

# REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS



November, 1950

## WHY AN AMBASSADOR TO THE VATICAN?

The Roman Church is putting pressure on our Government to send a full ambassador to the Vatican. If that is done, it would constitute a special favor to a single church, a virtual contractual relation between the Government and the Vatican. In 1867 the Congress of the United States declined to furnish further funds for such an ambassadorship, which had prevailed for a little time, on the specific grounds that the Vatican was violating religious liberty and we were violating our own Constitution which requires complete separation of church and state.

The proposal to tie up our Government with the Vatican at this time presents a peculiar embarrassment in two respects. First, in the enforcement of the anti-communist law passed by the present Congress. That law orders our officials to refuse entry to advocates of totalitarianism. Already our government has rejected Communists from behind the Iron Curtain and Falangists from Franco's Spain. What is the United States to do with those who come here from the Vatican, known to be the most pronounced totalitarian state in the world?

In a second respect the proposal to send an ambassador from the United States is most complicating. Our country is waging a distinct battle against Communism and other totalitarian systems. The Roman Catholic Church in its battle with Communism has become enmeshed in policies which are strictly peculiar to it and irrelevant to us. One of the major problems of the Roman Church in its fight for survival in Europe is church ownership of schools supported by state tax funds. America cannot march under the Pope's banner in defense of that. Nor can our country enter into partnership with the Vatican in upholding land monopoly by the Church and clerical interference with Government. Why should we be told that America is dependent on the woefully handicapped Vatican for espionage work among the Communists and secret counsels available to us? Let us fight our battle with Communism on clean-cut issues of freedoms for all men, uncomplicated by a tie-up with the distressed policies of the Vatican.

In passing from notice of the totalitarian church, we must express gratitude that the countries of the world which are freest from Communism are Protestant countries -- America, England, Holland, the Scandinavian nations, Australia and Canada. It is sorrowful to note that the countries most imperilled by Communism are Roman Catholic.

## A PRIZED PORTRAIT OF ROGER WILLIAMS

Through permission of the Library of Congress and efforts of Dr. Thomas E. Boorde of Washington, D. C., the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has acquired a 28 by 34 inches photographic copy of a fine painting of Roger Williams. It represents him in the wilderness on his way to Rhode Island in the dead of winter to found the first Baptist church in America in 1639 and to establish the first free state with a free church in the history of mankind. Properly framed, it hangs in our office, a reminder of the heroism of one of the greatest of the founding fathers, whose statue in Geneva is alongside that of Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox.

### OUR MESSAGE CARRIED TO THE PEOPLE

During the fall months the Executive Director has, in addition to office duties, filled many engagements outside. In the North he addressed audiences in Huntington, Pennsylvania and Huntington, West Virginia, the West Virginia Baptist State Convention at Parkersburg, a religious liberty rally of all churches at Takoma Park, Maryland, and meetings at Grace Lutheran Church and Columbia Heights Christian Church of Washington, D. C. In the South he delivered the Reformation Day address for the churches of Memphis in the Municipal Auditorium, the Reformation Day address for the churches of Alexandria, Louisiana, in the Bolton Auditorium; and the South Carolina Baptist State Convention at Charleston on, "Current Church-State Problems".

### IMPORTANT BOOKS BEARING ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

Mr. William R. Scott, Monteagle, Tennessee, a retired Washington journalist, writes the Executive Director: "The crisis we face is turning the thoughts of Americans to basic things in our history. The flood of books on our origin, our development, our idealism in government, among which is your own book, Separate Church and State Now, is evidence of this deep stirring. There is manifest a desire to 'put none but Americans on guard', as George Washington instructed at another critical period....This means that alien ideas of every type are under closest scrutiny or attack, such as alien attempts to foist on us any degree of union of church and state."

In recognition of this fact the Baptist General Association of Virginia, in its annual session at Roanoke, recommended that certain current books on Church-State relations in America be included in all church libraries.

Not all the books here noted deserve a place in church libraries. They are presented however, as important contributions, pro and con, of interest to the general public, and of particular meaning to students, editors, executives and pastors.

The Vatican And Its Role In World Affairs. By Charles Pichon, translated from the French by Professor Jean Misrahi. E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., New York. 382 pages, \$4.50.

Since the appearance of Avro Manhattan's volume, The Vatican in World Politics (Horizon Press, Inc., New York, \$3.75) the Romanists have doubtless felt it desirable to circulate something for counteracting that devastating book. The present book is a dignified publication by a standard house, under the imprimatur Cardinal Spellman. It endeavors to present the Vatican historically in a manner least objectionable to non-Catholics. An example of its restraint may be cited in what it says of Martin Luther: "It should be understood that neither the intentions nor the legitimacy of Luther's work are in question. He never intended to found a church. He simply wished to reform the one Church, and consequently he applied radical and ever-widening reforms to it. He wanted especially to re-establish it in its primitive purity, in opposition to Rome."

This is a far cry from the usual characterization, such as Bishop Charles P. Greco of Alexandria, Louisiana, offered the press in protest against a Reformation address delivered by the Executive Director of the Baptist Public Affairs Committee on October 31, this year: "The Reformation, as it is called, was engendered in beastly lust, brought forth in hypocrisy and perfidy, and cherished and fed by plunder, devastation, and rivers of innocent English and Irish blood."

If This Be Religion. By Frederick Keller Stamm. John Day Company, New York. 116 pages, \$1.75.

