

A **creed** is a statement of [belief](#)—usually [religious belief](#)—or [faith](#) often recited as part of a religious service. The word derives from the [Latin](#): *credo* for *I believe* and *credimus* for *we believe*. It is sometimes called *symbol* ([Greek](#): σύμβολο[v]), signifying a "token" by which persons of like beliefs might recognize each other.

The most definitive creed in [Christianity](#) is the [Nicene Creed](#), formulated in AD 325 at the [First Council of Nicaea](#). Affirmation of this creed, which describes the Trinity, is generally taken as a fundamental test of orthodoxy.^[1] The Apostle's Creed is also broadly accepted.

Some denominations, including [Unitarians](#), [Quakers](#), [Baptists](#), [Messianics](#), and [Restorationists](#), have rejected the authority of those creeds.^[citation needed]

Whether Judaism is creedal has been a point of some controversy. Though some say Judaism is noncreedal in nature, others say it recognizes a single creed, the [Shema](#). "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." ([Deut. 6:4](#)).

[Muslims](#) declare the [shahada](#), or testimony: "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."^[2]

The terms "creed" and "faith" are sometimes used to mean religion. Where "creed" appears alongside "religion" or "faith" it can also refer to a person's political or social beliefs, for example The [American's Creed](#).

[Pope Paul VI](#) published on June 30 1968 a profession of faith or creed, called the [Credo of the People of God](#).^[3]

Actually in the 2003 edition of the Roman Missal the Apostles Creed is now allowed for any Mass. The new Rubric reads:

"Order of Mass 19. Instead of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, especially during Lent and Easter time, the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church, known as the Apostles' Creed, may be used."

Re: What is the difference between the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed?

Dear Mike,

We use the Nicene Creed at Mass on Sundays and Solemnities. We use the Apostles Creed to begin the rosary.

For the history of the Apostles Creed, log on to this link:

- [Apostles' Creed](#)

For the history of the Nicene Creed, try this:

- [Nicene Creed](#)

Fr. Vincent Serpa, O.P.

Nicene Creed

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For other uses, see [Creed](#).



Icon depicting [Emperor Constantine](#) (center) and the Fathers of the [First Council of Nicaea](#) (325) as holding the Nicene Creed in its 381 form.

The **Nicene Creed** ([Latin](#): *Symbolum Nicaenum*) is the [creed](#) or profession of faith ([Greek](#): Σύμβολον τῆς Πίστεως) that is most widely used in [Christian liturgy](#). It is called Nicene (pronounced */ˈnaɪsiːn/*) because, in its original form, it was adopted in the city of [Nicaea](#) by the first [ecumenical council](#), which met there in 325. The Nicene Creed has been normative to the [Anglican](#) and [Roman Catholic Eucharistic](#) rite as well as [Eastern Orthodoxy](#) liturgy.^[1]

It is given high importance in the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), [Assyrian Church of the East](#), [Oriental Orthodox churches](#), the [Roman Catholic Church](#), including the [Eastern Catholic Churches](#), the [Old Catholic Church](#), the [Lutheran Church](#), the [Anglican Communion](#), and almost all branches of [Protestantism](#), including the [Reformed churches](#), the [Presbyterian Church](#), and the [Methodist Church](#).

For current English translations of the Nicene Creed, see [English versions of the Nicene Creed in current use](#).

Nomenclature

There are several designations for the two forms of the Nicene creed, some with overlapping meanings:

- **Nicene Creed** can refer to the original version adopted at the [First Council of Nicaea](#) (325), to the revised version adopted by the [First Council of Constantinople](#) (381), to the later Latin version that includes the phrase "Deum de Deo" and "[Filioque](#)", and to the Armenian version.
- **Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed** can stand for the revised version of Constantinople (381) or to the later Latin and Armenian versions.
- **Icon/Symbol of the Faith** is the usual designation for the revised version of Constantinople 381 in the Orthodox churches, where this is the only creed used in the liturgy.
- **Profession of Faith of the 318 Fathers** refers specifically to the version of Nicea 325 (traditionally, 318 bishops took part at the First Council of Nicea).
- **Profession of Faith of the 150 Fathers** refers specifically to the version of Constantinople 381 (traditionally, 150 bishops took part at the First Council of Constantinople)

In musical settings, particularly when singing in [Latin](#), this Creed is usually referred to by its first word, *Credo*.

