

**LEX CREDENDI: A
SEQUEL TO
LEX ORANDI**

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Lex credendi: a sequel to Lex orandi by George Tyrrell

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GEORGE TYRRELL

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A SEQUEL TO
LEX ORANDI

BY
GEORGE TYRRELL

AUTHOR OF "NOVA ET VETERA," "HARD SAVINGS,"
ETC.

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER
OF OUR FAITH."—*Heb. xi.*

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PREFACE

THE title which I have chosen for this volume needs some explanation. In "Lex Orandi" I endeavoured to show how the Christian Creed had been, not entirely, but principally shaped by the exigencies of the devout life; and how it ought therefore to be viewed primarily as a Law of Prayer or of practical devotion, and only secondarily as a theology. My intention was far more practical than apologetic. I wrote in the interest of that growing number of earnestly religious persons whose impatience with theological disputes, and whose conviction that the Gospel means deeds rather than words or theories, lead them to look upon the Creed with a cold eye; to view it as belonging more to the outward life of the Visible Church than to the inward life of the individual Christian; to regard it as the sword of militant orthodoxy rather than as a subtle factor of the very same Spirit of Charity in whose name they would fain thrust that dividing sword into its scabbard. There (and still more explicitly elsewhere in subsequent occasional articles and reviews) I emphasized the importance of distinguishing between the "substance" of the Creed, which we owe to

revelation, and whose proper vehicle of expression is the language of prophecy and mystery rather than that of science or philosophy, and that "form" which the same Creed has necessarily and rightly received in consequence of becoming an object of theological reflection. Revelation offers us mysteries of Faith; theology endeavours to translate them from the language of prophecy into that of science, and to harmonize these translations with the whole system of our understanding. It is the "substance" of the Creed and not its "form" that Faith lays hold of as the food of the soul, the Bread of Life, the Word of God. If we accept the form it is only because we cannot draw water without a vessel. In the *Te Deum* and in other hymns and canticles of the Church we possess the Christian Creed more nearly in the prophetic language of revelation, and divested to a great extent of its theological setting. There we find it exercising its principal and original function of appealing, not so much to the understanding as to the imagination; not so much to the explicit reason of the mind as to the implicit reason of the heart. Thus we not only may and ought to, but we actually do separate the substance of the Creed from its theological or scientific form.

Again, in the interests of devotion, I frequently insisted on the danger of treating disjointed fragments or articulations of the Creed as independent wholes, intelligible and spiritually valuable even when divorced from their context. The possibility of doing

so is the result of giving (as we are prone to do) objective value to the distinctions and divisions of scientific reflection—of transferring to the living reality the form that belongs merely to our understanding of it. Yet what Faith embraces is never the severed part, but that same whole which is also the indivisible object of Hope and Love. The mind, indeed, may abstract, and analyse, and dissect; it may give a fictitious completeness to what are really fragments; but it is only the unbroken unity of the living whole which appeals to the heart—and Faith is of the heart. To this or that separate article we may give a theological assent with our mind; but the assent of Faith belongs to it only as vitally one with the complete object of Faith, which is the mystery of the Kingdom of God. In this mystery all others are included; from this they get their meaning and unity; apart, they may live for theological thought, but they are dead for Faith.

In substance, our Creed is but the expression of that conception of God and His Kingdom which is the light of our spiritual life—a conception constitutive of that same indivisible life which is at once Vision, Feeling, and Will according as it is viewed from different angles. By one and the same act we identify ourselves with God, who, viewed as Truth, Might, or Goodness, characterizes that act as one of Faith, Hope, or Charity respectively. Faith is the right orientation of the spirit in relation to its end and action, and the Creed is primarily the verbal