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Christmas and the Democratic Spirit

The spirit of Christianity is the spirit of democracy. When the Carpenter of Nazareth gave men the Golden Rule he gave them the basic principle of democracy. He said: "Do unto others as you would have that they should do unto you," and he told His followers that they should know the truth and it would make them free.

No man is free to do as he pleases. True freedom is expressed perfectly by the Golden Rule. A man's rights are limited by the rights of his neighbors, and he should respect their rights as he would have them respect his. When the spirit of democracy evolves the principle, "equal rights for all, special privileges for none," it is merely stating in different terms the divine philosophy of the Golden Rule.

All freedom is founded on and limited by the duty of man to serve his fellow men. Only the beasts of the field are free to do as they wish. They may treat one another kindly, they may be indifferent, or they may trample upon one another and be held to no accountability, but men must serve and to serve they must sacrifice. The men who have served their fellow men best are they who in the tide of time have sacrificed the most. The men who have served their fellow men the least are they whose conduct has been guided by selfishness. When we harm our fellow men we do not always do it selfishly, and when we serve them we do not always sacrifice, but the greatest good is wrought by self-sacrifice and the greatest evil by selfishness.

The Golden Rule expresses a social ideal. The nearer it is approached by society as a whole the happier and freer are the mass of men. The rich man has no right to use his wealth as he pleases. He is not sure that he has earned all his wealth, nor that he deserves it all. Of one thing he is sure: that the laws of society and the good will and justice of his fellow men have made it possible for him to gain and to keep his wealth. It is, therefore, his duty to use it for the benefit of his fellow men. He must not demand special privileges for himself, but should strive that each man may

have equal opportunity within the range of power God has given him. Only in this way can he serve his fellow men rightly. That is the spirit of Christianity, and it is the spirit of democracy. Nor has the toiler a right to do as he pleases. He too must serve his fellow men. He has no right to idle when it pleases him and to work when he will. He must give the best that is in him for the service of all.

All men should desire a reign of justice. Perfect justice would produce an ideal economic condition. The greatest political economists have recognized this truth. That which is right for the individual to do is the best for all. It is a glorious and a mighty truth, but for ages it has been obscured by the selfishness of men and will never be fully esteemed and rightly prized until the Golden Rule has become the rule in the world of trade.

There is more to Christianity than there is to democracy. Christianity is for a world at war, and to man it offers an eternal reward. It brings "peace on earth to men of good will," but it has a teaching higher than the teaching of justice. Christianity not only teaches men to deal fairly with one another, but it teaches them to forgive those who have dealt unfairly. Democracy teaches justice, while Christianity teaches justice and charity. So far as we know at this day the precept "forgive your enemies" is not an economic rule, but fair dealing is and so, too, is the spirit of sacrifice. The reward of fair dealing and of sacrifice is a better economic state; the reward of those who forgive their enemies is an eternal reward.

At Christmas time the spirit of peace and good will should prompt all who love their fellow men to remember that fair dealing is necessary every day in the year. The Golden Rule was not made for Christmas day, nor for Christmastide. It was made for all men and for all time. If all men dealt fairly with one another there would be no wars, political or commercial, and that is the true significance of the Golden Rule and its corollary, "Peace on earth to men of good will."

Sounding Knell of Railway Rule

That the people of Nebraska are awakening at last to a full realization of railway perfidy is indicated by the action of Richardson county taxpayers, who, in mass meeting assembled, denounced the Burlington road for refusing to pay its taxes in 1904 and again this year. The root of the evil is pointed out in a resolution which condemns the issuance of federal injunctions prohibiting the counties from enforcing collection of taxes. Another resolution favors the La Follette idea that corporations should be compelled, like individuals, to pay taxes when due or suffer attachment of their property. "If taxes are paid wrongfully, let the controversy be settled afterwards and over-charges refunded as any competent court may see fit to order," says this resolution.

It may be of interest to note that the Wisconsin assembly has passed a bill providing that should a local rate of general property taxation be found higher than the constitutional limit and therefore void, that fact should not invalidate the ad valorem railroad assessment. The assembly has under consideration a bill to require railway corporations to pay their assessed taxes in full before bringing any action in court to contest the assessment, and allowing them to recover in the event that the assessment be subsequently declared void by the courts.

It is apparent that there can be no effective regulation of rail-

ways until they are forced to obey the law first and to litigate afterwards. President Roosevelt's plan of rate regulation is weak in that it can be overridden by federal injunctions. And yet the president goes out of his way to defend the principle of court injunctions and to protest against any drastic modification of this power. Government by injunction is replacing government by the people. The judicial branch is usurping the powers of the executive branch through the medium of a prerogative, which, like modern finance, has developed abuses out of all proportion to its uses. The evolution of the federal injunction has been distinctly baneful. In theory the injunction has many excellent uses, but in practice it is rarely employed to prevent injustice to the individual or harm to his property. It is more frequently used to tyrannize over the individual and to protect the property stolen by corporations or property withheld by corporations from rightful owners, as, for example, in the cases where railways refuse to pay their just taxes and are enabled by federal injunctions to withhold money that rightly belongs to the people.

The citizens of Richardson county struck the keynote of the coming campaign when they recommended that no man be nominated from that county next fall for the legislature by any political party who is not known to be absolutely free from all railroad influences