

tween the value of the land before the dam was mentioned (\$10) and the value of the land before the water is turned on (\$75) is \$65, stated very conservatively—and that is the price the farmer must pay in addition to his \$40 to the reclamation service for the building of the entire project.

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It is clear that under this system of the government the man who tills the soil will not be benefited except as he overcomes almost insurmountable obstacles. It will cost him over \$100 per acre before he can get at the land and he will have a tremendous job to make the land pay him. He must face crop failures and he must experiment in new territory with new crops and perhaps will become wholly discouraged and drop the burden.

Yet there are many farmers who believe a tax on land values would be a burden on the farmer.

If land values were taxed in the El Paso valley the tax would not be one-third what the speculator is demanding, for the land tax would drop with the burden on city property and other valuable objective sites to commerce and business.

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The forestallers are growing rich in this neighborhood, as well as in all of the other irrigation centers. As mentioned above they secured options on practically all of the land. These they are holding or selling to buy other tracts from the Mexican population in sections later included under the project. More than one of these speculators will become millionaires—and without putting a cent's worth of improvements on the land.

It is notorious that no attempt is being made by the big land owners to clear or cultivate any of the land here, which is retarding the growth of the city and valley. The government has already finished the canals and it is possible even now to farm and farm successfully. Yet through the entire valley there is found a cultivated tract very rarely as compared with the idle acres.

The speculators are holding the land with the idea of letting go of it as soon as the dam is finished. This is an open secret among them. One of the prominent dealers has told me that he expects to see the value advance to a higher figure just before the dam is finished than after the water is turned on. This is expected for the reason that buyers will seize it beforehand without realizing the great burden they will assume when they pay their \$40 to the reclamation service.

A crude attempt of the government to prevent the speculator from enriching himself at the expense of the farmer is made by a ruling of the reclamation service that no one holder may have more than 160 acres of land after the project is completed. Of course, this is putting the cart before the horse. At the present time, when the increase in value is greatest, one man may own the entire valley if he has the money to gobble it up. There is no one in El Paso who would attempt to hold over 160 acres after the dam is completed and pay \$40 an acre for doing it.

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This is not the only species of graft that is

utilized as a result of the policy of the government in reclamation projects. An instance is afforded in this valley in the building of bridges. A dozen or more men bought up an island under the project for speculative purposes, paying \$9 an acre for the land. The island contains over 12,000 acres. In the present shape it is inaccessible and for that reason the former holders let loose. Immediately the purchasers, who are men of prominence and some of them office holders, induced the county of El Paso to build a bridge to the island. The people of the city are paying 90 per cent of the cost of the bridge and the people of the county the remainder. The bridge will make the land worth at least \$30 per acre. Thus the county will put a gigantic sum into the pockets of the forestallers. There is now no demand for the bridge because the island is not inhabited.

Trolley lines and roads to favorite tracts furnish other means of collecting revenue from the worker of the land for the benefit of the worker of the farmer.

WILLIAM HOFFMAN.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### ANOTHER CLERGYMAN ON THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY.

That the church stands condemned today, as it has many times before at critical historical periods, is indubitable. The plea usually made on behalf of the church in times past as well as to-day is in the nature of what lawyers call "confession and avoidance." Such is the nature of the plea advanced by a clergyman in *The Public* of March 19, 1909 (p. 269), and it betrays the very moral astigmatism and spiritual dry-rot for which the social reformers of all ages have condemned the church.

The blameworthiness alleged against the church is not, as the writer referred to seems to think, that the church does not "champion the cause of some specific reform or reforms, and prove the necessity of each member taking hold thereof and fighting therefor"; but it is that the church is not a leader but a timid and reluctant follower in the moral and spiritual movements which the various and specific reforms connote. The charge is that this timidity and time-serving spirit of the church and its ministers, this fearfulness respecting any thorough going and radical analysis of existing conditions and of the various reforms and remedies proposed, this waiting till it shall be prudentially safe and even materially profitable to take sides in the eternal struggle for human freedom and social justice, is a practical abdication of the divine authority and the world-redeeming mission which is the church's sole *raison d'être*.

True, the church may have some strong points despite this evidence of weakness. It may, for example, be highly respectable, or materially prosperous, or an excellent spiritual anodyne for disturbed consciences. But such excellences do not commend it to men and women aflame with moral passion in times that "try men's souls." They are not the excellence and strength we look for when what is needed is leadership, the voice of authority, the dy-

namic power of ethical ideality and purpose. The reformers hold, and history amply justifies them in holding, that it is as true of churches as of individuals, that—

"'Tis man's perdition to be safe  
When for the truth he ought to die."

