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sult Jerome by letter upon the Bible. Not merely men like Bishop Damasus, but women like Hedibia and Algasia in far-off Gaul, no less than other members of the women-group at Rome, received help from the great scholar. Still, it is the personality of Marcella which stands out in this connexion. She is head and shoulders above even a woman like Paula. Her passion for monastic discipline was unfortunately tinged with the delusion that marriage at best was a second best for any really Christian woman; but even this aberration proved at any rate that the ethical tradition which characterized the Roman genius in great families of the capital still throbbed, although unfortunately it was not always reinforced within the Roman Church. She had the moral courage to resist the shallow, fashionable temper of her patrician surroundings, and even as she yielded to the ascetic current she managed to keep her head better than most of her contemporaries. She was a great lady, yet humble; generous and yet not one to be imposed upon; possessed of a warm heart but nevertheless gifted with some sangfroid. Marcella was a religious inquirer who had mental balance, and a love of learning which did not make her either conceited or pedantic.

The Apostles' Creed.

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The New Testament Church soon found it necessary to demand acceptance by its members of at least certain doctrines if it were to safeguard its healthy life. It was born into a world of competing faiths, all of them more or less aggressive and out to win the world. The real danger to Christianity did not lie in their rivalry so much as in the spirit of eclecticism begotten in bewildered men by the claims of these competitors, strengthened by similarities in their teachings, an eclecticism which took shape in the congeries of ideas and speculations generically known as Gnosticism. The Christian Church was early menaced by this dangerous invasion. Gnostic ideas found or formed points of contact with its beliefs and threatened to suffuse themselves into its doctrines, as appears from apprehensive references and warnings in the later portions of the New Testament. Happily the apostles and leaders, roused by the keen-sighted Paul, became wideawake to the insidious peril and ejected the plausible and specious enemy before it poisoned the springs of the Church's life.

But measures had to be taken to ensure the purity of Christian doctrine in the future, as converts began to stream in from all quarters, many of them with minds tainted by beliefs which tended to become associated with and to bring elements of corruption into those they were now asked to accept. Something had to be done to make and keep plain the truths which formed the unique claim of this new religion to supremacy and finality. In fine, a creed had to be formulated of such a nature as would safeguard the entrance into membership and secure unity in essentials in the Church which was rapidly spreading throughout the world. The New Testament of course provided the groundwork. But converts could not be restrained from thinking along pre-Christian lines and trying to correlate their new beliefs with ideas which had commended themselves to their reason in the philosophies of the world. Differences of opinion regarding the interpretation of doctrines inevitably arose as men began to ask what this or that article of faith exactly meant. The leaders of the Church were called on to determine what was to be regarded as error and to outlaw it from the Church, especially errors which might become centres of infection to other related doctrines or threaten to set up dry-rot in the structure of the Church. The original central doctrines of the New Testament in their stark simplicity would soon cease to be sufficient for the purpose. Clauses would require to be added of a defining nature, as this or that article of belief centred attention upon itself and new heresies were thrown up and denounced. That is very summarily how the Apostles' Creed came into existence and grew to the proportions which it at last assumed.

That the Apostles' Creed has no right to the title scarcely needs to be argued in this enlightened age. The name appears only towards the end of the fourth century. Ambrose of Milan, recognizing, like Ter-

tullian, the necessity of a united Church, and taking advantage of any device that would conspire to promote the desirable unity, seems to have been the first leader to suggest the apostolic origin of the Symbol, however he conceived of its relation to the apostles. Later on some unknown romancer, with more imagination than conscience, invented a legend which described how the various apostles had co-operated in its production by each stating one of the articles, a legend which took different forms in respect of the articles assigned to the several apostles. The sagacious Augustine was not taken in, but the gullible and uneducated public by-and-by welcomed the plausible story, and at last the authorities concurred in stamping it with the hall-mark of authenticity by letting it be known as the Apostles' Creed when its present form was standardized in the seventh century and took a central place in the worship of the Western Church.

Not until the fifteenth century was the voice of shrewd suspicion raised when that industrious image-breaker, Laurentius Valla, and that astute modernist, Erasmus, dared to question the validity of its claim to apostolic authorship. Calvin saw no reason to worry about its origin, and the Scottish Reformers, with native sagacity and caution, confessed to serious doubts of its apostolicity while adopting it as being a useful instructional summary of Christian doctrine under the name of the Creed or the Belief.

