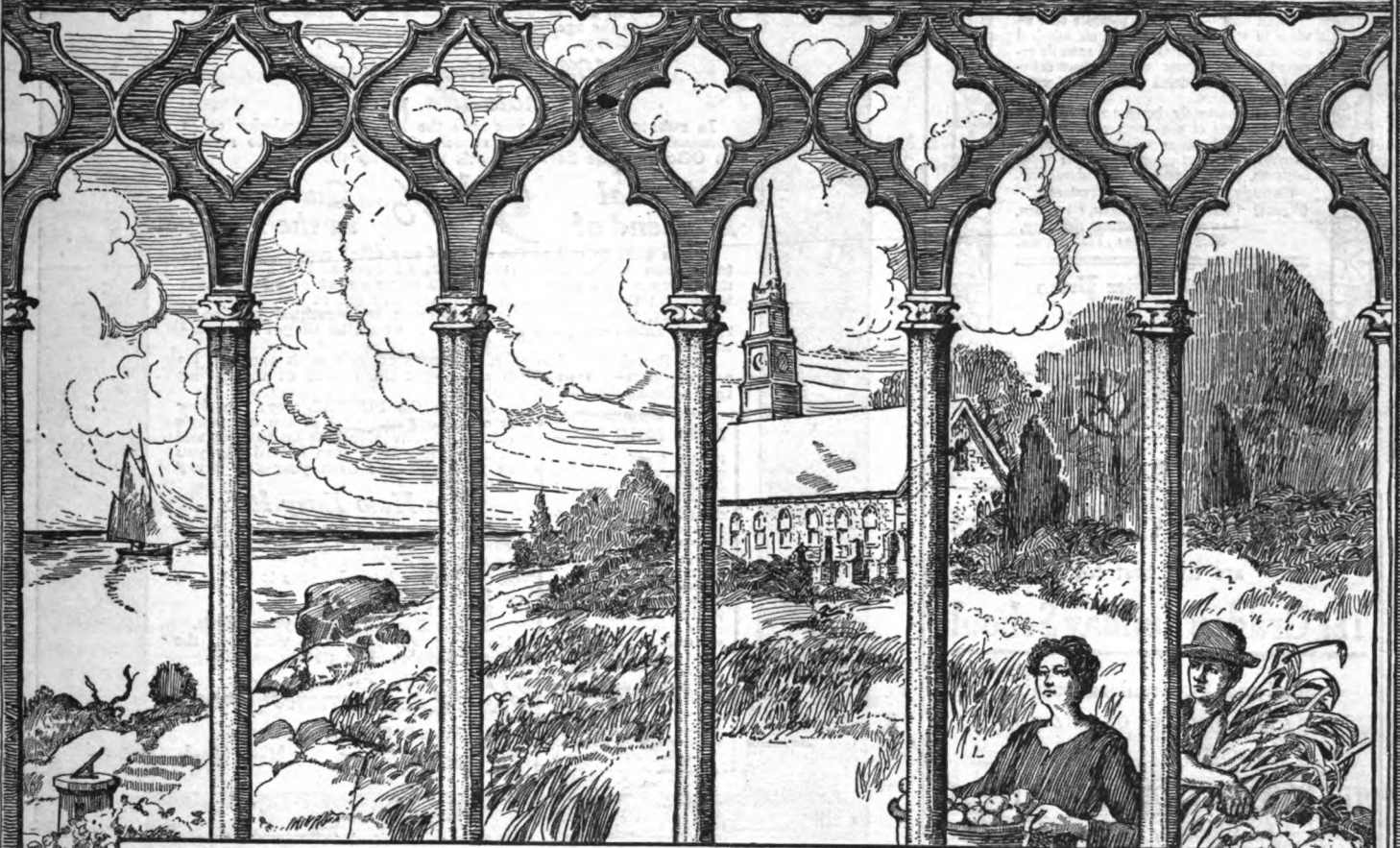


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CLELAND B. McAFEE

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WILLIAM T. ELLIS

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Marriage That Stands the Test

IS MARRIAGE ONLY A ONE-PERSON AFFAIR?

You would think so to hear people talk about it these days.

It is the common remark that this is a social age. Social and socialistic theorizing is in the air everywhere.

But by a paradox simply unfathomable, the mention of marriage converts on a sudden the most socialistic of radicals into the crudest individualists that ever broke through the crust of civilization. On the whole subject of wedlock, indeed, the age, so far from being social in its thinking, has run away headlong into a kind of individualism so sheerly absurd that it would be poor credit to a madhouse.

