

Now That It's Over

JOHAN W. DAVIS became the Democratic nominee for President because on Wednesday, June 9—after nine days and nights of actual balloting and sixteen days of actual convention fighting—the more than one thousand maddened mavericks of delegates had just sense enough left to see the widest gate through which to rush to shelter. Much will be said and written in the next few months of how George Brennan always had Davis lodged largely in his mind; much will be said of the really creditable if somewhat ostentatious activity of James M. Cox, and much of the doings of other bosses and leaders. In truth, Mr. Davis's nomination is mainly due to the fact that at the last his candidacy offered the delegates the largest exit with honor from an unendurable situation.

After it had been established that neither McAdoo nor Smith nor any of the candidates who lived in their shadows could be nominated, there were three men before the Convention who would have had the most careful consideration, had the leaders and the delegates coldly measured availability from the standpoint of possible Democratic victory. The three were Senator Ralston, Senator Walsh of Montana and Governor Ritchie. Ralston's claim turned upon the theory of victory by reduction of losses. Without positive political color, he is the kind of homespun, unassuming man that occasionally can be made very appealing to the people, and in addition it was reasonably certain that he could carry Indiana, traditionally a pivotal state. What would have happened had Mr. Ralston not instructed Taggart to withdraw his name is as much one man's guess as another's. Mine is that he would not have been nominated; for in his case freedom from entanglement in the McAdoo-Smith struggle had elements of danger.

Walsh and Ritchie did not get a running start, although their claims to consideration in any chess-board survey of the prospects were extremely high. Walsh had at the foundation his general record of sound and enlightened public service, and the universal respect which that has won. On top of that was his extraordinary and dramatic personal triumph in the Fall investigation. Plus all of that were these facts: He was a McAdoo man out of the West who would have made a tremendous call upon the people in that country, even upon many of those now believed to be swinging to La Follette; and he is a Roman Catholic, and an Irish one, who would have made a tremendous call upon the sentiment in the big cities that gave Smith's candidacy its vitality. Moreover, if the South would remain solid for any Catholic, it would for Walsh. No public man of today has less tendency toward religious prejudice or religious self-consciousness. Finally, there was the picture that Walsh made be-

fore the Convention as chairman, a picture that confirmed his fitness as one able to spread himself over all the discordant party elements. For Walsh was the superb chairman under conditions that would have destroyed an ordinary presiding officer; he was the born lawgiver, a model in impersonal competence as a ruler. Two weeks' observation of the man in action, with the knowledge of all that is in his record, sent the Convention to him heels over head for Vice-President, once the Presidential nominee was chosen, and only Walsh's abrupt adjournment of the Convention prevented his nomination by acclamation. But he had no show for President, because nobody coldly calculated; everybody dismissed him under the no-Catholic rule. Ritchie's assets lay in his probable ability to win in the North and East while holding the South. Next to Smith he was counted the great wet governor. A Maryland Democratic governor, born in Richmond, Virginia, and a Protestant, could say anything that came into his head about liquor and carry the South with ease. Further, in point of general ability, Ritchie is clearly above the average of the men who appeared as candidates. But he did not get his chance when McAdoo and Smith collapsed because the Smith following, evidently angry over his refusal to aid Smith in the balloting of the first week, turned away. Of course, there was no initiation of a Ritchie swing from the dry South or West.

With Ralston, Walsh and Ritchie off the boards, following the breakdown of McAdoo and Smith and the elimination of the echo candidates, who was left? Davis, Robinson, Glass, Underwood and Saulsbury. Cox, on whom the Convention had seen from its beginnings the Indian sign of that seven million defeat, had never struck a spark and had made a dignified exit from the candidates' field quite early. Of the others, Robinson was too lately emerged; besides, he was under the taboo of being from the solid South. Glass was another solid South product, and, apart from that, he long had borne the reputation of a hot-tempered, hard-headed, difficult little man—the type that politicians shun. Underwood was what he has been for years, a man universally honored but questioned as a candidate. He was still another solid South man, and his candidacy was too familiar as a futility. Not only that, he had faded away in the popular primaries, and he was deeply involved in the Klan fight. The feeling in the Convention about former Senator Saulsbury's candidacy was perfectly expressed by Samuel G. Blythe. He said that when Delaware had cast its six votes for Senator Saulsbury one hundred and twenty-two times, making in all seven hundred and thirty-two votes, or a two-thirds majority, it would claim the nomination for him on the theory of cumulative voting. And, with

