

like the grass that grows and withers? What benefit will the Abiding Word be to us in our fleeting life? Ah, but that is only one aspect of human life. It is life in connexion with the world that is fleeting; but there is also a life in connexion with the Word. The Old Testament says: 'All flesh is grass.' The New Testament goes even further, and says, 'The world passeth away.' But, if the New Testament goes beyond the Old in its declaration of the temporary nature of all things earthly, it goes beyond the Old, too, in its manifestation of the permanent view of life. The Old Testament says, 'The word of God abideth.' The New says, 'He that doeth the will of God abideth.' It has a clear and triumphant note for the individual. Yes, if, even as regards the grass, according to the song,

Ilka blade o' grass keeps [catches] its ain drap o' dew,
how much more may mortal man find, in the
eternal Word that which shall be as the dew to
his soul, the refreshing, transfiguring element, not

renewing for a brief day only, but enabling to live after the power of an endless life!

Mrs. Carlyle, in one of her letters, writes of revisiting her birthplace (Haddington) after many years' absence. Looking at the signs over the shop-doors as she walked along the streets, she could see but few of the old familiar names. 'Almost all the names had disappeared from the signs, and I found them on the tombstones in the churchyard.' But nothing can supersede the Sign of the Cross. It has been connected with the tomb, too, but it is no tombstone it is written upon. It is just because that Name has been connected with the tomb that it lives, and will ever live.

There is in Northern India a spacious city, built by a Mogul Emperor for his own glory, Fatehpur Sikri. It is now absolutely deserted by man. Over a vast gateway in the silent walls is carved an Arabic inscription, which purports to preserve, strange to say, an extra-Scriptural utterance of our blessed Lord's:

Jesus, on whom be peace, hath said,
This world is but a bridge; pass over;
But build not thy dwelling there.

So let us pass on and over, alert and occupied all the way, yet with heart and hope ever in sober earnest looking forward to the life of the world to come.

The Doctrine of the Incarnation in the Creeds.

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I.

1. THE one question with which this article is concerned is: Whether, and how far, the doctrine of the Incarnation in the Creeds, as they are accepted in the Christian Church, can be regarded by us to-day as adequate and satisfactory. We are not now concerned with these creeds in their historical function as standards of orthodoxy, or as weapons against heresy, except only in so far as these standpoints are necessary to our historical interpretation of them. We may now be of opinion that it is not by such means that Christian faith is to be preserved and defended in our own day; and we may even venture the conjecture that Christendom was divided and so weakened by these attempts to enforce uniformity of belief in the days of old. For our present purpose we must consider these ancient symbols from three points of view—personal faith, historical fact, and metaphysical formula. Do the contents of these creeds express personal faith as we to-day

conceive it? Do they accord with historical fact as modern scholarship establishes it? Do they in the metaphysical formulæ employed satisfy the philosophical thought of the modern world? Must Christianity regard itself in its thinking on the object of its faith, the person and work of Jesus the Christ our Lord, bound by the fetters, kept within the borders of the thought of the early Christian centuries; or should it here, too, claim the freedom wherewith the Son maketh free?

2. A glance at the history, although it must be as brief as possible, is inevitable.

(i.) The Apostles' Creed in its present form is first found in the writings of Pirminius, in a manuscript belonging to the eighth century, and so may be dated about 750 A.D. One change has been introduced since: 'ad inferna' has become 'ad inferos' in the fifth article. But the creed can be traced backwards through Rufinus, about 400 A.D.;

Augustine, A.D. 393; and Marcellus of Ancyra, A.D. 341, to Tertullian, A.D. 210, and Irenæus, A.D. 185. It is now generally agreed by scholars that it is an expansion of the Roman Baptismal Creed. M'Giffert denies that it can be traced further back than the middle of the second century, and maintains that it was directed against the heresy of Marcion. It is neither apostolic nor is it a complete confession of what the Christian believes.

(ii.) The Nicene Creed was adopted at the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325, in condemnation of the heresy of Arius. It is a development of the Creed of Cæsarea, which its bishop, Eusebius, presented to the Council. The most important differences are these: The clause *πρωτότοκον πασης κτίσεως* is omitted as capable of an Arian interpretation; and there are added to exclude Arianism the clauses *τουτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ*. One clause in the Nicene Creed *τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῆ* is taken from the Creed found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. This Cæsarean Creed was also an expansion of a much shorter and simpler baptismal formula, such as is found in the lectures of St. Cyril as in use in the Church at Jerusalem.

