



John Calvin's *Institutes in the Christian Religion* (1541)

A PPA Seminar: Winter/Spring 2018

Rev. Charles R. Biggs

Study 16: Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen: The Power of the Church and Civil Government - Read pgs. 721-784

Prayer: "Grant, Almighty God, that since you have gathered us to your Church, and enclosed us within the boundaries of your word, by which you preserve us in the true and right worship of your majesty, grant that we may continue contented in this obedience to you ... May we cleave to Christ your only Begotten Son, who has joined us forever to Himself, that we may never by any means turn aside from you, but be, on the contrary, confirmed in the faith of the gospel, until at length He will receive us all into His Kingdom. Amen."

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 7:22-23; Matthew 28:18-20; John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 4:1, 14:40; Romans 13:1ff; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 John 2:18-29

1. Who is the king and "only deliverer" of God's people? What is the "law of freedom" that all Christians should be ruled by? Give some specific ways that the Medieval Roman Catholic Church abused their authority (and still does!)? [pgs. 721-30, 43-46]
2. Does the Church have real power or authority? From where does this authority come? Give specific scriptures to support your answer. Compare this biblical power and authority with the abusive tyranny of Rome. [pgs. 722-27, 31-37]
3. Are church councils helpful in articulating and confessing the true faith in the church? Why, or why not? Are church councils infallible? What wisdom can we gain from this? [pgs. 728-31, 39-41]
4. Explain at some length both Christ's role as the True Teacher of the Church, and of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the Church, particularly in granting authority and gifts. [pgs. 725-27, 32-38]
5. Is tradition always a good thing? Why, or why not? In your own words from your reading, when is tradition good, and when can it be dangerous? [pgs. 741-43, 46-50]
6. What are the two jurisdictions man is subject to? Compare and contrast these. Is the Christian to live faithfully in both of these realms? If yes, give a couple of specific ways. [pgs. 755-57]

i. _____

ii. _____

7. What are God's purposes for civil government in your own words? What is the magistrate's primary vocation/calling and duties given from God? Give specific scriptures of both calling and duties to support and biblical examples from your reading of Calvin. [pgs. 757-63]

8. a. How can Christians specifically show submission to Christ in relationship to civil government?
b. Can Christians go to war? Why, or why not? If yes, then when? When is it right for a Christian go to war? c. When must Christians resist the civil government? [pgs. 762-67, 75-84]
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

9. a. How is a law a "silent magistrate" and a magistrate a "living law"? Explain. b. Briefly define and make the important distinctions between the moral, ceremonial, and judicial law. How can these help us to understand the purpose of laws and rulers? [pgs. 768-69]
 - a.
 - b.
 - i. Moral**
 - ii. Ceremonial**
 - iii. Judicial**

10. a. What is the goal of all laws? Why is this important to God's heart? Give scripture to support. b. What are the specific duties of Christian subjects to laws and rulers? c. Should a Christian ever rebel if under the jurisdiction of an unjust ruler? Why, or why not? Would there ever be a time where this was right and noble in God's eyes? [pgs. 770-84]
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.