

JANUARY, 1949

ADVICES ON THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

On a dark drizzly day President Truman delivered his State-of-the-Union address to both houses of the new progressive Democratic Congress. He was smiling, expansive, and he asked for "everything". That is, he appealed for the fulfillment of all his campaign pledges, feeling assured that he would get almost that. Will he be disappointed?

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Included in the President's demands were some items which the churches have consistently and persistently opposed. One of these is universal military training. While most of the churches have approved Federal aid to education, non-Catholics have earnestly insisted that such aid should carry provisions insuring that public funds be applied to public schools only. The same contention will be earnestly urged again. The National Conference on Church and State, scheduled for January 27 in Constitution Hall, will leave no doubt of that.

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Some of the President's proposals will be watched with more profound interest than others. One of these will be the Civil Rights program about which some national committees appointed by the churches will find themselves somewhat embarrassed by divided mandates from groups, one of a certain kind from the North, and one of a different kind from the South. In such a predicament the public relations servant of the differing elements in his constituency will find himself walking a tight rope. But if he is primarily concerned about Christian attitudes, after all he may be able to interpret his people in support of Christian principles in the face of controverted measures or methods.

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The churches will have a great stake in the Administration's foreign policies. Will foreign relations be governed by military considerations, or will they be properly directed toward peace? In rightly seeking to protect against the Communistic menace, will there be a realistic awareness of the Roman Catholic complication? These and many other acute questions will be raised and pressed, not the least of which will be United States support of the United Nations!

JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE FEBRUARY MEETING

In the auditorium of the Baptist Building at 9:30 A. M., February 8, the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations for the Baptist Conventions will convene. This will be an important meeting, not alone because of routine Committee reports on World Affairs, Domestic Situations, Religious Liberty, and Baptist Cooperation, but

because of the adoption of a Constitution and by-laws and the election of officers. Representatives from several of the hitherto unaffiliated Baptist groups have signified their intention of attending. This should prove one of the most significant sessions held thus far.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHURCH AND STATE JANUARY 27

Throughout January 27, Protestants and Other Americans for Separation of Church and State will stage the National Conference on Church and State. During the morning the members of the National Advisory Council will meet in annual session in the National Christian Church. In the afternoon at the same place there will be a forum discussion on vital topics by some of the country's notables before the large audience invited. In the evening in Constitution Hall there will be addresses by Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Secretary Glenn Archer, Dr. Edwin McNeill Potest, Dr. Ellis H. Dana and Dr. Louis D. Newton. Coming at this time the gathering should strongly influence public opinion on important legislative questions affecting church and state.

QUOTATIONS FROM LETTERS TO THIS OFFICE

(Names of persons and places are omitted from the following quotations for reasons which will appear obvious).

Complaint: "An important Baptist Church in the South has for numerous past years been receiving, and it is currently receiving, from a municipal government in money a monthly gift or donation for the support of the church expenses."

Answer: "A letter addressed to the pastor and deacons calling attention to the nation-wide Baptist struggle to maintain consistency with our historic doctrines concerning separation of church and state which forbid the application of public funds to sectarian purposes, and further, the pronounced effort of Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State to maintain this principle, should make an appeal to them not to embarrass their brethren in this vital struggle."

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Complaint: "Three Catholic nuns are teaching in a public school in a rural community a few miles north of my city. This is the third year they have taught there. One of my members gave me an interesting side light on the situation as we discussed the matter the other day. He tells me that he understands that the County Superintendent does not deduct income tax (withholding tax) from their checks, although he does withhold such tax from other teachers. It is our understanding that he says that the Federal Tax Division gave him instructions to do this. We are now working on the matter locally and a committee will go before the Superintendent at an early date, protesting the re-employment of these nuns for next year. I have already talked to him and he assures me that they will not be re-employed."

Answer: "I am not surprised at your statement that there is no deduction of income tax from checks issued to the three Roman Catholic nuns teaching in your public school. It is my understanding that under a rule of the Federal Income Tax Bureau those belonging to a religious order holding to a vow of poverty are excused. This is one of the matters on which we are vigorously protesting because all of us Protestant preachers pay income tax, and so do all Protestant teachers in the public schools. I think you should

Answer set up a strong protest addressed directly to the Federal Income Tax
(Cont'd.): Bureau concerning this. Please send me a copy which will assist us in our battle for religious equality and against special privileges to any.