The Creed was actually the product of a long moulding process taken part in by numerous unknown hands through a period of centuries. It is not surprising that the Church at Rome should have been the first to realize the necessity of such an authoritative norm of doctrine, providing a definition and touchstone of orthodoxy, for its membership would be made up of converts from the many faiths represented in that hospitable cosmopolitan city. In the very success of its missionary activities lay a grave danger of alien elements from other religions corrupting the purity of genuine Christian doctrine. A protective fence was set up in the baptismal formula which took shape somewhere in the second century, not later than the third quarter. To and from the capital Christian travellers would be constantly coming and going, carrying this formula all over the Empire to the churches with which they were associated, or temporarily associated themselves, to be discussed with intense interest by their membership. It would come from such an imperial source with a certain authority ; at least it would provide other Christian communities who had not progressed so far on the road to ecclesiastical consolidation with a lead and an exemplar of the doctrinal safeguard of which they also were feeling the need. The provincial and local churches too were in frequent correspondence with one another. This would help to account for the fact that similar formulæ, or Rules of Faith, grew up in many countries, East and West, of which only a few have survived in history. These, however, are sufficient to prove that the trend of thought as to the beliefs which should be embraced in them was much the same everywhere. The impelling influences of course were very similar, substantially the same errors, at least in the earlier centuries, being rife on all hands. This is indeed what determined the shape taken by the growing Creed—the heresies which threatened the peace and strength of the Church already rapidly acquiring an aggressive and imperial consciousness of its unity and catholicity. The Creed, therefore, is primarily a polemical document. Its articles, with one or two exceptions, were inspired by the necessity of instructing catechumens in what exactly they must believe in face of these alluring and specious heresies.

The Church in the early stages of its growth, it scarcely requires to be said, was still immersed in a heathen environment. It was desirable that the faithful should have a password in the shape of such a Rule of Faith by which they might recognize each other and the door of the Church be blocked to the entry of what Ambrose calls the '*indignus et profanus auditor*.' This Creed provided such a *σύωβολον*, as it came to be called, a term used in the army and elsewhere to describe a watchword or distinctive mark.

This being its original purpose, it was regarded as a secret to be shared only by members of the Church. It was forbidden to be written down. This secrecy was due partly, no doubt, to the influence and example of the Gnostics with their esoteric doctrine, but still more perhaps to the need of protecting the Lord's Supper from abuses that had resulted in its profanation. It ensured that only the baptized initiates took part in the sacrament. The catechumens, as is well known, had to retire before the celebration. Ambrose speaks of the *mysterium symboli*, and Cyprian justifies the secrecy enforced on the ground of Pr 23^9 and Mt 7^6. Its several articles were indeed all to be heard in sermons preached in public and read in the writings of the Fathers, but not so as to be recognizable as constitutive items of the Symbol. Augustine frankly told his catechumens that they had been familiar with them all before, for there was no esoteric doctrine in the Church. This pretence of secrecy

persisted until the fifth century, long after the need of it was past, so strong was traditional usage and custom.

One consequence of the prohibition of writing it down in the interests of secrecy was the need for brevity, simplicity, and precision. Memorability was of first importance. Catechumens had to repeat it by rote at baptism as their profession of faith, and members had to be able on demand to prove their acquaintance with it. It seems to have never been repeated in the ordinary services of the Church before the eighth century.

Moreover, in view of its primary intention, no dubiety could be permitted as to the exact meaning of at least the original articles, those which were included in all forms of the Creed, East and West, before the fourth century. The teachers had to see to that, otherwise the originating purpose of the Symbol would be defeated. In their classes of instruction they expounded its meaning and implications at length, exposing the errors implicitly condemned and defining the truths affirmed. So that in regard to these articles there can be no dispute as to their interpretation, and Jurieu is justified in saying that we must not seek the sense of the articles in Scripture but in the intention of those who composed them. Abundant material survives to enable this to be done in the writings of the Fathers, early and late, especially in the summary treatise of Rufinus, to whom we are indebted for much knowledge about the history of the Creed.

Space will not permit of discussing how the various articles came into the Creed and how out of many similar forms current throughout the Church that now known as the Apostles' Creed was finally established in its services. This form probably proceeded from Africa and drew much of its inspiration from Augustine. Pirminius, a Benedictine monk who lived in the early half of the eighth century, is the first to record the traditional text in its entirety. No General Council ever gave its official endorsement and sanction. So far as can be inferred from various allusions, the rapid spread of its use was largely due to the favour and authority of Charlemagne, who had it inserted in his favourite version of the Psalter, which with his approval was circulated in large numbers throughout his domains. Such was its vogue and the regard in which it universally came to be held that it retained its place in the services of the Church through the upheavals of the Reformation in the great branches of the Protestant Church.

