



# **The Creed Explained: or An Explanation of Catholic Doctrine According to the Creeds of the Faith and the Constitutions and Definitions of the Church**

*Rev Arthur Devine, Brother Hermenegild TOSF*

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Article IX of the Creed, which embraces all that concerns the Church and the Sovereign Pontiff, has demanded several chapters in order to deal with it fully, and to explain in detail all the points of doctrine "that affect Catholic claims, Catholic policy, and Catholic teaching and authority. There are therefore separate chapters in this Article on the Church:-The Primacy of St. Peter; the Sovereign Pontiff and his infallibility; General Councils and their authority; and a concluding chapter on the legislative authority of the Church, and her relations to civil society. It would have saved much controversy and misunderstanding at the time of the publication of Mr. Gladstone's Expostulation on the Vatican Decrees, had the doctrine of the Church been better known and understood by the English public on the question of Catholic allegiance, Catholic policy, and Catholic teaching, which the Expostulation attacked with such vehemence and severity. Men who were then disturbed by the controversy may now, with calm and dispassionate reason, read and understand the sense in which all these questions are held and taught in the Catholic Church, without any fear of their believing that" the Church of Rome is arrogant in her claims, dishonest in her policy, shallow and ignorant in her teaching." From this outline of the work, it will appear that it covers a large field of study, common to ecclesiastical students, to teachers in schools, colleges and convents, to whom I hope it may be specially useful in their religious studies and examinations; and many a hard worked priest may find it a convenient hand-book for the subject matter of his pastoral sermons and instructions. On the part of the Catholic laity, there is always to be found amongst them an earnest and laudable desire to read and to study doctrinal works, as they deem it necessary, in the midst of their Protestant friends and relations, to be well instructed in their Creed, in order to be able to assign a reason for the faith that is in them, and to instruct others in the Christian doctrine when required. And it seems that amongst the people of this Country in general there is a sincere and ever increasing spirit of research and inquiry into religious truth and doctrine, as is evident from the publication and large circulation of numerous works, even of fiction, all tending in this direction, as for example " Robert Elsemere," and others of a like class. For these reasons I am led to hope that the work, which I now publish, may find a place in the religious and doctrinal literature of the day. It is intended as a help to Catholic students and teachers; as a safe and secure guide to the laity in matters of Catholic belief; and as a convenient hand-book for priests, on the mission, for the preparation of their sermons and instructions. And all non-Catholics may learn from it a correct knowledge of the Christian doctrine as held and taught in the Catholic Church. To these individually we must give the full benefit of the excuse derived from invincible ignorance with regard to the truths of faith which they do not know, or which they are prevented from knowing through no fault of theirs. At the same time, we must remember the words of the prophet Isaias, which St. Jerome applies to the Catholic Church :-And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it.

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