

PREACHER PROPOSES A RADICAL EXTENSION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

NEW YORK, Dec. 14—It is safe to assert that the state of the Christian church in this country at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century is not all that could be desired, says the Rev. Washington Gladden, in the August Century. Without indulging in any pessimistic deploring or venturing on any percentages or estimates I am content to rest this statement on the experience and observation of intelligent men. Put this question to any Christian minister: "Is your church today sustaining the relation of all classes of the community which you would like to have it sustain? Has it the measure of respect from the high and the low, the powerful and the weak, the learned and the ignorant, that you would like to claim for it? If you are a pastor of a good many years' experience, do you feel that your church is gaining in its hold upon the people round about it?"

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is manifested to the world. The primary question is, therefore, whether its life reproduces His life. By as much as it does must its strength be impaired and its influence annulled. I do not wish to understand that part of our Lord's ministry in which He sought to bring men into conscious fellowship with God. That work of restoring the wayward and the disobedient to the joy of sonship and the strength of virtue was never absent from His thought. We must not undervalue this, but we do need to get into its proper perspective before our minds this other phase of our Lord's ministry. And there can be no doubt that His relation to the poor and the friendless was the outstanding fact of that ministry. We are comparing the life of the church of today with the life of its Master. How does it compare in this respect? Is it giving an equal proportion of its ministry to social service? Do the ill and the poor and the despised in our American cities think of the churches of these cities in the same way that the same kind of people in Galilee and Decapolis used to think of Jesus Christ? Martin Luther's idea was that the care of the sick and the poor ought to be handed over to the community instead of being provided for by the church.

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religious organizations. His expectation was, of course, that the community—the municipality or the state—would be so thoroughly Christianized that this work would be properly done. It is highly probable that the first Christian churches were municipal churches; that in every town or city was one church with several local congregations, each with its elder or leader and all co-operating in the work of the city. The need of the hour is the restoration to every town or city of the municipal church. It ought to include all the Christians of the municipality; every Christian organization should be represented in it. Its claim to the philanthropic leadership of the community would not be disputed. If it is the body of which Christ is the head, that is its first business. In passing it over to the state the church has divested itself of its most vital function. The loss is lamentable, almost fatal; the weakness of the church in this latter day is largely due to it. The church must recover this function; it is not a mere matter of expediency, it is a question of life or death. For such a service as this the municipal church would require no creed. Its simple message to the world would be: "We believe in the friendship of Jesus Christ, and we live to make it known to those who need it most."

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LORD BYRON, THE INCONSTANT. Francis Gribble, the latest commentator on the character of Lord Byron, finds a perplexity in choosing the title for his book and in frankly saying so he turns a very neat bit of characterization to which the shade of the Hellespont swimmer might take exception. "Whether a book is called 'The love affairs of Lord Byron' or 'The life of Lord Byron' can make very little difference to the contents of its pages," says the biographer. "Byron's love affairs were the principal incidents of his life and almost the only ones." Nevertheless Mr. Gribble elects to call his book "The love affairs of Lord Byron," and the November Book Buyer notes one comprehensive passage in which the biographer sums up his view of the character of his subject. This is what he says: "His whole life was deflected from its course and thrown out of gear, first by his unhappy passion for Mary Chaworth, secondly by the way in which women of all ranks, flattering his vanity for the gratification of their own, importuned him with the offer of their hearts. That is Byron's life in a nutshell. "His biographer, it is clear, has no way of escape from his love affairs, while the critic is under an obligation almost equally compelling to take note of them. It is not merely that he was continually writing about them and that the meaning of

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