[\[edit\]](#) History

The purpose of a creed is to act as a yardstick of correct belief. The creeds of Christianity have been drawn up at times of conflict about doctrine: acceptance or rejection of a creed served to distinguish believers and deniers of a particular doctrine or set of doctrines. For that reason a creed was called in Greek a σύμβολον, a word that meant half of a broken object which, when placed together with the other half verified the bearer's identity. The Greek word passed through Latin "symbolum" into English "symbol", which only later took on the meaning of an outward sign of something.^[2] The Nicene Creed was adopted in the face of the [Arian](#) controversy. [Arius](#), a Libyan preacher, had declared that although [Jesus Christ](#) was divine, God had actually created him, and there was a time when he was not. This made Jesus less than the Father and contradicted the doctrine of the [Trinity](#).^[3] Arius's teaching provoked a serious crisis.

The Nicene Creed of 325 explicitly affirms the [divinity of Jesus](#), applying to him the term "God". The 381 version speaks of the Holy Spirit as worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son. The [Athanasian Creed](#) describes in much greater detail the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The [Apostles' Creed](#), not formulated in reaction to Arianism, makes no explicit statements about the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, but, in the view of many who use it, the doctrine is implicit in it.

[\[edit\]](#) The original Nicene Creed of 325

Main article: [First Council of Nicaea](#)

The original Nicene Creed was first adopted in 325 at the [First Council of Nicaea](#). At that time, the text ended after the words "We believe in the Holy Spirit", after which an [anathema](#) was added.^[4]

The [Coptic Church](#) has the tradition that the original creed was authored by [Pope Athanasius I of Alexandria](#). [F. J. A. Hort](#) and [Adolf Harnack](#) argued that the Nicene creed was the local creed of [Caesarea](#) (an important center of [Early Christianity](#)) brought to the council by [Eusebius of Caesarea](#). J.N.D. Kelly sees as its basis a baptismal creed of the Syro-Phoenician family, related to (but not dependent on) the creed cited by [Cyril of Jerusalem](#) and to the creed of Eusebius.

Soon after the Council of Nicaea, new formulae of faith were composed, most of them variations of the Nicene Symbol, to counter new phases of [Arianism](#). The *Catholic Encyclopedia* identifies at least four before the [Council of Sardica](#) (341), where a new form was presented and inserted in the Acts of the Council, though it was not agreed on.

[\[edit\]](#) [The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381](#)

The [second Ecumenical Council](#) in 381 added the section that follows the words "We believe in the Holy Spirit" (without the words "and the Son" relative to the procession of the Spirit);^[5] hence the name "Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed", referring to the Creed as modified in Constantinople. This is the received text of the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#),^[6] with the exception that in its liturgy it changes verbs from the plural by which the Fathers of the Council collectively professed their faith to the singular of the individual Christian's profession of faith. [Byzantine Rite Eastern Catholic Churches](#) use exactly the same form of the Creed, since the Catholic Church teaches that it is wrong to add "and the Son" to the [Greek](#) verb "Ἐκπορευόμενον", but correct to add it to the [Latin](#) "qui procedit", which does not have precisely the same meaning.^[7]

The [third Ecumenical Council](#) ([Council of Ephesus](#) of 431) reaffirmed the 325 version^[8] of the Nicene Creed and declared that "it is unlawful for any man to bring forward, or to write, or to compose a different (ἑτέραν) Faith as a rival to that established by the holy Fathers assembled with the Holy Ghost in Nicæa"(i.e. the 325 version)^[9] This statement has been interpreted as a prohibition against changing this creed or composing others, but not all accept this interpretation.^[10] This question must be considered against the background of long and continuous controversy in the Church concerning the nature of the Trinity, and of Jesus in particular; and the debate over whether a [creed](#) proclaimed by an [Ecumenical Council](#) is definitive or subject to change.