The popular radio preacher, who in protest against prejudice supported Al Smith for the presidency and in admiration of humanness declared Lincoln had the purest religion since Jesus of Nazareth, gives vent to his disappointment in the churches which he has served (taken to be representative of all) for lack of sympathy, love and cooperation in human welfare. "I do not want", he writes, "a religion that wraps God around with definitions to the point where religious groups become bitter, dogmatic, and bigoted". Unfortunately he tells us too little about the religion he does want. A kind of Bernard Iddings Bell wail over the assumed failure of religion, not calculated to win anybody, but to play down the Protestantism, which despite its faults and derelictions remains the most vital and dynamic expression of religion observable in our world today.

The Transcendentalists. Edited by Perry Miller. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 521 pages, \$6.50.

All who have read Perry Miller's Jonathan Edwards (William Sloane Associates, New York, \$3.50), will approach this noble book with keen anticipation. No one interested in the religious and political founders of American culture can afford to neglect the founders of our philosophy. Jonathan Edwards may well be our first and greatest philosopher, but those whose articles, essays, poems and addresses are gathered in this beautiful volume deserve careful reading. We delight to commend this assemblage of expressions from Channing, Clarke, Ripley, Brownson, Alcott, Emerson and others of like stature.

Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther. By Roland Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. 422 pages, \$4.75.

As might be expected from an author, who in this book won a \$7,500 prize, this is a commanding biography. In it Bainton, professor of Ecclesiology in Yale University, has achieved marked distinction in at least two respects: the readableness of his style and the wealth of woodcuts and engravings of Luther's own time, which illustrate the text. The book is fascinating, so that the reader pursues it avidly. Along with this reader appeal it combines notable comprehensiveness and insight. It will no doubt have a share in the revival of Protestantism which we are now witnessing.

Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy. By Max Beloff. Macmillan Company, New York. 271 pages, \$2.00.

The Oxonian author writes for English readers. He does not even glimpse Jefferson's significance in relation to religious liberty and separation of church and state. He does, however, give an interesting account of Jefferson's ideas of democracy and offers a very good account of the political policies pursued by the sage of Monticello in his public actions.

Peace By Investment. By Benjamin A. Javits. Funk and Wagnalls, New York. 242 pages, \$3.50.

Are we financing peace or war? This book is a critical inquiry, from the viewpoint of big business, into the Marshall Plan, Point Four and other efforts made by the United States in behalf of rehabilitation and reconstruction in war -- devastated lands. The ideas are largely those of Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric Company. The book presents ideas which are essential to any complete view of the world situation.

John C. Calhoun -- American Portrait. By Margaret L. Coit. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 593 pages, \$5.00.

This is a first rate biography, undoubtedly the best yet produced on the subject. The author qualifies for her task both by taste and research. The portrait is vivid, unforgettable. The insights are true and most illuminating. The wealth of facts which have a bearing on what the man was and what he did is astounding. After reading it one concludes that the citizens of Charleston have done well to erect the tall monument in Citadel Square to South Carolina's greatest son. To understand the United States one must read this volume.

The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's. By Henry Steele Commager. Yale University Press, New Haven. 476 pages, \$5.00.

Anything by Commager is accorded high respect in thoughtful circles. Even though the reader suspects that the author has been somewhat arbitrary in his findings in this volume, the result is immensely rewarding. It is unquestionably a much more reliable judgment than that of the Hollywood artists, the best-selling novelists, and the ruling politicians. Give us more Commagers!

The Man of Independence. By Jonathan Daniels. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia. \$3.75.

President Truman, in harmony with a common characterization, is presented here as the symbol of the Everyday Man in American Life. The author, who has had abundant opportunity to study him at close range, offers a most interesting portrait. The story is a lively one, full of episodes, and on the whole a faithful one. A reviewer insists that Truman is to be recognized for his "industry, perseverance, loyalty to his obligations, total unscareability, and calm confidence". Mr. Daniels, who professes at one time to have been in doubt about him, now holds that he "best embodies and exemplifies the democracy of America."

Zachary Taylor. By Brainerd Dyer. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge. 455 pages, \$4.00.

Old Rough and Ready, who had much to do with those decisive years when the war with Mexico over the annexation of Texas and the acquisition of the great Northwest Territory were issues in America, deserves an adequate presentation. Louisiana, which more than any other state claims him, most appropriately presents him. This is a worthy biography, meriting a place with those makers of history.

\* \* \*

#### AUTHOR OF CHURCH AND STATE IN THE UNITED STATES COMMENTS

I have read what you say criticizing my statement regarding Cardinal Spellman and Mrs. Roosevelt. Your statement as to events which have followed the Cardinal's utterance does not seem to me to invalidate my statement. I did not say that the Church would hereafter forego any attempt to secure government aid. I did say, and still believe, that the Cardinal's statement 'was of epoch-making importance'. My reason for this is clearly implied in the America review which criticizes me for playing up the Cardinal's statement and says that the action of the hierarchy, of which Cardinal Spellman was a member a few years earlier, should rather be taken as the norm. It is a fact that Cardinal Spellman had heretofore outspokenly advocated direct Federal aid, which made his statement to Mrs. Roosevelt taking a different standpoint so highly significant. It is something that can be pointed to for years to come and whenever the Church departs from the policy indicated by the Cardinal in that statement his utterance can be brought effectively to public attention.

ANSON PHELPS STOKES