

“The Calvinist Streak in the American People”

Professor John Schaller

Translated by John Weaver-Hudson

The spiritual currents struggling in our nation for recognition and sovereignty array themselves into two major groups. Each of these then splits into two more or less clearly distinguished factions. The first major group includes all currents which manifest themselves as *unchurchly*, if not outright *hostile to the church*. Here we encounter freemasonry in well-organized form as a representative of the whole lodge phenomenon. Of course, it supposedly ignores the religion of its adherents, but in fact leads from Christianity back to heathenism, since it is a nursery of a pantheistic or deistic world view. The spiritual powers of materialism have brought about all those organizations, which play their role in the endless struggle between capital and labor. The great workers' associations (unions) are also in theory religiously indifferent, yet they have such a decidedly anti-church and unchristian impulse, that the Socialists with their explicit partisan hatred against all that is churchly can make pretensions of being the consequent representatives of this tendency. In the other great group belong those churchly communities, which on the basis of differing points of view find their task in bringing other people around to their political or moral viewpoint. Romanism's place is readily discernible here, inasmuch as its basic views have been firmly established for hundreds of years, and its political goals for our country have been stated outspokenly often enough. Right alongside it, however, stands Calvinism as a tendency, which knows as little as Romanism about the clear distinction between church and state, but launches itself toward supremacy among the American people just as energetically. One could characterize the various groups in brief thus: that the first group strives to neutralize and shunt aside the influence of the Christian religion on the American people, while the second, in the name of the Christian religion, wants to set forth a caricature of the kingdom of God on earth.

It is not difficult to demonstrate this point, since the principles on which these two groups act contradict the truth which is revealed in God's Word, and thereby in like manner to point out that their efforts can finally succeed only to the people's detriment. Only a wide-ranging investigation, in which one must digest lots of nearly inaccessible statistics, could satisfactorily bring to light the results of all these efforts in a somewhat satisfactory manner, and thus make it possible to judge where most of the guilt for the political, moral, and religious damage to our nation lies. It would be more difficult to demonstrate from which side the greatest danger threatens our national and churchly life. All previous attempts in this direction so markedly bear the stamp of one-sidedness and therefore of subjectivity, not to say fanaticism. So the sober observer consciously avoids answering the question, in order not to come into danger, through the sharpening of judgment in one direction, of relegating to the background the dangers which threaten from the other direction. Think how many Lutherans aid and abet the agitation of certain anti-Romanist papers through happy agreement and monetary contributions. They utterly overlook the fact that these papers do not represent churchly interests, but the interests of freemasonry, whose common deleteriousness must remain just as clear to us as the papist danger. We do not want to fall into the same error here, of lumping Romanism and Calvinism together, both as political and social agitations. We want to point out which of these two spiritual tendencies conceals the most dangers for our people.

It does not need any demonstration that, in our circles, Romanism is by far the *one* big bugbear. The inmost essence of the domain of Antichrist just does not come into view, just the

obvious striving of the Roman hierarchy to gradually achieve a control over the forms of government, whose final aim must be the suppression of all freedom of religion and conscience. Now one can quite well grasp the dangerous tendencies of Romanism without losing an eye for proportion. But one ought to consider well, that the anti-Roman agitation among us is not based on a thoughtful weighing of the available facts. The completely unified work of the Roman clergy appears as a dark, threatening, looming thing, conscious of its goal, marching onward without turning aside, at most delayed by temporary setbacks, but never discouraged. Compared to this, the remarkably successful Calvinist agitation appears by contrast as a figure of light. One overlooks the fact that the spiritual influence of the Roman church so far is virtually negligible beyond its own adherents. It restricts itself for the most part to making the Roman voting bloc a force to be reckoned with, so that politicians accordingly grant privileges at every turn out of fear of the Roman hierarchy. However, Calvinism not only establishes the governmental and social ideal in Reformed circles, but in fact has placed its stamp upon legislation throughout the country. In other words: apart from tyranny over the conscience, which rules only within the Roman church itself, Romanism has had so far only a negligible, small influence on the consciousness of the people and on the populace; while on the contrary, Calvinism by its agitation has impressed false moral and religious ideals on almost the entire people, and has established an indescribable derangement of consciences. This is the case to such an extent that wide circles even in the Lutheran church in our country have lost sound Lutheran judgment on such things, and think in an entirely Calvinist way as soon as they come to questions about social ethics. It surely ought to be worth the trouble, to test the anti-Roman agitation in our own circles on this point. At least in their selection of means, even if perhaps not in their guiding principles, see if they don't depart from the spirit of Lutheranism, and sail into dangerous Calvinist waters.