[\[edit\]](#) [Comparison between Creed of 325 and Creed of 381](#)

The following table displays side by side the earlier (325) and later (381) forms of this Creed in the English translation given in Schaff's [Creeds of Christendom](#), which indicates by [square brackets] the portions of the 325 text that were omitted or moved in 381, and uses *italics* to indicate what phrases, absent in the 325 text, were added in 381.^[11]

First Council of Nicea (325)	First Council of Constantinople (381)
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<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.</p>	<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker <i>of heaven and earth, and</i> of all things visible and invisible.</p>
<p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;</p>	<p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, <i>begotten of the Father before all worlds (æons)</i>, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;</p>
<p>By whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth];</p>	<p>by whom all things were made;</p>
<p>Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man;</p>	<p>who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate <i>by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary</i>, and was made man;</p>
<p>He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven;</p>	<p><i>he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;</i></p>
<p>From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.</p>	<p>from thence he shall come again, <i>with glory</i>, to judge the quick and the dead;</p>
<p></p>	<p><i>whose kingdom shall have no end.</i></p>
<p>And in the Holy Ghost.</p>	<p>And in the Holy Ghost, <i>the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the</i></p>

	<i>prophets.</i>
	<i>In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.</i>
[But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable'—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.]	

Apostles' Creed

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The **Apostles' Creed** ([Latin](#): *Symbolum Apostolorum* or *Symbolum Apostolicum*), sometimes titled **Symbol of the Apostles**, is an early statement of [Christian](#) belief, a [creed](#) or "symbol".^[1] It is widely used by a number of [Christian denominations](#) for both [liturgical](#) and [catechetical](#) purposes, most visibly by liturgical Churches of Western tradition, including the [Latin Rite](#) of the [Roman Catholic Church](#), [Lutheranism](#), the [Anglican Communion](#), and [Western Orthodoxy](#). It is also used by [Presbyterians](#), [Methodists](#), and [Congregationalists](#).

The theological specifics of this creed appear to have been originally formulated as a refutation of [Gnosticism](#), an early [heresy](#). This can be seen in almost every phrase. For example, the creed states that Christ, Jesus, was born, suffered, and died on the cross. This seems to be a statement directly against the heretical teaching that Christ only appeared to become man and that he did not truly suffer and die but only appeared to do so. The Apostles' Creed, as well as other baptismal creeds, is esteemed as an example of the apostles' teachings and a defense of the Gospel of Christ.

The name of the Creed comes from the probably fifth-century legend that, under the inspiration of the [Holy Spirit](#) after [Pentecost](#), each of the [Twelve Apostles](#) dictated part of it.^[2] It is traditionally divided into twelve articles.

Because of its early origin, it does not address some [Christological](#) issues defined in the later [Nicene](#) and other Christian Creeds. It thus says nothing explicitly about the divinity of either Jesus or of the Holy Spirit. This makes it acceptable to many [Arians](#) and [Unitarians](#). Nor does it address many other theological questions that became objects of dispute centuries later.

Origin of the Creed

Throughout the Middle Ages the Apostles' Creed was believed to have been created directly by the Apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with each of the twelve contributing one of the articles.

While the individual statements of belief that are included in the Apostles' Creed are found in various writings by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Novatian, Marcellus, Rufinus, Ambrose, Augustine, Nicetus, and Eusebius Gallus,^[3] the Apostles' Creed probably dates, at earliest, from the second half of the fifth century.^[4]

While the title, *Symbolum Apostolicum* (Symbol or Creed of the Apostles), appears for the first time in a letter from a Council in Milan (probably written by [Ambrose](#) himself) to [Pope Siricius](#) in about 390 ("Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled")^{[5][6]} what is now known as the Apostles' Creed is an enlarged version of the [Old Roman Symbol](#),^[7] a shorter text that existed more than a century before and that some argue goes back to the second century. This in turn evolved from simpler texts based on [Matthew 28:19](#).^[6]

The earliest appearance of the present text of the Apostles' Creed was in the *De singulis libris canonicis scarapsus* ("Excerpt from Individual Canonical Books") of [St. Priminus](#) ([Migne](#), *Patrologia Latina* 89, 1029 ff.), written between 710 and 714.^[8] This longer Creed seems to have arisen in what is now France and Spain. [Charlemagne](#) imposed it throughout his dominions, and it was finally accepted in Rome, where the Old Roman Creed or similar formulas had survived for centuries.^[6]

Some have suggested that the Apostles' Creed was spliced together with phrases from the New Testament.^[9] Thus the phrase "descendit ad inferos" ("he descended into hell") echoes [Ephesians 4:9](#): "κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς" ("he descended into the lower, earthly regions").

This phrase and that on the [communion of saints](#) are articles found in the Apostles' Creed, but not in the Old Roman Symbol nor in the Nicene Creed.

