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A table of contents for the *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_ajet-02.php

CONFESSING CHRIST IN THE APOSTLES' CREED¹

Eshetu Abate

Before we examine the confession of Christ in the Apostles' Creed, we need to consider the creed itself.

A. THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Apostles' Creed is the shortest of the three ecumenical creeds which have reached us from the ancient church. Through the message of its content, it has touched the lives of innumerable men and women throughout the centuries. As a result some have even called it the "Bible in miniature." The great reformer of the sixteenth century Martin Luther said the following concerning it while delivering a sermon:

This confession we did not devise, nor did the fathers of former times. As the bee collects honey from many fair and gay flowers, so is this Creed collected, in appropriate brevity, from the books of the beloved prophets and apostles --from the entire holy Scriptures. It is fittingly called the "Apostles' Symbol" or "Apostles' Creed." For brevity and clearness it could not have been better arranged, and it has remained in the church from the ancient time. It must either have been composed by the apostles themselves or it was collected from their writings and sermons by their ablest disciples.²

In 1537, in order to bear witness to his opponents that he held "to the real Christian church", which until then had preserved the three Symbols or Creeds, he issued a short pamphlet entitled "The Three Symbols or Creeds of the Christian Faith." There Luther remarked: "The first Symbol, that of the Apostles, is truly the finest of all. Briefly, correctly, and in a splendid way it summarizes the articles of faith."³

The above assessment by the Reformer would suffice in witness to the value and nature of the Apostles' Creed. As correctly evaluated it is brief and biblical. What about its origin and usage?

Until the fifteenth century the Apostles' Creed was taken to have come from the Apostles. This is based on a tradition which is believed to

have been in existence at the latest from the fourth century. The tradition as recorded by Tyrannius Rufinus (AD 345-410) says:

As the [Apostles] were therefore on the point of taking leave of each other, they first settled an agreed norm for their future preaching, so that they might not find themselves, widely separated as they would be, giving out different doctrines to the people they invited to believe in Christ. So they met together in one spot and, being filled with the Holy Spirit, compiled their brief token, as I have said, of their future preaching, each making the contribution he thought fit; and they decreed that it should be handed out as standard teaching to believers.⁴

The above description of Rufinus may well be a remote and exaggerated report of a fact which might have actually happened as we shall see below.

Since the work of Laurentius Valla (AD 1404\5-1457), a propagator of Renaissance ideas in the fifteenth century, the above testimony of Rufinus has been taken to be legendary and false.⁵ Under the influence of the Renaissance and Humanism, as exemplified by Valla, it has been the legacy of the western mind to doubt and criticize whatever had been handed down from the ancients, including the Holy Scriptures. However, we have to weigh the conclusions of such scepticism very cautiously as the perverted reason naturally is an ally neither of faith, nor of the truth connected with it. By this I do not mean that we have blindly to support the ancients and their traditions no matter what the evidences of our investigations demonstrate. Rather we have to weigh carefully the results to determine whether they are conclusive in disproving a tradition that has been received for over fifteen centuries. Any evidence, whether internal or external, which supports the tradition, which locates the origin of the Apostles' Creed in the Apostolic circles, is a plus for the claim of the tradition. Let us review the available evidence to this end.

First of all, there is hardly any scholar who doubts the apostolic authenticity of the Apostles' Creed as to its content. All of its assertions are biblical and can be supported by the Apostolic teachings and preachings in the NT documents. This is a plus for the tradition and needs no further elaboration.

More than this, however, there are external evidences that would point to the fact that the Creed in its basic form may go back substantially to the Apostolic circles and their environment. It may be that the declaratory form of the Apostles' Creed known to us is from the fourth, or fifth or even eighth century. However, there are creeds substantially the same as the Apostles' Creed which go back to the second and third century, which were believed by the whole church to have come from the Apostles.

