

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE CATHOLIC
TRUTHS HIDDEN UNDER
CERTAIN ARTICLES OF THE
GREED OF THE CHURCH OF ROME**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649055555

An Inquiry Into the Catholic Truths Hidden Under Certain Articles of the Creed of the Church of Rome by Charles Smith

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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THE CREED
OF
THE CHURCH OF ROME.

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Pt. I.

LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XLIV.

C 1349.38

$19\frac{1}{2}.36$

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PREFACE.

HAVING in a former publication on National Religion been led to consider the encroachments of the Church of Rome, I ventured to suggest, that in compensation for the injuries we have received we might possibly extract some good from a patient investigation of the peculiarities of her creed. I then illustrated the mode of obtaining that good by showing that there appeared to be a truth hidden under the dogma of Supererogation. The present Work pretends to be little more than a series of the same illustrations; it will however comprise all the peculiarities of the Romish Faith as they are contained in the Twelve last Articles of Pope Pius's Creed; and as these Articles are professedly gathered from the Decrees of what is called the Council of Trent, I have made such use of the proceedings of the Council, as is necessary to explain the intent of each Article in the Creed.

The plan of the Work is as follows: each Article, or where the Article consists of two or more subjects, each subject, is treated in the same manner and according to Four Divisions: the First Division contains the Article of Pope Pius's Creed and its reference to the corresponding Decree of the Council of Trent; the Second contains a suggestion of the Catholic Truth probably hidden under the Romish Article; the Third proposes an inquiry into the origin and progress of the particular error; and the Fourth points out some of the evils, which are connected with the preference of the Romish Error to the Catholic Truth.

The controversy with Rome seems to have lately assumed a more desultory and morbid character, which requires some such plan as the foregoing for its correction; the present attempt pretends to be an illustration rather than a thorough execution of the plan; and its publication will be best answered, if it provoke more diligent students and more thoughtful minds to fill up the details of the plan for themselves. I am not aware that this plan has been systematically followed in the great and unanswerable writings of our Island Churches, which refute the peculiarities of the Creed of Rome; indeed the recurrence of the controversy, and latterly with a profession of philosophy, favours the

opinion which I have ventured to form, that in the ruins of Rome, which our standard controversial writings have caused, may be found some buried truths; and that it is this treasure hidden under the ruins, which accounts for that almost unconscious attachment to them manifested from time to time by persons, who are thoroughly convinced of the idols of Rome and the justice of their demolition. If those truths are sought after and really found, and gathered up, then I believe nothing will remain but the ruins in their proved worthlessness, and that the truths themselves will be found in perfect harmony, and indeed identity, with the Articles and usages of our Island Churches. It will be observed that this inquiry therefore is not into the whole Catholic Faith, but into such truths or portions of them as are hidden under Romish errors, and tend to make those errors permanent and attractive.

There is one truth, which is hidden under all the additional Articles of Faith decreed at the Council of Trent, viz. the truth of the *authority* of the Church. This authority is misused by Rome presuming to establish and ordain corruptions, and to set them side by side with those Articles of the Faith, which were once for all delivered to the saints, and of which Rome and all other Churches are the executive keepers and witnesses.

One advantage of the present inquiry is, that it tends to set forth real Protestantism or witnessing for truth against its caricature and corruption, and to distinguish it from that popular Protestantism, which would pull down the fabric of Rome, without carefully culling the treasures which may be hidden in the ruins. The motto of such a Protestant is "*Diruit*," the spiritual Protestant would rather earn, as his motto, "*Diruit, edificat*:" it is true wisdom never to pluck a growing error from the minds of men, without transplanting into its place its ordained successor—a vigorous and fragrant truth. The careless demolition, by popular Protestantism, has so offended some members of the Church, that they feel disposed to give the same treatment to Protestantism itself; and while they condemn the rash zeal, which confounds truth and error in one blind protest against Rome, are themselves too little careful to discern true Protestantism, which is also a truth hidden under its more popular namesake. But the rash zeal of popular Protestantism is not peculiar to those, who are charged with a tendency to idolize the Reformation; and they who condemn it, if they wish to pass a righteous judgment, should condemn it without partiality, wherever it appears. *Now the Romish Council of Trent is flagrantly guilty of it.* If we attend to the arguments used in the

Assembly, we shall find that the drift of those speeches, which were most popular and most prevailing, was *to protest against the Protestants*, and to give up the witness for the truth itself, if the anti-papal party were known to hold it, and called for its assertion by a General Council. If the voice of real Protestantism and Catholic theology was heard in that meeting, it was immediately silenced by the legates of the Pope, or drowned by the acclamations of his adherents. Trentism there protested against titular Protestantism, and made such protest the basis of many of its decrees. This ultra-Protestantism of Trent should not therefore escape the condemnation, which has been too partially passed upon what is called ultra-Protestantism in our own days.

In seeking after truths hidden under corruptions we should be most careful to avoid that vain philosophy, which would excuse corruptions by calling them fond and frail modes of holding truth, so that good, passing through the hands of men, may innocently become evil,—error innocently flow from truth. They, who know the truth, know also that no lie is of the truth, as the beloved Apostle tells us in his Catholic epistle: “I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.”*

* 1 St. John, ii. 21.