

An Anglican Perspective

A Brief Commentary on the Articles of Religion

A Training Course
for Clergy and Lay

St. Andrew's Theological Seminary
Episcopal Church in the Philippines

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Preface

We are Episcopalians, part of the world-wide Anglican Communion. But what does it mean to be an Anglican? What is distinctive about it? Are we just like Roman Catholics except that our priests can marry and we are not under the authority of the Pope? There's much more to it than that. Careful reading of our Catechism will explain a lot but, without further instruction, it will not immediately reveal where we differ from other churches. The Articles of Religion (at first forty-two in number, later thirty-nine) issued in the 16th century constituted a 'position paper' showing where the newly reformed and independent Church of England stood in relation to other churches. These Articles can be found towards the back of our ECP Prayer Book and, more conveniently, among the 'Historical Documents of the Church' included after the Catechism in the green booklet published by the ECP Executive Council in 2003. That they are in Elizabethan English does not make for easy reading, so they tend to be ignored by most people. But they can be 'decoded' to reveal the standpoint of our 'Mother Church', the Church of England, at its inception on many important matters: belief about God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Bible, the creeds, salvation, the Church, its ministry and sacraments, a Christian attitude to civil authority, to possessions and more. They do indeed provide an Anglican perspective. In this manual we shall study the Articles, grouped according to subject, and see what they can teach us.

I first heard of the Articles when I was a teenager beginning to explore Christian truths. I was a student mixing with members of other churches, and my father, an Anglican priest, wishing me to hear an Anglican viewpoint would sometimes quote some of the Articles to me, and he insisted I read large chunks of E. J. Bicknell's commentary on them. They were remote from my teenage interests and I thought no more about them – but a seed had been sown. When in 2008, so many years later, Dean Patrick Tanhuanco asked me to teach a course on them at St. Andrew's Seminary, I was glad to make a systematic study of them using Bicknell's commentary (3rd edn, 1955), the even older commentary by W. H. Griffith Thomas (1930) and later the new commentary of Gerald Bray (2009) as well as other relevant material. What did my students make of the course? Once they had overcome the challenge of the Elizabethan English they said they found it valuable and now understood more of what it meant to be an Anglican.

In the SATS lay-training series I hope this manual will be used in coordination with *An Outline of the Faith: Introducing Christian Doctrine*, for at the end of each chapter of that book the relevant Articles are referred to – now here is a brief commentary explaining them. I hope it will also be of interest to clergy and lay people just wishing to find out more about their Anglican heritage. It can be read by individuals or studied in groups. Either way, Thomas Cranmer and others who assisted in the compilation of the Articles, would be gratified!

May God richly bless your study.

Andrew Daunton-Fear
SATS Lay-Training Program Coordinator
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Introduction

History

In the early 16th century the Western Church was in ferment. The scholars of the Renaissance were challenging Rome's credibility; in particular Erasmus, in his *In Praise of Folly* (1509), bitterly criticized monasticism and the corruptions that had crept into the Church, and by publishing his Greek New Testament (1516), showed inaccuracies in Jerome's Latin translation (the 'Vulgate'), the form in which the Medieval Church knew the Bible. From Wittenberg in 1517 Luther challenged the authority of Rome and his writings were rapidly spread by the printing press, soon reaching other universities of Europe including Cambridge, where Cranmer and other scholars were much impressed.

Scholars of Oxford, Cambridge and some continental universities declared Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon invalid and in 1533, in defiance of the Pope, Cranmer, by then Archbishop of Canterbury, married Henry to Ann Boleyn. Excommunication by the pope swiftly followed. In a series of Acts the British parliament made payments and appeals to Rome illegal and, in 1534, Henry declared himself 'Supreme Head' of the now independent Church of England. In this new situation what were the members of the church to believe and do?

In 1536 the Church issued the *Ten Articles*, a real hotchpotch of old and new learning.¹ In 1537 *The Institution of a Christian Man* (the 'Bishops' Book') followed and, in 1543, the more polished publication *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man* (the 'King's Book'); the latter, like Henry's *Six Articles* (1538), was a reactionary document as the king was doctrinally still a Catholic at heart. Only after Henry's death in 1547 could Cranmer and other like-minded clerics and senior laity carry the Reformation cause forward. In the brief reign of the sickly boy king Edward VI (1547-1553) in quick succession there appeared the Homilies (1547), the English Prayer Book (1549, 1552), and the Forty-Two Articles (1553) in Latin with an English translation.² A royal proclamation required all clergy, schoolmasters and members of the universities to subscribe to the Articles. Three weeks later Edward VI died and his embittered Catholic sister Mary came to the throne. The realm was forcibly returned to Rome until her death in 1558, when she was succeeded by Elizabeth I, who continued the path of reform, though with some moderation, trying to keep her realm united. She declared herself 'Supreme Governor' of the Church of England. The 1552 English Prayer Book was restored in 1559, slightly modified, and in 1563 Convocation re-issued the Articles, which after revision numbered thirty-nine. Elizabeth wanted certain alterations and their final form was only published in 1571; all clergy had to subscribe to them.

