

Christian Beliefs and Morals

1. THE APOSTLES' CREED

a. Introduction

- i. It is called Apostolic because it contains the accepted teachings of the apostolic church. There is a legend that the Apostles composed it on the first Pentecost Sunday.
- ii. It has its origin in an old baptismal confession associated with the church in Rome. Those wishing to become Christians were asked a series of questions such as "Do you believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth". This symbol was used as early as the 2nd century.
- iii. The present form of the creed goes back to the eight century and that is only slightly different from a creed found in the sixth century.

b. "I Believe..."

- i. The object of our belief is God and what God has done and is doing in the world.
- ii. Faith is God's gift; we cannot achieve it on our own.
- iii. Faith is also our personal decision and thus we can speak of it as a paradox similar to Paul's "I, yet not I but God in me."
- iv. Cranfield believes that our choice is not between God and no-God but between the Living God revealed in the Scripture and anything else which receives our ultimate allegiance and concern.
- v. True faith sets us free from what enslaves us.

- vi. Faith is also trust.
- vii. Faith is knowledge and understanding.
- viii. Faith is exclusive.
- ix. Faith is confessional, public in some way.
- x. Ultimately, faith is the source of true joy.
- c. "...in God, the Father almighty..."
 - i. God is the father of Jesus
 - ii. God the father is the 1st "Person" of the Trinity
 - 1. The word person does not mean a separate individual.
 - 2. God in his eternal being exists in three ways: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God has a threefold life. The One God is eternally Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - 3. Therefore God is eternally "love".
 - iii. Through God's gracious action those who believe in his son are also children of God. God is our Father as well.
 - iv. The Holy Spirit enables us to believe in Jesus and therefore to know that God is our father in heaven as well.
 - v. Calvin taught that we could not know whether God was the Father to all human beings but we could hope that this was the case.
 - vi. God is almighty
 - 1. His character limits his power.
 - 2. God cannot do what is unloving, unfaithful, unrighteous, or unmerciful.
 - 3. God limited himself when he created. God respects the orderliness of the universe and our freedom.

4. Almighty does mean that God will accomplish his ultimate purposes in the world.