In any case, the view presented of the actual situation justifies trying to point to a few examples of how strong the influence of Calvinism has become, and how it has already helped bring totally false religious and moral perspectives to mastery in our land. So it is self-illustrating that this trend not only destroys true inward freedom of conscience, but fundamentally stands in just as antagonistic a relation to outward freedom of conscience and religion as does the papacy, even if Calvinism lacks the hierarchical glamour of the papacy.

It may also be mentioned by way of introduction, that as far as we are guaranteed freedom of conscience in our country by the federal constitution, this is at any rate no thanks to the Calvinists, that is, the colonists of English origin and Reformed denomination. Surely the Puritans of the New England states, with their strict Calvinist orientation, were not people who would have been able to grasp the great concepts of freedom of conscience. One can, in fact, say of them easily enough, that they emigrated to America for conscience' sake, and sought a religious freedom, which had not been granted to them in England. The first settlements in Massachusetts and Connecticut were established by congregations as such, who under the leadership of their pastors, founded the first townships. They came over here, because their right was denied them in England to avoid certain church usages, which they considered to be papist. In fact, they also sought churchly freedom, but note well: only for themselves, not at all in the sense that someone had the right to think differently from themselves. They fled England, because it was not permitted to them to carry out their insights and compel others, indeed because their fairly close-in-heart countrymen denied them the right to rearrange their church orders according to their conscience. From the beginning in the New England states, church and state were completely amalgamated with each other; the renowned preachers of the oldest settlements claimed and maintained a decided influence on political legislation. Under such

circumstances there could be no talk of freedom of conscience. Whoever did not agree with the ruling church community forfeited his right to remain in the colony. Roger Williams was banished because he proposed complete separation of church and state and unrestricted freedom of conscience. The theocratic leaders of the colony could see in him only an enemy of the state. Those colonies had not yet worked their way out of these perspectives at the time of the War of Liberation. In fact, not until 1820 in Connecticut and 1833 in Massachusetts did it happen that all restriction on freedom of religion was abandoned by the state. As a result, the great concept that church and state ought to be completely separated was not introduced into the assembly which devised the Constitution of the United States.

The case of the large and rich colony of Virginia was quite similar. Here the Anglican state church was in charge. Since the relationships between settlements were arranged very differently from the New England pattern, the county rather than the township formed the basic political unit. But each county consisted of a certain quota of parishes, in which the vestry, that is, the church officers under the chairmanship of the incumbent rector, had complete control of church and political business in their hands. Thus here, as in New England, there was the uncontested, and for the Reformed self-evident, amalgamation of church and state. Not until 1799 did the Anglican Church cease to be the state church in Virginia. The same spirit, which had entailed the persecution of the Dissenters, also lived in Virginia; a certain number of Puritans, who did not want to bow to the ruling power of the state church, were driven out of Virginia in 1643. These people could not grasp the concept of religious freedom, so in the debates on the Constitution it could not prevail.

Where did it come from, then? We see God's rule most clearly in the history of our country in this, that he took away through the national constitution every right of the secular power to lord it over the church. His tools in this matter were not the Christians who had had the last word in the colonies, but rather people who had been schooled by the English deists and French atheists. Men like Benjamin Franklin and James Madison, who were known as freethinkers and consequently stood in contrast to the church, were the ones who had to give the deciding impact in the vital Constitutional Convention, when the question of recognition of the church arose. The provision for religious freedom was included in the Constitution, not out of love for the church, but in order to exclude the influence of the church on politics. Not in order to promote the church, but to insure unbelieving citizens of their civil rights, was it specified "that no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." This sentence was expanded thus in the First Amendment (adopted 1791): "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The first ten amendments have James Madison as their chief drafter, and were adopted, as Judge Story writes, "(in order to) more efficiently guard certain rights already provided for in the Constitution, or to prohibit certain exercises of authority supposed to be dangerous to public interests."