Among these creeds is found what is known as the "Rule of Faith." Before stating the content of the "Rule of Faith", Irenaeus (c. AD 190) prefixes the following comment: "The church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith." After that Irenaeus presents his version of the "Rule of Faith" in the following words:

(The church believes) in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father.⁶

Tertullian (c. AD 200) for his part gives the following version of the "Rule of Faith," which he says "has come down from the beginning of the Gospel":

We . . . believe in one only God, yet subject to this dispensation that the one only God has also a Son, his Word who has proceeded from himself, by whom all things were made and without whom nothing has been made: that this [Son] was sent by the Father into the virgin and was born of her both man and God, Son of man and Son of God, and was named Jesus Christ: that he suffered, died, and was buried, according to the Scriptures, and having been raised up by the Father and taken back into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father and will come to judge the quick and the dead: and that thereafter he, according to his promise, sent from the Father the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁷

Whether both Irenaeus and Tertullian reproduced the "Rule of Faith" exactly, or made a free reproduction is not very clear, but from the context and the manner of writing it seems to be a free reproduction. In spite of this we can see that there is a considerable similarity between the "Rule of Faith" as presented by Irenaeus or by Tertullian and the Apostles' Creed as we have it, as to both form and substance. This similarity is not to be taken lightly.

If one can claim apostolic origin for the "Rule of Faith," as both Irenaeus and Tertullian assume, there is no reason that the Creed which is almost identical with it in its main substance could not also be apostolic. In fact the difference between the "Rule of Faith" and the Apostles'

Creed seems to reflect only local variations.⁸ While the Apostles' Creed is a Roman creed based on the old Roman Symbol, the "Rule of Faith" was the same Creed with some variations according to locality. In his commentary on the Apostles' Creed, Tyrannius Rufinus confirms this fact when he writes:

I think it appropriate to mention that certain additions are to be found in this article in some churches. No such development, however, can be detected in the case of the church of the city of Rome. . . . The ancient custom is maintained there whereby candidates who are on the point of receiving the grace of baptism deliver the creed publicly, in the hearing of the congregation of the faithful. As a result, since those who have preceded them in the faith are listening attentively, the interpolation of even a simple article is not tolerated.⁹

If this is the case, we can believe that the Apostles' Creed as we have it today can be traced ultimately to the pure Roman Symbol, which in turn as the "Rule of Faith" was of apostolic origin, as Irenaeus and Tertullian testify.

Another evidence which points to the apostolic origin of the Apostles' Creed is the setting of the interrogatory creed contained in the so-called "Apostolic Tradition" of Hippolytus. This interrogatory creed of Hippolytus (c. AD 215) is found as an integral part of the baptismal rite which was derived from the rite of Jewish proselytes.¹⁰ Not only the baptismal rite but also the Eucharist as well as the Agape rites in Hippolytus were equally Judaic. As Dix puts it, "there is scarcely one element in the cultus as described by Hippolytus for which clear Jewish parallels cannot be found."¹¹

If this is the case, where would such a concentration of Jewish Christians be found, who might have developed this statement which contains the Creed on the model of proselyte baptism? Clearly this evidence points to an early date and to the Jerusalem church. The existence of the Creed within such manifestly Jewish clothing is a major plus for the claim of the tradition.

The fact that we cannot point to a specific date of composition for the Apostles' Creed as we can for the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed, also supports the statement of Tertullian that the Creed emerged from the "beginning of the gospel."

On the basis of the above evidences we believe that the Creed initially originated in the Apostolic circles and finally reached its present form, in the process leaving several local variations. Assuming then the Apostolic origin of the Creed, we will now proceed to consider the Christological confession of that Creed.

B. THE CHRIST CONFESSED IN THE APOSTLES' CREED

The confession about Jesus Christ is found in the Second Article of the Creed. In reality the second article should have been given the first place, because our understanding of the first and third articles as well as the whole of our Christian faith depends in our correct understanding of its content. Karl Barth while describing the Second Article wrote: "Whether a sermon and proclamation in word or writing have rightly or wrongly a place in the Christian church is decided by their relationship to the second article."¹²

The second article is saturated with Christological designations. Every word and phrase is saturated with Christ and his deeds. Let us consider some of the principal phrases.

