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PERVERTED DEMOCRACY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

What are the God-given functions of civil government? We answer: Civil government, whether monarchical or democratic, is instituted by God not only for the material, but also for the moral welfare of its citizens. "Righteousness"—civic righteousness—"exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14, 34. Hence in the *locus classicus* on civil government, Rom. 13, 1—7, civil authorities are called God's ministers for them that do good, but revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil. When civil powers therefore issue and enforce laws that suppress all manner of lawlessness and vice, they are discharging a divine function and protecting that civic righteousness—the *justitia civilis*—that alone exalteth a nation. Where government suffers vice and immorality to go unpunished, even connives at public turpitude, there the State as well as the Church cannot thrive, but will finally perish. Hence Christians are enjoined 1 Tim. 2, 1—3 earnestly to pray for all them that have authority in civil matters over them, that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Says Luther (St. Louis Ed., IX, 922): "In the first place, pray for the civil magistrates. For the world needs nothing so much as a strict civil government. The world cannot be governed with the Gospel, for the Word is insufficient and too limited, it apprehends but a few; scarcely one among a thousand accepts it. Therefore you cannot establish secular government through it. . . . Where civil government does not strictly enforce its office, there every one will grab

and stuff into his own pockets; then follows sedition, murder, wars, violation of women and children, so that no one can live in security. The rabble (*Herr Omnes*) is not Christian. Kings, lords, and masters must use the sword, take off the heads. Punishment must be executed that the others may be kept in fear and *the pious can hear the Gospel and follow their vocation*, and everybody abide in peace and quietude."

While civil government, therefore, has the duty sternly to repress all lawlessness and vice that endanger social peace and order, it is a far different question when we ask: Has government, especially a democratic government like ours, the duty to make its citizens "*better men and women*"?

That is the boastful claim we hear and read so often in these topsy-turvy days. "It is argued," says Prof. Winchester in his book *Religious Education and Democracy* (Abingdon Press, New York, 1917), "that the function of democracy is not primarily to produce the best government, *but to produce the best men.*" And Herbert Croly, in his *Progressive Democracy* (Macmillan Co., 1914), declares: "Democracy has assumed an express responsibility for the achievement of the stupendous task of making this world a better place in which more human beings will lead better lives than they have hitherto had an opportunity of doing." (p. 406.) But what does this boastful assertion involve? If it really be the function of democracy to make men and women better, then it must also be the function of democracy to teach them, and indoctrinate them with, religion; for all experience proves that you cannot make men and women better without religion, since alone religion, specifically the Christian religion, can supply the motives for a morally upright life. Ascribing to our American democracy, however, any religious function whatever clearly conflicts with the basic law of the clean separation between the functions of State and Church in our country. "After more than one hundred years of test under all conditions it is now as true as at the beginning of American national life that the full and free right to entertain any religious belief, to practise any religious

principle, and to teach any religious doctrine which does not violate the laws of morality, and which does not infringe personal rights, is conceded to all. The law knows no heresy, is committed to the support of no dogma, and to the establishment of no sect." (Bayles, in *Schaff-Herzog's Cyclopaedia*, sub "Church and State.")

It is true, there is a vital connection between Church and State also in free America. The State has the duty and the power to secure the Church in its legal rights of property and corporate church-life. The Church, on the other hand, has the duty and the power to imbue its members with loyalty towards the State, and to further the observance of such laws as make for civic righteousness. Again, in great national danger, as in the recent war-crisis, the Church is in duty bound to place at the disposal of the civil government its material goods and possessions for the defense of the commonwealth. In thus helping to defend the government, or state, it defends its own life as a legal corporation. But outside of this *economic* connection there exists no functional relation between Church and State in this country, and should not exist. Mere suspicion that a Church is not loyal because it happens to number among its members souls that need the Gospel preached to them in another tongue than the English, or because it insists on giving its youth a Christian education and training in self-supported schools, is *un-American and unchristian*. Our State legislatures that are about to pass laws infringing the religious and parental rights of loyal Lutheran citizens ought to be reminded of the action taken by the legislature of Virginia in 1785 under conditions similar to those confronting them to-day. "During all the colonial period dissent had resisted the legal church-establishments, especially the system of taxation for their support; and after the overthrow of British sovereignty a demand developed for a divorcement of political and ecclesiastical affairs. An illustration of the sentiment prevailing at the close of the Revolution is to be found in an act of the Assembly of Virginia of the year 1785, the preamble of which declares that