Purpose of the Articles

- To define the doctrinal position of the Church of England in relation to the controversies of 16th century.
- To instruct the clergy and preserve the church from heresy.

¹ For further details see E. J. Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, 3rd edn rev. by H. J. Carpenter (London: Longmans, 1955), pp. 8-9.

² Gerald Bray points out that Latin was the theological language of the day and the English translation was only approximate and had no formal authority of its own – *The Faith We Confess: An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* (London: Latimer Trust, 2009), p. 9.

- To provide a background against which the Prayer Book was to be interpreted.

Their emphasis on the authority of the Bible showed them to be a product of the Reformation, and they reveal the influence of Luther and Calvin; but, like the Prayer Book, they sought to conserve what was good from the past: the historic creeds, an episcopal polity, and church traditions not contrary to Scripture. Congregationalist scholar Erik Routley says of them:

The Articles are, like the Church of England itself, a meeting place of Catholic and Protestant doctrine which is quite unique in the records of Christian confessions.³

Subscription

The form of words used for subscribing to the articles:

- In 1583 Archbishop Whitgift in his *Three Articles* gave the wording with which clergy were to subscribe ‘willingly and *ex animo* (‘from the heart’) I...do believe all the Articles...to be agreeable to the Word of God [the Bible].’
- In 1628 King Charles I’s Royal Declaration prefaced to the Articles declared they ‘do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God’s Word’ and required *all* his subjects, not just the clergy, to hold to them.
- The Clerical Subscription Act (1865) simplified the wording of the assent and stipulated that every person instituted to a benefice must, on his first Sunday in office (or on such a day as his bishop specifies) read the Articles before the congregation and then make the declaration of assent.
- Those now ordained in the Church of England have simply to declare before the bishop that they believe in ‘the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England [the preface to this mentions first the Thirty-Nine Articles] bear witness.’

Differences from Creeds

Bicknell declares:

Creeds are universal and of abiding value; the Articles are local and ‘only of temporary value’. Creeds were designed for all Christians; the Articles were primarily ‘tests for teachers’.⁴

But J. I. Packer maintains:

The Articles may be regarded as ‘the domestic creed of the Church of England’.⁵

He speaks further of the similarity between creeds and confessions:

Creedal and confessional statements emerge at times of crisis in church life, when it seems that, unless the apostolic faith is clarified afresh, error will simply overwhelm it.⁶

How far is each right?

³ Erik Routley, *Creeds and Confessions: The Reformation and its Modern Ecumenical Implications* (London: Duckworth, 1962), p. 104.

⁴ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 19.

⁵ J. I. Packer, ‘The Status of the Articles’ in *The Articles of the Church of England*, ed. J. E. De Satgé et al (London: Mowbray, 1964), p. 40.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45

The Articles in the Anglican Communion

The Lambeth Conference of 1888, resolution 19, stated that new Anglican provinces need not ‘be bound to accept in their entirety the Thirty-Nine Articles,’ though they should give ‘satisfactory evidence that they hold substantially the same doctrine as our own and that their clergy subscribe Articles in accordance with the express statements of our own standards of doctrine and worship.’ Few provinces have done this, though a number have continued to reprint the Articles, some making amendments (the ECP has taken over PECUSA’s 1801 revision of the Articles – see Appendix 5). The Articles tend to be viewed as important ‘historical documents’.

Criticisms of the Articles

1. The Articles are a ‘Calvinistic document’ which jars with our ‘catholic liturgy’ (hence Newman’s ‘Tract 90’, see Appendix 3 below). *Yet, as we shall see, this is grossly exaggerated, and they more often share a Lutheran position.*

2. Our attitude to Scripture has changed since their time:

The Articles rest upon the implicit assumption that Christian doctrine may be directly read off from certain truths or propositions divinely revealed in the words of Scripture.⁷ (G. W. H. Lampe)

The point he is making is that, since the advent of biblical criticism, we cannot accept uncritically the words of Scripture. This needs bearing in mind but the difficulty can be exaggerated – it scarcely prevents us from widespread quoting the Scripture elsewhere, e.g. in our liturgy.