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To the plea that "when it is seen that there is one remedy and only one remedy for any given evil, only one way of righting a given wrong, then it will be time for the church to preach that reform," the reformer very properly replies that it is precisely then when there is no necessity for the church to preach it; the remedy will then have been applied, the wrong will have been righted without the assistance of the church, and without any thanks to it also.

If the church has any function whatever, in a world of wrong and right, of falsehood and truth, it is that of an organized social conscience. And this implies not only the recognition that wrong and falsehood exist but also what the wrong and the falsehood consist of, what makes them wrong and false, and why they should be rejected by the wise and the right and the truth chosen.

To merely say to mankind "wrong and falsehood exist," without pointing out what and where they are, is to utter a merest platitude. To say to men "you are free now to find out for yourselves the best way to get rid of evil and the best or better thing to substitute for it," is to utter a mere abstraction and give forth words devoid of ethical meaning. It is precisely such phrase making which is the curse of our pulpits today and which has caused the breach which exists between the social reformers and the church, and is alienating from religion in its organized form the great body of the working classes who most keenly suffer the wrongs of the exploited under our existing industrial and political systems.

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Not so spoke the great prophets of religion. They shrank not from pointing out what was specifically wrong, nor from announcing the specific remedy.

No one will accuse Amos, or Micah, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or John the Baptist, or Jesus, or Paul, or Bernard, or Augustine, or Savonarola, or Knox, or Wesley, or Theodore Parker of a lack of definiteness regarding what is black and what is white, or what made it black or white, or what must be done to abolish the one and to establish the other.

They spoke to individuals but they also spoke to the collectivity. They recognized the necessity not merely of individual cleansing but also of national regeneration and reform. They advocated not glittering generalities but specific measures by which the reforms of their times were to be brought about. They waited not till one remedy was clearly seen, but flung themselves into the fight as advocates and partisans of methods and measures that were not yet clearly recognized. They took upon themselves the work of moral and spiritual pioneers through a social wilderness to blaze the trails which later generations made the broad highways of religious and social orthodoxy. Their reckless zeal in such directions made them the religious heroes of later genera-

tions, but it made them the feared and hated and persecuted and martyred "undesirables" of the smug respectability, the enthroned powers, the Pharisaic legalists, the spiritually deaf and blind religious leaders and organizations of their own times.

Their inspired moral passion shames the timid conservatism of their modern priestly successors who are content to stand as mere "guide-posts" pointing to the safely guarded and well-beaten highways of use and wont.

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The fault of the majority of modern pulpiteers is not so much that they do not espouse the cause of this or that social "ism," but that they have no fundamental social philosophy, no adequate knowledge of the laws and forces of social development which are operating today, on which to base any teaching of social ethics that has direct bearing on existing conditions and standards; no spiritual vision of a social "ought"; no social idea or ideal of sufficient power to inspire them or their congregations with the moral passion which will dare every peril in order to accomplish its end, which is the permanent uplift and betterment of the whole of humanity. It does not recognize the existence in economic conditions of an environment that must be changed before humanity as a whole, or even as individuals, can rise out of present degradation into the fullness of the stature of a perfect or even a nobler manhood. This widely prevalent ignorance it is which is responsible for the timidity of our ministers and churches.

The common saying "God hates a coward" may not be true; but it is greatly to be hoped, for the sake of the divine character, that it is true. A preacher cannot justly be condemned for not espousing, let us say, socialism. He may have arrived at a different conclusion as to the nature of existing evils and their remedy. But, if he is convinced that the analysis of social disease and sin which socialism makes is correct, and its remedy the true one, then he holds his peace at his soul's peril and at the peril of his efficiency as a religious and ethical teacher.

I say "as a religious and ethical teacher" advisedly; because I grant it is not his function to be, as preacher, an advocate of party politics. He is not required to say "vote thus or so, or for this or that person for political office"; but what ethical and religious content he finds in his socialistic, or single-tax or any other philosophy, what message affecting the bodies, minds and souls of men, women and children comes to him out of that philosophy, that he not only may preach but, as the spokesman for God, is required to preach.