For Calvinists of all shades of opinion, the freedom of religion and conscience has remained a thing not understood and unable to be understood, down to the present day. Calvinism's whole presentation of the *kingdom of God on earth* does not agree that one ought to coerce no man to a particular religious or moral point of view. We Lutherans also make a distinction between the visible and the invisible church, but it remains clearly understood among us, that we mean just about the same persons. Nobody belongs to the visible church, who does not belong to the invisible. For us, the expression "visible church" is a somewhat unfortunate one, capable of being misunderstood. Still, it is always a fitting summary of the knowledge that

the true church of Jesus Christ, the communion of saints, cannot exist upon earth without making itself *perceptible*. One always knows where it is extant, because the preaching of the Gospel sounds forth nowhere except where the church is. It is in fact “seen”, not with the eye, but with the ear! The Calvinist, however, conceives of the matter in a completely different way. Since to him, Word and Sacrament are not the actual power of God for the salvation of sinners, but merely outward testimonies of the truth without inherent power, thus too, he cannot consider the preaching of the Gospel as the actual, true mark of the church. For him, therefore, the visible church is the outwardly organized fellowship of those who gather for the sake of God's Word. According to the Calvinist's point of view, there must be such a visible kingdom of Jesus Christ, since Jesus has bequeathed to it many rules and laws, whose fulfillment makes the outward organization of the church necessary. The church so organized is the *kingdom of God on earth*. The Calvinist thinks of this in a purely external way. Whoever gives obedience to the laws supposedly left behind by Christ, belongs to the kingdom of God, whether or not he belongs to the invisible church. If one has brought a man somehow or other to [the visible church], so that he observes outwardly certain laws and rules, then one has won that man for the kingdom of God. And this kingdom shall realize itself on earth; it is not only God's will, but ought also to be the effort of the church, to realize God's visible state on earth.

In this totally legalistic and entirely external striving of the Calvinist church bodies, they can never arrive at a clear view of the critical examination of existing relationships, and become conscious of the necessity of a sharp separation between church and state. On the contrary, according to God's will the church has the task of extending the morality and religiosity of outward observance over the earth. Without tedious logical proofs, the right ensues of accepting the power of the state as intentional assistance toward the success of churchly endeavors. Quite plainly, this saw the light of day in the case of Calvin himself. He wanted to make his city of Geneva into the city of God. He brought it about that the civil government assumed the responsibility of meeting the demands of the church, and especially of carrying out the punishments which the church officials imposed. It would be thoroughly backwards to maintain that this conception was only a peculiarity of Calvin. He had worked out the entire system of religion, which today still governs the Reformed church. Wherever these communities can put their viewpoint into practice, the Genevan pattern unrolls itself before our eyes. Whoever studies the development of our populace fairly closely, will see everywhere the traces of this striving, and indeed some realization of Calvinist ideas will be visible to him. In all Reformed churches we find the same impulse to work over the people moralistically, and to compel at least an outward observance of the regulations set up by the churches. Yes, to compel! Then, if the art of persuasion does not suffice, yes, without expecting the success of calm instruction, one relies upon political agitation which aims at co-opting the machinery of the state for the realization of Calvinist ideals of improvement.

Whoever has not learned to judge the driving force of this effort may be inclined, in light of its seemingly useful results, to forget the danger which lies in agitation itself. We have here an amalgamation of state and church before us, which the papacy has not developed more thoroughly – an amalgamation, which must lead to the oppression of dissenting religious convictions with as much firmness as in the papacy. Yet only in this way can the Calvinist ideal of the kingdom of God on earth be brought to its conclusive actualization: to the extent that all other conceptions are shoved to the side by governmental power and are destroyed in those who uphold such conceptions. In other words, the Calvinistic tendency can recognize true freedom of religion and conscience today as little as ever. It cherishes as an inheritance a decided, even if

unclear, opposition to the lordship of the papacy; but it sets in the place of papal rule a goal of a church lordship which is just as dangerous to our national structure and to the entire populace!

From here on out, we can now bring ourselves to an awareness of how strongly our populace is under the influence of Calvinist ideas, and how far consciences have already been deranged by these ideas.