[\[edit\]](#) Text of the Creed in Latin



Pronunciation of the Creed in [Latin](#)

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem, Creatorem caeli et terrae,
et in Iesum Christum, Filium Eius unicum, Dominum nostrum,
qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine,
passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus,
descendit ad íferos, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis,
ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Patris omnipotentis,
inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos.

Credo in Spiritum Sanctum,
sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem,
remissionem peccatorum,
carnis resurrectionem,
vitam aeternam.

Amen.^[10]

[\[edit\]](#) English translations

[\[edit\]](#) The Roman Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives the following English translation of the Apostles' Creed.^[11] In its discussion of the Creed,^[12] the Catechism maintains the traditional division into twelve articles, the numbering of which is here added to the text.

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
2. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
3. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
4. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
5. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.
6. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
7. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,

9. the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

10. the forgiveness of sins,

11. the resurrection of the body,

12. and the life everlasting.

Amen.

I. ORIGIN OF THE CREED

Throughout the Middle Ages it was generally believed that the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, while still under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, composed our present Creed between them, each of the Apostles contributing one of the twelve articles. This legend dates back to the sixth century (see Pseudo-Augustine in Migne, P.L., XXXIX, 2189, and Pirminius, *ibid.*, LXXXIX, 1034), and it is foreshadowed still earlier in a sermon attributed to St. Ambrose (Migne, P.L., XVII, 671; Kattenbusch, I, 81), which takes notice that the Creed was "pieced together by twelve separate workmen". About the same date (c. 400) Rufinus (Migne, P.L., XXI, 337) gives a detailed account of the composition of the Creed, which account he professes to have received from earlier ages (*tradunt majores nostri*). Although he does not explicitly assign each article to the authorship of a separate Apostle, he states that it was the joint work of all, and implies that the deliberation took place on the day of Pentecost. Moreover, he declares that "they for many just reasons decided that this rule of faith should be called the Symbol", which Greek word he explains to mean both *indicium*, i.e. a token or password by which Christians might recognize each other, and *collatio*, that is to say an offering made up of separate contributions. A few years before this (cc. 390), the letter addressed to Pope Siricius by the Council of Milan (Migne, P.L., XVI, 1213) supplies the earliest known instance of the combination *Symbolum Apostolorum* ("Creed of the Apostles") in these striking words: "If you credit not the teachings of the priests... let credit at least be given to the Symbol of the Apostles which the Roman Church always preserves and maintains inviolate." The word *Symbolum* in this sense, standing alone, meets us first about the middle of the third century in the correspondence of St. Cyprian and St. Firmilian, the latter in particular speaking of the Creed as the "Symbol of the Trinity", and recognizing it as an integral part of the rite of baptism (Migne, P.L., III, 1165, 1143). It should be added, moreover, that Kattenbusch (II, p. 80, note) believes that the same use of the words can be traced as far back as Tertullian. Still, in the first two centuries after Christ, though we often find mention of the Creed under other designations (e.g. *regula fidei*, *doctrina*, *traditio*), the name *symbolum* does not occur. Rufinus was therefore wrong when he declared that the Apostles themselves had "for many just reasons" selected this very term. This fact, joined with the intrinsic improbability of the story, and the surprising silence of the New Testament and of the Ante-Nicene fathers, leaves us no choice but to regard the circumstantial narrative of Rufinus as unhistorical.

Among recent critics, some have assigned to the Creed an origin much later than the Apostolic Age. Harnack, e.g., asserts that in its present form it represents only the baptismal confession of the Church of Southern Gaul, dating at earliest from the second half of the fifth century (*Das apostolische*

Glaubensbekenntniss, 1892, p. 3). Strictly construed, the terms of this statement are accurate enough; though it seems probable that it was not in Gaul but in Rome, that the Creed really assumed its final shape (see Burn in the "Journal of Theol. Studies" July, 1902). But the stress laid by Harnack on the lateness of our received text (T) is, to say the least, somewhat misleading. It is certain, as Harnack allows, that another and older form of the Creed (R) had come into existence, in Rome itself, before the middle of the second century. Moreover, as we shall see, the differences between R and T are not very important and it is also probable that R, if not itself drawn up by the Apostles, is at least based upon an outline which dates back to the Apostolic age. Thus, taking the document as a whole, we may say confidently, in the words of a modern Protestant authority, that "in and with our Creed we confess that which since the days of the Apostles has been the faith of united Christendom" (Zahn, *Apostles' Creed*, tr., p. 222). The question of the apostolicity of the Creed ought not to be dismissed without due attention being paid to the following five considerations:

