

the right, I will give him one on the spot. It is a mark of false religion that it is always trying to express concrete facts as abstract. . . . The test of true religion is that its energy drives exactly the other way; it is always trying to make men feel truths as facts; always trying to make abstract things as plain and solid as concrete things; always trying to make men not merely admit the truth, but see, smell, handle, hear, and devour the truth.

Of course, our good friends who would have us pin our faith to physical facts as the only kind of truth, will find no value in Chesterton's test. But after all, physical "facts" are evanescent at the best, and often they are not even true.

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About Keeping Platters Clean.

The action of the Presbyterian General Assembly in protesting against a forthcoming prize fight which furnishes a good deal of "news" material for the daily press, has called out a criticism that has in it a good deal more religious sense than it is likely to get credit for from the dominant elements in the body to which it is addressed. This criticism—very brief, very pointed—is from the pen of Bolton Hall, son of the late Dr. John Hall, one of the most distinguished of Presbyterian clergymen in his day. So much of Mr. Hall's letter of criticism as we find in the newspapers is as follows:

While in every big city young girls are snatched away to lives of slavery, while all over the land little children are worked to death in our factories, while the monopolies put prices so high as to increase these shrieking evils, is it possible that the church can find nothing more serious to attack than a prize fight, already sufficiently well advertised? It certainly makes any one indignant who has eyes to see or even a heart to feel, that the great Presbyterian church assembly devotes its valuable time and energy to a probably harmless fight between two roughs. I am the son of a clergyman, myself a member of the Presbyterian church, and I speak often in the churches, and it makes me sick to see the petty, ineffective time-serving of the church organizations. Whenever there is a real fight on against political or social evil the churches are sure to be found dragging a red herring across the trail with a "crusade" against some such horror as Sunday saloons or playing "craps." Religion only makes itself contemptible by such a bid for support as an anti-prize fight protest.

There does seem to be in the organized religion of our times, as there was in that of the time of the Founder of Christianity, much more concern for the cleanliness of platters on the outside than on the inside. This concern is by no means confined to the denomination that Mr. Hall criticizes, but his criticism is not misdirected.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT *)

Most of the laity among progressive Republicans imagine that Mr. Roosevelt will place himself at their head and lead the charge against the reactionaries. After that, they think, "it will all be over but the shouting"; that the reactionaries will take to the woods, and that progress will be enthroned in the Republican organization. It is doubtful if their leaders at Washington share their hope as to Mr. Roosevelt's future course, or agree with them that his identification with Insurgency is essential to that movement's success, but there is no question as to the hope and confidence of the rank and file.

A close study of Mr. Roosevelt's career will fail to disclose anything in it upon which to base the hope that he will become an Insurgent.

In his later years he has been chief among the apostles of party regularity, and Insurgency is essentially irregular. Mr. Roosevelt has never done or said anything to show that he sympathizes with Insurgency's aims or purposes. In fact many people who acclaim most loudly their belief in the "Roosevelt policies" have no clear conception of what those policies are, nor of the character of the man for whom they are named. They have judged Mr. Roosevelt by his words and not by his deeds, and the result is an amazing popular misconception of the real Roosevelt.

Mr. Roosevelt's strength, in fact, has come largely through his ability to convince the people of his devotion to the public welfare, while in an emergency he has never failed to enlist in behalf of himself or his cause the support of "the malefactors of great wealth." Certainly his policies have never included any extension of democratic government, which, after all, is the inspiring principle of this Insurgent movement.

If Mr. Roosevelt's future is to be judged by his past, he will be found allied with the Standpat element of his party, although he will probably avoid committing himself publicly to the Standpat faction. He is the most adroit politician of his time, and he wants to be President again. He has no hope that he can attain that place against the combined opposition of the concentrated wealth of the country—a wealth which, despite his pretense to the contrary, he has always cultivated and courted. At the same time he will avoid, if possible, doing aught that will alienate to any serious degree the support of the rank and file.