Most shockingly we run up against the *prohibition movement*. It used to be called the *temperance movement*. It was from the start an untrue and misleading designation. From the beginning those who strove for this “moral improvement” had no intention of working toward true moderation. Instead, they had the outright intention of a total suppression of the use of alcoholic beverages. This agitation has not arisen from a political basis. Certainly, every halfway reasonable government is concerned, for the sake of the public welfare, to set a dam against the misuse of alcoholic beverages, but no government could find a testimony in conscience, and not in a conscience guided by God's Word, flatly to criminalize the production and use of alcoholic beverages. Neither natural nor revealed law knows that sort of insight. In fact, the prohibition agitation stems from the Reformed church camp, and is borne along from first to last by Reformed ideas. If one could break the religious mainspring of this propaganda, it would come to such a screeching halt, that a block of sandstone by comparison would look like a frightened doe. We can spare ourselves a wide-ranging rebuttal of the false moral perspective at the basis of the whole movement. We note, however, the characteristic of Calvinism, that it opportunistically adds a little extra to the morality which God has given, in order to improve it. For these additions Calvinism then demands the same recognition as for the divine commandments. Never and nowhere has God flatly designated the use of alcoholic beverages as immoral. It escapes the notice of the prohibition fanatic that he accuses the Lord of a moral dereliction because in Cana he bestowed so rich a wedding present. By this, any insightful person can judge the whole movement as untrue and unethical. Likewise, it also came to light how closely this whole agitation fits into the basic framework of Calvinist thought. After one has developed the thesis that all consumption of alcohol is sinful, the striving of the Reformed churches must aim at fighting this sin, not only within its own circles, but in the whole nation. It serves to bring the kingdom of God on earth closer to its realization, in that one does not so much prevail over sin as make it impossible. Toward this end, the state must be used, in whose hand such power lies. As soon as one has taken away every opportunity from the citizens of the country to render themselves impure by intimate association with the “demon rum,” then one has brought them at least that far into the kingdom of God, and attained a Great Moral Uplift [English in the original], which is just so formed and worth just as much, as what Calvin accomplished when he let a child which had struck its mother have its hand cut off. Whoever does not know the Calvinist idea of the kingdom of God, does not understand the actual essence of prohibitionism, and cannot measure its danger for our populace.

Along just the same lines *Sunday legislation* is afoot in our land. We Lutherans know that no moral requirement is set forth in Scripture, to desist from our daily business and from innocent pleasures on a particular day of the week or on any day of the week. We recognize the special observance of Sunday as a church regulation, which Christians have set up in perfect freedom, in order to create good order for their common worship. The fact that Sunday becomes a particular day of rest for a Christian, who lives under orderly church relationships, is a byproduct and not the heart of the matter. At the same time, the question can obviously arise, whether it is salutary for the physical well-being of a nation, that such a day of rest be established by law. This question has neither a religious nor a moral coloration, and cannot be

answered directly from the Christian religion or morality. For the church, it belongs in the area of adiaphora, and for the state in the sphere of social economy. Perhaps it would be [pertinent] in our circumstances to answer the question by taking into consideration whether in fact such legislation is necessary to the guaranteeing of religious freedom. One ought to consider cheerfully, that all Sunday legislation, which so far has been enacted in our country, owes its development to thoroughly wrong motives. The children of this world have not intellectually contrived this argument. The Lutherans have not gone after it. Not once have the papists had any guilt in the matter.

The great, celebrated "American Sabbath," a true spin-off from the English Sabbath, owes its existence pure and simple to the Reformed church domain. Reformed pastors and females egg on the agitation. Vaguely aware of pushing hard against the limits of the forbidden zone of a church establishment, legislators have for the most part shied away from designating Sunday as the Sabbath or day of the Lord. They just do not act in the same frame of mind as the people who spur on this agitation. For the Calvinists, it is firmly established that the Sabbath-Sunday is a divine commandment for the whole world, and that its purely external observance is a moral duty of every human being. For these people, it is a question of part of the realization of their idea of God's kingdom on earth. One cannot convert all people. According to pure Calvinist interpretation, that is also simply not God's intention. But one can compel them outwardly to some extent to live according to the laws of the kingdom of God on earth, and among other things to keep the Sabbath. In any case, every citizen must be compelled willy-nilly to live like a Christian, in that he grants compulsory rest to saw and hatchet, to spade and hoe; to pen and typewriter. He himself languishes in careful avoidance of baseball games and other recreation. Then according to Calvinist interpretation, he has lived morally on the day. Indeed, this is so important, that one ought sooner deal indulgently with a marriage-breaker than a Sabbath-breaker.

We want to mention yet another piece of Calvinist propaganda, in which the nature of this spiritual tendency comes especially clearly into the light of day. Constantly and tirelessly the agitation is drummed into our eyes and ears, that *religious instruction is to be introduced into the public schools*, or at least *moral instruction*, or at the very least *Bible reading*. Who's behind this drive? The unbelievers, the materialists, the freemasons and their comrades? Surely not. They might in any case go in for moral instruction according to their tastes, but not actually for real morality. We would not suppose that the papists would go in for religious instruction which did not stand completely under the control of priests, and the Pope certainly does not want to hear of any unrestricted Bible reading. In the first place, real Lutherans certainly could not hit upon the idea that they were the only people in the world to be clear on the point, that no governmental institution ought to have anything to do with religious propaganda, if civil and religious freedom are to remain in the country, quite apart from the consideration that [Lutherans] cannot trust the state to teach the holy Gospel without distortion. Only the Calvinist Reformed are left standing as the actual originators and promoters of this movement.