delegates and leaders placing such valuations, there stood Davis—apart! Apart was he from the other candidates in the universal belief in the brilliance and strength of his mind, a belief that has wrapped him at fifty-one years of age in an amazing contemporary legend of greatness. Apart was he from the other candidates in a singularly gentle and philosophical dignity. Nobody knew what he thought of controverted domestic questions. In foreign affairs he was counted a League of Nations man, but in internal affairs scarcely anything was known beyond his adherence to the Democratic idea of a tariff framed to assure competition. The delegates had not the slightest concrete understanding of what he thought about today's concerns in taxation, farm relief, railroads, labor relations or any such questions. All they had to reason from was his record as a Wilson lieutenant. In fact, though the delegates might have reasoned from the facts of Davis's career as a Wilson lieutenant, they did not. They thought simply about his fine mind and his fine character. And they had the naive great man faith that was so marked in Chicago in 1916, when Mr. Hughes, who had lived in austere judicial silence throughout the period in which occurred the Bull Moose convulsion at home, and the Mexican revolt and the outbreak of the World War abroad, was nominated for President by the Republicans. This great man faith in Mr. Davis was apparent from the first days of the convention. Knowing nothing of his present views, scores of delegates voiced the opinion that he was of all the candidates the best fitted for the office, among them being many who sought the nomination of another, on personal grounds or for expediency's sake.

What more natural than that the Convention, in distress, and long past the reasoning, calculating stage, should have turned instinctively to him. At least he offered dignity and honor. Defeat under his leadership would not be discredit, and that was important to a convention which felt that it had run amuck and made a fool of itself. As Cox put it, Davis could lift the campaign above the level of the convention. Of course, no one had the slightest notion whether he could win. The few who stopped to analyze his chances realized very well that there was serious danger that his performance would be like that which followed Alton B. Parker's candidacy twenty years ago—the South and a state or two here and there above the Ohio and the Potomac. As this is written, most politicians would credit the East to Coolidge, and divide the larger number of western States between Coolidge and La Follette. Davis's chance to win is based mainly on the possibility that he will prove under the test as big a man as his friends believe.

Those who may deplore the fact that the Democratic party bought a splendid pig in a poke, in so far as issues are concerned, should save their tears. It was written that there should be no clear delineation of party policies and principles. McAdoo, who

started as the candidate of the progressives and the economic dissenters, ended with his emphasis on opposition to the city bosses on racial, religious, social and sentimental grounds. Smith's campaign was based on social and religious feeling. The other candidates were echoes, or were chess-board candidates like Ralston, Walsh and Ritchie, or were dignitaries of the class headed by Davis. All of the genuine issues that have interested the country for months were submerged in the social, racial and religious test that headed in the ludicrously over emphasized Klan fight. That fight, started as a simple political manoeuvre against McAdoo, whom the Klan had supported in the South, aroused to the utmost the full fervor of the wet Irish and Jewish Democracy of the North—the big city Democracy—that was behind Smith. And that, in turn, aroused to full fervor the dry Protestant Democracy of the West and South that had gone to McAdoo originally principally for economic and political reasons. So the platform that might have been a party charter on the big issues is, in effect, a party evasion and apology on those issues. Framed in the shadow of the impending fight over the Klan, it embodies the easy compromises of men pre-occupied with other thoughts.

The fact that the interests centred in the Klan fight so submerged all the issues that have been forming for four years is the best explanation of why McAdoo and Smith fought so long. But for the forcing of that issue by McAdoo's enemies, he would have been down for good within three days. But for the forcing of it, Smith would have flickered as soon. With it forced, the Convention entered a form of insanity, and became divided into a pack of bull dogs. It is an interesting fact that the idea which finally released these bull-dog grips was developed by a man outside the Convention. When Smith and the minor candidates were demanding that McAdoo quit; and when McAdoo was replying that it was impudent to ask him, the high man, to quit, Governor Ritchie sent into the conference of minor candidates on Sunday a proposal that all candidates release all delegates, and allow the latter to make a fresh start. The idea came from a visitor, B. Howell Griswold, of Baltimore, who also proposed the resolution offered by Ritchie's representatives. The idea was accepted by the minor candidates and by Smith. Rejected by McAdoo, it finally was adopted by the Convention. It opened the door for a new movement of the delegates, and saved Cox from futility when he began to call attention to Davis.