3. Eucharistic doctrine has moved on since then.

One might think, for instance, of the statements of the ‘Final Report’ (1981) of the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). This point needs examination when we consider the sacraments (particularly Articles 28 and 31).

4. Many relevant matters today do not feature in the Articles, e.g. the Christian duty to the secular state, urbanization and technology, ecumenism, science and religion.

Of course no historical document provides for all aspects of later life.

Our Treatment of the Articles

For convenience, in this study we shall group the Articles together under seven broad headings: The Godhead, Christian Revelation, Sin and Salvation, The Church, Ministry and Worship, The Sacraments, and Living in the World. Individual Articles will sometimes appear out of number sequence. So, to find out where any particular article is being studied, it will be essential for you to consult the Contents page.

⁷ G. W. H. Lampe, ‘The Revision of the Articles’, in De Satgé, *Articles*, p. 99.

The Godhead

In this chapter we shall study the first five articles. Together they show that, in its faith, Anglicanism is a true child of the Ancient Church.

Article 1 Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

This article dates from 1553; its wording is close to that of Article 1 of the Lutheran Augsburg Confession (1530).

This article is a fine, brief but comprehensive statement about the Godhead. It makes no attempt to prove the existence of God. It accepts that God is simply there (cf. Ex. 3:13-15). Anthropology has shown that belief in a Supreme Deity is universal. This must either be an 'innate idea' (one that all humans are born with) or something instinctively deduced by rational human kind from the world around. This article is an emphatic statement of monotheism. Israel may have originally believed there were many gods but one was superior, Yahweh, who alone deserved their allegiance (cf. Ps. 82:1-7, 86:8-9; Ex. 20:3).⁸ But later it is clear they thought the gods of other nations were mere idols, not true gods at all (cf. Ps. 96:4-5, 115:3-8, Is. 44:12-20, 45:5-6). This monotheism was virtually unique in the ancient world as was the forbidding of making idols to represent God (Ex. 20:4-6). Monotheism is surely superior to polytheism for, if there are many gods, there is always the possibility they will fall out and fight one another!

The article states that God is everlasting (Ps. 90:2) and without body (Jn. 4:24) or parts,⁹ but can we really believe he is without passions? Certainly he is not subject to change of form or unpredictable fits of rage, but is it true to say he is without feelings? The Latin version of the article here uses the word *impassibilis* meaning literally 'not susceptible to pain', but as Bray comments, this 'was never intended to make God remote from human concerns but rather to insist that his power and sovereignty can in no way be diminished by a suffering inflicted from outside himself'.¹⁰ Indeed God is often said in the Bible to have wrath, sorrow, love, even jealousy, but these are not passing emotions rather part of his unchanging character (cf. Jas. 1:17).¹¹ And because he is 'the maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible' we believe him to be 'of infinite power, wisdom and goodness'. Astronomers today give us mindboggling figures for the size of the universe. Its radius, they say, so far as it can be observed, is around

⁸ The Hebrew word for 'god' *elohim* is in fact plural. It could also be that this was a first hint of what Christians later recognized to be the trinity of persons within the Godhead.

⁹ The Latin *impartibilis* means 'unable to be divided'. The Mormons are then quite wrong to say God (the Father) is made of flesh and bones.

¹⁰ *Faith We Confess*, p. 20.

¹¹ Bicknell, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 28. This is explored further in *We Believe in God: A Report by the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 1987), pp. 157-160.

435,000,000,000,000,000,000 km. But it was not always so big. The galaxies are observed to be travelling outwards from an initial point where, some 13,800 million years ago, a mighty atom of all the matter in the world exploded – the BIG BANG!