It would be thoroughly false, in these efforts merely to see a confession, that the public school as an institution of education, which should be supplied to us regular citizens, finally has created a fiasco. In any case, all who are actually familiar with the nature of the public school admit that in its current structure, it has not fulfilled the great hopes placed in it. One would have to be blind and deaf to the influence of the daily papers, whose columns are chock-full of proofs that our nation, by and large, is surely the most immature and raw among the civilized nations. Whoever as a consequence tries to put into the hand of the public school a new means of

education in the form of religious or moral instruction, thereby confirms our opinion that science, history, and geography, not to speak of grammar and arithmetic, have not brought to completion that greatness, that one blithely expected of them. But that does not explain to our satisfaction the eagerness and persistence with which the above-mentioned agitation is promoted.

One might think that leaders of the Reformed sects were finally conscience-stricken because for decades their churches did not think the great majority of children worthy of being saved from spiritual starvation. Then the conjecture might arise, that these people lacked the energy to replace their miserable Sunday school educational program with a properly constructed Christian education, and build schools for themselves. There is something to this idea. More and more voices are heard in the circles of the Reformed bodies, which insist upon the improvement of their churches' youth instruction, and which recognize accordingly that their previous attempts at bringing Christian influence to bear upon their children have been lamentably inadequate. They are entirely right about that. The Reformed sects are largely responsible for the religious and moral neglect of our nation, in that they entrust their children with a perfectly clear conscience to the state for education, and have thus saved a lot of effort and money. But also herewith one has not yet explained completely the striving to bring religious instruction right into the public schools. Besides, what has that state to do with religion among us? Haven't the Lutheran congregations of the Synodical Conference given concrete proof for nearly two generations, that only an honest measure of knowledge, of love for the Gospel, and of willingness to sacrifice is required in order to assure Christian children of an education that properly equips their souls?

The agitation of the Calvinists will immediately be understandable enough, if we turn to their ideas mentioned above about the kingdom of God on earth as the basis of explanation. There one thinks in completely external terms about this kingdom of God, so that certainly it belongs to its realization, that people at least read the Bible, whether or not they believe in it. Since one cannot get at grownups in this by coercive means, at least the children will be required to busy themselves with the holy Book. Nobody wants the church to set up provisions for this. One also knows, that one would not get far beyond the confines of a single congregation with an attempt to do this. But haven't they, since Calvin's time, invoked the services of the state for such purposes? Well and good: the state keeps the assignment of introducing religious instruction or Bible reading into its schools. If it does so, one has won what one aimed at. If every citizen is forced in youth by the state to read the Bible, thus he will have entered into the kingdom of God, and our people will by and by become a Christian nation [English in the original] just like England, for example.

What danger to our populace nevertheless lies in this agitation! We Lutherans oppose this kind of effort. It is clear to us, that under such arrangements, the pure teaching of the Gospel would certainly not come to the people. Instead, a weak, superficial, falsely oriented presentation, a caricature of the truth would nonetheless be paraded in front of the children under the guise of Christian instruction. Such instruction would turn the prevailing religious confusion in our country from something unspeakable into something inconceivable. On top of that, it appears that this tendency mixes state and church together perhaps even more than prohibition and Sunday legislation. If the state, which has no religion and cannot have any, promotes religion by order of the church, and thus directly develops a strong religious impression on young people, then the grimmest confusion of consciences cannot be kept at bay.

Now if we think about it, that these forms of Calvinist agitation have been visible for decades, that they cover the whole land, that they seek to drag absolutely every citizen beneath