(1) There are very suggestive traces in the New Testament of the recognition of a certain "form of doctrine" (*tupos didaches*, Rom., vi, 17) which moulded, as it were, the faith of new converts to Christ's law, and which involved not only the word of faith believed in the heart, but "with the mouth confession made unto salvation" (Rom., x, 8-10). In close connection with this we must recall the profession of faith in Jesus Christ exacted of the eunuch (Acts, viii, 37) as a preliminary to baptism (Augustine, "De Fide et Operibus", cap. ix; Migne, P.L., LVII, 205) and the formula of baptism itself in the name of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity (Matt., xxviii, 19; and cf. the *Didache* vii, 2, and ix, 5). Moreover, as soon as we begin to obtain any sort of detailed description of the ceremonial of baptism, we find that, as a preliminary to the actual immersion, a profession of faith was exacted of the convert, which exhibits from the earliest times a clearly divided and separate confession of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, corresponding to the Divine Persons invoked in the formula of baptism. As we do not find in any earlier document the full form of the profession of faith, we cannot be sure that it is identical with our Creed, but, on the other hand, it is certain that nothing has yet been discovered which is inconsistent with such a supposition. See, for example, the "Canons of Hippolytus" (c. 220) or the "Didascalia" (c. 250) in Hahn's "Bibliothek der Symbole" (8, 14, 35); together with the slighter allusions in Justin Martyr and Cyprian.

(2) Whatever difficulties may be raised regarding the existence of the *Discipline Arcani* in early times (Kattenbusch, II, 97 sqq.), there can be no question that in Cyril of Jerusalem, Hilary, Augustine, Leo, the Gelasian Sacramentary, and many other sources of the fourth and fifth centuries the idea is greatly insisted upon; that according to ancient tradition the Creed was to be learned by heart, and never to be consigned to writing. This undoubtedly provides a plausible explanation of the fact that in the case of no primitive creed is the text preserved to us complete or in a continuous form. What we know of these formulae in their earliest state is derived from what we can piece together from the quotations, more or less scattered, which are found in such writers, for example, as Irenaeus and Tertullian.

(3) Though no uniform type of Creed can be surely recognized among the earlier Eastern writers before the Council of Nicaea, an argument which has been considered by many to disprove the existence of any Apostolic formula, it is a striking fact that the Eastern Churches in the fourth century are found in possession of a Creed which reproduces with variations the old Roman type. This fact is fully admitted by such Protestant authorities as Harnack (in Hauck's *Realencyclopädie*, I, 747) and Kattenbusch (I, 380 sq.; II, 194 sq., and 737 sq.). It is obvious that these data would harmonize very well with the theory that a

primitive Creed had been delivered to the Christian community of Rome, either by Sts. Peter and Paul themselves or by their immediate successors, and in the course of time had spread throughout the world.

(4) Furthermore note that towards the end of the second century we can extract from the writings of St. Irenaeus in southern Gaul and of Tertullian in far-off Africa two almost complete Creeds agreeing closely both with the old Roman Creed (R), as we know it from Rufinus, and with one another. It will be useful to translate from Burn (Introduction to the Creeds, pp. 50, 51) his tabular presentation of the evidence in the case of Tertullian. Cf. MacDonald in "Ecclesiastical Review", February, 1903.

THE OLD ROMAN CREED AS QUOTED BY TERTULLIAN (c. 200).

De Virg. Vel. , i (P.L., II, 889).	Adv. Prax. , ii (P.L., II, 156).	De Praescr. , xiii and xxxvi (P.L., II, 26, 49).
(1) Believing in one God Almighty, maker of the world,	(1) We believe one only God,	(1) I believe in God, the maker of the world,
(2) and His Son, Jesus Christ,	(2) and the son of God Jesus Christ,	(2) the Word, called his Son, Jesus Christ,
(3) born of the Virgin Mary,	(3) born of the Virgin,	(3) by the Spirit and power of God the Father made flesh in Mary's womb, and born of her,
(4) crucified under Pontius Pilate,	(4) Him suffered, dead, and buried,	(4) fastened to a cross,
(5) on the third day brought to life from the dead,	(5) brought back to life,	(5) He rose the third day,
(6) taken again into heaven,	(6) was caught up into heaven,	(6) received in heaven,
(7) sitting now at the right hand of the Father,	(7) sits at the right hand of the Father,	(7) sat at the right hand of the Father,
(8) will come to judge the living and the dead	(8) will come to judge the living and the dead,	(8) will come with glory to take the good into life eternal, and condemn the wicked to perpetual fire,
	(9) who has sent from the Father the Holy Ghost.	(9) sent the vicarious power of His Holy Spirit,
		(10) to govern believers [In this passage articles 9 and 10 precede 8.]
(12) through resurrection of the flesh.		(12) restoration of the flesh.

