

Draft notes on early Church rites and the Creed

Author: Isaac Newton

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As for {the} rites, & ceremonies of the churches of the first ages there was very great variety. in them These things being indifferent in their nature the Apostles left the churches at liberty about them, & every Church set her self such rules as she thought fit. For Socrates & Sozomen relate at large that in their days & long before there was great variety in the times of keeping Easter & Lent, & in the number of weeks & days in the week in which they fasted in Lent & in the sorts of meat from which they abstained in fasting, & as great variety in the Collects, & times of celebrating the Eucharist & in other circumstances of worship so that to put in writing all the rites which were variously observed by the Churches in every city & province, saith Socrates, would be very difficult or rather impossible. And yet the Churches kept in communion with one another notwithstanding all these differences. Men might vary in rites & ceremonies, They might vary in opinions not necessary to Baptism. The union of the Church consisted in one faith. By one baptism into that faith, men were admitted into one church & continued in it by living according to that faith.

Also auricular confession & penance began to be in use soon after the persecution of Decius & were in use in almost all the Churches in the latter end of the 4th century untill a matron in doing penance in a Church at Constantine was defiled by a Deacon & by confessing the crime brought a reflexion upon that Church, & thereupon Nectarius the Bishop of Constantinople abolished Confessors in that city, & several other bishops followed his example in other cities.

Lucian the Martyr who suffered at Antioch in the 10th persecution A.C. 312 left a creed in writing which was subscribed by the Council of Antioch A.C. 341 & again by the Council of Seleucia A.C. 359 & is as follows. Credimus

We are not commanded in scripture to worship him as God Almighty (for by the first commandment we are to have no other Gods in our worship then him who according to the fourth Commandment made heaven & earth & the Sea) but we are to worship him & give him honour & glory in respect of his humanity. Because he humbled himself to death even the death of the cross therefore God hath highly exalted him & given him a name above every name that at the name of Iesus every kne should bow, of things in heaven & earth & under the earth & that every tongue should confess that Iesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father. We are therefore to bow to him as the Lord Iesus Christ the Prince of the kings of the earth. Vnto him that loved us & washed us from our sins in his own blood & hath made us

kings and Priests unto God even his father to him be glory & dominion for ever & ever. We are to worship him give him glory as the Lamb of God who was slain for us

In all our prayers we must have but one God and one Mediator between God & man the man Christ Jesus .. 2 In that day saith he ye shall ask me nothing, whatsoever ye shall {ask} the father in my name he will do it for you. 3 If we would have our petitions granted we must not neglect the mediatorship of the man Christ Jesus. By the first commandment we are to have no other Gods then that God who according to the fourth commandment made heaven & earth, but we not forbidden to have a mediator between God and Man the Man Christ Jesus, we are not forbidden to have him for our Lord & King or to give him that worship & honour & glory which is due to him on that account. The Jews who were taught to worship but one God were also taught to expect a king & the Christians are taught to worship the same God & to beleive that Jesus is that King. For they are to beleive in one God the father Almighty the maker of heaven & earth & in one Lord Jesus Christ. And if he is their lord & king they may certainly without idolatry give him that worship which is due to him as their Lord & king & it is their duty to give him such worship; not the worship of an ordinary king but that which is due to him as the king of kings & Lord of Lords, the supreme king over all the creation next under God Almighty, the King who sits at the right hand of God the father & is therefore next to him in glory, the Lamb of God whose eyes are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth & who alone of all beings in heaven & earth & under the earth was worthy to receive the book of prophesy from the right hand of God the father & whose testimony is the spirit of prophesy & who is therefore called faithfull & true witness & the word of God, that is, his Oracle <1v> the express image or oracle of the invisible God, [in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily,] whose testimony is the spirit of prohesy & who is therefore called the faithful & true witness & the Word of God. To this great king, this visible image of the invisible we are to give suitable worship. We are not to worship him as the God Almighty who created the heaven & earth, (This would be to deny the father and the Son) but we are to worship {him} as the redeemer of the world the Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah , the Prince the mediator between God & man the man Christ Jesus.

Thus the Creed in describing the persons of the father & Son directs what worship we are to give to each. We must worship the father as God, the Son as Lord & Christ the father as the father almighty the first author of all things who hath life & all knowledge & power in himself originally & cannot dye the Son as the son of God who hath received life and knowledge & power from the will of the father & was slain & exalted to the right hand of God

of things in heaven & earth & under the earth & every tongue confess that Iesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father. All the worship which we are directed in scripture to give to Iesus Christ, respects his death & exaltation to the right hand of God & is given to him as Lord & King & tends to the glory of God the father. Should we give the Father that worship which is due to the Son we should be Patripassians & should we give the Son that worship which is due to the father as God the father Almighty the creator of heaven & earth our worship would not tend to the glory of God the father but injure him & we should be Idolaters & in both cases we should practically deny the father and the Son. We must be careful therefore to give to each his proper worship, such a worship as is suitable to the character given to each in the primitive Creed, & then we are safe. We may give blessing & honour & glory & power unto God & the Lamb but it must be in different respects, to God as he is the father Almighty who created all things & to the Lamb as he was slain for us & washed away our sins in his own blood & for humbling himself is now exalted to the right hand of God the Father.

Iesus Christ shall come to judge the quick & the dead – He comes to judgement not from the right hand of God but from heaven. For he sits at the right hand of God not only in this world but also in that which is to come untill all enemies shall be put under his feet. And this we must beleive that we may pray for the coming of his kingdom

The article whose kingdom shall have no end is equipollent to the article of life everlasting in the Creeds of the Latines, exprest in the scriptures of both old & new testament, prayed for in the Lords prayer, expected by Christians as the reward of a good life & not liable to be disputed.

M^{rs} Barton failing me off the payment off the five hundred pounds; if you woud be pleased to pay the money or take the assignement off the Morgage it woud be a great convenience to me; as you know that the title is undoubtdly very good; I will waite on you any time to day, if you will name the time.

Sir

March the 4th

I am your humble Servant

Geo: Watson

The article whose kingdom shall have no end is [expresly in all the Creeds but it is implied in the article life everlasting &] is exprest in the old & new Testament & in most of the Creeds & implied in others in the articles life everlasting & everlasting punishment & is generally received without any dispute.