

Thus the opinion of theologians, the practice of the Church, are confirmed by the eminently rational theory of Suarez and Vincent de Lerins. We are to conclude then that the Catholic *creed* may grow in extension, according as the Church, by her infallible authority, increases the number of truths formally *defined*, and that, consequently, a revealed truth, which never made part of the creed properly so called, may, by a providential order of things, be placed in a condition which authorizes the Holy Catholic Church to stamp it with the immutable seal of a defined dogma. Whether the belief in the Immaculate Conception of the holy Mother of God is now in this condition, is what we are about to consider.

Suarez feared not to say to the men of his age: "I affirm that this truth may be defined whenever the Church thinks proper; because the Sovereign Pontiffs Sixtus IV and Pius V, in their Constitutions, and the Fathers of Basle, in their Declaration, suppose that the controversy may be decided in both senses, and, moreover, because this truth of the supernatural order may attain such a position that the holy Church, without any new or explicit revelation, may find sufficient reasons to define it dogmatically, in virtue of a tacit and implicit revelation, sufficiently manifest."¹

¹ Dico veritatem hanc posse definiri ab Ecclesiâ, quando id expedire judicaverit . . . Nam Ecclesiam posse hanc controver-