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EDITORIAL

## EMPTY-SOUNDING CYMBAL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE students of Yale, before whom the Rev. Lyman Abbott preached a sermon in Battel Chapel last Sunday, must conclude either that the Rev. gentleman is a trifler, or that this is a trifling world. Said the Rev. gentleman in the course of his homily:

“If you young men are going to enlist in the battle for purity in politics and in life, enter it for life. If you can’t go this; don’t go in at all. It isn’t worth the while to enter the battle for a month, or a year. As in life so in politics.”

So far, very beautiful. And what was the great goal, what about was the battle, the extent and importance and nobleness of which the preacher sought to impress upon his young hearers with these true words? Was that battle for life to be waged in behalf of completing the cycle of human revolutions by overthrowing the capitalist system, that last of slave systems, and making man free at last? Was it, at least to be a battle of education in which the standard of Humanity was to be reared, and planted as a rallying point from which at some later day the final battle could be delivered? Was it to be a battle for Truth against Falsehood, for Truth against Shams, for Truth against Hypocrisy so as, at least to cleanse the race from within, and prepare it for the day of battle? Oh, no! The battle that the Rev. gentleman invited these young men to turn their minds to had no higher aims than the hypocritic municipal reforms present; he set up as the ideal to be reached nothing higher than the fraud of such reforms; he furnished his youthful hearers with no higher soul tonic than the pharisaic assumption of superior morality to cloak immorality with and under which to practise it.

Truly, if among those young men there were any inclined to lead a filthy life of falsehood, they must have received their inspirations from the Rev. Abbott, and been shown how. They must have learned that it was possible to be corrosively selfish and yet put on the appearance of altruism; to be cowardly as hens and yet

put on the appearance of bravery. They were there taught that words and phrases can take the place of deeds. They there learned that they could uphold the capitalist system of slavery, and yet strut with breasts filled as liberators; that they could uphold a social system that breeds impurity and yet sanctimoniously turn up their eyes as personifications of purity; that the magnitude of a man's work on earth depends, not upon the importance of the work, but upon the bombast it is clothed with. In short, if it was possible to debauch the intellect of the young men of Yale, the Rev. Lyman Abbott must have succeeded to perfection.

With such a Devil's Advocate as Hadley for President and such a Devil's Servant as Abbott for Preacher, the Devil's cause cannot be said to be neglected. Surely not at Yale.

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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