“to suffer this civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on the supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty,” and that “it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officials to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order.” (Bayles, in *Schaff-Herzog*.)

Alas for the days of pure American democracy that seem forever dead and gone! What would the Fathers of our Republic say if they could see the *perverted* democracy rampant in the country to-day? And what would they say if they saw the advocates of this perverted democracy bent on destroying the religious liberties of their fellow-Lutheran citizens, citizens whose fathers they knew and honored, who fought and bled and suffered and died side by side with them for the independence of our country, and whose sons so gloriously followed in their footsteps in 1861 and 1917—18? We Lutherans are among the men and women that are to be converted into better citizens, if not into better Christians, for: “The function of democracy is to make better men and women,” and that, according to the prevailing spirit of the times, can be done only if the preaching of the Gospel in the German language is prohibited, and all children are compelled to attend the public schools. But what of our constitutional rights? We know that we are in the minority over against the great mass of our fellow-citizens demanding such undemocratic legislation against us; but is it not true and good democratic doctrine that “*A majority must not be allowed to determine the religion of the minority. Of the two conflicting principles, freedom of religion and majority rule, the most fundamental is that of religious freedom, and it must prevail.*” (Brown, *Secularization of American Education*; Columbia University, 1912, p. 3.) Who, we ask, are the authors and instigators of the prevailing perverted democracy? Examining the facts in the case, we answer: There are three classes of them: 1) our professional politicians, currying favor with

the public by making a grand-stand play of their patriotism. 2) Many of our educators, who are actuated out of sincere, but misguided love for our country's youth, and demand that they be given a better religious training. 3) The majority of our Protestant preachers outside of the Lutheran Church, who do not know what they want. In fact, it is the latter class that is responsible for the woeful neglect in the religious training of our country's youth. So many of these preachers have done everything else—made money, played politics, preached sociology, and shamefully forgot the command of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ: "Feed My lambs!" Listen to the bill of indictment Prof. W. S. Athearn draws up against them in his *Religious Education and American Democracy* (Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1917), where he writes: "The State has relied upon the Church to teach morality and religion. But the Church has not taken its teaching function seriously. Sunday-schools have been inefficient, and the Church colleges have been gradually secularized until their product can hardly be distinguished from that of the tax-supported institutions. *One of the difficult problems of our day is to induce Church colleges to teach religion.*" (The italics are Mr. Athearn's.) "The condition in church academies is still more appalling. With the State institutions confessedly leaving religious teaching to the Church, and the Church colleges shamefully dodging this responsibility, and the Sunday-schools doling out 'a-penny-a-Sunday' educational program, we are fast losing the sturdy virtues of our Puritan ancestors, and we are growing up a generation of people who have no moral basis of citizenship. Sixty millions of our one hundred million citizens have no connection with any church. There are 15,000,000 children in this country who receive no religious guidance whatever. There are 35,000,000 over ten years of age outside the membership of any church. There are 10,000 small towns west of the Missouri River in which Christian preaching is rarely or never heard.

"New sciences, new psychology, new sociology, new wealth,

new forms of amusement, are all factors in the decreasing interest in religious training. We are fast drifting into a cultured paganism. Unless the Church takes immediate steps to stem the present tide of indifference, luxury, and commercial greed, this country will soon cease to be a Christian nation — if, indeed, a country in which three out of four of its citizens are without active church-relations can be said to be a Christian nation now.