And I believe in Jesus . . .: The name "Jesus" is an anglicized form of the Septuagint rendering for the Hebrew "Yeshua." In the first instance the name "Jesus" is an expression of his humanity. There were many others who bore the name "Jesus" both in the time of our Lord and even up to the beginning of the second century AD.¹³ In order to distinguish the "Jesus" of the Gospel from others, the Gospels sometimes used adjectives such as "from Nazareth of Galilee" or "Nazarene" (Mt 21:11; Mk 10:47; Jn 1:45). After the beginning of the second century AD the name "Jesus" seems to have been consciously avoided by other persons and was retained only for our Lord.¹⁴

The name "Jesus" is much more than a mere expression of his humanity. It was not an accident that both Matthew and Luke write in the annunciation "and you shall call his name Jesus . . . for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21; Lk 1:31). It was a name chosen from above and sent through a messenger. This is all the more signified when we investigate the roots for the name "Jesus." The Hebrew form of the name "Jesus" represents a form of the divine name Yahweh together with a subsidiary form of the Hebrew verb which means "to save," or "to help." If we put together the two parts, the root could be rendered as "Yahweh saves or helps." Thus "Jesus" means "Yahweh saves."

The connection of the name "Jesus" with "Yahweh" even in its root form cannot be taken lightly. It directs us to the fact that Jesus himself is Yahweh, that is, Yahweh who saves. This unity of Jesus with Yahweh (though not in person) speaks against those who teach that Jesus is somewhat inferior to Yahweh, the Creator. I believe in . . . Christ: The Greek title "Christos," which later became a proper name for Jesus, is equivalent to the Hebrew "Mashiach," which means "the anointed one." We know that in the OT times priests, prophets and kings were being "anointed." We will here concentrate on the kingship aspect of Jesus in his designation as "Mashiach," that is, "Christ," "the anointed one."

The Jews after the destruction of their State, especially when they were in exile, looked forward for the fulfillment of the promise of God to David in 2 Samuel 7:12ff:

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. . . . And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

On the basis of this they held that they would be receiving a king anointed by God, from the seed of David, who would restore the Kingdom of Israel. Even though the Jewish concept of the coming "Mashiach" shows some variations, the predominant view was that he would be a political Messiah, with full grandeur and earthly power.

It is questionable whether the Jews understood the correct sense of the divine promise from the start, since Jesus rebuked them once, saying: "you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God" (Mt 22:29). The Jesus of the Gospels, however, though he accepted the title "Christ" when others confessed about him, never accepted it in the sense understood by the Jews, that is, as a political and nationalistic leader. Even the disciples did not understand the real nature of his Messiahship at the beginning. Thus when Jesus told them about his suffering, we see Peter rebuking him (Mk 8:33). And Jesus, rebuking Peter, said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God but of men." Oscar Cullmann writes: "This means nothing less than that Jesus considered as a satanic temptation the conception of the Messiah which Peter implied by his rebuke."¹⁵

Jesus did not openly use this title about himself as he did other titles such as the "Son of Man," because the popular idea of the day about the Messiah was incompatible with his own mission. Jesus did not come to show his own grandeur and temporal power as would be expected from a political Messiah. As he confessed before Pilate, his kingship was not of this world. It was with the same understanding that he rejected the temptation in the wilderness when the devil showed him "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" (Mt 4:8).

The devil lurks about constantly attempting to snare the church, the body of Christ on earth, with the same temptation. Members of the church, including its leadership, can fall into this specific snare. Forgetting the real nature of Christ's mission, expressed in his service and his cross, the church has tried to climb up the ladder to hold temporal power. Not to mention some manifestations in the church of today, the church of the Middle Ages in Europe showed an ambition for absolute authority on earth. The result of this ambition was an utter decay and worldliness in the life of the church, which in turn led to the Reformation. It is then

important for us, the body of Christ, to have the mind of Christ which was manifested to us in his service and the cross (Phil 2:5-11).

