

**THE HISTORIC FAITH:
SHORT LECTURES ON
THE APOSTLES' CREED**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649603237

The Historic Faith: Short Lectures on the Apostles' Creed by Brooke Foss Westcott

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

BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT

**THE HISTORIC FAITH:
SHORT LECTURES ON
THE APOSTLES' CREED**



THE HISTORIC FAITH:

SHORT LECTURES

ON

THE APOSTLES' CREED

BY

BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT, D.D., D.C.L.,

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, AND FELLOW OF
KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.



London and Cambridge:
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1883

The Right of Translation is reserved.

Cambridge:

**PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A. & SON,
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.**

PRINTED BY
C. J. CLAY, M.A. & SON,
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS,
CAMBRIDGE.

St. Andrews Church
4-28-47

PREFACE.

THE following Lectures, with the exception of the last, were delivered in the course of my residence at Peterborough in the Summer of 1880. They are now published in fulfilment of a promise made to some who heard them. It was my object to shew the direct bearing of the different articles of our Historic Faith upon our view of the world and of life. For this purpose the form of devotional instruction has many advantages. In this kind of teaching it is impossible to forget the practical issues of belief. The loftiest thoughts necessarily assume the character of motives or guides to action. There is no fear lest the Creed should appear to be merely a collection of propositions leading to certain intellectual consequences. It is felt to be the inspiration of duty. The facts of the Divine Life reach with a present force to all life: they reach to our life.

I have assumed as the basis of my exposition

w.

b

that the Creed is accepted as true in the full form which is current in the Western Church. These things, I presuppose, we believe; it remains to consider the present meaning and effects of our belief. Starting therefore from the familiar text I have endeavoured to determine the relations of the different sections of the Creed to one another, and the significance of the separate clauses. In doing this I have sought to meet the wants of those who without technical knowledge are willing to give to the great problems of life which the Creed illuminates that careful and sustained thought which their paramount importance demands. To settle them by a peremptory effort is to sacrifice the blessing of mental discipline and the growing strength which comes from the realised consciousness that the first Gospel has an answer to our latest questionings.

But while I have had in view a popular treatment of the subject I trust that anyone who wishes to follow out in detail the topics which are touched upon will find that the arrangement which has been followed will give a convenient outline for study. For the sake of such readers I have added a few notes which deal with some points more fully than the limits of the Lectures allowed, and also suggest some lines of enquiry which my experience has shewn me to be fruitful.

There can be little doubt that the Apostles' Creed in its main substance represents the Baptismal Confession of the middle of the second century. But as such it assumes the fact of communion with the Christian Body. It does not therefore contain any articles in regard to the Institutions through which the divine facts set forth in it are brought home to men. The doctrine of the Sacraments and the doctrine of Church organization are implied as matters of experience, and not formulated. The fulness of the life of the Society is recognised as flowing from the Holy Spirit, but nothing is defined as to the exact modes of His operation.

There is an equal absence from the Creed of all statements of abstract dogma. Nothing that is subjective finds a place in it. It is silent on the theory of justification. It has not even received as an addition the key-word of the Council of Nicæa, 'of one substance (essence) with the Father,' which later controversies made necessary for the interpretation of the Faith.

On both grounds it is impossible that the Apostles' Creed should supersede the special Confessions of particular Christian societies, while it underlies them. But though it cannot be taken in itself as a complete expression of what we hold in regard to the facts of our Faith, it brings before

us those facts in their simple majesty, and encourages us day by day to bring our interpretations of them to the test of the whole historic Gospel for the guidance of our own lives. The same abstract statements cannot always convey the same meaning.

Each age, each Church, each believer, will indeed read in the record of the historic Creed of Christendom a peculiar message. We learn its power by listening to its message to ourselves. The voice which we can hear now has been made audible to us first; and answering to this is the special work which is committed to our accomplishment.

It has been my desire to indicate what seem to me to be our obligations in asserting and extending the claims of the Faith, as calling to its service not one class of virtues or one type of character or one type of work, but all virtues, all characters and all works in the fulness of their distinctive energies, and according to the forms of their most effective operation. Looking with open eyes upon the facts which we believe and upon the manifold life in which they have been embodied through the ages, with due regard to the authority of the Society and the adequate fulfilment, by the Spirit's help, of his personal duty, 'let each man be fully convinced in his own mind'

and bring the offering of himself to God. Meanwhile if any thought which is suggested here is allowed to make more clear the living force with which our Faith deals with the doubts, the difficulties, the speculations, the hopes of to-day; to inspire one fellow-worker with a new confidence in maintaining a conflict where each victory must disclose fresh fields to conquer; to suggest that more than one controversy which troubles and divides us turns on topics which we have no faculties to discuss: that will be a full reward for anxious reflection. No one, I think, would venture to speak on such things, unless he looked back to the charge which has been committed to him.

If our prayers need the purifying grace of the Spirit, what shall we say of our attempts to set forth the mysteries—the revelations—of the Gospel? *Brethren, pray for us.*

B. F. W.

BRAEMAR,

Sept. 23, 1882.