Men and women, otherwise rational, are found putting forth, with all axiomatic gravity, the preposterous proposition that a husband or wife who has become unhappy in the marriage relation is, by mere fact of such dissatisfaction, released from all marital obligation and justified in seeking happiness in any other comradeship that appears to promise it.

In truth, to such an astounding pass has this inversion of the moral reason extended that there are today discovered respectable persons who argue that for the unhappy partner of matrimony it is not merely privilege but duty to fling off the irksome bonds.

For—save the mark!—we are told it is "duty" to be happy.

All that these purported thinkers can see in marriage, then, is a chance for somebody to find somebody else who will make him or her individually enjoy life. One would think that social science was unheard of.



In whatever romantic aspect wedlock may offer itself to callow lovers, only one account of it is to be tolerated from men and women who would be thought to speak dispassionately of permanent principles: Marriage is first and preeminently a social institution.

Fundamentally there is only one reason for marriage—to provide a basis for homes wherein the children of the race may be reared.

A profound and nearly universal prejudice prevails, however, against emphasizing this elemental racial purpose of marriage among young men and young women of what is commonly called the marriageable age. So practical a view of the married state is deemed an affront to the bliss of romantic love.

Yet that prejudice is precisely what accounts for the startling proportion of unhappy marriages.

Young people whose best considered reason for marrying is that they are extravagantly fond of one another, are indeed "entering lightly and unadvisedly" into responsibilities the most solemn that humanity is summoned to undertake. No wonder, when they feel on their shoulders later the stress of unthought-of tasks, that their dreams of joy fade before the bitter realization of how ill they are fitted for the prosaic duty of making a home together.



None of the mushy reasons that sentimentalists write down in novels and essays for the failure of marriage have anything to do with the case. Talk about discovering lack of affinity or developing incompatibility of temperament is figment, fiction or folly.

The trouble always is that at no time in advance of marriage did either bridegroom or bride ever take the slightest thought whether the other was a person to make a home with, capable of carrying domestic obligations and fit for the upbringing of children.

Instead of such serious reflections as these, lovers commonly spend their courtship days in a fantasy of reciprocal flattery, too mutually delicious to be analyzed, but dissolving cruelly when living together wakes them both from imaginations to realities.

The cure of such domestic calamities resides in rational training by sensible parents for intelligent sons and daughters.

The base of that training must be the constant emphasis with both sons and daughters, from adolescence up to maturity, of this one great rule of physical, social and spiritual sense:

Reasonable people assume wedlock not with a selfish view to individual happiness but in a solemn sense of duty to increase the number of responsible homes willing to train for God and humanity worthy members of the human generation to follow.



There will be no hasty and reckless marriages—no marriages of impulse, passion or self-coddling conceit—where this conception of marriage has been ingrained into conscientious young people.

Nor will there be any surrender to the fictitious supremacy of an emotional love. Sane judgment will insist on governing even love, and will recall it from wherever common sense forbids.

Love is not excluded by any such practical contemplations. On the contrary, love—real love—is the greatest of those solid reasons for domestic hope. It is indeed only by such sober study of the prospects of home-making that love of the lasting sort can disengage itself from passing fancy.

The man or woman who stops to think is seldom or never betrayed into a marriage destined to be dissolved by some later affinity.



But about the marriages that do come to the shattering of love—how shall husband or wife meet that wrench and shame?

Well, for the sake of all that's strong and brave, let neither of them whine. There's been a sad mistake made—the mistake of both. Let them behave with the courage of those who, whatever their other faults, are not cowards in the face of consequences.

Then let them appreciate that, having sworn to both God and the state that they will make and keep a home, they are not quit of that oath, no matter how personally unhappy and uncomfortable they are.

Can the home be continued? If by any means it can, it must be.

The first parties in interest are neither the husband nor the wife, but the children. The children have a natural and inalienable right to a home. Shall they be robbed of it?

Willingness to face such questions is itself an antidote to pettish individualism, craving the selfish repair of its own comforts. The home claim and the duty claim make a moral stimulus which shakes off so childish a weakness.

And maintaining duty often restores love. No doubt there are cases of family wreck beyond the hope of any such remedying. But any remnant of honor sufficient to respect a wedlock vow is capable of working marvels of restoration. If that much of the square and fair remains in both husband and wife, home maintenance is nearly always possible.

At all events, if divorce must come, let it be attended with the shame of a disgraceful social failure—not with a brazen boast of exercising a fatuous personal "right to happiness."

Is Christian Unity a Dream?