I believe in . . . His only Son:¹⁶ The title "Son of God" was not unfamiliar in the Hellenistic world. In Hellenism, anyone who was believed to possess some kind of divine power was called "Son of God" by others, or gave himself the title. Miracle workers were also called "Sons of God."¹⁷ Some scholars have ventured to suggest that the title "Son of God" applied to Jesus in the NT has come from the Hellenistic use of the title. This, however, is an erroneous conclusion reached without a thorough understanding of the similarity and differences between the use of the title in the NT and in the Hellenistic world.

In the Hellenistic understanding, the designation "Son of God" can hardly be separated from the polytheistic background of pagan antiquity, whereas in the NT Jesus is the Son of the one God, understood within a monotheistic setting. In addition, as indicated above, the designation "Son of God" was given to those in the Hellenistic world if they were believed to have the gift of divine powers and doing miracles. However, the most important passages of the Synoptic Gospels in which Jesus appears as the Son of God show him precisely not as a miracle worker like many others, but as one radically and uniquely distinguished from all other men. This title means to Jesus not primarily miraculous power, but absolute obedience of a son in the execution of a divine commission. To Jesus the most important thing as the "Son of God" was doing the will of the Father, not going around doing miracles to manifest his greatness and divine power. For example, when Satan tempted him saying "If you are the Son of God . . ." (Mt 4:1-11), Jesus would not resort to miracles to prove his sonship, as suggested by Satan. It is highly significant that Jesus here rejects as satanic the Hellenistic conception of his divine sonship in the sense of miraculous powers. The point of the temptation is not whether Jesus believes that God's miraculous power is present in the Son, but whether he will be disobedient to his Father by attempting to use that power apart from the fulfillment of his specific commission as the Son, because the sonship of Jesus was based on the complete unity of his will with the Father. He not only obeyed him when he was granted divine power to do miracles, but also when he was "given up" and "forsaken" by the Father, so that through his suffering and death many should be saved. The prayer in Gethsamane "My Father . . . not as I will but as thou wilt" shows his complete obedience and sonship.

In addition, in NT understanding, Jesus Sonship was unique. His sonship was not in the sense that all men are children of God. Matthew and Luke describe his virgin birth through the Holy Spirit, thus showing the uniqueness of his Sonship. John shows Jesus' unique Sonship by asserting his unique origin. He writes "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (Jn 1:18). The author of Hebrews also clearly affirms the unique relation of Jesus

with God: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed . . ." (Heb 1:1). This clearly shows that Jesus was not seen as another of the prophets who also used to do miracles, but as a unique Son who had a special relationship with his Father.

We Christians who make up the body of Christ, the church, are given the power to become children of God. Our sonship however is by adoption, while that of Jesus was by birth. Nevertheless the church must learn from the attitude of Jesus towards his status as "Son", manifested in doing the will of his Father, whether it was the joy of Transfiguration or the agony of the cross. For Jesus, his food was doing the will of his Father. We may ask what is the guiding principle of the church today? Whose will is the church striving to fulfill? Its own? The world's? Or the will of God? From the attitude of Jesus it is quite clear that the church as his body ought to fulfill not its own will, nor that of the world, but the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. The will of God revealed in the Scriptures should be the church's norm and the guiding spirit in all its actions and resolutions. If the will of God was food for Christ, who is and was the head of the church, how much more should it be for the church which is his body.