"I think you will have to be exceedingly careful in securing dismissal of the nuns from their positions because under the Federal Constitution, and I believe under each state constitution, no one can be declared ineligible for public position on account of religious belief. Indeed, we as Baptists stand unqualifiedly for this principle, which is a guarantee of religious liberty and a protection against discrimination on the grounds of religious belief. That serves to protect us as well as others. It may be, however, that your state, as in North Dakota, has a statute against the wearing of religious garb in the public schools, a statute which you could invoke against continuing the Catholic teachers. It may be also that there is evidence of their Roman Catholic instruction in the schools as there was in New Mexico where we joined with local citizens in bringing suit against such sectarian instruction in the public schools. This would be ample ground under the recent Supreme Court decision for ousting them from their positions. I counsel that you be insistent that on whatever grounds you act you make it crystal clear that you do not stand for their exclusion from the schools on the grounds of their personal religious beliefs. We must be consistent for the ideals of religious liberty and protect this principle. In saying all this, I do not doubt that there is ample reason for getting rid of them for reasons above stated."

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Complaint: "We here in this island are watching with great interest the work that you are doing in behalf of the civil and religious liberties of our country, and want to pledge you our unreserved support, for at every turn we find the intrusions on those liberties to be legion. Space by no means would be sufficient to relate all of them, but we do desire to call attention to one that is doubtless of national scope as well as local. The one to which we refer has to do with the disposition of government property, chapels in particular. The enclosed letter will be self-explanatory. The chapel described is not nearly so desirable as some that have been sold here on the islands, but the principle is the same; and, as it appears to us, is definitely discriminatory."

Answer: "I can well understand your feelings. I wish I were able to assure that I can do something about it, but I fear that such is not possible. However, I am keeping your letter with the notice from the Colonel sent to all church organizations on the island as a part of growing evidence which I hope at the proper time to bring to the attention of the Chief of Chaplains. If you have any further information to communicate along this line, please feel free to address it to me."

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Complaint: "I am writing you to get your ideas on the Government Aid Hospital Program. You know we are planning our drive the latter part of this year and January of next year. You will remember the Catholic Hospital put on their drive and one of their talking points was that they would get so much money from the government to match whatever they raised here. There is quite a difference of opinion on our Board as to whether or not we should apply for this government money. The laymen seem to take the idea that since the

Complaint money has already been set aside and someone will definitely get it, then
(Cont'd.): we should take our part of it. Otherwise it will go to other institutions. The other side of course feel it is a direct violation of all Baptist principles by our doing this, and therefore they are opposing it.

"I am writing you because I know you are in Washington and probably know more of the ins and outs of this political business than we do here. I do not intend to use your letter as any kind of lever but we all value your opinion and I think from your position it might help us if you would give us your opinion on it."

Answer: "Our organization is indeed making a nation-wide fight against gross abuses perpetrated particularly by the Roman Catholics. I am sending you, under separate cover, a bundle of literature. This will show that not only the Baptist Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations which has been specially charged by the four supporting Conventions, Northern, Southern, and two National Negro Conventions, to uphold this principle, but others also, such as the new organization, Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, which has had a most amazing response from all who stand with us in respect to the maintenance of this great American principle on which, as Justice Frankfurter recently said, 'America has staked its very existence'.

"You would have to live in Washington to know the enormous pressures which interested church groups are exerting toward the use of public tax monies for sectarian purposes. On the hopeful side, I can assure you that we are making substantial progress toward arresting these outrages. I do feel that we Baptists, who are instrumental more than any others in causing the principle of separation of church and state to be written into the Constitution, should be consistent and exemplary in maintaining this principle. I know it is costly to pay the price of such consistency, and that we are peculiarly tempted when politicians under pressures are willing to grant such sums in violation of the Constitution to groups with whom we are associated in community life. Often such grants are made to rival institutions to their temporary advantage and to the embarrassment of the Baptists, but I feel confident that these practices are going to cease."

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IMPORTANT BOOKS COMMENDED

EDUCATION IN A DIVIDED WORLD, by James Bryant Conant. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 249 pages, \$3.00.

An effort to show the function of the public schools in our unique society; an examination of the hostility toward them which is based on ignorance of the present practices of the schools, and above all of the nature of the task they are called upon to undertake. Schools used for patriotic ends.

PHILANDER PRIESTLY CLAXTON: CRUSADER FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, by Charles Lee Lewis. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tennessee, 369 pages, \$5.00.

