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0.9: “ $G = P \div 0.9$ ”, which is easily done on any calculator. Thus we finally see that even all those painful hours spent in 10<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra were ultimately for the glory of God.

<sup>30</sup> Genesis 1:12b (KJV).

<sup>31</sup> Genesis 1:31a (KJV).

<sup>32</sup> This particular erroneous teaching about the Faith, or “heresy”, is called “Manichaeism” and also underlies another similar error called “Gnosticism”.

<sup>33</sup> This is the principle of “Stewardship” that is implied in Genesis 1:26-30.

## A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE APOSTLES’ CREED -- 2.

The Reverend Canon John A. Hollister

The Form of the Apostles’ Creed.

***I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth:***

**And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost: The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints: The Forgiveness of sins: The Resurrection of the body: And the Life everlasting. Amen.**

First, notice that the Creed, as printed in THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, is set off in three paragraphs. These correspond to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity: the first deals with God the Father; the second deals with God the Son; and the third deals with God the Holy Ghost. This concept, which we call the doctrine of the Trinity,<sup>1</sup> is one of the two most distinctive,<sup>2</sup> as well as most important, features of traditional, orthodox Christianity.

Then, notice the capitalization of the words in the Creed. While some are as we would expect, seeming to be the beginnings of sentences or at least of complete thoughts and others names of people, there are some words that are capitalized that do not seem to follow the rules we learned in high school English class: “Son”, “Lord”, “Forgiveness”, “Resurrection”, and “Life”. The capitals signal us that these are actually *proper* nouns, that is, they are the names of concepts or facts which are important to Christianity.

Finally, notice that the punctuation, like the capitalization, does not seem to follow the rules we were taught in school. In the Prayer Book, the Creed is printed in twelve segments that are set off by *colons* (:) where we might expect periods. Only two segments, the final ones of the second and third paragraphs, actually end with periods, and those do so because they are the ends of their respective paragraphs.

Each of these twelve segments, whether set off by colons or periods, expresses *one* complete thought. That is, each segment deals with a single truth about the Christian Faith. How it does that will be discussed in the following sections.

### “I believe in God the Father Almighty....”

#### “I believe....”

The opening word of the first sentence is a ringing affirmation of *personal* belief: “**I** believe **in** God, the Father Almighty....” In Latin, “I believe” is “credo”, from which we derive the word “creed”. Each time a Christian recites this Creed in private or in public, he or she is reminded of the personal dimension of faith. This is underscored by the use of the preposition “in” to describe what it is in which that worshipper believes.

The Creed does not say “I believe *that* God *exists*”. God is a *person in whom* we believe, not a *concept about which* we

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<sup>7</sup> THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 68 (PECUSA 1928).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 71 (PECUSA 1928).

<sup>10</sup> A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 21 (CPSA 1954).

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 22.

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 12:1-5.

<sup>13</sup> Exodus 7-12.

<sup>14</sup> St. Matthew 6:9; St. Luke 11:2.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 1:27, 7:2.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 7:1-3.

<sup>17</sup> To take just a few examples from the period of God’s revelation of Himself in the Old Testament, we may recall the faithfulness of Rahab, in Joshua 1 & 2; the wisdom and leadership of Deborah and the courage and steadiness of Jael, both in Judges 4; and the loyalty of Ruth and the bravery of Esther, each in the book that bears her name. And, of course, above all others is the supremely obedient heroine of the faith, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Luke 1:26-38.

<sup>18</sup> It is, in fact, the heresy called “Modalism”. M. D. Haverland, *ANGLICAN CATHOLIC FAITH AND PRACTICE* 30 (1996). Also, of course, when each individual worshipper commits himself or herself to the orthodox Faith, as he or she does when reciting the traditional Creed’s statement that “I believe...”, that is by no means the same thing as when the modernist worshipper pushes the responsibility of commitment off on the amorphous group by mouthing the vague and general formula, “We believe....”

<sup>19</sup> This is what theologians call a “*ious* opinion”, something we are permitted but not required to believe, in contrast to a “dogma”, which is a truth defined by the Church that we are required to believe as a prerequisite for salvation.

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 1:1.

<sup>21</sup> THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 54 (PECUSA 1928).

<sup>22</sup> “A General Thanksgiving”, *The Order for Daily Morning [and Evening] Prayer*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 19 [& 33] (PECUSA 1928).

<sup>23</sup> THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 68 (PECUSA 1928).

