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The Religion of Democracy

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Democracy is more than a name, it is a religion, the religion of brotherhood among men, the religion of equal opportunity for all mankind. It is the religion that demands more of the golden rule and less of the rule of gold in government. This is the kind of democracy that should be fought for, and this is the kind of democracy that special privilege does not desire. It is an open secret that the agents of privilege are now endeavoring to secure control of the democratic party. As the chances for democratic success have become brighter, their efforts to dominate the party have proportionately increased. They would use the liver of democracy for their purposes, and it is the duty of democrats to see that these interests do not capture the party name, thereby robbing the people of the benefits flowing from a triumph of democratic principles.

The record of every candidate should be carefully examined to see whether he is so situated as to be able to serve the public without bias in favor of any interest antagonistic to the public. "No man can serve two masters," and those whose environment are such as not to leave them free for the service of the people should not be supported by the people. Is a candidate supported or opposed by the enemies of the people? That should be the inquiry, and those who stand for the common good cannot be far wrong when they get on the other side, and oppose those upheld by the agents of privilege.

In an address about three years ago, the late Justice Brewer of the supreme court of the United States said: "Many senators and representatives owe their places to corporate influence, and that influence is exerted under an expectation, if not an understanding, that as law makers the corporate interests shall be subserved. The danger arises in the fact that they are so powerful, and that the pressure of so much power on the individual law maker tempts him to forget the nation and remember the corporation. And the danger is the greater because it is so insidious."

The need of the hour is to have men who will not forget the people after they get into office, and who are under obligations only to the people for the places they hold. If special interests are as much benefited by a democratic victory as by a republican victory, then the democratic party would not represent the principles that it should. If democratic victories are to become as much or more useful to privilege than a continuance of republican control, then that kind of democracy is not worth fighting for. Those are not real democrats who favor turning over the party organization to privilege in return for large campaign contributions, on the theory that is the way to win. Under such leadership the democratic party would lose even if successful at the polls, for

it would be untrue to its own principles, and to the people it is supposed to serve.

There has been too much shouting of party names and too little teaching of the principles that political parties are supposed to stand for. When a man says what principles of government he believes in, it is not always easy to tell from that what party he belongs to, and when a man says what party he belongs to it is not always easy to know what principles of government he believes in.

The democratic party should make an aggressive fight for progressive democratic principles. It is not essential that we always win, but it is essential that we be true to democratic ideals. It is not necessary that we succeed, but it is necessary that we keep the faith if democracy is to live. More was gained for the people in the Bryan campaigns that ended in apparent defeat than would have been accomplished by the barren victory of leaders controlled by the powers that prey. These campaigns wrought a revolution in the public conscience, and aroused the people to the need of reform. Underlying these campaigns, and greater than any special issue, was the struggle of humanity against the oppression of plutocracy, of men against dollars and of conscience against greed. Through these campaigns the people were awakened and they are ready now to give the harvest to be reaped from the sowing of the seeds of truth. While it is better to lose with the right than to win with the wrong, we can be right and win also.

Under the present aroused state of public opinion democracy will triumph, unless it for sordid reasons deserts the people and enters into a wanton alliance with privilege. That we have representatives of privilege in our party no one can deny, and the effort should be to lessen their influence as much as possible. We cannot prevent some of them being in the party, but we should keep them from running the party. We ought not to permit the party to be prostituted to the service of selfish interests, or to be made the tail to the kite of monopoly.

There is an independent spirit now in evidence over the country and it is to this spirit we must appeal. The party must convince the people not what it proposes to do for itself, but what it can do for them.

The vote in the last election was an expression of lack of confidence on the part of the people in the republican party. It was a negative vote insofar as the republican party is concerned rather than a positive vote in favor of the democratic party. The democratic party must now make good and if it does, the chances are very bright for an overwhelming victory in 1912.

A crisis has been reached in the affairs of the nation. Pick up a paper any day and one will find accounts of thievery and graft. What does it mean? Is corruption becoming a national disease? Is there something in our system of government that encourages men to violate the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal?" Is not the government itself in a sense to blame for this seeming general disposition? Has not the example which the government sets of enriching the few by taking from all by means of the protective tariff been an influence for corruption? With the national government giving the privilege of protection to a class at the expense of the rest of the people, there is encouragement afforded all forms of graft. All graft is based upon privilege. Officials are not bribed to give equal rights to all, but to confer upon the few some privilege denied the many. All political parties ostensibly oppose the privilege of lawlessness, but when it comes to privilege conferred by law, there is a distinct issue between the parties. The republican party stands irrevocably for the privilege of a high protective tariff. The democratic party

if true to itself and its teachings must stand squarely against this privilege. A man may call himself a democrat and be in favor of a high protective tariff, and he may even represent his constituents, but in fact he is not a democrat. The congressman who votes for protection on articles produced in his own state cannot deny the justice of the demand of Senator Aldrich for a larger share of the tariff plunder for his state. A tariff for revenue only is for the benefit of the public, but a tariff for the protection of a class is for the benefit of that class at the expense of the public. The chief purpose of a high protective tariff is to stifle competition, and to that extent give monopoly. The republican idea is to protect monopoly from the people; the democratic idea is to protect the people from monopoly. When a government by means of a monopoly tariff attempts to take from one class and give to another, a moral question is presented. Wealth created by legislation must in the nature of things be drawn from the public, and it is unjust for all the people to be taxed in order that a few may profit. A tariff other than for revenue is merely a legalized graft. Let the democratic party take an unmistakable stand on this question and invite every one of all parties opposed to this unjust system to unite with it in the fight. Then there can be a square issue between privilege and equal rights. A battle over tariff schedules claiming that some are too high and others should remain as they are, does not involve any principle, and can only result in a sham fight.

The tariff question cannot be settled by a tariff board, for it is not simply a matter of increasing or decreasing the tariff on certain articles. It is a question of principle as to whether the tariff should be used for the purpose of creating monopoly. Before a commission could do any good the American people must decide whether the tariff shall be for revenue merely or for the purpose of protection. If the people decide in favor of protection a commission would not be necessary to enable the special interests to grab all they can get. If the people decide in favor of a revenue tariff then a commission could carry out the instructions of the people by adjusting the tariff schedules to that basis, in such a way as to cause no shock to fair business by reason of too sudden changes from the unnatural and artificial conditions that have grown up under a monopoly building tariff.

THE DOCTRINE OF EQUAL RIGHTS SHOULD BE MADE A LIVING, VITAL, CONTROLLING FORCE IN GOVERNMENT. This doctrine opposes the privilege of subsidies, bounties and all forms of governmental favors to a few at the burden of all. The government has no more right to take from one man indirectly to add to the wealth of another than it has to compel one man directly to contribute to the fortunes of another. When such governmental favors are conferred they go to those of wealth and influence enough to secure them and are beyond the reach of the average man. If such favors benefited all alike, no one would want them. It is because they give a class privileges denied to others that these few clamor for them, and it is for this reason that the rest of the people should not submit to such discriminations. As privilege increases opportunity must diminish, and as opportunity diminishes the rights of the individual are destroyed. That is the reason why, under the republican system, the classes are becoming more opulent and the masses are finding the opportunity for individual effort growing less as the years go by. Under this system in the large cities one end of society is rolling in abnormal wealth, while the other end of society is begging for bread. The multi-millionaire and the pauper are alike dangerous in a republic, and they are related

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