BY CLELAND B. MCAFEE

IT WAS UNDERSTOOD by the leaders of the Presbyterian hosts that the matter of organic union should not be openly debated when three General Assemblies were in session at Atlanta. But it was not their wish nor within their power to prevent, either in those separate gatherings or in the joint sessions of the three, discussion of church unity. That Atlanta occasion was a notable event, and there is danger that it may be taken as a matter of course before it has done its work with us.

Nearly thirty years ago Dr. A. B. Bruce observed with some distrust "the phenomenon of Pan-Presbyterianism" which had just then made its appearance, declaring frankly that he feared the movement would work in a purely antiquarian direction and would not serve the cause of catholicity. He hoped for a true "amphictyonic council" like that in which "men were not known as Athenians or Spartans, but as Greeks"—a council of churches where men would not be known as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, but as Christians. Yet he was not sure that the era of such reconstruction had arrived. "Or is it ever to arrive? Is the day for catholic Christianity past?"

What has been the actual movement of the several decades since Dr. Bruce asked that question? Are we nearer the time when we can say, "I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints"? Is it anything more than a dream, unsubstantial and impossible, that the churches of Christ shall become the Church of Christ here in the earth? Is there any sense in which we may hope for a truly catholic Christianity? In other words, what is such a meeting as that at Atlanta intended to accomplish, so far as we can read God's plan? Is it a step toward anything, and, if so, toward what?

There is danger that it may be used as evidence that church unity already exists and so it may check instead of advancing the main cause. I wish it were worth while to discuss whether the union of all the Presbyterian churches shall result next year, but it is far too early for that. The question is, What faith have we regarding it as an ultimate fact? Is that union to occur in its time? Is a wider union ever to be possible? Is the day for catholic Christianity past?

No Rigid Legalism Can Comprehend Christianity

Some things seem fairly certain. First, the day for catholic unity by mere organization is past. It was a dreary day in history when it existed and no enemy of the church could wish a worse calamity than that it might come again. There are two conceptions of the church: One, that it is an outward manifestation of an inward life; the other, that it is an organization into which life must be fitted. Protestantism insists upon the former—which is certainly the earlier conception of the church. Christianity is a live thing and makes its own organization in the nature of the case. It expresses itself in that form which it needs, to which it is led by the ever-present and living Spirit of God. There is no reason why we should hope for such a unity of organization as shall refuse the Christian faith its opportunity to express itself in various ways.

It is, however, this very principle which condemns such divisions as appeared at Atlanta. Here are churches expressing the one common Christian life, expressing that life in perfectly familiar ways, in ways so nearly identical that it is difficult to think of them apart, and yet remaining apart! Loyalty to history is beautiful, until it becomes forgetful of the present, pulsing life of the faith to which we all owe our chief loyalty.

Many of us, loyal sons of loyal fathers, look to the time—and it surely cannot be far distant—when the differences which now operate in the Presbyterian family will seem as unsubstantial for purposes of division as the difference between Old School and New School looks to us now. It seemed vastly important to our fathers, but there are not five men in a hundred in the Presbyterian ministry today, who have entered it since 1880, who could possibly tell what that difference was without looking it up. We should be glad to feel that thirty years from now our ministers would be as hard put to tell what were the differences that are today keeping Presbyterians of various names apart.

Creed Lines Must Not Be Counted Barrier Lines

Further, the time for catholic unity by mere creedal declaration is past. That also was a bad day for the church when there was one declaration of the Christian faith, and every man must stand to that or be set outside. The day is past not because creeds are unimpor-

tant, but exactly because they are so important. A layman has recently published a tract on church unity in which he says this strong word: "If I dare to maintain that I fully understand the infinite revelation by God of himself to man, I am driven to declare that you who differ from me are hopelessly wrong. But if I could only so far forget myself as to see that my conception of infinite truth can only be inadequate, I shall be able to see that your different conception may be the supplement to mine."

One of the most interesting results of the comparative study of the prevailing church creeds is the light which each throws on the others. There is far less difference than most people suppose. Moreover, we do not get on rapidly when our plan is to whittle down our creed till there is nothing in it, and therefore no ground for difference about it. From some points of view it is wise to say that we do not need simplifying creeds nearly so much as we need extending them. That is, we are not working toward church unity when we bring our creeds down to the last shreds of Christian faith, impoverishing all our thought and robbing our faith of its vitality. We work toward unity far better when we broaden and enrich our faith so that we take in the faith of other men and give their accent place within our creed.