<sup>24</sup> Malachi 3:8-12.

<sup>25</sup> Genesis 14:18-20.

<sup>26</sup> Hebrews 7.

<sup>27</sup> Psalm 50:8-14 (MCV). *See also* Isaiah 1:11-14.

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 51:15-17 (MCV). *See also* Jeremiah 7:21-13 and St. Mark 12:33.

<sup>29</sup> To determine the amount that must be given to net a specific sum after the tithe is paid, take the desired net amount and divide it by ninety per cent. In algebraic terms, the formula is “ $P = 0.9G$ ”, where P is the price of the object to be purchased and G is the total sum needed to be given to cover both price and tithe. Then that equation may be rearranged by dividing each term by

Thirdly, because God the Father *is* the Creator, we know that there was a Creation. This elementary-seeming idea itself has further very important implications for how we behave with respect to God's created order. Because God Himself is responsible for all that He created, for the existence of the universe, and because God Himself is infinite goodness, then the nature of His creation is essentially *good*: "and God saw that it [the world He had just created] was good";<sup>30</sup> "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."<sup>31</sup>

Thus, for example, certain ancient teachings, that have recurred in our own day, to the effect that the physical world is essentially bad and only the spiritual realm of existence can be good, are grievously in error.<sup>32</sup> Also, because the created world is God's, we must treat it with respect and, in using it, take account of the needs of other people, both those who share it with us now and those who will come after us.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although the doctrine of the Trinity, as set out in the Creeds, is not *defined* in the Bible, it is both *stated* and *referred to* in ways that make clear that it is part of the Truth Christ came to reveal to us. *E.g.*, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." 1 John 5:7. "The Word" here is, of course, Jesus Christ, St. John 1:1-4, 11, & 14.

<sup>2</sup> The other is the doctrine of the Incarnate Son of God. These two doctrines, taken together, distinguish the authentic Christian tradition both from questionable modern revisions of Christianity and from other, non-Christian monotheistic religions.

<sup>3</sup> The text of the Nicene Creed, as that emerged from the Council of Nicea and the First Council of Constantinople, did state that "We believe..." In the context of those Councils, however, this, was a public statement of *the Church's* beliefs, intended for teaching those inside the Church and explaining the Church's position to those outside it. When, later, a very natural impulse led to the insertion of this declaration of faith into the liturgy, it became appropriate for the gathered individual worshippers to use it in the singular form, "I believe..."

<sup>4</sup> *See, e.g.*, Exodus 20-24.

<sup>5</sup> THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 68 (PECUSA 1928); *cf.* Exodus 20:2-3.

<sup>6</sup> St. Matthew 6:9b-15; St. Luke 11:2-4; *see, e.g.*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 6, 24 (PECUSA 1928).

hold certain assumptions. The recitation of the Creed is an act of *personal commitment*, not an exercise in *abstract knowledge*.

Thus each time a Christian recites these words in the public worship of the Church, in unison with all the other worshippers present, he or she is expressing, together with them, that this *personal* faith is also the Faith of the whole Church.

Recent attempts to alter the liturgical use of this Creed so that public worshippers say "We believe..."<sup>3</sup> are sadly mistaken. That use of the plural form cannot as clearly express the simultaneous individual *and* corporate dimensions of the Christian religion. Christianity is the fulfillment of God's Covenant with the Israelites,<sup>4</sup> the Covenant that is the essential subject of the Old Testament.

That Covenant was not between God and any one individual, or even between God and some number of individuals. Rather, it was between God and the *people* God chose for Himself, the Israelites. Each individual Israelite participated in that Covenant only because he or she was a member of that Covenant People. This essential concept of the Covenant between God, on the one hand, and a collective people, on the other hand, was not changed with the coming of Christ.

Rather, Jesus simply opened up the criteria for membership in that Covenant People, expanding it from a narrow tribal or ethnic concept of inheritance for which only Jews could qualify to one of Faith for which any properly-disposed person could qualify, regardless of nation, family, or background. The dual personal and corporate character of that Covenant membership remained, however, and remains to this day.

### **"... God the Father Almighty..."**

This first segment or phrase of the Apostles' Creed deals with *God the Father*, who is the First Person of the Holy Trinity. We expressly acknowledge Him as *God*, which recalls the First Commandment: "I am the Lord thy God; Thou shalt have none other gods but me"<sup>5</sup> and also the opening words of the

Lord's Prayer: "Our Father, *who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.*"<sup>6</sup> He is "Hallowed", or sacred, precisely because he is "Almighty" and the Creator. As we owe to Him our very existence, we owe to Him honor and worship to show our thanks for that existence.

