

**THE SYMBOL IN SERMONS:  
A SERIES OF TWENTY-FIVE  
SHORT SERMONS ON THE  
ARTICLES OF THE CREED**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649252251

The symbol in sermons: a series of twenty-five short sermons on the articles of the Creed by Alexander MacDonald

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**ALEXANDER MACDONALD**

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BDU - 5172

THE  
SYMBOL IN SERMONS



A SERIES OF TWENTY-FIVE SHORT SERMONS  
ON THE ARTICLES OF THE CREED

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A COMPANION VOLUME  
TO  
THE SYMBOL OF THE APOSTLES

BY

THE VERY REV. ALEX. MACDONALD, D.D.  
*Vicar-General of the Diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia*



NEW YORK

CHRISTIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION PUBLISHING COMPANY

26 BARCLAY STREET

1903

63469

**Nihil Obstat.**

REMGIUS LAFORT, S.T.L.,  
*Censor.*

**Imprimatur.**

✠ JOHN M. FARLEY, D.D.,  
*Archbishop of New York.*

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## CONTENTS.

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THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED.	
SERMON	PAGE
I. Faith.....	13
II. Faith.....	22
III. God, His Existence.....	30
IV. God, His Existence.....	42
V. God, His Being and Attributes.....	51
VI. God, His Being and Attributes.....	61
SECOND AND THIRD ARTICLES OF THE CREED.	
VII. "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary".....	69
VIII. The Trinity.....	76
IX. The Incarnation.....	83
X. The Incarnation.....	91
FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.	
XI. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried : He descended into hell.".....	100
FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.	
XII. "The third day He arose again from the dead.".....	108

CONTENTS.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH ARTICLES OF THE CREED.

SERMON	PAGE
XIII. "He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty".....	116

EIGHTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

XIV. "Whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.".....	123
--	-----

NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

XV. "I believe in the Holy Ghost.".....	133
---	-----

TENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

XVI. "I believe in the holy Catholic Church,".....	142
XVII. The Church.....	151
XVIII. The Church.....	159
XIX. The True Church.....	167
XX. The True Church.....	175
XXI. "The communion of saints.".....	182

ELEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

XXII. "The forgiveness of sins" (Feast of our Lady of Sorrows).....	188
XXIII. "The forgiveness of sins.".....	192

TWELFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

XXIV. "The resurrection of the body.".....	200
XXV. "And the life everlasting.".....	207



# THE SYMBOL IN SERMONS.

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## I.

### “I BELIEVE.”

INTRODUCTION. Two things necessary to salvation, to believe and to do. Faith comes first, good works follow. The sum of our faith in the Creed.

1. Faith the root of the spiritual life. St. Paul defines for us what faith is. Two ways of coming to a knowledge of truth, seeing and believing. Two kinds of faith, human and divine. How God speaks to us.
2. The unseen the formal object of faith. No assent without a rational motive. The motive of belief is testimony. Testimony human and divine.
3. Faith above nature for two reasons. Three orders of divinely revealed truths, the highest being mysteries.

Conclusion. Faith a precious possession: let us thank God for it.

To believe and to do, these are the two things needful to salvation—to believe what God teaches, to do what God commands. And as the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, is the sum of our duty to God and our neighbor,

### SERMON FIRST.

the sum of what we are bound to do, so the Creed is the sum of our faith, of what we are bound to believe. Faith comes first; duty, conduct, good works come after. It is the fashion nowadays with those whose forefathers held faith to be the one thing needful, to put conduct before faith, so that it has become almost an axiom with them that it matters little what man believes if only he does what is right. But it is written that "without faith it is impossible to please God," and that the "just man liveth by faith." The two must go together, but in the order named, faith first, and then conduct; for the works which avail unto salvation are such only as are good in God's eyes, pleasing in His sight, and we have His own word for it that they cannot be so unless they rest on the foundation of faith.

Faith then is the basis of Christian conduct, the root of the spiritual life, the germ which God plants in the soul to bear fruit unto life everlasting. And, as I have said, the sum of our faith is in the Creed. The whole body of Christian doctrine grows, as it were, out of the germinal truths that are there briefly set forth.

#### ARTICLE FIRST.

The Creed is the depository of our faith, a storehouse of divine knowledge, a rich mine from which have been brought forth the priceless gems of truth which deck the brow of Christ's holy Spouse, the Church of God on earth.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," such is the first article of the Apostles' Creed. We will begin at the beginning. What is it we mean when we repeat these first words of the Creed, "I believe?" We mean to make an act of faith in all that follows. And what is faith? Faith, St. Paul tells us, is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." To understand this, we must bear in mind that faith is a source of knowledge, a means of knowing the truth. Now there are two ways in which we may know the truth; by seeing it with the light of our own reason and for ourselves, and by learning it from those who know it and who can be trusted not to deceive us. There are some things which we can find out for ourselves, either because they are self-evident, as that the sun is in the sky, and that the