Here, also, the churches represented at Atlanta find no excuse for continued division. Talk about vital differences in their creeds is forced. It would take no serious rewriting to make the creed of any one of them such that it would include all the others. The union would be in their affirmations; it is already there. In the truly united church, the creed will take in all of these branches with perfect ease. No revision downward is needed, but only revision outward, where already we gladly recognize each other as fellow believers.

Ceremonials Cannot Be Forced on Free Worshipers

Again, the day for catholic unity by ritual or ceremony is past. It is impossible that acceptance of this or that detail of ceremony or of sacrament can be the final way to unity in a living church. We are not quite so cheap as that, let us hope. Our differences are not of that sort. It has been necessary all through history to protest against magnifying a ritual or a ceremony into undue importance, but there has never been any necessity to refuse a ceremony or a ritual where it could serve the purposes of the Spirit.

There have been natural reactions. The early believers broke the heads off of figures built in temples in protest against making any image an object of worship. That was natural enough. But we have long ago found that our protest does not need to be against the ceremony or ritual, but against the compulsion of it, against any confusion between it and the spirit of the believer. Most of us can see the folly of pretending that God has hinged any of his blessings on the doing of this or that minute thing, no matter how big our talk is about it. We shall never come together on the basis of ritual or ceremony.

Fortunately Presbyterians are not much given to pettiness in this regard. We may prefer psalms or hymns or even spiritual songs, but it is incredible that we can long make such a matter cause for division.

Neither mere organization, nor mere creedal declaration, nor mere ritual and ceremony opens the way to catholic Christianity. Yet the day for that good result seems nearer than ever. The day for true unity by service of a common purpose is here already. It is the presence of the common task that shames our divisions. Imagine trying to make Chicago a Christian city by having all the Presbyterians fight for the things that they want and the Methodists for the things they want, as though they differed in what they want for Chicago! Imagine making New York city a Christian city by making it wholly Baptist or wholly Episcopalian! The man who can face the cities of America and pretend that his church alone is adequate to the task is not facing them at all, but only pretending to do it.

Then there is the world task. The Presbyterian Church *contra mundum*? Not if we see the world—proud and sure as we are of the Presbyterian Church! Rather, we must use our differences, when we attack the common problem, as instruments of efficiency. We are so many mobilized forces available for use in a common warfare.

So is the day for catholic unity by one common spirit upon us now. It is our own fault and our shame that we hold back from entering into that day. No church's spirit is bound to its organiza-

tion or to its distinctively creedal expression or to its ceremony and ritual. It would be folly to pretend that there are not men of equal spiritual power in churches which differ widely in all these matters. The thing that makes them powerful is that they have yielded in their own spirits to the one mighty Spirit of God. With the empowering of that Spirit they can live under any organization and work under any creed that voices God's truth and worship through any ritual or ceremony that gives their hearts full swing.

The Spirit of Love Alone Can Produce a Real Unity

At this point, of devotion to one common cause and dependence on one Holy Spirit, we are not divided. We need only be true to that unity, refusing to clutter it with factitious differences, scorning to challenge the faith of men who worship at the same cross and bow before the same Redeemer. The first step before us is surely to bring together in an actual, visible, organic union all those churches which belong together by reason of their trifling differences. The years ought not to be many until we shall think it strange that the beautiful fellowship at Atlanta was the most beautiful thing of which we were then capable—when we shall not need to point out how united we are, because we shall be actually, openly, decisively united. The next steps we can take along with that one, developing the wider fellowships and being so conspicuously brotherly with all who bear the name of our Master that if they fail of brotherliness the shame will be on their own heads. It is love that wins.

Against Foreign Dress for Chinese

Very good reasons can be adduced for the return to the use of national costume by those Chinese who had discarded it in favor of foreign dress, says a writer in *The North China Herald*.

The Chinese are an ordinary common-sense race of people (notwithstanding what clever writers have to say about the country being "a complex problem" and its inhabitants "an enigma") and they are not slow to see the reason of things and learn the lesson of experience.

When, about three years ago, the movement first started to promote the adoption of the European style of dress and foreign ways and manners, there was very great enthusiasm among a certain section of reformers, and it must be admitted there was also very little sense and much absurdity.

For a time the vogue found many followers, especially among the young "bloods" of the coast towns. But when it came to be reckoned up that the cost of foreign apparel for a single season could purchase Chinese clothes to suffice for twelve months' wear, there was a very decided falling off in the fashion. And as this copying was most conspicuously practiced by those persons who were least acquainted with foreign customs and manners the results were generally ludicrous in the extreme and, far from being objects of admiration and respect to their fellow countrymen, these ardent "reformers" were more often the victims of their ridicule. More recent cases of a return to the national costume indicate a stronger confidence in the prestige of the nation.