In so acknowledging God as God, we are also implicitly acknowledging that the God we know is also the *only* God there is. This is why the final portion of the first Commandment directs that "Thou shalt have none other gods but me"<sup>7</sup> and the second Commandment forbids us to set up images of any other gods – or idols – for the purpose of worshipping them.<sup>8</sup>

The Nicene Creed, which expresses precisely the same Faith as does this Apostles' Creed, makes this even clearer: "I believe in *one* God the Father Almighty...."<sup>9</sup> So, too, does the Athanasian Creed: "But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one : the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal"<sup>10</sup> and "So the Father is God, the Son is God : and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods : but one God."<sup>11</sup>

By naming God as *Father*, the Creed expresses our relationship to Him as the close family relationship of parent to child. The Old Testament God was a distant, fearful figure, who might give orders, as when He directed Abraham to gather his entire family and travel to a distant, unknown country,<sup>12</sup> or who handed down severe judgements, as when He sent plagues upon the uncoöperative Egyptians.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to this distant, commanding Old Testament view of God, Jesus taught his disciples to pray to "Abba",<sup>14</sup> which is the Aramaic word for an ordinary father, almost the equivalent of "Daddy". Thus the Christian God, although the same as the Jewish God, was seen from a new and shatteringly more intimate perspective: not the distant, awe-inspiring judge

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.<sup>28</sup>

Traditionally the tithe is ten per cent. (10%) and we are to pay it on everything we receive, in money or in kind. Sometimes a person asks, "What am I to tithe on? My aunt left me a summer cottage, but that isn't income; so do I have to tithe on that?" Or one sometimes hears, "My Parish tithes to the Diocese but only on pledges and the open plate offering; we don't have to tithe on restricted or designated gifts."

The rule of tithing is very simple: whenever we receive something through God's providence, for which we thus owe Him thanks, we must tithe to Him 10% of the full value of what we received. Whenever we receive something by our own unaided efforts, in which God had no part and for which we owe Him not one particle of thanks, then we need not tithe on that thing.

Thus when the Vestry of one of our Parishes accepts a gift of a \$100 candlestick, it knows that in accepting that gift, it is also incurring an obligation to pay \$10 in tithe to its Diocese; after it pays that tithe, the Parish has still received a \$100 candlestick at a cost of only \$10. If this were not done, however, the Parish would be declaring to God that He had nothing to do with its receiving that candlestick. Then one would have to question whether a church could properly use in its worship utensils that had nothing to do with God and in the acquiring of which God had no hand.

However, if our hypothetical donor wishes to give that \$100 candlestick and not put the Parish to any charge, he can give the Parish \$111.11. Then the Vestry can pay \$11.11 in tithe to its Diocese and still have \$100.00 left over to buy the candlestick.<sup>29</sup> By doing this, both the donor and the Parish are acknowledging that the Parish owes thanks to God for every penny and every crumb that it receives.

*Tithes* are the “rent” we pay to God for what He has permitted us to use here on earth. Because we cannot pay them to God personally, we pay them to God’s representative here on earth. Thus Moses gave thanks for his victory over four kings at the Valley of Shaveh by paying the tithe of his war booty to Melchizedek, “the priest of the most high god”.<sup>25</sup> We are told in the New Testament that this same principle continues to apply to us under the New Covenant.<sup>26</sup> Since Christ’s Ascension, of course, God’s representative here on earth is the Church He founded and so it is that Church that receives our tithes on His behalf.

What must be stressed here is that the tithe obligation is a direct consequence of our spiritual relationship to God. It is *not* because God needs our meager offerings, for He most certainly does not:

I will not reprove thee because of thy sacrifices; as for thy burnt-offerings, they are always before me.

I will take no bullock out of thine house, no he-goats out of thy folds.

For all the beasts of the forest are mine, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills.

I know all the fowls upon the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are in my sight.

If I be hungry, I will not tell thee; for the whole world is mine, and all that therein is.

Thinkest thou that I will eat bulls’ flesh, and drink the blood of goats?

Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most Highest.<sup>27</sup>

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall show thy praise.

For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee; but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.

and commander but the head of the human family, ruling it in fatherly love.

