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REPORTING THE ENLARGEMENT OF A PRESBYTERIAN WITNESS LOYAL TO SCRIPTURE AND THE REFORMED FAITH

Responding to Dictators

We should be intensely concerned about a new situation: Bible believers, even Reformed Christians, misunderstand what Romans 13 teaches. Some of these people think Paul was preaching acquiescence to the brutal rule of criminals who somehow manage to seize power. They use the passage to teach that anyone who seizes political power becomes God's minister as soon as he has that power firmly in his grasp; and, further, that everyone, including all Christians, should be subject to him, and that anyone who resists him is damned. . . .

Those same Christians readily understand why the American Revolution took place; at the same time, some say at least by implication that a revolution against a Hitler, a Stalin, or an Idi Amin would violate the commands of Romans 13.

—Stephen M. Reynolds

See p. 7

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 26

CIRCLE BIBLE STUDY FOR MARCH

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Mailbag

SURPRISES YET TO COME

The Rev. James L. Rohrbaugh's observations, "By Their Fruits," came as a warm, spring breeze in the Dec. 14 *Journal*.

It must have taken plenty of courage for a PCA minister to submit an article with so little likelihood of tickling the ears of your Reformed readership. I admire his candor and

generally agree with his thesis. Incidentally, I am not a charismatic nor am I attracted to such ministries, and yet facts are facts and fruit is fruit.

Mr. Rohrbaugh was bound to be misunderstood, as indicated by a Jan. 18 *Mailbag* letter of criticism. It is naive to think that Mr. Rohrbaugh was giving blanket endorsement to each denomination mentioned; and to state that he defines power as bigness and wealth is missing the point. The topic is *fruit*, the fruit of the Spirit, seen in lives as evidence of power, the power of the Holy Spirit.

True, some charismatics could stand a big dose of Presbyterian doctrinal discipline in the handling of the

Word of God. Likewise, some Presbyterian "shackles," as they are called, need to be broken—perhaps with some lessons learned in regard to warmth, spontaneity, and openness to the surprises the Lord may yet have for His people.

—Mae S. Litzenberg
Gig Harbor, Wash.

A PROPENSITY FOR COMMUNISM?

I wish to thank you and congratulate you on the outstanding article by the Rev. D. James Kennedy, "Revival or Removal" (*Journal*, Jan. 4). Not often do we hear of a mini-ature of the Gospel with such a keen insight into and understanding of the imminent and catastrophic threat of Communism to Christianity and to our beloved country. Nor do we hear of many editors of religious publications with the courage to print such revelations!

Many of our mainline denominations are soft-pedaling the Communist threat of world conquest; they are even urging unilateral disarmament for America in the face of total and complete evidence that the USSR right now has considerable military superiority.

Why do our Church and national leaders largely dismiss this? Is it ignorance? Is it a propensity for Communism? Is it a kind of detente—render—for America to obtain the most favorable position after Communist conquest?

And are we too preoccupied with our own affluence and pleasure to care? As Dr. Kennedy suggested, indeed we should write our President and Congressmen. Or better, replace the appeasers at the very next election with patriots and statesmen who have the courage and intelligence to place Christianity's interests, and America's, first.

—G. Russell Evans,
Capt. USCG (Ret.)
Norfolk, Va.

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Seeking to promote a rising reformation in God's Church according to the whole counsel of God known as the Reformed faith; to define, describe, popularize and promote the Reformed faith; to encourage and assist Reformed conservatives; and to report on activities in Presbyterian and Reformed bodies.

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FROM THE M-US COORDINATOR

In the wake of the announcement of my resignation as coordinator of the Committee on Mission to the United States for the Presbyterian Church in America, I would like to express my appreciation to the following: the Rev. Cecil Williams

through his writings, to the churches and to us.

His epistle to the Ephesians was not a letter of correction, but a fervent word of exhortation. Read his impassioned prayers (Eph. 1:15-21, 3:14-21). He prayed that the Ephesians might be filled with the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that they might deeply understand their inheritance in Christ, and that the sense of greatness of God's power would flame in their hearts.

In his second prayer the burden on his heart was that the Ephesians should be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man; that they should be rooted and grounded in love; and most of all, that they should constantly be aware of the mighty power of prayer.