But how can God be thought to be of infinite power, wisdom *and goodness* when there is so much suffering in the world? Well, what causes the suffering? Wars result surely from *human* greed and aggression – two countries or tribes want the same piece of territory and so they fight for it. Some sickness results from unhealthy lifestyles – overeating, drunkenness, smoking, drug addiction, lack of exercise, inadequate sleep and so on. Other sickness is a mystery. Some natural disasters also come from a human origin – polluting the atmosphere or sea, deforestation, legal or otherwise, leading to soil erosion and slippage. But volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis and so on seem to come from the constitution of the physical world. Can there be a God of love who is responsible for such destruction and pain? Well, do not all physical objects have positive and negative aspects? Wood is hard and therefore suitable for making strong structures: house frames, doors, tables and chairs, but, because it's hard, if a branch from a tree falls on people it can crush them. Geologists tell us our globe has a molten core on top of which are plates of rock. These plates slowly move around. Where they clash they produce earthquakes – but also mountain ranges. The very same geological processes which produce a beautiful world of mountains and valleys also gives us earthquakes and volcanoes which, when people live nearby, destroy lives and property. The report of the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England, *We Believe in God* (1987) uses the analogy of an artist:

The artist in any field gives being to a work of art. It is he or she who makes it what it is...it is out of the artist's spontaneity that the work of art comes into being. But that spontaneity must be expressed within some kind of form – a canvas of a particular size, a certain verse convention. The artist chooses the form; but the form once chosen exercises a degree of constraint or discipline on his or her spontaneity.

If we now apply this model to God, we may find that it helps us to approach some aspects of the age-old problem of evil. Having freely chosen to create something in a particular 'medium', God may no longer be free to escape the constraints which that medium imposes...¹²

But overall this world is a wonderful scene for the development of a wide variety of life forms. If it were not, our world population would be decreasing whereas it continually *increases*. Moreover facing disasters of huge proportions makes human beings realize their own littleness; it causes some of them to pray to a God they have long ignored; it makes the survivors work together; it brings out compassion in the hearts of others who have been spared the disaster. And we Christians do indeed believe God will compensate in the next world all those who have suffered unjustly in this one.

Our article goes on to speak of the constitution of the Godhead, saying its unity consists of three divine Persons sharing one substance, power and eternity, 'the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost'. 'Ghost' is from the old English 'Ghest' (cf. German *Geist*). The formula of 'three persons in one substance' was first put forward by the North African theologian Tertullian in the early 3rd century. He also invented the word 'trinity'. In the 5th century the great Augustine of Hippo, recognizing that no formula is totally

¹² *We Believe in God*, p. 151.

adequate to explain God's nature, commented, 'We speak of three Persons...lest nothing should be said.'¹³ And he put forward helpful analogies: the Trinity is like -

- An eternal love affair in which the Father is the lover, the Son the one loved, the Spirit the love between them.
- The human mind which consists of three parts: memory, understanding and will.

Belief in the Trinity is the distinctive Christian way of understanding God. We are not thinking of mathematics for $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ not $1!$ But of organic unity as found for instance in a piece of fruit consisting of skin, flesh and seeds. Early Christians came to this belief through their *experience*. John Stott puts it like this:

The apostles were all Jews, who had been brought up to believe in one God (over against the surrounding polytheism), who was both the creator of the world and the covenant God of Israel. Then they met Jesus. As they spent time in his presence, listened to him and watched him, they became convinced that he was the Messiah, yes and more than the Messiah, for he forgave people's sins and even claimed to be the judge of the world. Instinctively, they knew that he was worthy of their worship, in other words that he was God. Yet he was not the Father, because he spoke about the Father and prayed to the Father. Then he began to tell them of somebody else, whom he called 'the Comforter' or 'the Spirit of truth', who would take his place after he had left them, and who in fact did come on the Day of Pentecost with the fullness of divine grace and power. So it was the facts of their own observation which compelled them to believe in the Trinity. These historical events and experiences left them no alternative.¹⁴

The Nicene Creed speaks of Jesus as being 'of one Being with' the Father. The Greek original uses the word *homoousios* meaning 'of the same substance'. Certain Eastern theologians later applied this term also to the Holy Spirit.

Article 2 **Of the Word or Son of God, which was made Very Man**

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men.

This article dates from 1553 and reflects the Augsburg Confession (1530), but the words 'begotten ...with the Father' were added in 1563 from the Lutheran Confession of Württemberg to exclude ancient heresies about the person of Christ being revived by some Anabaptists.

The first sentence makes multiple affirmations of the divinity of Christ. Christ is the Son of God (Mk. 14:61-62, Rom. 1:4) and the Word of the Father (Jn. 1). The next three statements all reflect the Nicene Creed. The heretic Arius said the statement that Christ was begotten by the Father implied there was a beginning of his existence and before that he did not exist. The Nicene bishops responded Christ was 'begotten from everlasting', i.e. begotten before time – he was always part of the Godhead. Arius said that because

¹³ *On the Trinity* 5.9.