their influence, then it must be clear to us, how full of consequences it has already been effective and must be effective even further ahead. If we want, we could already detect an evil effect. Lutheran circles have also been invaded by the Calvinist perspective, and not merely those Lutheran circles whose Lutheranism stands on a shaky footing. Even among us, there are people who are so comfortably upset by certain results of the agitations mentioned, that they completely overlook what lies hidden behind them. Introduction of prohibition does not destroy everything evil that appears inseparably connected with the American saloon. The Sunday laws assure us a certain external quiet and respectability, which also appears welcome to Lutherans. And yet there are amenities which one buys at too high a price, and the ones mentioned above are exactly that kind. We know that the propaganda for prohibitions and Sunday legislation is based upon a *false morality*, even if the setting aside of divine truth isn't spelled out word for word in the laws of the state. In both instances the agitations proceed from a single lie. It is a lie, that God has forbidden every use of alcoholic beverages. It is a lie, that God has fixed Sunday in his moral law as a general day of rest. These lies are not simply untruths. Whoever expresses them lies about God's Name and defames it. From such twisting of the moral law, no real salvation can come for the nation. If such a false morality is foisted upon an entire people, a community of hypocrites will be raised, who think that they do God a real favor with their self-imposed piety. What a grim confusion of consciences must arise where it is taught in the name of church and state, that it is moral progress: if a drunk can't indulge his impulses because of lack of opportunity; if a blasphemer honors the enforced "American Sabbath" through work stoppage; or if the children of atheists, Jews, and Muslims [*Türken*] have to learn the religious Book of the Christians in the public school! Thus this Calvinist propaganda imposes false moral ideals upon the whole nation. It chops down awareness of real religious freedom and freedom of conscience. It clears the way so that finally these great benefits can be torn from the people with their apparent total agreement! ¹

Once we have secured this vantage point, lots of things will be thoroughly comprehensible, which we have experienced hereabouts in the current time of war. Whoever does not take into consideration that the persons who stand at the summit of our federal government have been for the most part cradle Calvinists, bringing their false idea of the kingdom of God into their governmental service, will be faced with some real puzzles in the interpretation of certain current events. Prejudice toward England and English ways doesn't

¹ Evidence that the awareness of the danger described above and its origins is manifest here and there in other circles, the Chicago Tribune afforded in February of this year. In a lead article, it said, among other things: "In spite of our principles of individual freedom, of our carefully considered constitution, and our free institutions, we are developing a system of social tyranny. A wishes B to live as A thinks B ought to live, not because B is injuring A, but because A thinks B is injuring himself. A is not willing that B should be left free to determine this matter for himself. He demands that B shall be compelled by law to conform to what A thinks is good (*continued on next page*) for him. A not only considers himself his brother's keeper; he wants to delegate his keepership to the policeman and the jailer. This all goes under the plausible guise of morals and social betterment. But it derives from one of the most offensive systems of oppression ever developed, the theocratic tyranny of New England puritanism. The reason why moralistic reformers resort to Washington for certain laws is not that local authority is unable to enforce their will, but that very often it is unwilling. The appeal to the central power is not to protect one community from another, but to impose the will of a group or a class or a section upon communities which will not adopt its standards. An altruistic purpose does not alter the fact that this is a subversion of American principles which ought to be frankly and courageously opposed. Opposition is certain to be misinterpreted and ascribed to a sympathy with immorality by the advocates of specific reforms. Unfortunately, yet inevitably, selfish interests will take cover under this legitimate opposition. Nevertheless, it must be developed for the sake of the larger public issues involved."

explain everything to our complete satisfaction, that seems to us unfair and un-American. We must after all assume that the persons concerned regard their position as specifically American. When we add that every Calvinist feels himself called to cooperate in the realization of the kingdom of God on earth, and also to make the most of a governmental office, much becomes clear. We hear that people who set the tone consider it the duty of the United States to avenge the great injustice that Germany has committed against Belgium. However, the same people not only find it supportable, but rather self-evident, that England should set unarmed nations ablaze and trample on their rights, since England is the vanguard of the idea of the kingdom of God! We hear with increasing astonishment, that our federal officials see it as their task, to use their oversight all over the whole wide globe to function as defenders of morality and to carry out their ideas of humanity. Likewise, in diplomatic documents one deals with supposed basic principles of morality and humanity. But nobody in those circles has ever deemed it necessary to offer evidence that our government, which is established only for our own land, anywhere has the task of venturing everywhere in the world on behalf of morality, and thereby trying to impose its own notions of moralism on other peoples. Since these personalities stand under the psychological compulsion of Calvinist perspectives, it never enters their minds that someone could be justifiably prejudiced against their kind of procedure. One ought not object here that this judgment causality- mongering [*Konsequenzmacherei*]. Haven't leading churchmen and politicians in England quite openly expressed the thought that there are religious values at stake in the World War?