Six times Paul repeated the exhortation: Walk with the Lord; walk worthily; walk in love; walk in the light; walk circumspectly; walk in the Spirit. He urged the Ephesians to be aggressive: "Put on the whole armor of God!" We are not fighting a defensive action. The enemy is defeated. Go after him!

And above all, "Be [being] filled with the Spirit." Like a glass held under the full flow of a faucet, let the gracious inflow of the Spirit fill and

repeatedly fill your whole being. Never be without a fresh supply.

Thirty-two years later Paul was gone. All of the apostolic voices were silent except the voice of John the beloved. Banished to the Isle of Patmos, John received a special message from the Lord Jesus for the church at Ephesus: "Unto the . . . church at Ephesus write" (Rev. 2:1).

"I know thy works" (Rev. 2:2). The congregation at Ephesus was a beehive of activity. And they were orthodox. There is not one word of rebuke or correction for false doctrine. But in the midst of all their activity, a sacred quality, precious to our Lord, had gone out of that body of believers. "I have somewhat against thee," said our Lord, "because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). Remember, repent and return to that first love!

The Ephesians were not guilty of doctrinal heresy nor of laziness. But they had *forgotten*, and they had *forsaken*, and they no longer gave first place to the burning passion that once possessed them. They had allowed the flame to burn low.

Carefully read the Saviour's words again and again: "Thou hast left thy first love." It was the sin of desertion.

Years ago I stood with other tourists marveling at the many geysers in Norris Geyser Basin in Yellowstone Park. We were guided into the subterranean chambers of what had once been an active geyser.

The guide explained how geysers function. The chamber in which the geyser stood was once filled with boiling water and steam pouring in from an underground stream. When the pressure reached a certain point, the boiling water and steam burst upward through a narrow aperture, resulting in a spectacular geyser.

This no longer occurred, explained the guide, because the stream of water had shifted, and this geyser was left cold and empty.

The words of the guide had a special impact upon me. I turned from the group that they might not see a quick, hot tears that began to flow. "O God," I cried, "don't let the stream of Your Holy Spirit ever turn from my life! Never let my heart become cold and empty like this roomy chamber. Let the warmth, the fervency of the Spirit flow continually as liquid fire into and from my life and Your glory."

And I heard His answer in my heart: "Just do not allow the flame of your love for me to burn low!"

Calvin's View on Church and State

WILLIAM C. ROBINSON

The Reformation operated with a deeper sense of the gravity of the fall and a greater need for grace and light from God for sin-darkened man than that professed by scholasticism. Consequently, the Reformation did not assume that man could begin with an adequate natural knowledge of God, morality and the state.

For the Reformers, the beginning of all true knowledge of God is Jesus

Christ clothed with His Gospel. They began with Christ and read the Bible in the light of His atoning cross and glorious resurrection; then they read nature in the light of the Bible.

Accordingly, there are not two separate entities—the state governed by natural reason and the Church by supernatural grace. Every part of life is to be brought into subjection to the God who confronts us in His revelation.

Calvin found some seeds of political order and a native love of truth implanted in every man (*Institutes*, II, ii, 12-13). Nevertheless, this internal law engraved on the heart

needs to be clarified by the written law given to men who are blinded by the sins of arrogance, ambition and self-love (*Institutes*, II, viii, 1).

The human mind cannot attain true knowledge of God without the Word (*Institutes*, I, vi, 2), so Calvin begins as a disciple of Scripture with the doctrine of heaven (*Institutes*, I, vi, 4). In Scripture, the believer starts with the Gospel which sets Christ alone before us with His cross.

Rejecting the Thomist doctrine of a difference between the image and the likeness of God, the Reformers held that, by the fall, the image of God was destroyed, effaced or so deeply

The author, professor emeritus of Church history, Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Ga., now lives in retirement in Augusta, Ga.

rupted that all that remains of it is a horrible deformity (*Institutes*, I, xv, 3). The New England Primer began, "In Adam's fall we sinned all." Realization of the gravity of original sin led Calvin to favor lesser magistrates as a check upon the chief magistrate. Perhaps for this reason James Madison, who had studied under John Witherspoon, developed checks and balances in our American system of government. Civil government is to restrain evil men and keep the public peace so that society may not disintegrate and the Church may have the opportunity to proclaim redemption. Church and state owe one another mutual aid and collaboration.