In the Eastern Church, its birthplace or at least cradle, however, it had only a brief currency, and that in an incomplete form. The Nicene Creed, another misnamed Symbol, supplanted it, and soon the very knowledge of it disappeared. Nor has it ever recovered a place in the services of that Church.

The history of the Creed then, thus sketched in bare outline, explains its contents, and provides the key to its interpretation. Though often described as a brief sum of the Christian faith, it is far from being that. Its omissions are obvious and important. Had the apostles really dictated the articles, these would certainly have been at least in some respects different both as regards their nature and statement. As Lord Sands said at the Lausanne Faith and Order Conference, 1927: 'The love of God, the personal relation of the soul to the Saviour, the free offer of salvation to men—these may be implicit in the Creeds, but they do not find adequate expression. In the Apostles' Creed, for example, the only direct relation affirmed of the Master to mankind is that of judge.' Moreover, nothing is said of the new life in Christ through the *unio mystica* whose ethical implications and exposition occupy so much of the apostolic epistles. The actual contents of the Creed, let me again emphasize, were determined by the fact that almost all the clauses and even the prepositions such as ἐκ in the article relating to the Virgin Mary, had a controversy behind them, whether Docetist, Gnostic, Marcionite, Origenist, Donatist, or Nestorian, because of which they found their place in the formula. That accounts for the detail in the clauses regarding Christ as contrasted with the simplicity of that relating to the Holy Spirit about whom there was no heresy in the period when the major part of the Creed was in process of formation.

Let us examine, then, one or two articles in the light of this resumé of the Creed's history to determine what exactly they are to be taken as meaning. As I have indicated, two or three articles did not enter the Creed on a wave of controversy, and about their significance there was at no time general agreement. That applies to the clause regarding the 'descent into hell' which was added in the sixth century. Its insertion may be attributed to the rapid spread of the conjectural views of Augustine which issued in the doctrine of purgatory. It became a popular theme with preachers in that century, receiving at last a quasi-official sanction by its inclusion in the Creed. Nevertheless opinion was divided between 'hell' being equivalent to (1) the abode of all departed spirits, (2) the 'limbo' of the souls of the just, or (3) the place of torment, the last being favoured in later mediæval times.

But all alike accepted the New Testament belief in a subterranean place, as the framers of the Creed undoubtedly did.

The article was a source of embarrassment to the Reformers, who did not know what to make of it in view of its current association with purgatory. The proposal of some expositors to take it as meaning 'was buried' has no support in early Christian literature and would involve a tautology in the Creed inconsistent with its character. The Formula of Concord helplessly declares that this article cannot be understood by the human reason or faculties.

The article on the communion of saints (*communis sanctorum*), the last addition of all, is generally regarded to-day as susceptible of only one meaning, that attached to it by the Council of Trent, which takes it as descriptive of the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant, not two Churches but one. Many of the ancient expositors regarded the clause as implying the intercession of the saints. The word '*sanctorum*' was by others, however, pronounced to be a neuter noun and taken as referring to holy *things*, especially the emblems of the Lord's Supper. The Protestants made it equivalent to the earthly Church, with no reference to the Church in heaven.

But let us concentrate on one or two clauses regarding whose interpretation there can be no doubt. Let us take the article, 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.' According to Augustine, Cyprian, Rufinus, and other representative and authoritative expositors, this clause is to be taken with the succeeding ones, viz. the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and life everlasting. Cyprian and Augustine explicitly declare that these three gifts of grace are to be gained only through the Holy Catholic Church. These prerogatives are its unique characteristics. By these marks the Holy Catholic Church is distinguished from all heretical and schismatic sects. They, says Augustine, call their congregations churches, but they do not belong to the Church Catholic. He has in view the Donatists and Novatians, who contended that there was no pardon for apostates and that they themselves constituted the true Church. It is significant that the Latin Creed has no preposition 'in' before these clauses, as in the case of the previous ones relating to God and Christ, its absence being explained by the different sense attaching to '*credo*' without the preposition. 'I believe in God,' but 'I believe that there is a Holy Catholic Church, forgiveness of sins,' etc. Moreover, the word 'catholic' is absent from the Creed until after Augustine's day, and evidently found a place in it through his influence, for it appears first in a form of the symbol used by him. The significance of the clause in light of this fact appears from Augustine's unequivocal assertion that the Catholic Church was defined by its holiness. *Sancta Ecclesia utique catholica*, he says, holy and therefore catholic. Its holiness was due to its purity of doctrine, and there could be no true Church which lacked that attribute. Therefore there was only one true Holy Catholic Church, which included all who held exactly the same faith. That excluded, of course, all heretical bodies. 'I commend one thing to your prayers,' says Augustine, 'that you absolutely turn your mind and ears from whatever is not catholic. By doing so you will gain the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and life eternal through the one true and Holy Catholic Church.'