In addition, by naming God as *Father*, it affirms that He is a *male* Person. As Genesis teaches us, all of the animal part of living creation is divided into two sexes, male and female. “So God created man[kind] in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”<sup>15</sup> “And the Lord said unto Noah, ... Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee ... the male and his female ... and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female ... to keep seed alive upon the face of the earth.”<sup>16</sup>

We are not told *why* God chose, in revealing Himself, so to identify Himself with this aspect of sexual differentiation, although biologists find that sexual reproduction provides significant benefits for maintaining the diversity of a species’ gene pool. Nevertheless, from observation as well as from revelation, we know that sex is a fact inescapably imbedded in all animal, including human, life, as well as in all higher plant life.

Thus, for God the Father to have a real Personhood, He must be either male or female. According to the way He has chosen to reveal Himself to us, He is male. Of course, this does not limit Him in the ways we ourselves are limited by our sexuality. He is, in a sense, beyond sexuality but He embraces it for our sakes.

It would be a mistake to suggest that God’s masculinity devalues females or femaleness in any way. God is, of course, equally the God of all women as He is of all men. Further, Scripture and the other records of human history are full of accounts of the wisdom, bravery, and accomplishments of women.<sup>17</sup> It is simply a fact we are required to accept that God the Father – and, indeed, each of the three Persons of the Trinity – chooses to have a male identity.

Thus to say, as some modern “Creeds” do, that “We believe in one God, the Father, Mother, or Creator Spirit”, is *not*

the same as what Christians have always said when each one of them says, “*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty...*”<sup>18</sup> Such “politically correct” changes, inspired as they are by the spirit of this age and not by the Holy Spirit, simply do not convey accurately the truths of the Christian Faith **as those truths have been revealed to us.**

While God has not given us His own reasons for this male character of the Godhead, there may be one hint in the fact that most of the pagan religions which surrounded the ancient Hebrews had female goddesses. Most of those goddesses were associated with fertility cults, were served by corps of priestesses, and their worship almost always involved promiscuous sexual activity. Many of God’s injunctions in the Old Testament either taught the Hebrews a morality higher than those of the peoples and cultures surrounding them or made them distinctively different from those peoples and cultures, or both.

Thus the male character of the godhead *may*, at least in part, be connected with that separation of God’s “chosen people” from its neighbors. (“May” is stressed because we do not know that for sure, as we would if it were a truth that had been revealed to us. Instead, it is only a rational speculation although a logical one. Thus it *may* be true but is not necessarily so; it is, however, consistent with what we know for certain to be true.)<sup>19</sup>

### **“Maker of heaven and earth....”**

The remainder of this phrase in the Creed, “... Maker of heaven and earth”, tells us that this is God *the Creator*. As we are told in Genesis, “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth”.<sup>20</sup> Thus *The Litany* refers to “God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth”.<sup>21</sup>

God is not merely a passive observer of human life; He is the originator and First Cause of *all* life, including ours. In the most literal sense, we owe God our very lives, and also owe Him everything in the universe that sustains and protects those

lives, let alone the things that make those lives enjoyable and fulfilling. This fact has at least three very important implications for our worship, our duties to the Church, and our duties toward the world.

Firstly, it imposes on us an obligation of constant thankfulness to God for these gifts, and makes the expression of that thankfulness the highest form of worship: “We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life....”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the central act of Christian worship has always been called “The Eucharist”, which is just the Greek word for “The Thanksgiving”.

It is precisely because God *is* the Creator of all things and because we *do* owe him unending praise and worship that He is entitled to make of us the statement and the demand that together form the First Commandment: “I am the Lord thy God; Thou shalt have none other gods but me.”<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, because we are obligated to God for all that supplies our needs and existence, we must expressly show our acknowledgement of that obligation. In effect, God is our landlord, giving us temporary use of this world, and we are His tenants.

If we rent a dwelling, a farm, or a place of business from a human landlord, we pay him rent for the use of his property. Every month in which we pay that rent constitutes an acknowledgement that he is the actual owner and that we are merely tenants of his. If we ever stop paying that rent and continue to occupy that property, we begin possessing that property adversely to its owner, becoming mere squatters whose occupancy denies the owner’s rights.

If we squat on another’s land for long enough, the law may actually recognize us as the owners by what is called a “prescriptive title”. To squat deliberately upon property we know to be another’s is a form of theft and God has told us expressly that to deny Him His tithes is to rob Him.<sup>24</sup>