

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

CATHOLIC ANECDOTES

CHAPTER II.

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28. *How the Apostles Composed the Creed.* -

A learned ecclesiastic, named Rufinus, who lived in the year 400, assures us, on the authority of tradition, that the twelve Apostles, before they went their several ways to preach the Gospel, composed the Creed which bears their name. It is even stated that each of them drew up his own particular article; but that is not very certain. Still, it appears that there is yet preserved in the library of the Emperor of Austria, at Vienna, an old Greek manuscript, containing the Apostles' Creed, divided into twelve articles, bearing each the name of him who composed it. The first is ascribed to St. Peter; the second, to St. Andrew; the third, to St. James, the Major; the fourth, to St. John, the Evangelist; the fifth, to St. Thomas; the sixth, to St. James, the Minor; the seventh, to St. Philip; the eighth, to St. Bartholomew; the ninth, to St. Matthew; the tenth, to St. Simon; the eleventh, to Jude, otherwise St. Thaddeus; and, finally, the twelfth, to St. Matthias. I myself have seen, in an old book printed in the time of Henri IV., or Louis XIII., well-engraved portraits of the twelve Apostles, and around were written in large characters the article attributed

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to each of them. Thus, around St. Peter, there was, in old French: I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; around St Andrew: AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD; and so on with the rest. -

GABRIEL PEIGOT, *Amusemens Philologiques*, 6352. - G. S. G.

29. *The Creed Taught by St. John.* -

So entirely does the Apostles' Creed contain the abridgement of the truths of our holy religion, that, in the first ages of the Church, not only was it never departed from, but the bishops taught nothing else. The learned Baronius, relates in this connection, a fact which I am glad I remember now, in order to repeat it to you. Amongst the St. Gregorys, there was one who was surnamed Thaumaturgus, because of the great number of miracles he wrought during his life. He was still very young, when his virtues and talents caused him to be named bishop of Neo-cesarea, in Asia Minor, about the year 233. His first care, on reaching his new diocese, was to ask God to inspire him how best to instruct His people. One day being at prayer, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him with St. John the Evangelist. That good mother, for whom St. Gregory Thaumaturgus had a great devotion, besought the holy Apostle to grant him what he asked. Then St. John the Evangelist dictated to him the Apostles' Creed, just as we know it now : *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, &c.* St. Gregory preserved this copy so faithfully, that a hundred years after, it was still in existence; it was even cited in

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the fifth General Council, held at Constantinople in 553. From this we see, dear children, that the faith has undergone no change since the very days of the Apostles. -

TILLEMONT, *Ecclesiastical History*, I., 375.

30. *The Little Martyr of the Creed.* -

The Apostles' Creed, as I think I have already told you, is an abridgement of all religion; it was formerly taught only to those who were Christians, and that formula served to distinguish them from the pagans. Thus, when any one said: *I am a Christian*, the answer was: *Prove it by reciting the Creed*. I have read the history of a little saint of seven years, - I do not remember his name, - who was denounced to a wicked governor, named Asclepiades. He is brought before that man, who chooses to question him himself, and endeavours by caressing him to make him change his sentiments. "It is no use," answered the courageous child, "I am a Christian, as you shall see: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, Our Lord* -" Asclepiades, in a rage, would not let him finish; having sent for his mother, he ordered a soldier to scourge him before her, so that she might herself urge him to adore the idols. Whilst his tender flesh was torn by the cruel lash, the youthful martyr repeated: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, &c.* After some time, he turned to his mother, and said to her: "Mother, I am thirsty." - "Courage, my child," replied the heroic mother, "have patience a little longer, and you shall reach the fountain of life; Christ

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himself will give you to drink." This sad spectacle drew tears from all who witnessed it; the tyrant only remained unmoved. Ashamed of seeing himself vanquished by a child, he caused his head to be cut off, and thus sent him the sooner to heaven. -

PRUDENCE, *Crown of Martyrs*.

31. *Little Peter's Creed.* -

As the Apostles' Creed is the abridgement of our faith, heretics have always regarded it with aversion. One day, little Peter, who since became a saint and a martyr, had returned from the school of Verona, in Italy, where his father had sent him. One of his uncles, who had the misfortune of being a heretic, felt curious to know what he had learned. He took him on his knee, and began to caress him, as uncles are wont to do, asking him what he remembered. "Uncle," said the child, "I learned in my Creed: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth*," etc. "And do you know the meaning of all that?" "Yes, uncle, *Creator of Heaven and Earth*, means that God made all things out of nothing, by His word alone; it was He that made the sun, the moon, and the stars; it is He that sends us heat to make plants grow, and rain to water them; so for that reason, we ought to love Him." His uncle, vexed and angry, let him say no more; "You must not believe such things," said he, "You are entirely mistaken," etc., etc. But do what he would, Peter remained firm, and persevered all his life in the true faith. -

GODESCARD. *Vie de Saints, (Lives of the Saints)*, 29th April.

32. *The Creed Written in Blood.* -

This same St. Peter, surnamed

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the Martyr, who had shown so much zeal in learning and confessing the Apostles' Creed, never belied himself. He entered the Order of St. Dominic and was all his life employed in preaching the truth to those who, knowing it not, persecuted it. He was the scourge and terror of the heretics, and especially of the Manicheans, who in his time began to over-spread Italy. They swore to compass his ruin, and being as cowardly as they were wicked, they hired two assassins to lie in wait for him on the road between Como and Milan. As he passed them by, one of the assassins fell upon him and struck him twice on the head with an axe. St. Peter Martyr was not killed at once; he raised himself up, forgave his murderers, and began to recite the Apostles' Creed in Latin. Then, dipping his finger in the blood that flowed from his wounds, he had strength enough to trace on the ground the word *CREDO - I believe*. His assassins, in a rage, stabbed him with a poignard sword, and he gave up his soul to God on the 6th of April, 1252. -

GODESCARD'S *Lives of the Saints*, April 29th.

33. *An Old Man who was Ignorant of the Creed.* -

Profit by the season of youth, my good young friends, to learn the Creed, for when age once comes, it is hard to remedy the misfortune of not knowing it.

I have somewhere read that Cardinal St Robert Bellarmine being Archbishop of Capua, in Italy, assembled the children in his Cathedral, taught them their Catechism himself, and afterwards distributed rewards amongst those who had answered the best. On Holy Thursday

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of a certain year there happened to be amongst the twelve poor men whose feet the Cardinal was to wash, an old man nearly an hundred years of age. He asked him to recite the Apostles' Creed. "I never learned it," answered the old man, much ashamed, "no one ever taught it to me." At these words the holy Archbishop changed colour, and for some moments could not utter a word. Bursting into tears, he exclaimed with a deep sigh: "What! there was no one in all the city of Capua, for the space of an hundred years, to teach this poor Christian the articles of faith?" And he immediately took measures that the unhappy centenarian might be instructed in the Creed before he died; it was a hard task, however, to get him through it, his memory being so sadly defective. -

NOEL, *Catechisme de Rodez* I., 23.