The cutting of the cue synchronized with the adoption of the foreign dress, but its widespread permanence as a reform, if it could be so named in contrast to its vis-a-vis, is traceable to the revolution of 1911, when the bulk of the people were given no choice in the matter. If there was any choice, it was a choice between losing their cues and losing their heads, and of course they preferred the former. The discarding of the cue was in its first days a decided affront to the æsthetic sense; but consideration of hygiene and cleanliness soon reconciled lovers of the picturesque to its practical extinction.

A Prayer of Those Who Wait

For vision of the truth we praise thee, Lord,
And, in the battle thus enjoined, we cry for strength.
Give us, whose victory is to wait serenely

Thy appointed time,

The power to fill the common task brimful of love and cheery faith.
Or, if our hands lie folded to thy bidding, when all within us
cries to serve,

Keep thou the vision clear, our heart unshaken.

'Stablish our will and, for thy name's sake and the comfort of
our conscience,

Grant us through patient hope, the gift of peace.

MABEL ADDIS BEACH.

—Criticism of others is a negative compliment that we all delight to pay ourselves.

Wider Vision Through the Religious Paper

BY CORNELIUS M. STEFFENS

A FEW WEEKS AGO I heard a prominent minister of Iowa preach an excellent sermon on the enlarged vision for the Christian church. He said that we were too apt to become local in our conception of the kingdom of God; that the kingdom is not only a tremendous local fact, but it takes in the state, the United States of America and the whole world. It is true that Christ commanded us to begin at Jerusalem, but our work is also "in Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world." The sermon was comprehensive and forceful. The three lessons emphasized were these: First, that the church is a part of God's kingdom; second, that we must keep informed as to what the kingdom is accomplishing in the state, nation and the world, through discriminating reading of current events and learning what the church is doing through the religious press; third, that our prayers should not be exclusively local, but that they should contain an earnest petition that God's kingdom may come throughout the world.

It was encouraging to hear a minister plead for the religious press. This pastor was not an agent who was sent out to obtain subscribers, but a man who, with all the conviction of his heart, felt the need of keeping in close touch with what the church is accomplishing. If every minister in the Presbyterian Church would devote one Sunday to an address on Christian literature, the religious weekly would have a more important place in the life of the church.

During the months not long passed I have attended meetings of presbyteries, synod and General Assembly, but I have not heard a paper or a discussion on the value of the religious press. As far as I have learned, there was only one gathering during the year where this topic was discussed. I have the pleasure of stating that it took place during the German convention held in Dubuque. It seems to me that this is a subject worthy to be discussed by ministers and laymen at their ecclesiastical meetings.

A Molding Power in the Life of the Church

The religious weekly has a molding power in the life of the church. Able and thoroughly educated religious thinkers are devoting their lives to editorial writing. Many men and women are employed in writing stories and educational papers, and are giving their best thought to the proper presentation of Christian truth. This army, which is rarely heralded throughout the church, has much to do with molding the thought of the church and accomplishing transcendent good to mankind. The circulation of these publications aggregates thousands and constitutes an important item in the spiritual life of the nation. No one can measure their educational value.

A church that is deeply interested in these religious forces should demand a high standard of its religious press. I think it worth while for the church to consider more carefully what kind of religious paper should be circulated among its people.

These papers have for their object the dissemination of religious news and the giving of instruction in important questions that are before the church. It is instructive to follow the editorials as they appear. This page is probably read with more eagerness by ministers and elders. The contributed articles have their interest for those who want general information on Biblical, historical, devotional and missionary subjects. Articles with illustrations of China, India, the progress of the Orient, are also extremely interesting and profitable. Active business men have told me of the value of descriptive articles of world-wide interest which have appeared in one paper of the best type. The carefully prepared perspective of current events is exceedingly helpful to the busy man who does not find much time for reading or who is bewildered by the unorganized facts presented in the daily papers. Mothers, too, must appreciate the fascinating stories of child life and nature study which appear regularly in these publications; so every department has its educational value. The news department of the kingdom of God is surely necessary if we are to keep in touch with the life of the church. The stories of real life and experiences of the courageous Christian men and women are inspiring. They awaken a deeper human interest in the development of the kingdom.

A greater interest in the religious paper that really fulfills its functions is an obligation which ministers and laymen owe to the men and women who are devoting their lives to this branch of church work. Every minister owes it to his own responsibilities to seek to interest his community to have at least one religious weekly in every home. In this way the gospel may be preached to multitudes who are not now under a definite religious influence in that most important phase of their interests—the literature they read from day to day.