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Mr. Roosevelt's failure to identify himself with

*) See *The Public*, vol. xii, pp. 1184 to 1186.

Insurgency will not injure that movement nearly so much as some of its devotees imagine. It may cost the movement some immediate victories, and involve the desertion of some men who identified themselves with it in the belief that it was the band wagon; but in the long run it will result in the strengthening of this great movement which, breaking out in the Republican party, has extended into all parties and awaits merely the psychological moment to crystallize into an irresistible political force.

It is essential to the success of any new movement in politics that it be not launched inauspiciously, nor discredited in advance by false leadership; and the spectacle of Theodore Roosevelt leading a great battle for democracy would, to those who do judge him by his deeds and not by his words, be an incongruous one indeed.

Mr. Roosevelt is disqualified for leadership of the new idea in politics by reason of his utter lack of sympathy with or belief in democratic principles. Early in life he was inoculated with the virus of Alexander Hamilton's political philosophy, and all through his public career he has clung tenaciously to the belief that the first duty of government is to protect the people from themselves.

He has succeeded most of the time in concealing this belief, it is true; but it is breathed in every line of his public speeches and writings, and may there be found by those who are willing to go beneath the surface. It may be granted that he resents the plundering the many by the privileged few; but when called upon to suggest a remedy, he has never in his life proposed an extension of the power lodged in the people to control and direct their own affairs. Invariably he has demanded an extension of the powers of the central government, and the further removal of that government from popular control. He would eradicate privilege through the agency of a powerful bureaucratic system, responsible not to the people but to the appointing authority.

Point out any evil to Mr. Roosevelt, from child labor to the woolly-aphis pest, and he will suggest as a remedy the creation of a commission of experts to be appointed by the President.

Instances of Mr. Roosevelt's abhorrence of real democracy are so many that it is difficult to select from the wealth of the material at hand. His present round of calls upon the crowned heads of Europe, and his refusal to visit the only democratic government in the old world—Switzerland,—is an excellent example of it. It has been demonstrated in his almost brutal defense of exploita-

tion and tyranny in the Philippines, in his championship of British misrule in India and Egypt, and by his attitude toward democratic issues in this country. He sent Taft into Oklahoma to oppose the adoption of the initiative and referendum; and Cummins and La Follette, in their desperate struggles to redeem their States from reactionary control, had to combat constantly the influence of Federal patronage peddled by Roosevelt to the corporation machines of those States.

The Insurgents are democrats in a real sense, though not in a party sense. They believe in bringing government close to the people. They are for the initiative and referendum, for the recall, and for the direct election of Senators. Mr. Roosevelt does not pretend to believe in a single one of these things. His ideas of a perfect government are almost identical with the ideas of centralization and autocracy which Alexander Hamilton preached more than a century ago.

It is idle to hope that a man holding these notions can be counted upon to render efficient service to insurgency.

Mr. Roosevelt's lack of democratic feeling is displayed in his ardent military spirit and in his almost fanatical devotion to the exploded doctrine that a nation should spend vast sums of money on heavy armaments and huge military forces. It shows in his lust for blood and his passion for slaughter—in the imperialistic customs and forms with which he surrounded the ordinary routine matters of the White House while he was the tenant of that edifice. Even in delivering a peace oration at Christiania he could not refrain from eulogizing bloody war as a necessity which at times was bound to sweep every other consideration aside.

Insurgency owes much of its present force and militancy to resentment at the passage of the Payne-Aldrich tariff law. It must be evident to clear-headed political thinkers that the battlements of protection are to be the next point of assault against entrenched privilege in this country. Upon this issue Mr. Roosevelt is certain to disappoint those who are counting on his leadership. If he has any convictions on the tariff question, he concealed them carefully during his seven years in the Presidential office.

At a time when Albert B. Cummins was proclaiming that the Dingley law was costing the American people more money every day than the total stealings from the life insurance companies in New York, Mr. Roosevelt was arranging with Messrs. Aldrich and Cannon that the question of

tariff revision should go over until he was safely out of office.