Such a table serves admirably to show how incomplete is the evidence provided by mere quotations of the Creed, and how cautiously it must be dealt with. Had we possessed only the "De Virginibus Velandis", we might have said that the article concerning the Holy Ghost did not form part of Tertullian's Creed. Had the "De Virginibus Velandis" been destroyed, we should have declared that Tertullian knew nothing of the clause "suffered under Pontius Pilate". And so forth.

(5) It must not be forgotten that while no explicit statement of the composition of a formula of faith by the Apostles is forthcoming before the close of the fourth century, earlier Fathers such as Tertullian and St. Irenaeus insist in a very emphatic way that the "rule of faith" is part of the apostolic tradition. Tertullian in particular in his "De Praescriptione", after showing that by this rule (regitla doctrinae) he understands something practically identical with our Creed, insists that the rule was instituted by Christ and delivered

to us (tradita) as from Christ by the Apostles (Migne. P.L., II, 26, 27, 33, 50). As a conclusion from this evidence the present writer, agreeing on the whole with such authorities as Semeria and Batiffol that we cannot safely affirm the Apostolic composition of the Creed, considers at the same time that to deny the possibility of such origin is to go further than our data at present warrant. A more pronouncedly conservative view is urged by MacDonald in the "Ecclesiastical Review", January to July, 1903.

II. THE OLD ROMAN CREED

The Catechism of the Council of Trent apparently assumes the Apostolic origin of our existing Creed, but such a pronouncement has no dogmatic force and leaves opinion free. Modern apologists, in defending the claim to apostolicity, extend it only to the old Roman form (R), and are somewhat hampered by the objection that if R had been really held to be the inspired utterance of the Apostles, it would not have been modified at pleasure by various local churches (Rufinus, for example, testifies to such expansion in the case of the Church of Aquileia), and in particular would never have been entirely supplanted by T, our existing form. The difference between the two will best be seen by printing them side by side.

R.

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty;
2. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;
3. Who was born of (de) the Holy Ghost and of (ex) the Virgin Mary;
4. Crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried;
5. The third day He rose again from the dead,
6. He ascended into Heaven,
7. Sitteth at the right hand of the Father,
8. Whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
9. And in the Holy Ghost,
10. The Holy Church,
11. The forgiveness of sins,
12. The resurrection of the body.

T.

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty *Creator of heaven and earth*;
2. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;
3. Who was *conceived* by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;
4. *Suffered* under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, *dead*, and buried;
5. *He descended into hell*; the third day He rose again from the dead,
6. He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of *God the Father Almighty*,
7. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
8. *I believe* in the Holy Ghost,
9. The Holy *Catholic* Church, *the communion of saints*,
10. The forgiveness of sins,
11. The resurrection of the body, and
12. *life everlasting*.

Neglecting minor points of difference, which indeed for their adequate discussion would require a study of the Latin text, we may note that R does not contain the clauses "Creator of heaven and earth", "descended into hell", "the communion of saints", "life everlasting", nor the words "conceived", "suffered", "died", and "Catholic". Many of these additions, but not quite all, were probably known to St. Jerome in Palestine (c. 380.—See Morin in *Revue Benedictine*, January, 1904) and about the same date to the Dalmatian, Niceta (Burn, *Niceta of Remesiana*, 1905). Further additions appear in the creeds of southern Gaul at the beginning of the next century, but T probably assumed its final shape in Rome itself some

time before A.D. 700 (Burn, Introduction, 239; and Journal of Theol. Studies, July, 1902). We know nothing certain as to the reasons which led to the adoption of T in preference to R.