“But the State is alarmed. In fifty years crime has increased 400 per cent., with a crime rate in New York far above London, Paris, or Berlin. Something must be done to underpin the virtues of our people. Honesty, industry, truthfulness, and the common decencies must be taught or the State will perish. Can the State trust the Church to teach morality? The Church has confessedly failed in the past. For a dozen years committees of the National Education Association have been at work on the problem of introducing into the public schools courses in ethics which are not based upon religion. One thing is clear to those who are closely in touch with the present tendencies, and that is that the United States will have a system of moral training for her people before ten years. It will either be some form of ethics with no religious presuppositions, or it will be a system of church-schools giving adequate moral and religious training to the children of all the people. The attitude of the church people of this country during the next ten years will determine this question. Shall religion drop completely out of American education? At no time in its history has the Christian Church faced so grave a crisis as that which confronts it now. What are the churches of this country going to do about it?” (*Religious Education*, etc., p. 10 ff.)

Athearn's indictment cannot and does not include our Lutheran Church, at least not the Synodical Conference. On page 37 he writes: “The Catholic Church and certain branches of the Lutheran Church and some other Churches have been willing to bear the extra financial burden of maintaining a separate system of religious schools for their children. In so

doing they have shown a loyalty to the Church and to religious teaching which entitles them to very high praise." However, we Lutherans can claim even a higher mead of praise for our religious school system than Mr. Athearn seems willing to bestow upon us. It is a matter of record that our position toward our public school system differs fundamentally from that held by the Catholic Church. We do not stigmatize our public schools as "godless schools." We do not ask for a division of the public school moneys for the support of our schools as the Catholic Church has repeatedly done. Above all are we conscious of the fact that, in giving our children a good religious education in our own-supported schools, we at the same time are making them loyal citizens of our country, who are ready and willing at all times to shed the last drop of their blood in defense of our priceless democratic institutions. From our Missouri Synod schools, numbering 2,206 throughout our country in 1917, over 34,000 young Lutherans have served in the army. More than two hundred have paid the supreme sacrifice at the battle front in France. It is on record that our 3,246 congregations bought 87 million dollars' worth of Bonds of the first three Liberty Loans. A conservative estimate places our purchases of all bond issues, including the Fourth, at 150 million dollars. Here in St. Louis our churches and schools excelled all other denominations in the purchase of Thrift Stamps, amounting to \$143,000. And it is not only in the present crisis that our Lutheran Church has evinced its intense loyalty to this our own America. In a paper read at a recent conference of Fort Wayne, Ind., ministers and teachers, Prof. G. Eifrig of our Teachers' College at River Forest, Ill., well says: "The Lutheran Church needs no apology for her presence in America, and for what she has done and stood for in our country. She has been here from the infancy of the country, and has never shirked her duty toward it, but rather has been willing to do a little more than less of her fair share of work for our land. She has stood at the cradle of our government, of our liberties, and then and now has often been weighed and tried and not found wanting."

After a brief review of Lutheran emigration to this country begun by the sturdy Swedes in 1638, he approaches the school question and sets up the two theses: "1) Our Lutheran schools are American in character and spirit. 2) Our Lutheran schools are a blessing to our country because they teach real and lofty patriotism and loyalty, thus making for us the best type of citizen." He then goes on to say: "Neither does the fact that religion is taught in our schools make them un-American. That, indeed, is the principal reason for our having them. And that is rather a good feature. Many of our best people are working overtime to get religious instruction into the public schools, which, however, would be a violation of the Constitution. George Washington said in an address: 'Religion and morality are the essential pillars of civil society,' and in his farewell address: 'Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.' Similarly, Daniel Webster said in his famous Plymouth oration: 'Whatever makes men good Christians makes them also good citizens.' And Gladstone, one of England's greatest statesmen, said: 'Try to make good, conscientious Christians out of your children, and Great Britain will be well satisfied with them as citizens.' This, then, should make ours very desirable schools to have in the land." (*Walther League Messenger*, Jan., 1919.)