The strength and falsehood of Calvinism's influence on popular consciousness, were especially on display at the beginning of the war, as the question came up everywhere, how the awful catastrophe squared with the Scriptural admonitions to peace. If only mockers had asked: where is now the splendor of your Christianity, while the most Christian nations attack one another, filled with hate? One need not have wondered about this. In the case of declared enemies of the Gospel one surely need await no understanding for this idiosyncrasy of theirs. But where would they have gotten the opportunity for such blasphemies, if they had not gotten the idea from somewhere, that the Christian religion supposedly should bring a millenarian world peace in its train? The fact is relevant that absolutely serious Christians, especially in Reformed circles, asked with anxious hearts if Christianity had in fact proved itself to be a fiasco, because such an unprecedented bloody struggle had come to pass between civilized nations? The Lutheran knows that the preaching of the Gospel simply does not cure the world, which is hostile to God, of its sins. The Lutheran knows much more that the sinful world remains just as it was, and will continue onward in its sinful habits. The Lutheran knows that even to the last day, intelligence, insight, love of humanity, international trade preferences and so on will not create order on earth. On the contrary, in the final analysis only raw physical force does so. How differently must they think, who have been brought up under Calvinist tutelage in school! Perhaps they thought that prohibition, Sunday laws and other "moral" gimmicks had brought us a little bit closer to the realization of the kingdom of God, or that in any case the world had improved sufficiently, that at the very least, the sword in the mailed fist could no longer be the *ultima ratio*! How confusingly it must affect such people, as the nations of Europe in a jiffy threw aside the pen of diplomacy and grabbed the most refined equipment of war, in order to clean up their business once and for all! Must not the people, whom one had swamped with

utterly false hopes for an earthly kingdom of God, hopes supposedly deriving from the Gospel, actually go astray in respect to God's Word, which they have understood in so twisted a way?²

Now, how should we Lutherans array ourselves against this obvious and certainly damaging influence of the Calvinist spirit on our populace? Certainly not in such a way, that we use our church organization to set in motion a counter-agitation. That would be fighting fire with fire, not to say driving out the devil by Beelzebul. We hold firmly to the separation of state and church, to the principle that the church has as little to say about matters of state as the state has to say about the internal circumstances of the church. Therefore it must be clear to us, that churchly demonstrations are an inappropriate antidote to Calvinist efforts. Like the state, the church also has its God-defined sphere of influence, beyond which it cannot venture without damage to its own position. It is no part of the church's task to rummage about in the business of the state. In fact, it never ever belongs to the task of the church to improve the world and make it outwardly pious. That would not only be a hopeless undertaking, but also one that can appear justified only to popery and Calvinism. It can also in the long run only serve to damage the church if it undertakes a project to some extent in the name of the Gospel, which is not part of the Gospel. If the church remains true to its great task of pointing sinners to Christ, and thus pointing out to them the way to heaven, then the church sits within a mighty fortress, in which no devil can gain any advantage over it. If the church strays from its own sphere of responsibility that can make nobody contentious, and takes up worldly weapons in order to conduct worldly business, then the church places itself uncalled into wild controversy, and in a highly unnecessary fashion exposes itself to all the dangers of waging war in the world's way. Should the church thus surrender its royal privileged position, it makes it unlikely for human beings to recognize the actual task of the church, and necessarily undermines the success of the Gospel. The church has never yet mixed in worldly business without confusing the consciences of its own members. It has also never been able to do that sort of thing without drawing down upon itself the scorn and reproach of the children of this world. The church cannot say under such circumstances that it is suffering for Christ's sake. Instead, it suffers because it seizes another's function [*Amt*].

It appears to be difficult for many people in Lutheran circles to turn away from Calvinist schemes for the improvement of the world. We all know that many Lutherans, in their angry zeal against flunkies of the pope, would like individual congregations and even entire synods to make arrangements – in the name of the Lutheran Church – to enter into the struggle against the worldly machinations of the papacy. Further, right now there is a buzzing in the newspapers over reports of entire congregations, conferences, and synods issuing militant protests against the conduct of this or that government official. As if the church had any calling to that sort of thing,

² Apparently, Calvinist ideas operate as a powerful factor in the spread of pacifism, that is, the agitation which has set as its goal the establishment of an eternal world peace. That is naturally something different from the desire to fend off from our land, whenever possible, alignment with one of the parties to the rivalry in Europe, and thus [avoid being] dragged into the bloody conflict. Every good American citizen must earnestly desire this, and every real Christian must beseech it from God. One can remain entirely sober, and keep our direct participation in the World War in sight as a possibility, for which our people must prepare themselves through careful and substantial rearmament. The real pacifist, however, lives in the fanatical hope that one could banish war from the world with the stroke of a pen. He does not just expect, that one in the foreseeable future could make all people so reasonable, that they would perceive the unnatural character of war. He definitely counts on being able to set such a bridle to the thievery and murderousness of human beings by means of laws, say in the form of stringent treaties, just as one makes drunkenness impossible through prohibition. That is, however, exactly the Calvinist idea that one can banish a sin from the world by interfering with it, and thus make people more pious.

