



Render Unto Caesar by Anton Dorph

are known as the public taxes, to show submission; through which men may know that they are not their own masters, but live under an authority which is from God. For they are subject to their own ruler, who holds God's place, as they are to God; as the prophet Daniel says: *The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. And he will give it to whomsoever it shall please him* (iv. 14). Hence the words of the Lord: *Render, He says, to Caesar, the things*

that are Caesar's. They must therefore be subject to him as they are to God, and the proof of their submission is given when they pay him tribute.

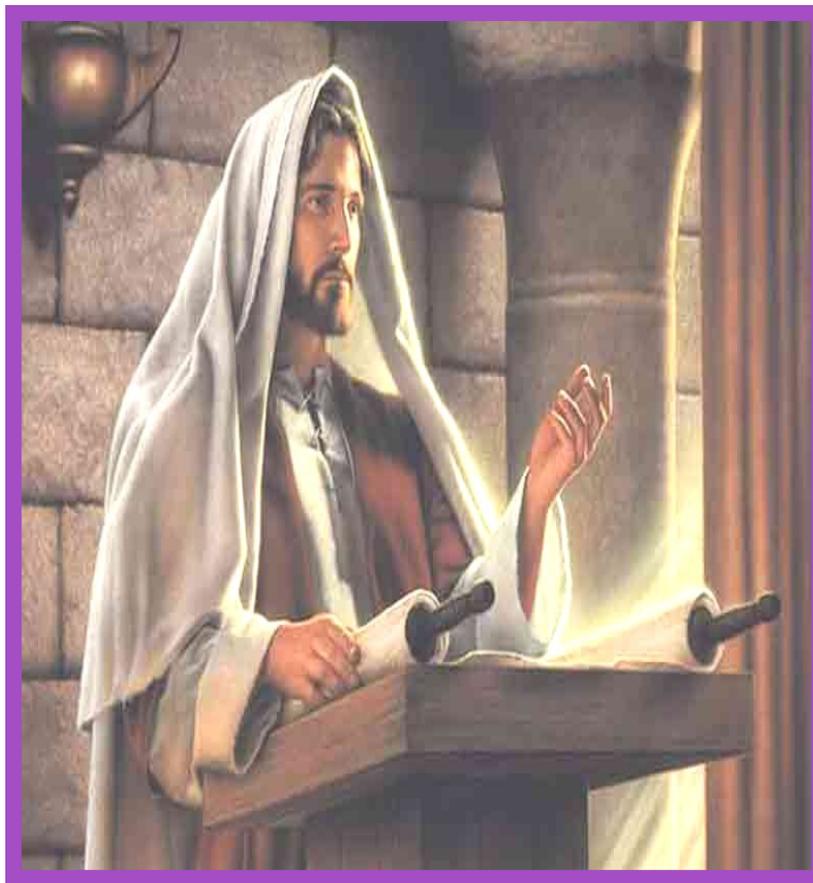
Render therefore to all men their dues.

For the powers also are debtors to the lesser citizens, that they may give them judgment and justice according to their merits. *Tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom.* He commands that we pay first what is due to the ruling authority: for there the need is greater: *Fear, to whom fear.* We should show reverential fear to authority; for fear prevents transgressions; then to our parents, or to our earthly master, that they may give thanks for their son or for their Christian servant. *Honor, to whom honor.* Honor may also be shown to those who are seen to be eminent in the world, so that, seeing the modesty of the servants of Christ, they may praise rather than speak ill of the Gospel way of life. *Owe no man anything, but to love one another.* He wishes us if, it is possible, to be at peace with all men, to love our brethren while holding them in due honor.



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**SERMON ON
RENDER TO CAESAR
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
121 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

22ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 22: 15-21

by: Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

Let every soul be subject to higher powers.

For there is no power but from God.

When Paul had laid down that we must follow the law of heavenly justice (Rom. vi. 19), that he may not seem to keep it apart from the justice of the present world, he commends this to us. For unless this is fulfilled, neither can the first be fulfilled. For present justice is as it were a guide, instructing the young, so that they may follow after to the more perfect justice. For no man can be looked upon as merciful, unless he possesses justice. Paul therefore, that he may confirm the authority and reverence due to the natural law, testifies that God is its Author, and that those who administer it, have their authority from God. And therefore he adds: *And those that are, are ordained of God*; that no one may think that these ruling powers are but human inventions, to be lightly esteemed; for what they see are divine laws, entrusted to human authority. He then is subject to the higher powers who, through fear of God, keeps himself from doing the things they forbid.

Therefore he that resisteth the power

resisteth the ordinance of God.

This he says against those who are strong through the power and influence they possess, or against those who believe no one can check them, and so think they can laugh at the law. These he shows that the law is God's law; and that they shall not escape the judgment of God who escape for a time. *And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation.* It is therefore manifest, that each one of us shall either be justified by his works, or condemned. For they who, knowing the law, continue to sin against it are inexcusable.

For princes are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil.

Princes here mean rulers, who are created to bring order into our common life, and restrain what is opposed to it, having their authority from God; so that the rest may be under the rule of one. *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good; and thou shalt have praise from the same.* Praise from authority is made visible when a man is shown to be innocent.

For he is God's minister to thee, for good.

It is here made clear to us that rulers are given to us that evil may not be done. *But, if thou do that which is evil, fear; for he beareth not the sword in vain*; that is, he inspires the fear that should he be ignored, he will punish. *For he is God's minister; an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.* For since God has decreed a future judgment, and also wishes that no man shall perish, He has appointed rulers in this world so that, making them an object of fear and awe, they may become a pedagogue to all men (Gal. iii. 24), teaching them what they must observe, so that they shall not incur the punishment of the judgment to come.

Wherefore be subject of necessity; not only for wrath, but also for conscience's sake.

Rightly therefore does he tell them that they must be subject, not only for *wrath's* sake, that is, out of fear of present punishment: for *wrath* brings forth punishment: but also because of the judgment to come. For should they escape punishment in this life, it awaits them in the life to come, where, their own conscience accusing them, they shall be punished.

For therefore also you pay tribute.

For they are the ministers of God, serving unto his purpose.

Therefore, he says, the tribute must be paid, or what