The repetition of this article then implies the repudiation of all beliefs not in accordance with the dogmatic system held by the Church so defined at the time when the Creed was compiled. All who do not accept these beliefs are heretics and therefore outside the Church and disentitled to the benefits enumerated in the defining clauses. There can be only one true Catholic Church, the Creed asserts—the Church which is characterized by unity of faith. What Church is it, then, in which Anglicans and Presbyterians who repeat this Creed profess their belief? Certainly not the Church defined by the Creed, but some idealized body which has as little real existence as that glowingly chanted in the hymn, 'Onward, Christian Soldiers,' or that highly metaphorical and visionary one beginning 'City of God.'

But let us pass on to the article on the resurrection of the flesh, discreetly camouflaged in the English translation by the use of the word 'body' instead of 'flesh.' There can be no question as to the meaning intended by the clause, viz. *resuscitatio cum carnis restitutione*, as Tertullian puts it—that is, the resurrection of the very body we now possess in all its identical parts and features. Incontrovertible evidence as to the correctness of that interpretation can be adduced not only from the Fathers and later writers but from mediæval poems and pictures which, by their lurid and gruesome representations of this belief, certify emphatically to its accepted meaning.

The apologists and Fathers were well aware of the difficulties involved. As preliminary to their refutation, Gregory of Nyssa marshals all the arguments against the possibility of such a resurrection in his treatise 'De Anima et Resurrectione,' and formidable they are, such as could not but occasion

deep perplexities in many thinking minds. Inevitably they tended to inspire views of a Gnostic complexion, or such as Origen advocated on the authority of the Apostle Paul. It was against these very views that this clause of the Creed was intended to safeguard the Church. Thomas found it necessary to controvert them as professed by the Albigenses.

The belief expressed in this article survived the Reformation, of which the early standards of the Scottish Reformed Church give indubitable proof. John Buchan in his novel *Witch Wood* quite correctly illustrates this fact in one of its incidents. Three ministers are engaged in discussion. 'The moor fowl at dinner had loosened a tooth (of Mr. Fordyce), and now it came out in his hand and was wrapt carefully in his kerchief. "I have kept ilka tooth I have ever cast," he told the others, "and they will go into my coffin with me, that my bodily parts may be together at the Resurrection." "Would you shorten the arm of the Lord?" Mr. Rutherford had asked testily. "Can He no' gather your remnants from the uttermost parts of the earth?" "True, true," the other had answered gently, "but it's just my fancy to keep all my dust in one place."'

More grotesque is an incident recalled by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser in her autobiography. The sailing-ship in which she first visited Australia was caught in a terrible storm. When they seemed likely all to go to the bottom, an 'old Scots wifie' put on an entire change of clean underclothing that she might meet her Maker decently.

But why was it considered so important that the resurrection of the flesh should be professed as an article of essential Christian belief (*religionis nostrae finis, haec summa credendi est,* Maximus says of it in the fifth century)? There were various reasons. Probably the chief was that the elements of personality, body, mind, and spirit, were regarded after a manner as separate entities though inseparably conjoined, and it was held that each, as it existed on earth, must receive the due reward of its deeds done in this life. The body therefore must not escape its share of punishment. Material notions of heaven and hell obviously had their influence. Another factor in determining this belief was that the risen body of Christ was accepted as the exemplar of the future resurrection one, and that body was understood, on the ground of passages in the Gospels representing one strain of tradition, to be the fleshly one which hung upon the Cross, was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. Irenæus, for example, speaks of the ascended Christ as ἔνσαρκος. In that substantial form He continues to exist there now, and, according to widely held anticipations of the Second Advent, will appear again on the earth. Numbers of hymns still sung are inspired by this belief, which is embedded not only in the standards of the Roman Catholic Church, but in the Thirty-nine Articles and in the Westminster Confession. This belief, which involved the localization of Christ in space, constituted for the Reformers one of the difficulties which had to be met in accounting for the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. The fact was generally recognized, of course, that every earthly body after death was disintegrated, its parts perhaps scattered, consumed by animals or by fire, and ultimately in any case dissolved into its original elements. But that was no stumbling-block to faith which held that the omnipotent power of God was equal to recreating and reassembling its every particle and restoring its former identity. 'All bodies,' says Minucius Felix, 'whether they become dry dust or are resolved into moisture or become a handful of ashes or a puff of smoke, are stored up by God, the guardian of their elements.'