to lecture persons in civic authority, as though *they* had to carry out *the church's* function! The situation becomes even more hateful, if one finds in the resolutions the total number of congregational and synodical members cited, and so directly gets the impression, that [the resolutions] do not deal with an intended exercise of purely moral influence, but with a completely ordinary political pressure. But even if this hateful streak subsides – no Christian organization has as such even the appearance of the right to promote itself as the adviser of the princes and authorities of the people. That is in fact the Calvinist style, which not only looks bad to Lutheranism, but also demonstrates that the correct knowledge of the relationship between church and state is strongly obscured. One can only explain this alarming appearance among us, in that the natural sympathy for one of the European nations has run away with Christian understanding!

Apparently it is difficult for some among us, inwardly to hold to the boundary between what is entrusted to us as Christians and what pertains to us as citizens. As a citizen, every Christian in our country has a vested interest in making known his discontent with any social or political conditions whatsoever, or even with certain aspects of the conduct of officials. He ought not let this capacity be taken away from himself of sharing his insight on a matter of policy with a governor or president personally, and also to address his conscience seriously in a given instance. But why should not one hundred citizens, who comprise a Christian congregation, do the same thing? They should not, for this reason: the organization which exists for a completely fixed purpose, would then be misused for an alien purpose. If the individual Christian makes use of his civil rights, he has no thought in mind of thereby preaching the Gospel; for he does not involve himself in saving souls. He does not enter into this [use of civil rights] as a Christian, actually, but as a citizen. He can easily make this distinction, since entirely different duties are incumbent upon him as a citizen, than as a Christian. However, as soon as he sits in a Christian congregation with other Christians, the civil rights of the individuals are not melted down into common civil rights of the congregation. The congregation has *as such* no secular civil rights and no civic task. It simply has to preach the Gospel, and where that can be neither the direct nor indirect goal of the church putting in an appearance, it has no reason to open its mouth at all. For pastors and other bearers of congregational office among us, the facts of endowment with civil rights are still somewhat different. Plainly, the same competence legally belongs to them, which we have recognized above as belonging to Christian citizens. If they nonetheless make their presence felt in civic matters *as* pastors, professors, etc., neither they nor the other people manage to distinguish between the citizens and the representatives of the church, and to avoid ascribing to the one what the other does. Neither does the announcement help, in that case, that one is speaking as a citizen and not as a pastor, etc. Not only does the opinion of such a man find special attention on his account, because he assumes an influential position, but the whole country has seen over and over again in the case of the Calvinist preachers (not to speak of the Roman priests), that the spiritual lords speak owing to their office and want to grab attention for their churchly position. Therefore the word of the apostle ought to hold good also in such matters for Lutheran pastors, professors, etc.: avoid every appearance of evil! Indeed, no citizen less as such the *duty* to speak publicly or to publish his opinion in writing. He can fulfill his entire duty as a citizen in the secret corner of the voting booth, without anybody having anything to say about it. Therefore there can be no talk here about a collision of duties, and the preacher, who at most in private discussions with his people makes his knowledge count for something, but does not publicly mix into in civic and political business, maintains thereby an undistorted conscience, and should not let anyone reproach him for it. If he risks venturing into the public

square of civic matters, at once he risks evil misunderstandings which can detract from the Gospel. So remain true, not to apparently Calvinizing basic principles, but to Lutheran, that is, Biblical principles!

In this we do not give up on all influence upon the nation at large. It follows as a side effect on its own, if we do our work properly as a church. If we proclaim the wonderful Gospel of the great God and of our Lord Jesus Christ purely and clearly, we pull sinners out of the world, make them into God's children, and build them up in saving faith. These people are then the salt in civic life, that restrains a little the decay and ruin. The right knowledge of the Gospel opens their eyes also for the things of this life. Just as the human being without the Gospel necessarily judges all things falsely, so on the other hand, the Christian who believes the Gospel has a key to the right understanding of all phenomena in the world of men. Then, as a citizen of the country he can make his right judgment in worldly things count for something as well, as opportunity presents itself, and will not neglect this task. If we thus grasp the extent and danger of Calvinist influence on our populace, and want to oppose this manifestation properly, it will serve right away to make many people into proper Lutherans. Beneath the good providence of God they will then accomplish what can be accomplished, in order to insure our political and civic benefits, without setting their Christianity, which has nothing directly to do with these things, at risk of misunderstanding.

J. Schaller
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