It is an undeniable fact, however, that, in spite of the manifested loyal character of our Lutheran day-schools, they are not regarded as "desirable schools" by the great mass of our American public, but rather looked upon as "undesirable foreign institutions" which the State for its own safety's sake will have to close sooner or later. This is not owing merely to the circumstance that many of our schools still taught religion in the German language when the war broke out, and for which cause sixty of them were closed in different parts of the country; the real cause lies deeper. Listen to the voice of Athearn, and in it you hear the voice of "perverted democracy on religious education."

After mentioning the Catholic and Lutheran schools, p. 37, he continues: "But we are living in a democracy, and the life of a democracy depends upon a system of public schools. People who are to do collective thinking must have a body of common knowledge and common ideas, ideals, and standards. The public school is the agency through which these common ideals and experiences are maintained. The homogeneity of our people depends primarily upon the work of the public schools. That which causes any church to withdraw its children from the public schools and establish parochial schools is not in the interest of our common democracy." And on p. 38: "But the parochial school system involves deeper questions than the teaching of religion in the public schools. The very essence of democracy is involved. The schools of a democracy must teach self-reliance, initiative, and originality as well as obedience, docility, and conformity. They must furnish their pupils with facts, and teach them scientific methods of interpreting and evaluating facts and detecting fallacies. The schools of a democracy will indoctrinate their students with the scientific method and with the ideal of Truth and true Democracy. In other words, the schools of a democracy will make democrats, and a non-democratic religion, or a religion with a non-democratic church policy, will fare badly among a people surcharged with the ideals of democracy. . . . It is increasingly apparent that a democratic nation involves a democratic religion. . . . It seems fair to say that *when we remove from the schools of a democracy those things to which the churches object, we must sooner or later remove from the churches in a democracy those things to which democracy objects*—else there can be no real democracy." (The italics are Mr. Athearn's.)

That, certainly, is straight talk, and if it means anything, it means the prohibition of all denominational schools. And it seems that "perverted democracy" is mobilizing for the attack on our church-schools. The *Lutheran Witness* of January 21, 1919, publishes the following legislative action demanded by the State Teachers' Association of Iowa:—

“Revision of the Compulsory Attendance Law. All Children Required to Attend the Public Schools or Schools Inspected and Approved by the Department of Public Instruction. The public school is the one institution where all the children meet in common, and where all have an equal chance, which constitutes the very foundation of social and political organization in a democracy. Recent developments in history show that democracy and illiteracy are incompatible. The responsibility of training and educating the children for useful employment and good citizenship belongs to the State. Loyalty to the government must include loyalty to its public institutions. The following resolution adopted by the State Teachers’ Association is hereby recommended for legislative action:—

“Resolved, That patriotism and good citizenship should have a place upon each school program. To the end that a deep-seated love of country and a willingness to sacrifice for her free institutions be inculcated, we recommend that our present compulsory school attendance law be amended so that each child between the ages of six and sixteen shall attend the public school, or a school inspected and approved by the Department of Public Instruction, twenty-four consecutive weeks each year.” (Report of the Dept. of Public Inst. for the Biennial Period ending June 30, 1918, Albert M. Deyoe, Supt., p. 29.)