Nothing can better illustrate the blind fury which swept aside all real issues than this fact that under the spell of the Klan fight, and all that was associated therewith, it remained for the voice of reason to come, not from one of the supposedly cool and astute leaders, but from an observant lawyer and banker on the sidelines.

JOHN W. OWENS.

Christianity as a Way of Life

DURING the last two years the members of this group * have coöperated in an enterprise which, in intention at least, is of some importance. We have been inquiring how and how far the Christian message of peace on earth and good will to men can obtain realization in modern social life. The enterprise began in a meeting at Lake Mohonk which I did not attend but which, as I have since gathered, agreed in general upon the existence of a dangerously morbid condition of the contemporary social body and the need of seeking a certain kind of remedy. The morbid condition consisted of racial, international and class conflicts which were becoming so bitter and so irreconcilable that they threatened to disrupt the complex, highly specialized and necessarily coöperative civilization of today. The prospect of appeasing these conflicts by the use exclusively of political or economic remedies was far from promising. On the contrary it seemed as if warfare between nations and classes belonged to the nature of current economic and political activities. But it seemed equally clear that the conduct of this warfare violated the most characteristic passages in the teachings of Christ. If such is the condition, sincere Christians are bound to inquire why a nominally Christian society prefers to tolerate suicidal conflicts rather than to translate into life the truths of its own religion and in what ways, if any, they can repair the colossal default.

The Lake Mohonk assembly proposed, consequently, a Conference on the Christian Way of Life which would consider how the truth resident in Christianity could get embodied in human conduct and particularly in those regions of human conduct which were given over to apparently irreconcilable warfare. They set up for this purpose three commissions: one to deal with Christianity as applied to racial conflicts, and others to do the same for international and industrial conflicts. In addition they authorized commissions on the social function of the church and on religious education.

Underlying this program there was one assumption which, as far as I know, never came to the surface but which was nevertheless decisively formative. If Christendom were being torn to pieces in defiance of the promise offered by the religion of peace on earth and good will to men, it was because the churches had occupied themselves with the salvation of the individual soul and had neglected the meaning and the consequence of Christian truth for man as a member of society. The major object of the conference, consequently, was to arouse professing Christians to the need of associating the salvation of the individual soul with some measure of social amelioration and to inquire what Christians

should do in order to give reality to their religion in social conduct. But there was, apparently, no disposition to inquire and no sense of the need of inquiry whether the fast association between social amelioration and individual salvation as part of the fundamental work of the Christian churches would react in any way upon what Christians had meant by the good life in the case of the individual. The Lake Mohonk Conference did not provide explicitly for an examination of individual as well as social frustrations and fulfillment in their relation to Christian truth. It looked in that direction by setting up a commission on religious education, but the general opinion was that this commission had no essential function to fulfill and it was quickly abandoned. If sincere Christians would only associate Christianity, so the Conference tacitly declared, with an ideal and a method of social conduct and amelioration as valid, as authoritative and as constructive as its ideal and method of individual conduct and fulfillment, the Christian churches might succeed in saving modern society from being victimized by irreconcilable conflicts.

The Lake Mohonk Conference did not circumscribe the commissions to which it gave birth either in the scope of their activities or in the choice of methods. They were free to adopt any procedure or plan of work which in the opinion of their members promised to be serviceable. It was far from obvious what that procedure should be. They were a frankly Christian group assembled to investigate how the truths of Christianity could be converted into a way of life; and their working method would depend upon what they conceived truth in general and particularly Christian truth to be in its relation to life. There existed among the members of the commissions a difference of opinion about this important matter. Some of them conceived Christian truth to consist of principles or commandments in which professing Christians did not sufficiently believe, and to which they expected to give reality by explaining their application to the facts of industry and politics and by placing behind these applications the authority of organized Christianity and the passion of sincere Christians for the integrity of their faith. There were others who were more sceptical. They doubted whether in any sense that would be constructive in social conduct they could definitely formulate for other people what the Christian way of life was. They believed that an attempt at such formulation would beg the question and convert what should be the search for a route into the justification of a goal. They wished to begin by taking nothing for granted except a disinterested common desire to seek a way of life which would appease social conflicts, which would take account of the ways in which lives had to be real-

* This address was read at a conference on the Christian Way of Life which was recently held at Lake Mohonk.