III. ARTICLES OF THE CREED

Although T really contains more than twelve articles, it has always been customary to maintain the twelfefold division which originated with, and more strictly applies to, R. A few of the more debated items call for some brief comment. The first article of R presents a difficulty. From the language of Tertullian it is contended that R originally omitted the word Father and added the word one; thus, "I believe in one God Almighty". Hence Zahn infers an underlying Greek original still partly surviving in the Nicene Creed, and holds that the first article of the Creed suffered modification to counteract the teachings of the Monarchian heresy. It must suffice to say here that although the original language of R may possibly be Greek, Zahn's premises regarding the wording of the first article are not accepted by such authorities as Kattenbusch and Harnack.

Another textual difficulty turns upon the inclusion of the word only in the second article; but a more serious question is raised by Harnack's refusal to recognize, either in the first or second article of R, any acknowledgment of a preexistent or eternal relation of Sonship and Fatherhood of the Divine Persons. The Trinitarian theology of later ages, he declares, has read into the text a meaning which it did not possess for its framers. And he says, again, with regard to the ninth article, that the writer of the Creed did not conceive the Holy Ghost as a Person, but as a power and gift. "No proof can be shown that about the middle of the second century the Holy Ghost was believed in as a Person." It is impossible to do more here than direct the reader to such Catholic answers as those of Baumer and Blume; and among Anglicans to the very convenient volume of Swete. To quote but one illustration of early patristic teaching, St. Ignatius at the end of the first century repeatedly refers to a Sonship which lies beyond the limits of time: "Jesus Christ came forth from one Father", "was with the Father before the world was" (Magn., 6 and 7). While, with regard to the Holy Ghost, St. Clement of Rome at a still earlier date writes: "As God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and the Holy Spirit, the faith and hope of the elect" (cap. lviii). This and other like passages clearly indicate the consciousness of a distinction between God and the Spirit of God analogous to that recognized to exist between God and the Logos. A similar appeal to early writers must be made in connection with the third article, that affirming the Virgin Birth. Harnack admits that the words "conceived of the Holy Ghost" (T), really add nothing to the "born of the Holy Ghost" (It). He admits consequently that "at the beginning of the second century this belief in the miraculous conception had become an established part of Church tradition". But he denies that the doctrine formed part of the earliest Gospel preaching, and he thinks it consequently impossible that this article could have been formulated in the first century. We can only answer here that the burden of proof rests with him, and that the teaching of the Apostolic Fathers, as quoted by Swete and others, points to a very different conclusion.

Rufinus (c. 400) explicitly states that the words descended into hell were not in the Roman Creed, but existed in that of Aquileia. They are also in some Greek Creeds and in that of St. Jerome, lately recovered by Morin. It was no doubt a remembrance of I Peter, iii, 19, as interpreted by Irenaeus and others, which caused their insertion. The clause, "communion of saints", which appears first in Niceta and St. Jerome, should unquestionably be regarded as a mere expansion of the article "holy Church". Saints, as used here, originally meant no more than the living members of the Church (see the article by Morin in

Revue d'histoire et de littérature ecclésiastique, May, 1904, and the monograph of J. P. Kirsch, Die Lehre von der Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, 1900). For the rest we can only note that the word "Catholic", which appears first in Niceta, is dealt with separately; and that "forgiveness of sins" is probably to be understood primarily of baptism and should be compared with the "one baptism for the forgiveness of sins" of the Nicene Creed.

IV. USE AND AUTHORITY OF THE CREED

As already indicated, we must turn to the ritual of Baptism for the most primitive and important use of the Apostles' Creed. It is highly probable that the Creed was originally nothing else than a profession of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of the baptismal formula. The fully developed ceremonial which we find in the seventh Roman Ordo, and the Gelasian Sacramentary, and which probably represents the practice of the fifth century, assigns a special day of "scrutiny", for the imparting of the Creed (*traditio symboli*), and another, immediately before the actual administration of the Sacrament, for the *redditio symboli*, when the neophyte gave proof of his proficiency by reciting the Creed aloud. An imposing address accompanied the *traditio* and in an important article, Dom de Puniet (*Revue d'histoire Ecclésiastique*, October, 1904) has recently shown that this address is almost certainly the composition of St. Leo the Great. Further, three questions (*interrogations*) were put to the candidate in the very act of baptism, which questions are themselves only a summary of the oldest form of the Creed. Both the recitation of the Creed and the questions are still retained in the *Ordo baptizandi* of our actual Roman ritual; while the Creed in an interrogative form appears also in the Baptismal Service of the Anglican "Book of Common Prayer". Outside of the administration of baptism the Apostles' Creed is recited daily in the Church, not only at the beginning of Matins and Prime and the end of Compline, but also ferially in the course of Prime and Compline. Many medieval synods enjoin that it must be learnt by all the faithful, and there is a great deal of evidence to show that, even in such countries as England and France, it was formerly learnt in Latin. As a result of this intimate association with the liturgy and teaching of the Church, the Apostles' Creed has always been held to have the authority of an *ex cathedra* utterance. It is commonly taught that all points of doctrine contained in it are part of the Catholic Faith, and cannot be called in question under pain of heresy (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. i, art. 9). Hence Catholics have generally been content to accept the Creed in the form, and in the sense, in which it has been authoritatively expounded by the living voice of the Church. For those Protestants who accept it only in so far as it represents the evangelical teaching of the Apostolic Age, it became a matter of supreme importance to investigate its original form and meaning. This explains the preponderating amount of research devoted to this subject by Protestant scholars as compared with the contributions of their Catholic rivals

