

CREEDS

As a young child being reared in denominationalism, this writer clearly recalls the practice in worship of the recitation of creeds. Those assembled would recite various creeds, particularly the so-called “Apostles’ Creed.” Of course, one would assume that a creed called the Apostles’ Creed would have been instituted by the apostles. However, the Apostles’ Creed in its actual form was not framed until at least 300 years after the death of the last apostle, although other supposedly Christian creeds had been written as early as the second century AD.

What is the purpose of a creed? A creed is defined as “a formal statement of religious belief.” A creed is designed by a particular religious group in order to make clear what it is they believe and to define parameters of what is acceptable doctrine. Virtually all denominations have creeds by which they abide, although many of the “lay members” may not be aware of their own creeds. However, their creeds dictate what they are taught from their pulpits and in their classrooms. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia attempts to justify creeds by saying, “In the Protestant system the creed is not to coordinate with, but always subordinate to, the Bible.” But the Protestant denominations which fled from Roman Catholicism and its binding of human tradition fell into the same trap when they decided to base faith upon anything other than the Bible alone.

Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into “all truth” (John 16:13) and through the apostles gave to man “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). When men adopt a creed, they accept that which is different from the Bible. Either a creed will have less than the Bible, more than the Bible, or the same as the Bible. What Christ gave is completely sufficient; but if one accepts a - creed which is less than the Bible, he no longer has that which is sufficient as his guide (Psalm 119:105, 130; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). If one accepts a creed which is more than the Bible, he has added to the word of God and brought himself under a curse (Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19). If one accepts a creed which is the same as the Bible, someone has wasted his time in trying to write a creed.

A curse awaits any who bring a doctrine different from the Bible (Galatians 1:6-9), yet creeds are intrinsically different from the Bible. The doctrine which Christ gave us is our only acceptable system of belief (2 John 9-10). Creeds deny that all can understand the Bible alike, or at least admit that those who adhere to their particular creed cannot understand it alike without being given a standard that supersedes the word of God. We cannot accept the beliefs of any man as our authority. Only the word of God is “able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32), and only by this word will one be judged (John 12:48).

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MEDIOCRE “CHRISTIANITY”?

In this modern period of time, the average person places emphasis upon convenience, comfort, and that, which brings pleasure. The term “creature comfort” is frequently expressed. Waiting for the right time causes many to hesitate in making a needed decision. Satan delights when a person procrastinates in making a needed commitment. When the Apostle Paul was taken as a prisoner to Caesarea, he had several opportunities to speak unto the governor Felix. The scripture reveals that on one such occasion “...Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned for righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:24-25). . It was probably at that moment he was most affected by the gospel. There is not any indication that Felix ever obeyed the gospel. We learn in the very next verse that he hoped to obtain money from Paul and so met with him on several occasions. For his eternal welfare Felix should have obeyed the gospel of Christ when he was convicted of his sins that caused him to tremble.

There are religious people today that never darken the doors of a church building except on special holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Some only attend on the Sunday that the date for Easter comes in order to parade their new wardrobe. These man-made religious holidays mean more to them than the Lord’s Day (Rev. 1:10). The Lord’s Day is the first day of the week when Christians are to partake of the communion and to lay by in store (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2). Even during the first century, there were some brethren who were indifferent to assembling with the saints. They were so neglectful that they were in danger of losing their soul (Heb. 10:24-27). The Christian life requires 100% of our participation. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:24-26).

Dub Mowery, Pritchett, TX

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Many younger readers may never have heard of Sir Douglas Bader. He was a flying ace during the Battle of Britain in 1940 who was credited with shooting down some thirty enemy aircraft. Even if you have heard of him you might not know that he did this without legs!

Douglas Bader was born in 1910. In 1930 he graduated from the Royal Air Force College at Cranwell and he became an officer in the RAF. On 14 December 1931 after over 500 hours of solo flying his British Bulldog fighter crashed when flying low and a wing hit the ground. He survived the crash and was taken to Roehampton Hospital, even then famous for its work with amputees. That night his right leg was amputated above the knee and his left leg amputated a few days later. Bader's sheer guts and determination enabled him to learn to walk again. Effectively, that was the end of his career in the RAF and he was invalided out of the RAF, he became a clerk with the Asiatic Petroleum Company.

However, when war was declared with Germany in 1939, through his persistence and "friends in high places" he was able to rejoin the RAF as a pilot. The shortage of experienced pilots and his own determination overcame resistance within the RAF hierarchy. Eventually he was given medical approval to resume flying and was assigned to a Squadron. He took part in the operation to evacuate British forces from Dunkirk, during which he made his first kill – a Messerschmitt 109. This was followed by his great work in protecting the skies over England during the Battle of Britain.

In 1941 while flying missions over France, Bader's plane was hit and he was forced to bail out. However, one of his artificial legs got caught in the cockpit. This probably saved his life as he was able to release the leg and open his parachute. Can you image what the French who saw him land thought when he came down with one leg and then to find out that the leg he had was artificial! Soon after he was taken captive by the Germans and placed in a prisoner of war camp. His exploits while flying were well known to the German Luftwaffe. One of the generals was able to get a message through to the British asking that they drop replacement legs for him. Winston Churchill agreed and on one bombing mission, the legs were dropped before the bomber reached its target for dropping its load of bombs.

From the point of view of the Germans, getting Bader new legs was the worst thing that they could have done! With his new legs, Bader was able to escape four times from POW camps. Eventually, the Germans transferred him to the notorious Colditz Camp and confiscated his legs!

Isn't it amazing what people will do when they have the grit and determination, in spite of all the odds being stack against then! David against Goliath is a wonderful example as is Gideon with his army of 300 against all the host of the enemy.

"For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and who has cancer, Maomi Aaron's sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Our sympathy goes to Rachel Fitzpatrick on the passing of her stepfather's sister. Services were held last Sunday in Bishopsville, SC thus she was unable to be with us. Also, Rachel called Saturday afternoon to let us know that her Aunt Eula Baker had passed away and she was on her way to her mother at Greenwood. No funeral arrangements have yet been made. Let us be sure to keep Rachel and her family in our prayers at this time.

Maomi Aaron is having some health issues at this time and has asked for prayers.

A DEFENCED CITY

"For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee" (Jer. 1:18-19).

As a Christian and a preacher of the gospel I have always admired the prophet Jeremiah. He was God's man in a city and a nation headed for **divine judgment**. He suffered much, was persecuted and knew deep frustration but he never wavered from his determination to do the will of God. That was his assignment from his true King. Likewise, brethren, God has placed us in society headed for divine judgment. The forces of ungodliness and hedonism are having a field day in America. **The twin evils** of religious liberalism and compromise are wrecking havoc among the churches of Christ. At times it may seem overwhelming but we must remain *"Faithful and True"* (Rev.19:11). Like the prophet of 2,600 years ago we must be "a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls" against the forces of darkness in our land **with love** in our hearts and **malice toward none**. **We** must continue to proclaim the Truth and live it. Not an easy task among an unbelieving people! Like Jeremiah, we must realize who we serve and His promise to us, *"and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world"* (Matt.28:20).

*Roelf Ruffner
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