¹⁴ John Stott, *Your Confirmation: A Christian Handbook for Adults* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), pp. 55-56.

‘there was when he was not’ divine titles such as ‘Son of God’ were only courtesy titles. The Nicene bishops said, on the contrary, he was truly God,¹⁵ part of the divine substance.

The next phrase reads more smoothly in the Latin of this article which says, ‘(The Son) in the womb of the blessed Virgin, out of her substance assumed human nature’. So Jesus’ humanity came from the Virgin Mary. Jesus was fully God yet also fully man. His human and divine natures were joined in one Person; these natures were never to be divided. This repudiates what was said to be the view of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople (428-431), whose strong assertion that Christ had two distinct natures led to the charge that he separated them, virtually saying God had ‘two sons’!¹⁶

Our article goes on to say it was the one Christ, truly God and truly man, who was crucified as a sacrifice to reconcile the Father to us and to pay not just for the taint inherited by the whole human race from Adam’s original sin but also for our actual sins committed day by day. We shall look carefully at the doctrine of ‘original sin’ when we come to study Article 9. But now let us consider another matter. This article states that Christ suffered ‘to reconcile his Father to us’. This suggests that through Christ’s death on the cross God’s attitude of hostility to us for our sins changed. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1093-1109), declared that only the sacrifice of the divine Christ could pay for the enormity of the offence caused by human sin against Almighty God. The Reformer John Calvin emphasized that God’s *justice* demands punishment for human sin. But others such as Abelard (1079-1142) said that, as God’s fundamental nature is love, and love readily forgives, there is no debt to pay; humans just need repent of their sins and God will forgive them. Which point of view is right?

God’s nature is indeed love (1 Jn. 4:16) and human repentance is of course essential - the apostles appealed for it (Ac. 2:38, 2 Cor. 5:20). But the Bible also speaks of the holiness of God being offended by human sin (Hab. 1:12-13, Is. 59:2), and of the wrath of God punishing wicked behavior (Rom. 1:18-32), the wages of sin being death (Rom. 6:23). We do not need to think of God as a schizophrenic, sometimes loving, sometimes wrathful. On the contrary he still loves erring humans even while he punishes them, as every good parent does while correcting a badly behaved child. Scripture emphasizes it was because of God’s love for the world that he sent his Son to die for its sins (Jn. 3:16). Jesus saw his forthcoming death as paying a ransom for sinners (Mk. 10:45). In the Garden of Gethsemane he surrendered his desire to avoid going through such a horrible ordeal because he was convinced it was God’s will (Mk. 14:36, cf. Is. 53:10). St. Paul says, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them’ (2 Cor. 5:19). Many more texts could be quoted. We must surely see it like this: if God passed over human sin without a response, looking the other way as it were, he would surely be condoning it. His holy nature will not allow that, but his love means he does not simply wish to obliterate sinful humanity – so he sent his own Son (part of his very nature) to pay our penalty. God ‘hates the sin but loves the sinner’ and this was his solution.

¹⁵ ‘Very’ in this Article translates the Latin *verus* which means ‘true’.

¹⁶ Many think, as Nestorius himself claimed, that this unfairly represented his position. From exile he later declared he fully agreed with the declaration of the Council of Chalcedon (451) that Christ was ‘recognized in two natures...without division, without separation, the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union’. The full statement is given as the first of the Historical Documents in the ECP green booklet (2003).

Article 3 **Of the going down of Christ into Hell**

As Christ died for us and was buried, so also it is to be believed that he went down into hell.

Added in 1563 from the Augsburg Confession in place of a longer article written by Cranmer in 1553.¹⁷

The word ‘hell’ is from the Anglo-Saxon *hellan* ‘to cover’, and means the covered or unseen place. In the early English Bibles (including the King James Version) it was used to translate Sheol in the Old Testament and both Hades and Gehenna in the New Testament. Sheol/Hades¹⁸ in popular Jewish belief in Jesus’ day appears to have been divided into two parts: the abode of the righteous (called ‘Abraham’s bosom’ or ‘Paradise’) and the abode of the wicked. The souls of *all* the dead were held there until Judgment Day. Gehenna, the valley of Gehinnom, the refuse tip outside Jerusalem where maggots crawled and fires burned perpetually, provided an apt picture of the place of torment for the wicked after the final Judgment and so was adopted as its name (Mk. 9:47-48).