A careful, authentic biography of the Nation's greatest Commissioner of Education. A monumental volume concerning a Christ-like leader who believed in separation of Church and State.

THE UNITED NATIONS CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH, by Hugh C. Stuntz. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. 169 pages, \$1.75.

Fondren Lectures at Southern Methodist University by the president of Scarrett College. Concerned with the high purposes of the United Nations as related to the Church. The chapter headings indicate the scope of treatment: "The Call For Unity", "The Will to Peace", "The Place of Personality", "The Demands of Justice", and "The Tide of Freedom". A worthy presentation.

MACARTHUR'S JAPAN, by Russell Brines. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 315 pages, \$3.50.

An Associated Press writer here presents every aspect of Japan as related to the most remarkable military occupation in history, an occupation rich in drama, full of anecdotes and color and holding deepest concern to all of us.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN THE UNITED STATES. By Alvin W. Johnson and Frank H. Yost. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 279 pages, \$4.50.

An enlarged and revised edition of a standard work, giving attention to the legal status, including the McCollum case.

WE ARE ALL IN IT. By Eric Johnston. E. P. Dutton and Company, New York, 219 pages, \$2.75.

A foremost business man attempts to set forth America's role as a world power. Its insights are to be respected by reason of his personal visits to the troubled spots of the world.

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. By Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York. 409 pages, \$5.00.

A subtitle reads, "The Impact of Modern Knowledge on Religion". Probably the most ambitious work undertaken by this valiant propagandist of the Roman Catholic faith. Characteristically a glorification of the Thomas Aquinas - Aristotle basis of the Roman Catholic philosophy and far from an adequate appraisal of modern knowledge.

WHAT BAPTISTS STAND FOR. By Henry Cook, M. A. The Kingsgate Press, London, 4 Southampton Row, W. C. 1. 188 pages, 6/- net.

Through the courtesy of the Southern Baptist Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky, this interesting volume finds its way to our desk. Its treatment of the supremacy of the Scripture, the nature of the church, the place of baptism, the principle of liberty is most excellent. Valuable also for comparison with American statements.

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL TRADITION. By Richard Hofstadter. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 378 pages, \$4.00 net.

The author's discussion is centered in Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, Abraham Lincoln, Wendell Phillips, Grover Cleveland, William Jennings Bryan, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt. An effort to evaluate the policies of these men critically.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The White House
Washington
December 6, 1948

Dear Dr. Dawson:

Thanks a lot for your letter of congratulations although I am a little late in telling you how much it is appreciated. I want you and Mrs. Dawson to know how helpful it is to be remembered in your prayers. I shall need them in meeting the great responsibilities which have been entrusted to me.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Harry S. Truman

Reverend J. M. Dawson, D. D., Executive Secretary,
Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations,
Baptists of the United States,
1628 - 16th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

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SECTARIAN APPROPRIATIONS OUT OF PUBLIC FUNDS

In a recent interview Frank Batcheller of Boston, Chairman of the League Opposed to Sectarian Appropriations, said:

"Less than 25 per cent of American citizens favor sectarian appropriations, but by means of political pressure this small minority has been able to secure repeated aid for its institutions, including at the present time transportation for its parochial school pupils in 18 states. Had the majority on this question been as actively interested as the minority, few, if any, of these appropriations would have been made.

"Regardless of the attitude of any other organization, the League Opposed to Sectarian Appropriations will make every honorable effort to convince office holders and politicians in general that an overwhelming majority of the American people are firmly opposed to sectarian appropriations and that to favor such grants is not only entirely wrong but politically inadvisable.

"No American was ever a stronger supporter of the great American principle of the complete separation of church and state than was President U. S. Grant. General Grant firmly believed that the first and 14th amendments to the federal constitution, which were identically the same when he was President of the United States as they are today, do not prohibit government aid to sectarian schools. He emphatically and repeatedly so stated, and in his Annual Message to Congress on Dec. 7, 1875, he urged the adoption of a constitutional amendment that would without question prevent such grants.

"An amendment to this effect was introduced in Congress in 1876 and received very strong support. It passed the House of Representatives by the necessary two-thirds vote, but lost in the Senate largely because of the argument that the individual states could be relied upon to prevent sectarian grants. This may have been true at that time, but it is certainly not the case today, when 18 states are furnishing transportation to parochial school pupils. * * * "

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