(iii.) What is, however, generally known as the Nicene Creed is that which is commonly said to have been formed by Gregory Nyssen, and to have been adopted and authoritatively sanctioned by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). On this latter point, however, doubts have been raised (Heurtley, *De Fide et Symbolo*, p. 19). 'What is called the Creed of Constantinople, however, did not emanate from the Council. The foundation of the Creed so called was a confession composed by Cyril of Jerusalem, prior to his being made bishop, which was in 350. In the existing form of the Creed, it is almost identical with a baptismal symbol recommended by Epiphanius as early as 374. It is probable that Cyril himself had enlarged this symbol for the benefit of his people by introducing the passages from the Nicene Creed which formed a part of it' (Fisher's *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 145). It was accepted by the Council of Chalcedon as the creed of the Council of Constantinople along with the Nicene Creed, so that it has 'the full sanction of a General Council' (Heurtley). The chief difference is that the short clause in the eighth article *καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον* is expanded in order to condemn the heresy of Macedonius and his followers, nicknamed the

'Pneumatomachians' because they regarded the Holy Ghost as a creature subordinate to the Son. The articles on the Church, baptism, the resurrection, and eternal life were also added. It is in connexion with the article on the Holy Ghost that the most serious doctrinal difference between East and West emerged. The procession of the Spirit is from the Father. In the West the *Filioque* clause, conjoining the Son with the Father, was added; but the date of the addition is quite uncertain.

(iv.) In the Constantinopolitan Creed the trinitarian doctrine is formulated, of which the Athanasian Creed gives a much more elaborate development. There is still controversy regarding the history of this document. It is certain that its author was not Athanasius, as it is of Latin and not Greek origin, and shows the influence of the teaching of Augustine. It is expressly directed against the heresy of Apollinaris in its assertion of the perfect manhood of Jesus: its clauses too may be regarded as directed against both Nestorianism in asserting the unity of the person, and Eutychianism in denying the confusion of the substances. It has been dated as early as the fifth century, and as late as the ninth, and various authors have been suggested; but no certainty on these points can at present be reached. It is probable that it was composed in Gaul. It is a sermon rather than a creed, and comes to us from one single author, and not a Council. It makes salvation depend on acceptance of its elaborate and complicated doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation; it is theology, not religion.

(v.) The Creed of the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 may be regarded as completing this theological development. Its definition of faith is not put forward as a new creed, but as an explanation of the Creed of Nicæa, and of Constantinople, to condemn the errors of Eutyches, and also of Nestorius, who had already been condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The perfect divinity is asserted against Arius, condemned at Nicæa in 325; the perfect humanity against Apollinaris, whose doctrine, without mention of his name, was condemned at the Synod of Alexandria in 362, the Synod of Rome in 377, and the Council of Constantinople in 381. Against his view that the divine Logos filled the place of the rational soul in Christ, Christ is said to consist *ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος*. Against Nestorius

the Council confesses him *ἐνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστὸν, Υἱὸν, Κύριον*. About the clause directed against Eutyches there is some doubt. 'The Greek text, as it stands in the record of the Council, is *ἐκ δύο φύσεων*,' but it need hardly be pointed out that Eutyches could have accepted that phrase. The text generally adopted is *ἐν δύο φύσεσιν*, words which assert the permanence of the two natures. 'Dr. Routh conjectures that the original was *ἐκ δύο φύσεων καὶ ἐν δύο φύσεσιν*, which certainly is more in keeping with the mind of the Council.' The adverbs *ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως* (without confusion, with conversion) are against Eutyches, the adverbs *ἀδιαίρετως, ἀχωρίστως* (without division, never to be separated) against Nestorius.

3. Into the subsequent history of the Christological controversy it is not necessary for our purpose here to enter. Nestorianism was driven beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. The bishop and others who would not accept the condemnation of Nestorius, fled to Persia, and built up the Syrian Church, 'which, in numbers and learning and missionary zeal combined,

surpassed all others and was till the fourteenth century the Church of the East *par excellence*, reaching far into India and China' (*Nestorius and his Teaching*, by Bethune-Baker). The recent discovery of a work of Nestorius, *The Bazaar of Heraclides*, proves that neither Nestorius nor his followers denied, or intended to deny, the unity of the person of Christ, and that he was the victim of the unscrupulous ambition, rivalry, and hostility of Cyril of Alexandria, whose own doctrine was consistently developed by Eutyches. His *monophysitism* was not crushed out by the Council of Chalcedon, and it survives in the Coptic Church in Egypt, in Abyssinia, in the Jacobite Church of Syria, and in a measure in Armenia (Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches*, p. 568). If we further remember that Arian missionaries carried the gospel to the Germanic peoples, we shall be justified in concluding that, while we may approve the decisions of these successive Councils in principle generally, yet we cannot recognize so absolute an identity of these creeds with the common Christian faith as to regard them above examination and criticism.

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