A Christian Mannes Bileeve

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edited by Nicole D. Smith

DESCRIPTION:
'A Christian Mannes Bileeve' (CMB) is a vernacular prose commentary on the Apostles' Creed likely composed in the first half of the fourteenth century. It has received little attention and has not previously been published. Growing out of a tradition of commentaries on the Creed, the CMB is the longest and most substantial of the four known Middle English versions.

In the CMB, each article of faith is given in Latin with a paraphrase in Middle English followed by a detailed explanation. It is this feature that makes the CMB distinctive; the explanations include Latin and English lyric poetry, scriptural verse, exempla, and a range of material drawn from Latin theological writers such as Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bonaventure. The CMB was of particular interest to women; of the four manuscripts, three are known to have been in the possession of aristocratic laywomen and female religious communities.

In its introduction, this volume discusses the manuscripts and their provenance, language and localization, date and context of the CMB, and the lyrics that are embedded in the text. The edited text is supported by an apparatus of variant readings, commentary, and a glossary, followed by a bibliography.