[Nicene and Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed](#)

Nicene and Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.—The origin and history of the Nicene Creed are set forth in the articles: [Councils of Nicaea](#); [Arius](#); [Arianism](#); [Eusebius of Caesarea](#); [Filioque](#). As approved in amplified form at the Council of Constantinople (381) q. v., it is the profession of the Christian Faith common to the Catholic Church, to all the Eastern Churches separated from Rome, and to most of the

Protestant denominations. Soon after the Council of Nicaea a new formula of faith were composed, most of them variations of the Nicene Symbol, to meet new phases of Arianism. There were at least four before the Council of Sardica in 341, and in that council a new form was presented and inserted in the Acts, though not accepted by the council. The Nicene Symbol, however, continued to be the only one in use among the defenders of the Faith. Gradually it came to be recognized as the proper profession of faith for candidates for baptism. Its alteration into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan formula, the one now in use, is usually ascribed to the Council of Constantinople, since the Council of Chalcedon (451), which designated this symbol as "The Creed of the Council of Constantinople of 381" had it twice read and inserted in its Acts. The historians Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret do not mention this, although they do record that the bishops who remained at the council after the departure of the Macedonians confirmed the Nicene faith. Hefele (II, 9) admits the possibility of our present creed being a condensation of the "Tome" (*Greek: tomos*) i.e. the exposition of the doctrines concerning the Trinity made by the Council of Constantinople; but he prefers the opinion of Remi Ceillier and Tillemont tracing the new formula to the "Anchored" of Epiphanius written in 374. Hort, Caspari, Harnack, and others are of the opinion that the Constantinopolitan form did not originate at the Council of Constantinople, because it is not in the Acts of the council of 381, but was inserted there at a later date; because Gregory Nazianzen who was at the council mentions only the Nicene formula adverting to its incompleteness about the Holy Ghost, showing that he did not know of the Constantinopolitan form which supplies this deficiency; and because the Latin Fathers apparently know nothing of it before the middle of the fifth century.

The following is a literal translation of the Greek text of the Constantinopolitan form, the brackets indicating the words altered or added in the Western liturgical form in present use:

"We believe (I believe) in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages. (God of God) light of light, true God of true God. Begotten not made, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary and was made man; was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose Kingdom there shall be no end. And (I believe) in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father (and the Son), who together with the Father and the Son is to be adored and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We confess (I confess) one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for (I look for) the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen".

In this form the Nicene article concerning the Holy Ghost is enlarged; several words, notably the two clauses "of the substance of the Father" and "God of God", are omitted as also are the anathemas; ten clauses are added; and in five places the words are differently located. In general the two forms contain what is common to all the baptismal formulas in the early Church. Vossius (1577-1649) was the first to detect the similarity between the creed set forth in the "Anchored" and the baptismal formula of the Church of Jerusalem. Hort (1876) held that the symbol is a revision of the Jerusalem formula, in which the most important Nicene statements concerning the Holy Ghost have been inserted. The author of the revision may have been St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386, q. v.). Various hypotheses are offered to account for the tradition that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan symbol originated with the Council of Constantinople,

but none of them is satisfactory. Whatever be its origin, the fact is that the Council of Chalcedon (451) attributed it to the Council of Constantinople, and if it was not actually composed in that council, it was adopted and authorized by the Fathers assembled as a true expression of the Faith. The history of the creed is completed in the article [Filioque](#).

J. WLHELM