heavens which rule: hence the believer's peculiar position, — he is governed in every action of life, by laws which are not of earth. He is not merely within the sphere of God's providence, he is lifted altogether higher, he is in the sphere of absolute grace and salvation. How then can he act? Is he left without instruction? By no means, "Let EVERY soul". Here is no exception. "Let every SOUL" — Here is that which affects the whole being and cuts deeper than the thought of the body. "Let every soul be subject (be subjected) to the higher powers". Here we have brought before us a continued condition. It is not only "let him be subject once"; it is not that he is to take upon him some promise of subjection; let him continue placing himself under, and being placed under, the higher authorities; and this not because of what they are in themselves. It does not matter what they are in themselves, they may be absolutely despotic, they may be monarchical yet limited, they may be parliamentary, or they may be, in the fullest sense of the word, republican; but whatever they be, without discussing them, without objecting to them, thankful for them, whether they be kindly disposed, or unkindly disposed, he is to be subject to the higher authorities, FOR there is no authority but of God. Here we have brought before us that which is entirely contrary to present day ideas. The believer's reason for subjection is that God has arranged; he cannot go back further than this, and he will not go back anything

short of this. He does not look to any authorities as appointed by descent, or by the people, but as appointed beyond this, whatever means God has been pleased to employ, as appointed by God Himself. Here is the position set forth for a believer in the most extraordinary circumstances of change of government. The believer may even pass through a revolution, but his position is marked out, he is to be subject to the higher authorities, those who have the position over him whoever they are, however they obtained the position. He knows very well that they obtained it by God's appointment. Oh, but you say, let us return to that terrible example, — Nero. Undoubtedly Nero obtained his position with respect to the saints of God by God's appointment. What! when he persecuted them, and maltreated them, and slew them? Without any controversy. But you say, he stepped beyond his appointed sphere. The whole of his life was a question of disobedience, he was crammed full of iniquity, but in his sphere with respect to that which reached the children of God he was appointed by God. You are not told that the actions of the powers that be are in obedience to God. Observe very definitely the contrast between ordination and obedience. The word "ordained" in this passage is the same as the word "subject", only the word "subject" has the word "under" joined on to it. Let every soul be placed under the authorities, for there is no authority but from God, the authorities that are have been placed by God. We are not told that their actions are arranged by God in the sense of His appointment. They do not obey Him. You must not confuse the word "arrange" and the word "obey". To be arranged under, is not necessarily to obey. It is a position of submission and subjection, and that God demands in any case. A very remarkable example is found in Dan. 3. (I have received considerable correspondence lately that has touched upon Dan. 3. I have been asked, What about these three faithful servants of God, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Did they submit to the king Nebuchadnezzar? The question is put sometimes in this form. Did they submit to the king, or did they obey the command of God in Exod. 20? I reply they did both. They submitted to the king, and they obeyed the Lord. But did they obey the king and worship the golden image which he had set up? Not in the least. But they submitted. Even Nebuchadnezzar bears them this testimony, "Who have yielded their bodies and changed the king's word". By their very submission God brought the blessing. If they had resisted, God would not have stepped in, as far as the record goes. God appointed a submission, it would seem, as a witness even then, and He has emphasized it upon His people

now. The word "submit" is explained further in the next verse.) "Whosoever therefore resisteth, (or taketh his place against — it is from the same root) the power (the authority), resisteth the ordinance of God, (The word "ordinance", again a derivative from the SAME root) and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment". Those who have taken a position of standing against, — the word "resist" is a different one on the second occasion, — those who have stood against, shall receive to themselves judgment. Our English word "damnation" has two meanings; sometimes it signifies judgment, and is a legal term, at other times it denotes condemnation in a wrath sense. Here the word used is the legal term "judgment". They will receive to themselves judgment. Undoubtedly it is so. God sometimes permits an illustration of this in the earthly life of some, — one of the most remarkable cases being that of Cromwell. But not only have we an allusion to the earthly life. The judgment to believers as to their SALVATION is not a matter of the future. Christ has been judged for them: — but as to their works the Bema of Christ is plainly in the future. "We do not come into judgment", that is our present position, and expresses our eternal position as to deliverance from wrath, but "So speak ye and so do, as those that shall be judged with a perfect law of liberty" is a Divine command. "Let no man judge you" says Col. 2; "Be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment". Believers ARE to be judged according to their works, and those who take a position of resistance, or standing against authority, must receive to themselves judgment at the Bema of Christ. Submission, therefore, is not obedience, but the reverse of standing against. The believer is to submit in any case, but he can only obey that which the Lord has appointed. We thus have brought before us clear instruction from the Lord, and till we learn to use His words accurately and carefully, we show very little reverence for the instruction of God's truth. The early Christians could not have worshipped the emperor which they were told to do, but THEY WERE TO SUBMIT even though they did not obey. They were not to resist, they were not to stand against, but they were to take their place under, and be crushed down beneath the wrath of the Roman Emperor. They were not to stand against, — the word "resist" implies the attitude of those who would seek to stand their ground and force their rights. Believers were to fall and not stand. Their standing was in a heavenly sphere. By the time the persecution reached them it was a very precious persecution, as precious as other tokens of the Lord's love. By the time they received the bitterest words of unkindness

these bitterest words of unkindness were gracious portions for glory. Nothing could reach them merely FROM men, for just as the angel of the Lord encamped round about the psalmist of old, so the Lord always interposes Himself between His people, and everything that reached them in the right sphere; and if it reaches them it does not reach them till it has passed His censorship, and if He has allowed it to come through, He has a reason and a purpose, and He is the Authority through Whose hand it has come. Therefore the believer has an encouragement in everything, and a rejoicing in everything. But, beloved friends, there is a deep lesson for us here. It not only affects relationship to a land where we live, or to a place of employment where we are found. If the believer is to be subject FOR there is no power but of God, he is to receive everything with respect to God, and to look at everything from the standpoint of God. "This that happens comes to me from God. Why am I to be thankful? Because it is from God. Why am I to refuse to complain? Because God has allowed it". That word "For" blots out all the murmuring and grumbling and self-choosing which disfigure the lives of those who should make manifest the riches of God's grace by a graciousness. If we are in Christ Jesus, to us the world is not simply a ruin that has become out of hand away from God. It is a place in which God still says "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed", and therefore the wrath of men praises Him, while the remainder of wrath He will restrain. Whatever happens, if it be that by wicked hands men take and crucify the Son of His love, it is in accord with the determinate counsel and purpose of God, to be the background for the adoring praise of His blood-bought people. What saints can find anything at which to complain which reaches them? Their only complaints are respecting the things which are inside the circle of protection, and those things are their own actions. They grieve over these, but the Lord's encircling care comes so close there is no room for anything else from outside to reach them till it has reached Him first.

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**Further addresses available:**

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