

The Catholic Journal

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AT
92 Cortland Street, Rochester, N. Y.
BY THE
CATHOLIC JOURNAL PUBLISHING
COMPANY

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES
For Year, in Advance \$1.00
Entered at second class mail matter.
ROCHESTER TELEPHONE 9285
Friday, Nov. 20, 1908.

Bigots.

While there is no doubt that the great majority of American citizens are pretty liberal in the matter of religious toleration, nevertheless, proof is not wanting that the slimy trail of bigotry is still evident in spots. During the last week the papers have published a letter from President Roosevelt to a person in Cincinnati who had asked regarding President-elect Taft's religious affiliations. This correspondent told Mr. Roosevelt that the report that Mr. Taft was a Unitarian, which the writer regarded as tantamount to professing atheism, was damaging to his canvass. Another rumor of damage to Mr. Taft was that his wife and brother are Catholics. That is not true, as it happens. By the way, how fortunately these rumors of Catholic relatives crop up to inspire sympathy for the afflicted candidates among voters who do profess the Catholic faith. We fancy that in the dim past, right here in Rochester, such rumors were set afloat by the backers of the candidate they wished to favor and that, on at least one instance, the Catholics were bamboozled into voting for a man on the plea that he was ostracized by the Apapists because the aforesaid candidate's wife was or had been a Catholic.

President Roosevelt reads this bigoted correspondent just such a lecture as one might expect from a man of Mr. Roosevelt's impulsive, warmblooded nature. In plain language, he is told that he who permits religious prejudices to dictate his vote rather than sense of fitness and unfitness of candidates and parties is not a true American citizen. Mr. Roosevelt also expresses the opinion that, in due time, we shall see a Catholic president of the United States. We hope that Mr. Roosevelt is right. Very likely he may be, if the Catholics continue to coincide with his views on race suicide and let the bigots keep on with their typical "American families".

Another gentleman, this one a Protestant preacher, has taken his pen in hand. He sends to president-elect Taft a lengthy communication announcing his disapproval of the way Taft handled things in the Philippines, especially in regard to purchase of the friars' lands. He also reads Mr. Taft a lecture because he discussed Philippine conditions with the authorities of the Vatican. Mr. Taft also gives this preacher a fine dressing down for his bigotry. He tells him that the friars' land question was settled just as any other business proposition, that if the United States had not purchased these lands, the friars would have legal right to institute about sixty thousand dispossess actions and thus have set any number of Filipinos adrift.

The preacher told Taft that public school teachers were not allowed to take part in Sunday school work in the Philippines. Mr. Taft promptly enlightens this preacher. The public school teachers are not forbidden to engage in any sort of religious work

they choose outside school hours but they are prohibited from imparting religious teaching to their pupils in school hours or in the school curriculum. This is precisely the same condition that exists in the United States. Evidently, this preacher could not see why the conditions should not be changed in the Philippines and that public school teachers should not be missionaries sent out at Government expense, to try and proselyte the Filipinos to Protestantism.

We have not the slightest idea that Mr. Taft will be influenced in the slightest degree by the ravings of these bigots. But their appearance should teach us to be careful of the stripe of Catholics we put into official place. To be sure, we are no worse than our neighbors but more is expected of us, it seems, and in all truth, we should excel because our religion demands that we be good American citizens as well as good Catholics.

Vindicated.

For several years the Catholic Journal has ventured to discuss the relative merits of the secular education imparted in the parochial and public schools of Rochester, taking the position that the public at large were being put to great expense for comparatively meager results. Some persons have remonstrated with us mildly taking the ground that inasmuch as Catholic children for the most part are educated in the parochial schools it is no business of a Catholic as to how the public schools are run. Ah, but it is our business! If we were taxed only to support our own parochial schools we might not care a fig what became of the public school system and then maintain our own school system besides which about one-third of the school population of Rochester is educated.

When we are able to educate children who are able and do step into positions in the Commercial and manufacturing world at a cost of about \$7 per pupil, while we are called upon to contribute in addition \$25 per pupil to educate children in the public schools and then they are unable to compete with parochial school pupils in obtaining positions, and then are told that the school Board must have \$15 more or \$40 per pupil to try to do what the parochial schools do for \$7 then we Catholics are vitally interested.

And when we are asked to put our hands in our pockets for money to provide free text books for the children of our non-Catholic neighbors then we have a right to protest. Under the constitution as the jurists construe it public funds cannot be used to provide free text books for the parochial school pupils, and we feel practically certain that there are a larger proportion of poor persons sending children to parochial schools than there are represented in the public school population so the Catholic Journal must second the Catholic Federation's protest that free text books is discrimination against Catholics.

All these points are emphasized by the report of the citizens' committee to investigate conditions in the public schools. Most of the daily papers call the report "a vindication of the school Board." We do not read it that way. In our way of thinking the School Board has admitted that it is not doing all that could be asked and promises to do better if only the city gives it over half as much again more money!

Until we know what is done with what is now allowed, the School Board should not be given a penny more.

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