As far as the inspection of our Lutheran schools by the State is concerned, we Lutherans are ready to submit to it; we can even welcome it, for we have nothing to hide in our educational program, providing the State will draw up and issue a curriculum which private schools must attain, and by which State officers must judge them. But just here lies the rub. In the school-fight we had to wage in Illinois and Wisconsin in 1892, our schools were to be left to the mercy of the individual County Superintendent. If he personally approved of them, well and good; if not, they were doomed. And the same unjust policy will be followed, if all signs fail not, by the present

antagonists of our schools. Rev. Vogel, of Des Moines, Iowa, who reports the proposed legislation mentioned above, interviewed the State Superintendent, Mr. Deyoe, and has this to say: "It is difficult to state just how far-reaching this recommendation is. One thing is certain, *viz.*, control over private schools is sought, and that includes our schools. If the Department of Public Instruction is given authority to approve or disapprove, it would be an easy matter to eliminate all private schools. All depends on how much might be required. Mr. Deyoe does not favor private or church schools. He did not say what view he takes in regard to such approvals of private schools. However, he is of the opinion that no congregation ought to teach secular branches and keep its children out of the public school because it wishes to give the children a thorough religious training. He thinks religious instruction can be given in a different manner; but he did not undertake to propose a different plan. In his annual address, delivered before the Iowa State Teachers' Association, December 27, 1918, he said: 'Greater stress must be placed upon the moral and spiritual development of the child.' (*An Awakened Civilization*, p. 11.) How does he expect to do it without the Word of God?"

Yes, how? Mr. Deyoe cannot solve that riddle, nor can anybody else. It is true, "perverted democracy" is hard at work finding a satisfactory answer to the vexed problem, but in the language of Bobbie Burns:

The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,
And leave us naught but grief and pain
For promised joy.

That holds true of all the many plans proposed so far by the opponents of the parochial school system. Even the famous Gary Plan that promised so much at first has miscarried. The churches that tried it soon tired in raising the funds necessary to pay the religious teacher they engaged to supply the daily religious instruction given to their children of school age in their own church-buildings, and in the hours in which the children

were freed from attending their classes at the public school. It would lead us too far afield here to mention the countless other schemes proposed for a more extensive and intensive religious training of our country's youth.

It is a significant fact, however, that in 1915 the National Education Association offered a prize of one thousand dollars for the best essay on "The Essential Place of Religion in Education— with an Outline of a Plan for Introducing Religious Teaching into the Public Schools." The Association stipulated that those competing for the prize should define religion in a broad way, so as not to run counter to the creeds of Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Jew. (See Winchester, p. 127, for particulars.) And this is the religion "perverted democracy" has set out to realize in our country.

In his "Annual Survey of Progress," read by Prof. King of the State University of Iowa at the annual meeting of the Council of Religious Education in New York last year, in which he deals with community cooperation, he holds forth as follows: "The primary interest of the religiously minded persons should never be mere preparation for a future life, but rather how to attain to, and participate in, a fairer, more Christian social order on this earth. His concern with prayer, with study of the Scriptures, with worship, or with church rites or activities of whatever kind, must always be to regard them as means for strengthening his hold on those eternal values which he is seeking to relate in a dynamic way to the realization of God's democracy among men. If religion is such a social affair, then it is obvious that religious education must consist primarily in training children in the appreciation of these social values, a training of young and old alike *in actual social service*. Religious education, as we conceive it, should be an organic, vital part of all those community activities which are reaching out for better conditions of social living. The religious training of children should find in various forms of social service, kindness, loyalty, lawfulness, and brotherly, neighborly helpfulness, such as the community recognizes as essential to its well-being,

the stimulus for religious growth." (See *Journal of Religious Education*, Chicago, April, 1918.)

In agreement with this program, "perverted democracy" has now set out to democratize the churches of the land, that is, to turn them into mere social agencies, which may retain a certain amount of their old doctrinal *camouflage*, but are to teach in fact nothing else than the broad *Unitarian* principle of "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." How it must make the very angels weep when they see so many of our Protestant Churches falling for that sort of *Christless religious education*! If the scheme succeeds, the priceless religious liberty of our country will be a thing of the past and the old nativistic cry: "One Country, One Language, One God and Church!" unhappily realized. But we have no fear. If it comes to the worst, and our church-schools are taken from us, we shall still have the pure and saving Word of God in our midst to teach our children, and by it secure and immunize them not only against any soul-destroying Unitarian religion that may creep into our public schools, but also against the unbiblical, faith-destroying science that taints so many branches taught in these schools. Then it will become our sacred duty both as Christian parents and loyal citizens to be represented on our local public school boards, where we can exercise our influence against all pernicious infidelistic subjects being taught our children. In fact, that is a duty we owe even now as Christian citizens to the public schools we help to support with our taxes, and which so many of our children attend after graduation from our church-schools. Our Catholic fellow-citizens have always taken a far deeper interest in our public schools, securing a more numerous representation among their directors and teachers than we Lutherans have. God help us to see and *do* our duty in this vital question more actively and faithfully in the future than we have done in the past!

