

economics and politics is pretty apt to result in ecclesiastical disaster of some kind. But many a preacher has nevertheless raised his cross and carried the neighborly love commandment into the strongholds of mammonistic economics and devilish politics. One of these is Bishop Williams of Michigan. His latest utterance was at the Sunday Evening Club in Chicago, when he connected the economic and the political awakening of the present time with spiritual influences—not cantingly, but in robust words of vital thought. Of the economic and political signs of the times he said: "These signs mean to me a real spiritual awakening, a revival that concerns itself with the salvation of men and the nation, the salvation of commercial honesty, industrial integrity, and political honor. It is the Big Righteousness—that is the movement that is sweeping over the country. Did you ever notice that the church is timid about taking up or even touching such a movement—that it holds such a movement not sufficiently spiritual to be included within its domain? When the teachings of Christ take on a new form, inspiring battles for justice and equity, the Church doesn't know what to make of it, and goes on teaching ecclesiastical proprieties and technical pieties. When the seeker after truth comes to the typical church of today he is set down in a restricted little paddock of accepted beliefs, surrounded by walls of dogma and creed. If the Church of God is to appeal to men—not the narrow, cantankerous, pernickety, little men, but the intelligent, noble, great men—she must cease keeping them fenced in."

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Those Japanese Cases.

A Tokio dispatch appearing in the New York Call of the 9th states that on the 8th two distinguished Japanese lawyers "were threatened with instant execution" if they undertook "to defend twenty-six Japanese radicals arrested recently on charges of conspiring to assassinate the Mikado and the royal family." The accused are evidently the same persons of whom we spoke last week (p. 1155) as having probably committed no other crime than that of publishing the books of Tolstoy, Kropotkin, Bakunin and Marx. But as the particulars of the crime alleged are withheld, its real nature remains a secret. It seems unthinkable that Japan should be as barbaric as these reports imply, and they should not be too lightly or quickly believed. But the Japanese Minister to this country can easily satisfy all reasonable public opinion here and in Canada, by disclosing these two facts: (1) Are the persons mentioned ac-

cused of conspiracy to murder the royal family, or is the whole story false? (2) If the story is thus far true, what is the nature of the conspiracy? Is it murderous, or does it consist in the publication of books, and if the latter, of what books?

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PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PROPERTY WRONGS.

We frequently see in editorials and political speeches such phrases as "Property rights versus the rights of man," "The man against the dollar," "When property rights conflict with human rights I am for human rights," and the like.

While phrases of that sort are dramatic, the double meaning of the words "property rights" makes them confusing and perhaps harmful.

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If a man has earned an honest dollar, or built a house, or sown and cultivated and reaped a crop, or created any other wealth by his labor, what might he think of these declamations about the conflict between human rights and property rights. He knows that he earned his wealth without injuring any one, and he may jump to the conclusion that he, or his property (which is a part of himself), is being attacked.

Of course the writers and speakers are not attacking him, but how should he know it without an explanation?

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Now there can be no conflict between human rights and rightful property.

And there can be nothing but conflict between human rights and property which is wrongfully such.

The ownership of what a man creates by his labor, or acquires by a fair exchange of his created wealth, can injure no one, be the amount of such property little or much. The only property the ownership of which injures humanity is a legal title enabling one person to confiscate wealth which is being created by others.

This power is conferred by laws that permit the legal owners of the earth to collect tribute from those who raise crops, carry on trade, transport persons, merchandise and intelligence, hew the forests, develop the mines, and harness the waterfalls; and by auxiliary laws creating monopolies, such as the tariff and patent laws. Property which consists of legal power to confiscate earnings always conflicts with the rights of those it robs. And that is all there ever was, is or will be to the economic conflict; and there can be no

end to that conflict until this kind of property is completely destroyed.

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Just one fact to illustrate with.

