

Fosdick "may serve to awaken the Presbyterian church to its peril," denial is difficult. Nevertheless, the decision upon Dr. Fosdick was rendered not by a sect but by the church. The requirement imposed was not the resurrection of an ancient faith but a subscription to the usual, conventional formula. Dr. Henry van Dyke has noted pertinently that the fundamentalist requirement would have been not simply the established creed but the "five points of the declaration of 1910" outlining the fundamentalist position. Furthermore, and this is most important, no specific point of theology has been raised between Dr. Fosdick and the church. The Judicial Commission has indicted no heresy; Dr. Fosdick has nailed no theses upon the door of the First Presbyterian Church. What the church requires is regularity. What Dr. Fosdick has resigned for is "the integrity of the individual conscience."

Here is the basic issue, an issue not of reaction but of conservatism. All questions of doctrine are beside the point. The conservative asserts no militant postulate. He is simply content not to think at all. The strength of his position is that he doesn't have to think. He has an established order that exacts only that he hold the lines. He is equally impervious to improvement either toward the right or toward the left. But most important of all, he is on top. There is no standard of measurement but that which is; what is, accordingly, is right and virtuous. The established order represents moderation, judicious compromise of extremes, common sense in government, in short, all that is accepted and accustomed and expected, world without end. Whoever thinks or does otherwise is an agitator.

The pachydermatous invulnerability of true bred conservatism to the onslaught of any form of innovation is actually maddening. Faced by the solid phalanx of conservative Presbyterian respectability Dr. Fosdick can point out that he is an initiator of great influence for good to "Evangelical Christianity," to which the church answers, with a bland smile, that he is cordially invited to step inside. He may retort that he is conscientiously opposed to the closed shop. But the good churchmen who are within can bow gravely to each other in mutual acknowledgment of the complete freedom and comfort which they have always found within the fold of the established church, than which no sensible man could desire more. As Dr. van Dyke has put it, "Dr. Fosdick is free to enter the Presbyterian church in the same terms as we liberals who were born in it and loyally remain in it." There are no issues save the universal conservative formula: personal incompatibility; the lamentable idiosyncracies of the agitator. Dr. Fosdick can defend no theses of his own; none have been attacked. He can attack no article of the accepted creed; none has been put forward as *sine qua non*. The issue is not what he thinks, but that he, unfortunately, thinks at all. He is, in the eloquent phrase of Dr. Work, the author of "a state of disturbance."

The moral of this story is obvious and anything but tragic. Dr. Fosdick and the Presbyterian church have proved to the satisfaction of all beholders that for them to work in harness is a grotesque futility. Their basic dispositions are antithetical. The church exists to conserve tradition and resist change. Dr. Fosdick, and his equivalents in every walk of life, exist to promote change and resist inertia. The very existence of Dr. Fosdick is a danger to the Presbyterian church. Its most powerful weapon is the illumination of his character as a dangerous agitator. But by the same token the Presbyterian church, and its likeness throughout the social structure, is an obstruction to all that the world hopes to gain from men of genius, and Dr. Fosdick's one advantage lies in making that fact clear. The Established Institution is the end of all hope, the haven of spiritual inertia, the sheltering conservatory of the intellectually supine.

The Use of an Electoral Deadlock

OF late we have been hearing on every hand a new and strange electioneering argument. A vote for La Follette, it is urged, would only work toward a deadlock in the electoral college. Coolidge and Davis supporters alike employ this argument; they agree on the dangers of the deadlock and disagree only on the course of action the voter ought to take. Nor is it only the out and out partisans of Coolidge and Davis who shrink back from the thought of an electoral deadlock. Thousands of independent voters who are inclined to favor La Follette on his merits are unwilling to vote for him if the net result will be that the election of the President must be consigned to Congress.

We can understand why every voter should prefer a straight majority for his favorite candidate to a deadlock that would expose him to further uncertainties. But why should any voter prefer to a deadlock the defeat of the man he regards as most fit? What is there so terrible about the thing itself? It was a grave matter in 1876, when the passions of the Civil War had not wholly subsided. That election affords no analogy to the conditions of today. To find a true analogy we have to go back to the elections of 1824, just one hundred years ago.

