

**'I BELIEVE'; OR, THE APOSTLES'
AND NICENE CREEDS
CONSIDERED IN MEDITATION,
AND APPROPRIATED IN
DEVOTION AND PRAISE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649025527

'I Believe'; Or, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds Considered in Meditation, and Appropriated in Devotion and Praise by J. W. Morris

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

J. W. MORRIS

**'I BELIEVE'; OR, THE APOSTLES'
AND NICENE CREEDS
CONSIDERED IN MEDITATION,
AND APPROPRIATED IN
DEVOTION AND PRAISE**

'I BELIEVE;'

OR,

THE APOSTLES' AND NICENE CREEDS
CONSIDERED IN MEDITATION,

AND

APPROPRIATED IN DEVOTION AND PRAISE.

BY

J. W. MORRIS, F.L.S.

With an Introduction

BY

THE REV. T. D. BERNARD, M.A.

CANON OF WELLS, RECTOR OF WALCOT, ETC.



HATCHARDS, PICCADILLY.

1878.

125 ; 482.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS little book needs no introduction, certainly none from another hand than its author's: but things not needed are sometimes desired; and in this instance, a request from a quarter which has claims on my compliance, has also an attraction of its own, in offering me the pleasure of some slight association in a work which engages my sympathies.

The book is intended to illustrate and assist the use of the Creed in private meditation and devotion, and it is this general purpose which is the proper subject of a preface. Writing then, not as a sponsor who recommends, or as a critic who estimates the work of another, but as a contributor who takes a share in it, I

thankful for the occasion of saying something on the various uses of the Creed, and particularly of this present use of it.

If a special Divine guidance is anywhere to be recognised in the life of the Church, it must be in this concentrated utterance of the faith which has the witness of its authority in its instinctive adoption, and universal and perpetual use by the whole of Christendom. We may note the tokens of this guidance, in its limitation to fundamentals, the selection and orderly sequence of its Articles, the firm hold in its central portion on historic fact, the grand range of its ideas, its condensation and distinctness, its gravity, brevity, simplicity. But the thing now to be observed is the great variety of uses for which these characteristics have fitted it in the life of the Christian Church, and in the experience of the Christian man.

Let any one consider with how many kinds of special intention he may rehearse the Creed, and consequently what varying shades of character it may assume. It may be used as an

expression of certainty, riveting and ratifying personal conviction; as a guarantee to the Church of participation in its faith given by a candidate for baptism; as the common voice of the congregation asserting its ground of union and bond of fellowship; as an authoritative record and publication to the world of the Articles of the Christian faith; as an unchanging protest against misbelief and heresy; as an act of worship and solemn confession before God; as a guide to meditation and framework for devout exercises; as a joyful recital of glorious truths in the spirit of a hymn of praise.

It is more particularly in the two last aspects that the use of the Creed is here advocated and presented. There is nothing in this which can even seem to be factitious. What indeed can be more natural and fit, if the Articles of a Christian's faith be not a mere string of opinions but a scheme of truths which by their very nature should enter into the recesses of his being, and form the groundwork of his habits of

thought? For it is evident that this their proper effect is both expressed and assisted by reviewing them, arraying them before the mind, dwelling upon them separately, connecting them in their orderly succession, uniting them by their mutual relations, drawing out what they imply, following out what they suggest, submitting the conscience to their appeals, and making them starting-points for communion with God and the ascension of heart and mind towards heaven.

Such spiritual exercises conducted in solitude, may, after all, be more conducive to profit than the 'addresses' and 'conferences' with which we are now so familiar, and by which there is some danger of their being supplanted. The entering into closets and shutting of doors may have become somewhat strange to the religious temper of our day; but if it be useful to hearken where there is a crowd, it is also useful to retire where one can be still; and if impression and contagion count for something in spiritual life, so also do recollection and meditation: and perhaps that which is done *by* us

will in the long run assert its own advantages over that which is done *to* us, as being more intimate, more permanent, and more certainly real. Books, therefore, which suppose such exercises, which are the product of them, and are meant to minister to them, are, so far, recommended by their general character and design, and they will be welcome to particular minds as suiting them first in the line which they take and then in their manner of treating it. Of the latter of these points the reader must be left to judge, but the line which is here taken is a proper subject of remark.

As a line of direction for meditation and devotion there is perhaps nothing comparable to the Creed.

The 'I believe,' which underlies every one of its words, places the mind at once in its true relation to the successive subjects of reflection. We are in the region of faith, as distinguished from sense, or demonstration, or speculation. We have done with argument, inquiry, and debate; and now with a firm footing and with

assured composure we rest on the ground of revelation, which is the word of God. In the same expression we speak each for himself, affirming an individual apprehension and personal appropriation of the truths recited; while we also intend in the word 'believe' a moral force which is in its proper nature the motive power of life. The opening word has thus given the true point of view, and the right temper of mind for healthy and profitable meditation.

Then follow the subjects of such meditation in a connected series, and distinguished under the three divisions which the common printing of the Creed presents: First, the faith in God, the broad foundation truth of all religion, as it is confirmed and defined by revelation; then the faith in the Son of God manifested for us, in the successive steps of that human history through which he redeemed the world; then the faith in the Holy Ghost, and in the dispensation of the Spirit, which is the consequence of redemption, including first the life of the Church