On the American side of Niagara Falls three private power companies take all the water for power purposes that the United States government has allowed to be taken. Yet, though water power is the cheapest power known, the rates for electricity for ordinary consumers in Buffalo are so high that many large concerns find it cheaper to develop their own electricity by steam and gasoline, while nearly all the private houses are still lighted by gas.

But on the Canadian side the Ontario government has created the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, which buys cheap power at the Falls from a power company, and has built transmission lines to many cities for the delivery of electric energy at cost, the cities owning their own distributing plants. The first power was turned on at Berlin, October 11.

Thus we have *robbery* on one side of the Niagara river, and *service* on the other side.

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This country has a long and rough road to travel before her political education reaches the level of many other countries. But the road lies before us and must be traveled. It is inconceivable that we should sink back into despotism. Special privilege must go.

ALBERT H. JACKSON.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

POLITICS IN AND ABOUT NEW YORK.

New York, Dec. 7.

Those who would follow the game of big politics should keep eyes on New York and New Jersey these days. Very interesting is the situation created by the election of Democratic legislatures in these States for the first time in many years.

In New York there will be a United States Senator to elect in the place of that choice representative of the old but fast passing order of things, Chauncey M. Depew; and the New Jersey voters have decreed the retirement to a well-merited oblivion of John Kean, a gentleman who never strayed far from the Aldrich reservation in the Senate, and is proud of it.

Both retiring Senators are now very rich men, and it would be hard to find two gentlemen in public life more insensible than they to the progressive spirit of the politics of to-day.

And, since the common interpretation of the recent political upheaval is to recognize in it a popular protest against men and things as they are, one

should say that in this situation the victorious Democracy of New York and New Jersey would quickly recognize both an opportunity and an obligation.

Let us first look at New York.

To what service shall her Democracy put the great opportunity that has come to it? Shall it be demonstrated again that Big Business can win even when it loses, and that party names mean nothing to it? Or shall it be that the party leaders, if able to resist the sinister pressure that the Interests bring, will yet make some choice that will prove their incompetence to measure the greatness of their opportunity for service to the party and the people. Either of these results is feared at this writing, although potent forces in and out of the official Democracy are working earnestly and enthusiastically for a Democratic Senator whose intellect and character are of the highest type.

This man is Edward M. Shepard.*

Seldom in the interest of a candidate has there been an expression so wide and sincere as that which has found publicity since election day in favor of Mr. Shepard. When he was defeated for the Democratic nomination for Governor at Rochester, chiefly because of the attacks made upon him by the friends of rival candidates with regard to his relations with the Pennsylvania Railroad,* it was declared that this was the end of Mr. Shepard as a conspicuous factor in our politics, and I have reason to know that his most intimate friends so regarded it. A Democratic legislature was at that time a hope rather than an expectation.

But when Democrats found themselves confronted, after election day, with the great opportunity and responsibility of matching Elihu Root in the United States Senate with a Democrat, the one name that suggested itself to most people was that of Shepard. If two men in New York got into a great contention at law, in which money was no object, and one of them hired Root to represent him, the other, if he was well advised and desired a Democrat for a lawyer, could not fail to select Shepard as the most conspicuously fit of all the great practitioners at the bar of the State to match in scholarship, in legal learning, in logic and in pleading power, the man who has been selected by the President as the permanent representative of the United States before the International tribunal at the Hague. Root is perhaps the most able, subtle, resourceful and plausible promoter and defender of his party's policies in New York. Shepard matches him in ability and intellectual resourcefulness, and in devotion to the opposite cause.

To Shepard, Democracy means something more than a badge and an empty name. He has expounded Democratic doctrines and defended Democratic policies in many a great speech during the last twenty years, and those who have been closely associated with him in political activity, know that there is conscience and feeling behind the splendid rhetoric in which it is his habit to give expression to his thought. I believe him sound in his view of the larger politics, and that he apprehends unerringly the fundamental democratic aspect of all public questions, often exhibiting a courage that appears

*See The Public of October 7, page 933.