According to the tradition of the Reformers, the two marks of a true church are the Scripture and the Sacraments. Where the Word of God is preached, taught and obeyed in its purity, and where the sacraments, the visible words, are administered correctly, there the church exists. Other philanthropic deeds of the church are, and should be, the fruits of its faith in the Word, who showed us Caritas Dei, the Love of God. For the church to put philanthropy in the forefront and to forget the Word of God, the very source from which it is nourished, will definitely lead the church to a loss of its identity, as well as to a loss of the cherished philanthropy. Thus, the present church should consider whether it performs the duties which it thinks ought to be done, or whether it does what is the inevitable outcome of its faith in the Word of God.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried: Pontius Pilate (AD 26-36), who followed Valerius Gratus, was the fifth officer of the Roman Empire to be in charge of Judea after the birth of Jesus.¹⁸ It is important to note that Pilate was a local governor. The mentioning of Pilate in the Creed informs us that Jesus lived and died for us in a specific period and place in the history of the world. In short it shows us that Jesus was a figure in history. Attempts which have been made to disprove the historical fact of Christ during the past two hundred years have failed. The historical fact of Christ is now incontrovertibly established. The fact that extant secular records of the first hundred years contain only a few references was because Christianity at first was considered as one of many religious cults originating in the East, so that there was little in it to attract pagan historians. Their attention was

directed to it when it came into conflict with the state. The earliest pagan writers who refer to Christianity in such a context significantly mention Christ as its founder.¹⁹

Jesus, after having completed his mission on earth, now sits at the right hand of his Almighty Father. Yet the church as his body lives in history as a tangible reality. The attitudes of the earthly Jesus towards the local rulers of governments (such as Pilate) are, therefore, determinative for the church.

It is instructive that the fate of Jesus was decided by the decrees and verdicts of the local and earthly rulers. His birth happened to be far from his home, due to a decree from Augustus Caesar. He had to flee to Egypt in his infancy due to Herod the Great (37-4 BC). And at last he was crucified under the verdict given by Pontius Pilate, a Gentile representative of the Roman Empire.²⁰ Jesus had either to deal with or submit himself to their verdicts. Yet he knew that ultimately the verdict was not from them but from his Father in heaven. That was the reason that he answered to Pilate "You would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from above" (Jn 19:11).

The church too cannot be negligent of the earthly powers and rulers around it in every place and age. As a historical figure the church has either to deal with, or to submit to, the decrees and verdicts of the local rulers at all stages of its pilgrimage. Thus the earthly fate of the church is in a way tied up with the kind of government and rulers in its locality. Under whatever kind of government or local rulers or earthly situation the church lives, that does not in any way minimize it being the body of Christ. Thus the church has to learn to deal with and be prepared to give an appropriate answer while in its existence on earth with the earthly rulers. Yet just as was the case with Jesus, whatever kind of encounter the church may have with the local rulers, it should know that the ultimate power lies with God, that no ruler shall have power over the church unless he is given this from above.

Suffered . . . The historical and true suffering of Christ, demonstrated in his agony on the cross, is where God spoke to humankind in the loudest voice he could. The suffering and the cross of Christ revealed to the world the inmost nature of God, the very heart of God, his inexplicable and immeasurable love. God could not have spoken any better to the world than He did on the cross. Yet this has always remained a dilemma and stumbling block to the world, which always likes to focus its attention on temporal and transient glory. Nevertheless to those who have realized the transient nature of this world, the cross of Christ is full of meaning. Indeed for them it is the gate to everlasting glory.

Unfortunately the suffering and the cross of Christ, which have been a stumbling block to the world, possess the very key by which the world

itself could be meaningful and sensible. How can we account for and get meaning out of the various manifestations of suffering which we see occurring in our world every day? Famine, wars, epidemics, pestilence, deadly viruses and poverty are just some of the manifestations of this suffering. Is the world then doomed to such sufferings hopelessly? Is not there hope for humanity? Or does suffering have the final word?