That the modern mind jibs at more than one of these articles, requires no proof. The Episcopal Church of America omits the clause, 'He descended into hell.' Individual congregations have altered the words 'the resurrection of the flesh (or body)' in such wise as to make the phrase connote the persistence of personal life in a spiritual body after death, as Paul seems to teach in contradiction to the Creed. But what is this but to destroy the identity of the Creed? The resulting symbol is really no longer entitled to be called the Apostles' Creed. Another creed has been substituted under shelter of its name. A more general practice of uneasy minds and consciences is to give an interpretation to certain clauses as they stand irrespective of their original meaning and indeed contrary to it. The article on the resurrection of the flesh is thus actually turned into the very heresy which it was intended to condemn. It is not as though the words might be taken as of a symbolic nature, and therefore as capable of being given various meanings. They say exactly what they mean and mean exactly what they say—that and nothing else. If a meaning contradictory of the original one is forced upon them, is it not obvious that the identity of the Creed is thus destroyed as much as when different words are substituted? It is no longer the Apostles' Creed which is repeated, and *the reason for its use based upon ancient catholic tradition entirely loses its force.* It remains the

Apostles' Creed only so long as it is taken in its original meaning, which was expressly purposed to safeguard the Church from what were then regarded as dangerous errors.

Those who still wish to repeat this Creed while unable to accept its original meaning are indeed confronted by an awkward dilemma. Either they say what they do not mean or they impose upon the Creed a meaning which its authors expressly repudiated and condemned. Either alternative involves that they are not repeating the Apostles' Creed and are cutting themselves away from the catholic tradition which they delude themselves into believing that they are loyally maintaining.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A CHRISTMAS TALK.

'Lighting the Lamps.'

BY THE REVEREND R. OSWALD DAVIES, Leicester.

'A light to lighten the Gentiles.'—Lk 2^{32}.

1. HAVE you ever tried to catch a moonbeam? 'It is only fairies,' you say, 'who know how to do that.' But if you really wanted to catch a moonbeam, and were in dead earnest about it, then you would need a very delicate instrument, and with its aid you would, I think, be successful.

Certain men, whom we call scientists, did actually catch one the other day. They were working in the Observatory of Florence in Italy, and, with the aid of their instrument, they caught a moonbeam. Having caught it, they sent it on a very long journey. They first sent it to Rome, and from Rome it was flashed all the way across the Atlantic until it reached Chicago in America. Never was there a journey made in quicker time than that. It sped from Florence to Chicago in one-twentieth part of a second, and, three minutes after, the answer came back from America that it had arrived! Now, in Chicago a Great Scientific Exhibition was being held and all the lamps of its pavilions were waiting to be lit. That night they were all lit by the moonbeam that had come all the way from Florence.

That explains precisely what happened on the first Christmas Day. God sent His great and wonderful light to the world; and that light was Jesus. Like the moonbeam speeding across space towards the earth, so did Jesus speed down from heaven to earth, arriving in the little town of Bethlehem, and bringing with Him the light of heaven. He came into a dark and cold world—a world dark with ignorance, superstition, and sin. It was not a happy place for girls and boys to live in. But after He came everything was changed. It was like lighting up those dark pavilions of Chicago, changing the place of darkness into a place of great light.

2. Further, those scientists in Florence caught the light with the aid of their delicate instrument. They pointed their telescope to the heavens, and, when all was ready, they caught the light. It was so when Jesus came. There were people who caught His light. They caught it because they were ready for it; in other words, because they possessed the necessary delicate instrument, which was a good and honest heart. Did not the shepherds, watching their flocks on the hills of Bethlehem on a cold and dark night, see His light? They hurried to Bethlehem to see the Child. Did not the Wise Men see the light of His star in the far-off East, shining with such brilliance as to outshine every other star in the heavens, and follow it across the wide deserts until they, too, knelt before the Child?

Then there were the disciples who caught His gleam, and there were others, such as Mary Magdalene, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. There was something in their hearts which was sensitive to His light; and when they saw Jesus they knew Him as the true light of God. I hope that we, too, this Christmastide, shall catch His light because we have good and honest hearts.

3. Those scientists of Florence not only caught the light; they sent it across the Atlantic to distant Chicago to light up the dark pavilions there. They did not keep it to themselves. Lamps in a distant land were lit by it. That is true of the light of Jesus. It was first caught by people who knew and loved Him in Palestine. The lamps of their own lives were made to burn. But it did not end there. They spread it abroad.