Bible Study 87

Wednesday, July 26

The Book of Common Prayer (continued…)

Page 851

The Creeds are to be found on pages 851 & 2 . They are important because the are a defining set of beliefs. The simplest is the Apostle Creed, followed by the Nicene Creed and Chalcedonian Creed. The Creeds resulted from a series of debates and struggles in the first five centuries of the church as to what could and could not be accepted as true doctrine.

Subsequently the Four Great Heresies of the Early Church were countered by the Four Great Councils of the church. Consequently, Councils of the church were to be regarded as being guided by the Holy Spirit and therefore God’s revelation in our midst. This is what is really meant by the word ‘Infallible.’

The Nicene Creed is derived from the Council of Nicaea, 325, which countered the heresy of Arius a priest from Alexandria in Egypt. Arius taught that Jesus was man but not God, nor the Son of God. The Council taught that Jesus had two natures both human and divine. Subsequently we find those words in the creed. “True God from true God. Begotten not made.”

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 explained the Trinity and the relationship of Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Turning to the Church BCP page 854. The Church is the Community of the New Covenant.” Episcopalians are fund of ‘The Church as the Body of Christ.’ Perhaps the best description is that of: ‘The Church as the people of God.’ A model that comes from the Pilgrim People of God, Israel in the Old Testament.

The Church is also defined as : one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

On pg 855 there is an interesting section on Ministry. We expect it to include clergy and bishops and may be surprised that it also includes lay persons. In other words, all God’s people are called to ministry in one way or another.

Most important is the section of sacraments from 857 through 861. They explain the sacraments but not who can or cannot participate. That is left to the Diocesan Constitutions.

The catechism ends in 861 with e Christian Hope—related to reward, judgment and the Kingdom of God.

The rest of BCP is devoted to Historical documents, used widely by researchers.

# Next Week: The Women of the Bible