

**A SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE
NICENE CREED: FOR THE USE OF
PERSONS BEGINNING THE STUDY
OF THEOLOGY. SECOND EDITION**

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A Short Explanation of the Nicene Creed: For the Use of Persons Beginning the Study of
Theology. Second Edition by Alexander Penrose Forbes

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ALEXANDER PENROSE FORBES

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STUDY OF THEOLOGY.

BY
ALEXANDER PENROSE FORBES, D.C.L.,
BISHOP OF MENCHIN.

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1866.

110. j. 78.

TO THE
REV. JOHN KEBLE, M.A.,
VICAR OF HURSLEY,
IN TOKEN OF
PROFOUND REVERENCE AND AFFECTION,
AND IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN KINDNESS,
THIS EDITION IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

SOME apology is due for venturing on a subject so mysterious, and on which so many of the highest intellects have exercised themselves. It seems no small presumption to follow, at however respectful a distance, in the footsteps of Bishop Pearson. My motive for making this attempt has been to remedy a defect which has met me in my own theological reading, the want of some treatise a little more technical and systematic than the great "Exposition of the Creed." The Reformation being in some sense a reaction against previous tendencies, the theology after that did well in emancipating itself from the dry unattractive form in which it was before that presented to the reader. A dead language did not hide it more effectually than the abstract shape in which it was proposed. Accordingly, the merit possessed by Hooker and Pearson, and claimed by Burnet^a, was to place the dogmas of religion before men without "stiffness of method,"

^a Pref. xxxix. Art.

“dark terms,” “the niceties of logic,” or “artificial definitions,” and to make the science of theology easy and pleasing. The debt which we owe to such authors cannot be exaggerated.

But amid the great revival of the last twenty years, as deeper views of God’s truth have by His mercy been accorded to our aching hearts, a desire of a more systematic theology has almost of necessity been engendered. Men feel that an exact theology is at once the most reverent and the most satisfactory: the most reverent, as the nearer we get to the very Truth the better we serve Him; the most satisfactory, because a strict dogmatic theology tells us in very plain language, that after the human intellect is exhausted, it has not reached God. Men also have felt, that in an exact theology is the only sure guarantee for orthodoxy of faith. Where matters have not been defined, men have generally contented themselves with the lower view. Therefore it was that St. Athanasius was raised up by God to fight for the “consubstantial;” and we ourselves have seen how the faith of our own Church, on the subjects that were left as open questions, has shrivelled and withered away. A definite expression of doctrine embodied in the symbolic books of a Church becomes the institution by which the idea is preserved and perpetuated. Had a dogmatic

teaching been then prevalent, the movement in the last century would in all probability have taken a more satisfactory direction, and the labours of the elder Wilberforce, and the other good men who then exercised so profound an influence on the pious sentiment of England, might have ended in a very different result from the Gorham decision.

To supply those beginning the study of theology, then, with a work a little more technical than our present text-books, has been my desire. I began by using Suicer's work on the Creed as a foundation, but have also applied to other sources both from the Latin and Greek Churches. I have suffered much from the want of books, and have in many cases been obliged to trespass on the indulgence of kind friends to verify quotations. Of these I beg especially to express my thanks to the Rev. Charles Marriott, B.D., Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, who at great trouble to himself has looked over the proof-sheets; and also to one, to whom posterity will render that homage which those who have the honour of knowing him accord to him now, the distinguished Regius Professor of Hebrew in the same University.

And now, in presenting this little work with all its faults to the public, it is my earnest prayer that it may do good; and I can send it forth with no

better aspiration than that of the great St. Augustine, "Domine Deus unus, Deus Trinitas, quæcumque dixi hic de Tuo, agnoscant et Tui : si quæ de meo et Tu ignosce et Tui." Amen.

DUNDEE, TRINITY SUNDAY,
June 6, 1852.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THAT another edition of this little work should be called for is very gratifying, in so far as it is some evidence of the increased demand for theological treatises of a dogmatic character. A value for the sacredness of God's truth will grow up along with a more earnest and thoughtful devotion. Nay, a strong objective faith, to use the language of the present day, is necessarily the truest incentive to divine love and self-sacrificing obedience. But for it the Christian life will be but emotional. A striking illustration of the importance of this view of Christianity is found in the fact that St. Augustine's well-known treatise *De Agone Christiano* is not a "Spiritual Combat" with individual private temptations, like the beautiful work of the holy and calumniated Lorenzo Scupoli, but is a refutation and enumeration of different heresies; teaching us thereby that the intellectual part of man is as liable to temptation and fall as the moral, and that to "keep the