And if he fails to do so because people may leave his church, or because his income will suffer, or because it involves the sacrifice of family comforts or the sweets of friendship or popularity, or because, forsooth, it may curtail his influence, he is an unfaithful steward who wraps his Lord's talent in a napkin and buries it in the earth; a lighted spiritual candle put under a very materialistic and prudential bushel.

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It is quite true that the vastness and complexities of sociological science and the philosophy of history

lay a heavier burden of work on the modern preacher than his prophetic prototypes ever had to assume. He may not be blameworthy if, in some of these respects, he is ignorant; but he certainly is blameworthy if he is content to remain in ignorance of matters touching so nearly and affecting so disastrously the material, mental and spiritual welfare of human beings as do the conditions and methods and laws of our industrial society.

The article in The Public which calls forth this reply says: "The minister of any church neglects his duty when he refrains from condemning the sins which are seriously injuring society. But he is . . . out of his sphere when he defines the remedy." This is precisely the crux of the whole matter. If the quotation means anything it means that as "a cure of souls" the minister may and should say "This thou shalt not do," but he may not and should not say "This thou shalt do." But to admit this is simply to surrender the whole significance of vital Christianity, the whole purport of the teachings of Jesus and of Paul, and to revert back to the legalism and the ineffective negations of priestliness and Pharisaism.

Furthermore, how shall one know to condemn sins unless he knows also what is the essence of the sin and how to cure it by the removal of the cause? And if he knows not how to cast out the cause, of what avail is his condemnation? And if he does know how to cast it out but refrains from prescribing the cure, is not his sick patient the victim of spiritual neglect and culpable cowardice?

Is not the very proper procedure, in either case, for the friends and lovers of the patient to discharge such a spiritual physician and to bid him "hunt some other job"?

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But again, and finally, referring to the last quotation from the article, it is not so much today the "sins which are injuring society" that call for treatment, as it is the sins of society which are injuring individuals.

And one of these social sins, and the one into which our ministers and churches are most prone to fall, is precisely the individualistic philosophy and attitude which the article in question exemplifies. And it is for this kind of analysis, which places the responsibility for existing evils upon individual members, and for this kind of prescription, which seeks the cure in individual reformation rather than in the making of a more wholesome social environment, that the church is condemned and deserted by those who know that economic relations are at the basis of all the woe as well as all the weal of humanity, and that out of these relations must come the new ethics, the new religion, the new revelations of God's will to men.

LEWIS J. DUNCAN.

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The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,  
Lies in new light through chinks that Time hath made:

Stronger by weakness, wiser men become  
As they draw near to their eternal home,  
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view  
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

—Edmund Waller.

## THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO SOCIAL REFORM.\*

Detroit, Mich., April 17, 1909.

I read the Rev. Mr. Hoeck's article in The Public of March 19, and I heartily approve of it.

As you know, I am an earnest advocate of the Single Tax and take every proper and suitable opportunity to present it, but I have never preached it from my pulpit, nor would I ever do so.

The pulpit is the place to deal with principles, not policies; motives, not methods. Its business is to arouse the conscience of men to actual sin and moral evil, and to inspire to righteousness. But its business is not to deal with economic, political or industrial methods and policies.

As a citizen I have a perfect right to deal with such subjects and I do so without fear or favor. But when I am in the pulpit, I have to deal with higher and deeper things than either methods or policies.

If the pulpit is to fulfill its highest function and exert its greatest power, it must confine itself carefully to those questions of principle and motive about which there can be no dispute. It is not a question of being afraid to speak the truth; it is simply a question of what kind of truth we ought to deal with.

If any clergyman sets up a single tax church or a socialistic church, he is certainly departing from his mission as a messenger and minister of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, by confining himself rigorously to the religion of principle and motive and appealing directly to the conscience, has given more impulse to industrial, economic, social and every other sort of reform than all the reformers put together that ever existed since his day. And his ministers must follow in his footsteps. As citizens, however, they have the right to exercise their judgment, and forward such policies and methods as recommend themselves to their judgment.

CHAS. D. WILLIAMS.

\*A portion of a letter written by the Rt. Rev. Charles D. Williams, Protestant-Episcopal Bishop of Michigan, to Daniel Klefer; published in these columns with the consent of Bishop Williams.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

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Week ending Tuesday, May 4, 1909.

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### The British Budget.

Probably no national budget ever excited more expectant interest long in advance than did the British budget (p. 391) which Lloyd-George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, presented to the Commons on the 29th, in a four hours' speech, as