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# the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

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## He Trusted God's Promises

Somewhere, deep within his own soul, Caleb dealt with these basic problems of faith and realized that in spite of any weakness or sin, he really did trust the Lord.

Somewhere along the line you are going to face that moment of truth. You are going to be faced with the impossible situation when compromise seems the only wise course. You have to decide if you really believe that God is God and that you can trust His promises.

—Gordon K. Reed  
(See p. 13)

S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR APRIL 26

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## MAILBAG

### THE STATE IS FOR MAN

You lately have had comments on government, especially from the viewpoint of so-called natural law.

In Romans 12 and 13 Paul did not write a treatise on government. He appealed to Christians for attitudes, thoughts and actions pleasing to God—that would keep individual Christians from running afoul of the law.

Luther and Calvin looked on the

state as an "entity," a phenomenon self-existent apart from individual persons. They were wrong. The created living soul or creature is the object of God's equal care. Ordered procedure is strictly relative: "The Sabbath was made for man . . ."

Paul's notion of the purpose of government may, however, be arrived at by recalling another reference to it. In it we see his idea that one proper purpose is to keep overt evil

at a minimum—"restrain."

But before looking for a second purpose, notice the negatives with which Paul hedged about the actions of men in authority as well as the actions of other men. In these, men are always just men, persons.

Romans 12:2—not to conform outwardly to the standards of this present world. Verse 17—never to repay evil with evil. Verse 21—to overcome evil with good. In 13:9, the 7th, 6th, 8th and 10th Commandments are included in the second of the great commandments.

Now the limitations on the actions of men are also limitations on the action of the state, for in the functioning state it is men who do the acting.

Paul recognized that state action often is evil and that God often removed "kings in My wrath" (Hos 13:11). God lets us have rotten fruit but only to a degree: Saul, Solomon, Jeroboam, Baasha, Jehu, Nebuchadnezzar.

The state was given to sinning man by God. But its authority stops at the precise limits set for individual men. We honor parents in spite of their mistakes. We should honor the necessary government in spite of its evil. At the God-appointed limit of rottenness we should disobey, as Peter said.

God ordained, but He also dis-ordained. We obey the ordained ordinance; we refuse that which is dis-ordained. Polycarp's comment is a gem: "We have been taught to give honor as is fit, where we can without harm, to governments and powers ordained by God."

One further word about the purposes of government. It is to receive the law "from Jerusalem," shed the evil that inheres in "rule," fulfill the good that flows from "servant." In today's speech we may say: restrain, correct, heal, educate, rehabilitate.

In all of which the Church is the witness, preach and teach.

—H. L. Elliott

Winnsboro, S. C.

### PERSECUTION COMING?

Your remarks about the "few publications in the U. S. giving authentic information about the true conditions in Russia that the Christians have to face" is, indeed, very sad. Even now it is too late to save our own nation without learning firsthand how Communism works. (Tru-

# the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

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THIS WEEK—

Vol. XXVIII, No. 50, April 15, 1970

*Tower-Wise, It's Babel!* ..... 11

What do all these words mean these days?, asks the critic of ecclesiastical gobbledegook ..... By Clydie

*Give Me the Mountain!* ..... 13

Caleb stands tall as a man who believed and was willing to try the "impossible" for God ..... By Gordon K. Reed

### Departments—

Editorials ..... 16  
A Layman and his Church ..... 17  
Sunday School Lesson, April 26 ..... 18  
Youth Program, April 26 ..... 20  
Book Reviews ..... 22

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**REVELATION AS HISTORY**, by Wofhart Pannenberg. The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y. Paper, 181 pp. \$1.95. Reviewed by Dr. William C. Robinson, professor emeritus of Church history, Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Ga.

Christianity is nothing if it is not historically true; this is the much needed testimony of the Pannenberg circle. God discloses himself by His self-vindication in historical events. That these acts in history are not isolated from words, however, is seen in that the Word relates itself to revelation as *foretelling*, prophetic promises; *forthtelling*, God's vindication of His faithfulness by the promised deliverance; and *report* or recital, the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel.

Specifically, Pannenberg affirms: "While it is only the whole history that demonstrates the deity of the one God, and this result can only

be given at the end of history, there is still one particular event that has absolute meaning as the revelation of God, namely, the Christ event, insofar as it anticipates the end of history."

We heartily concur in this main drive of these Mainz scholars. There are, however, sundry positions they take with which we differ.

We find, for example, their position of an alleged gnostic structure behind the Gospel of John much less acceptable than the insight of Jeremias in his *The Central Message of the New Testament*, to the effect that gnostic Christianity on the one hand and the Gospel on the other belong to two entirely different worlds. "Gnosticism affirms that the greatest of all evils is death, but the Gospel affirms that the greatest of all evils is sin. Gnosticism asserts that the way of salvation is revealed knowledge (*gnosis*),

but the Gospel asserts that the way of salvation is pardon for our sins."

**POCKET OF PEBBLES**, by Charles R. Hembree. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 128 pp. \$2.95. Reviewed by the Rev. Cecil V. Crabb, Memphis, Tenn.

Good books of a devotional character are ever popular. Their permanent value depends largely on two qualities — their real spiritual message and their literary style. A minister of evangelism in the Assemblies of God Church has given us an attractive, Scriptural, timely exposition of Galatians 5:22-23, the nine fruits of the Spirit ranging from love and joy to meekness and temperance.

This volume is outstanding, however, for two special qualities. The first is the effective use of worthwhile illustrations from a wide variety of sources. The other is the splendid literary style of the author. These two qualities are important to any writer or speaker.

In a day when there is so much emphasis on the purely external aspect of religion and its social side, it is refreshing to turn to a helpful volume like this one that stresses the internal phase of the Gospel and the fruit of the Spirit in the individual life of the Christian.

This book of meditations merits the study and emulation of any reader.

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## Mountain—from p. 14

and spiritual warfare to be fought.

This is not a time to "cut and run" but to stand and fight. Where are the Calebs of this generation to cry out for the mountains? Where are the John Knoxes who cry, "O God give me America for Christ or I die"? We are living in a grand and awful time, thank God!

Caleb's victory is almost a foregone conclusion. It is mentioned almost in passing that he won the hill and overcame the giants. Of course he did! What did you expect from a man like that? He did not fail, he won his victory for God and a place for his children to live for generations to come.

In this day when so many of God's people seem only to see the giants, the walled cities, and the strength of the foe, who will be a Caleb? Who will believe God and claim his mountain for Him?