Mr. Roosevelt is supposed to have left college a free trader, but one may doubt if he ever had any real convictions on the subject. Here is what he says in his life of Thomas H. Benton on the question of protection:

Now whether a protective tariff is right or wrong may be open to question; but, if it exists at all, it should work as simply as possible, and with as much certainty and exactitude as possible. If its interpretation varies, or if it is continually meddled with by Congress, great damage ensues. It is in reality of far less importance that a law should be ideally right than that it should be certain and steady in its workings.

Nobody will deny that the Dingley and Payne-Aldrich bills have been "certain and steady in their workings." But it goes without saying that the man who wrote that passage had no knowledge of the tariff question, either from a protectionist or from a free-trade standpoint—that he has no conception of the economic phase of the question, and that the possibility of a moral principle being involved in it has never entered his head. Lacking both knowledge and conviction, he would be a totally unfit leader for a movement which aims to wipe out or at least mitigate tariff abuses.

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Another reason why Mr. Roosevelt will be careful to avoid identification with the Insurgent movement lies in the fact that never in his life has he publicly acknowledged himself guilty of a mistake. To become an Insurgent he must confess to the whole American people that he was guilty of a gross blunder in forcing the nomination of Mr. Taft and vouching for his fidelity to the principles with which Mr. Roosevelt himself was identified in the public mind. Such an acknowledgment Mr. Roosevelt will never make.

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Mr. Roosevelt would be an unsafe leader of the insurgent cause, even could he be induced to assume its leadership. Those who trace back his career will discover that he has been the most agile trimmer and compromiser with the powers of darkness in modern times. With him the result of the immediate contest in which he is engaged excludes every other consideration. He is never willing to pursue with unwavering fidelity a given principle to the bitter end, regardless of its effect on his personal fortunes or ambitions. If by an artful and timely compromise he can boast of the shadow of victory, he willingly surrenders the substance. The most glaring example of that trait

in his character was afforded by his capitulation to Aldrich, Spooner and Allison in the struggle over the Hepburn rate bill.

There has never been a time in Mr. Roosevelt's career when he was not willing to deal and dicker privately with those whom he was publicly denouncing as enemies of mankind. Once or twice he has been caught and exposed at it, notably in the case when while he was President of the United States, he wrote a personal letter to E. H. Harriman, soliciting campaign funds.

He is not of the stuff of which martyrs and crusaders are made—content to wait for time to vindicate his course and force the adoption of his ideas. He is not patient enough to sow the seed and await the due coming of the harvest time. What he demands always is immediate results, which shall redound to the public glorification of Theodore Roosevelt. Too often he has surrendered what he has paraded as his undying principles in order to achieve his immediate ends.

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If ever in the world there was a movement that demanded a militant, uncompromising leader, who would not abate a jot or tittle of principle, but would pursue an undeviating course to the last, it is this Insurgent movement. In the hands of a compromiser or trimmer, a man who is willing to bargain in a back room with its enemies, it is bound to be wrecked.

Senator Cummins evidently understands this. Not long ago, when Aldrich sent for him and asked him for terms of compromise on the railroad bill pending in Congress, Mr. Cummins declined to name any terms, or to discuss the matter with the reactionary leader. That was the stand of a man who is as good a politician as Roosevelt and infinitely more faithful to principle.

Instead of needing the leadership of Mr. Roosevelt, the progressive Republicans are fortunate indeed that they will probably escape it.

D. K. L.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

OBSERVATIONS OF HERBERT S. BIGELOW.

Cincinnati, May 22, 1910.

A Columbus friend of mine who builds houses for a living and lives to preach the gospel of Henry George, says that when his customers are impatient because their work is not ready when expected, he usually can satisfy them by taking them to the mill and letting them see the chips fly. A trip of ten days in Maryland, New Jersey and Massachusetts,