St. Louis, Mo.

F. W. HERZBERGER.

NOTE. — The trend of modern thought in our country as regards education, in particular, religious education, to which Rev. Herzberger

has called attention, is revealed also in Dr. Coe's *Social Theory of Religious Education*. Likewise in an article inscribed, "Can Christianity Tolerate the Church?" by Joseph Ernest McAfee, in *The New Republic* for January 18, pp. 331 f., from which we quote the introductory remarks:—

Were the question: "Can Democracy tolerate the Church?" some thoughtful American would promptly reply: 'No. Democracy has no use for religion in its business. It cannot permit so vital a social function to be monopolized and arbitrarily controlled by private interests. Religion, like every other universal human concern, must be brought under community control, if democracy is fully to vindicate itself. A Church bearing a sect name, and exploiting society in the interests of a sect idea, cannot be tolerated by a thoroughgoing democracy. Religion is too vital a social function for its institutions to be monopolized by private corporations.

The great majority are still reconciled to *laissez faire* in religion. Democracy can *tolerate* almost anything. Even such institutions as the present hodge-podge of religious organizations are not beyond its complacency. Democratic society suffers a great deal which it does not approve. Even majorities do not arbitrarily order affairs according to their will. Until majorities attain a unity of purpose and select a clearly defined objective, they let minorities have their way. The community as a whole has been too busily occupied with matters which it must handle to mix in with the scramble of religious sects which it feels that it can let alone. The American doctrine of the separation of Church and State is still commonly interpreted by the sects themselves, by the politicians, and by the general public as involving a complete let-alone of the religious bodies by the agencies under public control. Our democracy so far takes the religious situation philosophically. Nobody except securely installed hierarchs likes the way things are going; but the only course open to the public seems to be to keep hands off. The public indeed gets much satisfaction out of its indifference, taking pride in its "toleration." We feel safe in saying that this is language unheard of since our Constitution was adopted.

Corroborative testimony regarding the insufficiency of secular training from the Christian point of view was offered by *The Lutheran Church Work and Observer* in its issue of February 27, p. 3 f., which quotes *The Presbyterian* to this effect:—

Some colleges are killing young Christians as the Germans killed the Belgians. . . . The writer is a product of, and was a worker in, the State system, and he is fully convinced that the State system can never be made distinctly and essentially Christian. The State schools above the family and parochial period should be exclusively vocational, technical, or professional. To subject any young mind and heart to negativism of the State universities is a peril to the individual, the Church, and the State. The State schools are all right for technical purposes, but they cannot and do not develop character.

The Lutheran editor continues:—

At the same time this appeared in our contemporary; in view of the results of an investigation being conducted at Washington and dealing with matters pertaining purely to patriotism, a United States Senator indulged in a very serious comment on certain deplorable, but widely

recognized tendencies in State education. Senator King said: "It is a remarkable thing that in those universities there has been a festering mass of pure atheism, and the grossest kind of materialism and teachings destructive to our form of government and the civilization which a Christian nation recognizes. We ought to weed it out, and drive out of the universities these pernicious teachers."

"Pure atheism" — "gross materialism" are just verdicts; but we tremble at the Christianity that is to be substituted for them. We may find that the devil is to be driven out by Beelzebub. D.