The suffering and pain in the world make sense only when viewed from the perspective of the suffering of Christ. The suffering and pain in the world are the result of sin. However, humanity is not all alone in passing through these sufferings. The very God who created the universe and man has passed through the same suffering. He bore "the sins of the whole world," thus passing through the worst, the maximum suffering of which one can think. As the apostle put it "though he was in the form of God . . . he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross" (Phil 2:6-8). It is a great privilege to humanity and a key for its self-understanding and existence to know that there is a God who has suffered and suffers for him and with him. The God revealed in Jesus Christ is first of all not a God who invites suffering. But when suffering comes, as is the case in our world, he does not evade it or flee from it. Rather he passes through it victoriously. In the same way he helps his children not to flee the world and its suffering, but to pass through them refined as gold. He clearly stated this fact when he said "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

The function of the church then, as the body of Christ living in the suffering world, is to bring to light the God who suffered for all, so that humanity may not live in ignorance, as if suffering, pain and sin were unconquered powers. Just as Paul exclaimed "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," so the church too can proclaim the victory won by Jesus over suffering and pain, both in its words and in its deeds. Thus the church in reality becomes in Christ the hope of the world, the instrument for the redemption of humanity.

On the third day He rose again from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; thence He will come to judge the living and the dead: The resurrection of Christ is the foundation on which the church is established. The affirmation by the author of Hebrews "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8) presupposes the resurrection of Christ. If Jesus were dead, there is no way he could be the same yesterday, today and forever. As the apostle Paul wrote "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:14). Similarly we can also say if Christ has not been raised, then our church and all we do in Christ's name is in vain. "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." If the cross, suffering and

death were the end of Jesus, then they would have been the master of the world. But now through the resurrection of Jesus Christ "death is swallowed up in victory." Therefore, the church should conduct its affairs with the realization and confidence that the Risen Christ is present in its midst. This Risen Christ who sits at the right hand of God, with the token that he has completed all his work to be done on earth, will come the second time to give his verdict of justice. Till then he works, in his Spirit, with his church on earth. This is the Christ whom we confess in the Apostles' Creed.

ENDNOTES

¹Adapted from a paper read at the 13th General Assembly of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, January 1989.

²Lenker Edition of Luther's Works, Vol. IX, #16-23; Hugh T. Kerr, ed. A Compend of Luther's Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), pp. 39-40. Cf. also for a similar idea, The Book of Concord, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), p. 363.

³Martin Luther, Luther's Works, Lewis W. Spits, ed. 55 Vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 34:201; Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, Robert C. Shultz, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), p. 7.

⁴Cf. J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 1-2; Rufinus, A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed, Ancient Christian Writers, Vol. 20, trans. by J.N.D. Kelly (London: Longmans, 1955), pp. 29-30; Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Vol. 20, pp. 134ff.

⁵Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Scribner's, 1970), p. 281.

⁶John H. Leith, ed. Creeds of the Churches (New York: Anchor, 1963), p. 21; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, x, 1.

⁷Leith, pp. 21-22; Tertullian Against Praxeas, 2.

⁸J. N. D. Kelly also admits the similarity between the "Rule of Faith" and the Apostles' Creed, even though he considers them to be somewhat different. We think, however, that the differences are local variations rather than in the original source. Cf. Early Christian Creeds, p. 2.

⁹Ancient Christian Writers, Vol. 20, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰F. Gavin, "Rabbinic Parallels in Early Church Orders," Hebrew Union College Annual 6 (1929), 57-67.

¹¹G. Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (London: SPCK, 1968), p. xlii.

¹²Karl Barth, *Credo* (New York: Scribner's, 1962), p. 39.

¹³Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:285-86.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁵Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), p. 122.

¹⁶This is one of the witnesses to the antiquity of the Apostles' Creed. We do not here find developed qualifications regarding the Son, such as "begotten, not made," "of one essence," etc., as we do in the Nicene Creed (AD 325) and thereafter.

¹⁷Cullmann, p. 272.

¹⁸Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), p. 428.

¹⁹Tacitus, *Annals* XV. 44; Suetonius, *Claudius* 25, *Nero* 16; Pliny, *Epistles* X. 96. Cf. "Jesus Christ" in J. D. Douglas, ed. *The New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1962); Tenney, pp. 199-201.

²⁰Cf. "Pilate" in *The New Bible Dictionary*.