The political conditions preceding the elections of 1824 present a striking parallel to the political conditions of the last four years. The two great parties of the formative period of our history, the Federalists and the Republicans, had fulfilled their missions. An "era of good feeling" or more properly of political ambiguity and personal politics had supervened. Accident and personal advantage, rather than principle or conviction determined the

party alignment of political leaders. There was, indeed, a perfectly definite division of interests in the country, between the democratic elements predominant in the West and the autocratic and propertied elements of the northern and middle sea board states. This division of interests found no more satisfactory expression in the politics of the twenties of the last century than the division of interest between our democratic farmer-labor elements and our business classes have found in the politics of the twenties of this century. Anybody could vote for any party, assured that his political interests would be but indifferently represented by a party which had to be all things to all men.

In the elections of 1824 there were four candidates in the field, Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, William H. Crawford and Henry Clay. To press the analogy for all it is worth, Jackson was the La Follette of his time, Clay the John W. Davis, John Quincy Adams the Coolidge. We have no analogue for Crawford, but since he was excluded by disabilities before the choice was finally made, we may ignore him. In the electoral college Jackson received 99 votes, John Quincy Adams 84, Crawford 41, Henry Clay 37. As no one had received a majority the election fell into the House, where Henry Clay threw his influence on the side of John Quincy Adams and elected him. We are not presenting this analogy with prophetic intent. We do not predict that John W. Davis will follow in the footsteps of Henry Clay if the election is thrown into the House, nor would we care to predict the contrary. What we are concerned with here is the political effect of an election made by Congress.

There was in 1824 a period of intense political activity in Congress before the issue was settled. Every political leader was forced to recognize that the time for political ambiguities was past. He had to range himself either with John Quincy Adams, the bureaucrats and conservatives or with Andrew Jackson and the democratic radicals. A real party alignment had become inevitable. Congress, then as now, the product of an earlier election and representative of a political mood that no longer prevailed, gave the presidency to the conservatives. It was a delusive victory. For the democratic elements, now hammered by defeat into a coherent party, elected Jackson by an overwhelming majority in 1828. The Jacksonian democracy had attained to self-consciousness. It evolved definite political principles and reliable leadership. It became a fit instrument for American political life, and remained fit until the slavery issue arose to force new alignments.

If the next election is thrown into Congress the deadlock that will ensue is not likely to be broken soon. Every member of Congress will have to consider his whole political future more seriously than he ever did before in his life. Men who have called themselves Republican while repudiating a majority

of the principles of the party will be compelled to hold themselves to a reckoning. Expert generalship will be required, especially of the supporters of La Follette, who will never be forgiven if they fail to make every card in their hands count for all it is worth.

Out of this contest we shall have a President elected either by a coalition of conservative Republican and Democratic votes, or by a coalition of the radicals of both parties with the La Follette group. In either event we are pretty sure to have a thoroughgoing realignment of parties in the next four years. In any case, the man elected President will be the choice of a minority of the American people. His position will be essentially precarious. And this very fact will infuse political energy into both his supporters and his opponents. American politics is certain to be the more realistic in consequence.

We recognize that a prolonged deadlock involves inconveniences of some moment. Business may be adversely affected, especially if its position becomes uncertain, through general economic influences, as it may. Many unlovely political passions will be set loose. But nothing of value is to be had without price. And we think that the clarification of political issues, the realignment of parties in conformity to real political interests, is worth the price.

Most Americans will agree that our governmental machine depends for its efficiency upon the healthy competition of well-organized political parties. They will agree that we do not now possess parties established upon a basis of organic principle. We may put the Republicans into power, and where are we? What single issue have we carried to triumph? If we are discontented with the Republicans and put the Democrats into power instead, what have we accomplished? We have replaced one motley crew by another, and may expect only the ambiguous performance of a motley crew.