Calvin believed that God has established two governments, both for His own glory and our good. Even the state has not come about by human diversity but by divine providence and holy ordinance, so that the magistrates should be faithful as God's deputies for those doing good unto praise; for those doing evil, as avengers of wrath (Rom. 13).

For this consideration makes a God king; that he recognize himself as a minister of God in the government of his kingdom (*Institutes*, IV, 1). Yet Christ's spiritual kingdom

The Church's task to preach Christ and Him crucified.

the civil jurisdiction are things distinct; the former occupied chiefly with the soul, with internals and eternals; the latter chiefly with the body, with externals and temporals. Under God, each is autonomous in its own sphere. Neither is to rule over the other, but God is over each and He has subjected us to both.

In Geneva "there was no question of a theocratic regime in which the temporal power would be subject to the spiritual power," as F. Wendel wrote. "In Calvin's view no king was a church agent for ruling the people; he was God's own agent for civil affairs." The problem there was how to

prevent the city-state from completely dominating the Church.

Calvin was exiled in 1536 and threatened with exile later because he would not permit the city council to dictate the worship and discipline of the Church. He was never an official of the state and during most of his ministry in Geneva not even a citizen. His struggle was not to set up the rule of the clergy but the reign of the living God, who confronts us in His revelation.

The Christian *as a citizen* seeks this sovereignty of God in the state, while the same believer *as a churchman* promotes the lordship of Christ, the head, over His body, the Church.

In Scotland it required definite testimony to keep the state from invading the offices of the Church, as the witness of Knox, the Melvilles, Henderson, the Erskines, Thomas Gillespie and Thomas Chalmers attest. At issue was whether the two institutions, Church and state, with equally divine appointments, have a separate existence, a distinct character and an independent authority. It is impossible to make the one dependent upon the other.

Further, as ordained by God, both the state and the Church are to be accounted moral parties responsible to God, and in consequence of this moral responsibility to Him, bound to recognize His revealed Word.

Abraham Kuyper insisted on a free Church in a free state. He showed that Calvinism emancipates the state from the dominion of the Church *but not from God*. Indeed, man's duty is to serve God in the world, to praise Him in the Church, to thank Him in the family, and to recognize Him in the school.

The distinguished Dutch theologian also found that, for the Calvinist, "All authority of governments on earth originates from the sovereignty of God alone," or as the Scripture puts it, "By me kings reign," and "the powers that be are ordained of God."

It is a gracious gift of almighty God when we the people are given the liberty of choosing our magistrates. That this power comes from God is recognized in varying degrees in the Declaration of Independence, in the Articles of Confederation, and in the constitutions of most of our states.

In the final chapter of his *Insti-*

tutes, Calvin cites sundry Scriptural examples to encourage the state in enforcing God's law of capital punishment for proven, deliberate murders:

"Our adversaries claim that there ought to be such great perfection in the Church of God that its government should suffice for law. But they stupidly imagine such perfection as can never be found in a community of men. For since the insolence of evil men is so great, their wickedness so stubborn, that it can scarcely be restrained by extremely severe laws,

Kuyper showed that Calvinism frees a state from a Church but not from God.

what do we expect to do if they see that their depravity can go scot-free—when no power can force them to cease from doing evil?" (IV.xx.2).

"All codes equally avenge murder with blood, but with different kinds of death" (IV.xx.16).

Calvin noted that magistrates are called "gods" (Psa. 82:1; John 10:35) because they are appointed to render God's judgment. And those who carry out the executions of proper penalties are spoken of as "vicars of God" or "deputies of God."

"The magistrate in administering punishments does nothing by himself but carries out the very judgments of God. . . . The law of the Lord forbids killing; but, that murder may not go unpunished, the Lawgiver Himself put into the hand of His minister a sword to be drawn against all murderers" (*Institutes*, IV.xx.4, 6, 10).

Brethren, let the Church devote itself to the task God has given it: preaching Christ and Him crucified, offering the grace of forgiveness to every penitent who believes in Christ.

And let Christian citizens encourage and not oppose the state as it seeks to carry out the task which God has laid upon it—justice, peace, tranquility, and order instead of anarchy—and, where God has commanded capital punishment for murder, that solemn act. [F]