

**THE ATHANASIAN CREED VINDICATED
FROM THE OBJECTIONS OF DEAN
STANLEY AND OTHER MEMBERS OF
THE RITUAL COMMISSION. WITH AN
APPENDIX ON THE PROPOSED REVISION
OF THE PRESENT VERSION**

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The Athanasian Creed Vindicated from the Objections of Dean Stanley and Other Members of the Ritual Commission. With an Appendix on the Proposed Revision of the Present Version by J. S. Brewer

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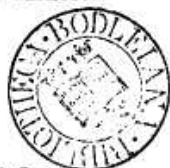
With an Appendix

ON THE PROPOSED REVISION OF THE PRESENT VERSION

BY

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OXFORD



Si quis credere potest credat, si non, oret ut credat.—S. Augustine

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1871

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PREFACE.

IF any demand why I, who have no place or fame as a theologian, have taken part in this controversy—if any apology be required of me beyond the right which every man has of expressing his convictions when the truth is assailed—I must be permitted to say, that I have always found the Athanasian Creed of the utmost importance to myself. I regard the great verities set forth by this Creed as the foundation of all order in earth and heaven—of all order especially in theology. I know of no question affecting our spiritual life and our relations to God, that is not in some way or another connected with it. To me it appears to have summed up clearly yet completely all that the profoundest intellects have laboured to express in every age, of the most mysterious of all doctrines; to have left nothing unsaid that ought to be said upon the Trinity, and to have recalled and repeated all that has been rightly said.

That the Reformers, anxious to secure the great foundations of the faith, should have retained this Creed in their most popular services and confessions, was significant of their feelings and convictions. They believed that the highest and most spiritual of all truths, as well as the lowest and most practical, were equally the inheritance of all men. In whatever regards the doctrine of the Trinity, the unlearned layman is placed by the Creed on an equal footing with the most accomplished theologian. If it be banished from the Prayer Book, if it be pushed out of sight, where shall men turn for so short, so accurate, so comprehensive an exposition of religious instruction? What book, or what commentary, can they use in the place of the Athanasian Creed? How are they to secure themselves from errors on a subject, where errors are most perilous, and where the most pious and the wisest have been apt to go astray? Merely, then, as a history and summary of all that has been rightly written on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Athanasian Creed is the best of all histories. Merely as preserving for us the Catholic Faith, in the sense in which that faith has been understood and maintained in all ages of the Church

from the days of Athanasius to the present time, the importance of the Creed is undeniable.

Nor let it be imagined that we can part with the Athanasian Creed, and retain in their comprehensiveness and exactness the truths that are taught by it. With the loss of the Creed the doctrine of the Trinity will vanish; if it be not already fast disappearing from English theology, at the present day, whether written or oral. Much I hear of the Fatherhood of God, much of the humanity of the Son, much of the beauty and holiness of Christian brotherhood; but of that which is the foundation of them all—the ground upon which they must all stand—by which alone, excellent as they are, they are true to us, and cease to be notional—the Eternal Trinity, The Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end—scarcely a vestige is found in the thoughts of preachers or their flocks, of writers or their readers.

Yet that Creed sweeps through all Creation—it embraces all that was before Creation—it anticipates all that is to come, not as a divine speculation or prophetic vision, but it ties and connects the eternal and ever blessed Trinity, in their undivided operations with the most commonplace and indifferent