The next election may go far toward ending so absurd a situation. If it does, it will be by virtue of the fact that the independent voters are not frightened by the bugaboo of a deadlocked electoral college, but face the prospect calmly as a necessary stage in the progress toward political health.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Why I Shall Vote For—

I. Davis

I SHALL vote for Mr. Davis because he is the only man who can be elected in place of Mr. Coolidge, and I do not wish directly or indirectly to give the present administration another term of power. I shall vote for Mr. Davis because it seems to me highly important that the next President should be willing to coöperate with Europe in organizing the peace of the world. I shall vote for him because it seems to me important that the next President should be neither bewildered, antipathetic nor obtuse in the face of the present sectional and class divisions. I shall vote for him because I believe that in this post-war world of fierce nationalisms his strong Jeffersonian bias against the concentration and exaggeration of government is more genuinely liberal than much that goes by the name of liberalism.

In short, I think it more important to vote so as to determine the character of the administration in the next four years than to vote for a new party system which may or may not be established in 1928 or in 1932. Perhaps the immediate consequences would not seem so much more real to me if I saw in the La Follette movement the materials and the ideals of a great liberalizing effort.

First, the practical politics of the La Follette movement. Here in the East its supporters, the New Republic among them, are arguing that the new party is to destroy and supplant the Democratic party as the opposition to conservative Republicanism. This seems to me impossible. The Democratic party is more or less indestructible because of the solid South. A party which enters every campaign with roughly half the electoral votes is not in my opinion going to disappear. It seems extremely unlikely that La Follette will break the solid South, and almost as unlikely that the Southern Democrats will coalesce, as the New Republic has suggested, with the Eastern Republicans. If the Democratic party survives, and if the Republican party survives, there is not under the presidential system of government any permanent future for a third party. I believe the La Follette movement is almost certain to be re-absorbed into the two old parties. It might dominate one of them for a time, as Bryan dominated the Democratic party with one interval from 1896 to 1912. But in the sense that it will make a new party system, intellectually distinct, emotionally honest, logical, clear cut and free of cant, I do not believe in the promises made in its name.

I think the exponents of the new party have never really understood the federal character of the American party system, have never understood that we have in fact no national parties, but only national coalitions of state parties, and that as long as

the President is not directly elected by a plurality of voters, the vitality of the party will remain in the state organizations. These state parties are independent bodies which come together every four years, as La Follette's Wisconsin and Lodge's Massachusetts used to come together. The national conventions set out to unite the state organizations on the basis of formulae which won't seriously divide them, and under the leadership of candidates who are popular in the dominant groups of states and acceptable to the others.

I shall not undertake here to argue whether this system is as absurd as it sounds, except to note in passing that it is the only political system we know under which a continental state has combined a strong central government with wide home rule. The British system of government is no analogy whatsoever, and even if it were, its comparative failure to deal successfully with Ireland and Ulster should be set beside the American success with half a dozen potential Irelands and Ulsters. In fact, I believe that the discerning historian will recognize more clearly than we can or perhaps need to do, that the success of federalism in America has depended largely upon the sectional accommodations achieved through our flexible and unprincipled two-party system.

But whether or not the fundamental virtues of that system outweigh its obvious stupidities, its frequent venality and its intellectual sterility, it is so deeply imbedded in our social system that it will, I think, upset the plans of Mr. La Follette's supporters. I should feel less certain of this if it were not already apparent that the La Follette movement is yielding to the same conditions. It too is a coalition of local organizations, and this early in its career, it exhibits all the symptoms of that same equivocation which the unifying of diverse elements requires. On foreign policy, on the question of whether to break up monopoly or socialize it, on immigration, on prohibition, even on the Supreme Court, the La Follette movement speaks with an uncertain voice or none at all. Why is that so? The New Republic, as I understand it, has argued that the La Follette movement was a gathering of the disfranchised and dissatisfied, and that when they were gathered they would unite on a coherent platform. I am skeptical about this explanation. For I think Mr. La Follette was shrewd enough to know that his hope of uniting his followers lay in avoiding the issues that divide them. He acted as every political leader does and for the same reasons and under the same compulsions. And when I see the New Republic making a virtue of Progressive ambiguities while it expends its scorn on Democratic