In 1 Pet. 3:18-20 Christ’s spirit is seen as going to Hades to preach to the wicked drowned in the great flood of Noah’s time (Gen. 6:11-13 - some believe 1 Pet. 4:6 indicates he preached also to righteous spirits but it may well simply be referring back to those mentioned in 3:18-20). This visit of Christ to the underworld, known as the ‘harrowing of hell’, was a favorite subject for art in the Middle Ages. Bicknell sees this teaching as giving hope for those who have died without hearing of Jesus right up to the present. He suggests that bringing the Gospel of Christ to such people may be part of *our own* ministry in the next world!¹⁹

Article 4 **Of the Resurrection of Christ**

Christ did truly arise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all men at the last day.

Form 1553 but with no counterpart in the Augsburg Confession. It lays stress on Jesus’ bodily resurrection to oppose the teaching of the Anabaptists, who regarded Jesus’ humanity as absorbed into his divinity after his resurrection.

Liberal theologian David Jenkins caused an uproar in 1984 when, newly appointed to be Bishop of Durham, he declared that the resurrection of Christ was no ‘conjuring trick with bones’. He said that, though he did not believe Jesus physically rose from the tomb, he yet believed in the risen Christ. But how can you have one without the other? Our gospels firmly declare that it was the very body of Christ that had been crucified that appeared to the disciples. When they were afraid they were seeing a ghost, Jesus showed them his actual body and the wounds he had received on the cross (Lk. 24:36-43, Jn. 20:26-29). This point is strongly affirmed by this article. But we must remember that,

¹⁷ ‘For the body lay in the sepulchre until the resurrection: but his Ghost departing from him was with the ghosts that were in prison, or in hell, and did preach to the same: as the place of St. Peter doth testify.’ Bicknell, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 94.

¹⁸ ‘Sheol’ is the word for the underworld of the spirits of the dead in the Hebrew OT, and ‘Hades’ its Greek translation in the LXX.

¹⁹ Bicknell, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 97.

while there was identity between Christ's crucified and risen bodies, there were also differences. The risen Christ could appear and disappear at will and pass through locked doors (Lk. 24:31, Jn. 20:19). This risen body then ascended into heaven.

What is the evidence for the resurrection of Christ? There are two major points:

- the empty tomb (Lk. 24:1-12, Jn. 20:1-10 etc)²⁰
- the many who saw the risen Christ (1 Cor.15:5-8)

The apostles saw the resurrection of Christ as the supreme demonstration that he was the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). Those who believed in him would share in his conquest of death (Jn. 11:25-26). Christ's resurrection was seen as a fulfilment of Psalm 16:10 which in the Greek translation of the LXX reads: 'You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let your Holy One experience corruption.' (Ac. 2:27, 13:35). So central was Jesus' resurrection to St. Paul's preaching that at Athens local people took him to be promoting a pair of new deities, Jesus and Resurrection! (Ac. 17:18 – in the Greek 'resurrection' is a feminine word *anastasis* from which comes the name Anastasia.)

For those still skeptical Sir Norman Anderson, for many years Professor of Oriental Laws at the University of London and Chairman of the House of Laity of General Synod of the Church of England, cogently examined the alternatives to the resurrection of Christ in his booklet *The Evidence for the Resurrection*.²¹ He had no difficulty in showing that the alternative suggestions: that the tomb was empty because the disciples had stolen the body, that the Jewish or Roman authorities had moved it to safer custody, that the women in their grief had gone to the wrong tomb, and that Jesus did not really die on the cross but revived in the tomb and walked out – all on close examination prove *less* satisfactory explanations of the empty tomb than that Christ really rose from the tomb.

The Ascension of Christ is described only in Ac. 1:9-11, but is foretold in Jn. 6:62, 20:17 and referred to in Eph. 4:8-10, 1 Tim. 3:16 and 1 Pet. 3:22. We assume just that a cloud received him and he disappeared (cloud – symbol of God's presence, cf. Num. 9:15-23, Mk. 9:7 etc), not that he headed like a rocket into outer space! It was a visible sign to stop the disciples expecting more appearances. Bicknell comments, 'Heaven is a state of being, not a locality. The inner meaning of the Ascension is...the final withdrawal into another mode of existence.'²²

That Jesus sits in heaven 'at the right hand of God' was taken by the apostles from Ps. 110:1 (Ac. 2:33-5). It was viewed as the highest place of honor. There, as king, he will reign until all powers are in subjection under his feet (1 Cor. 15:27, Eph. 1:20-2). There, as priest, he prays for us (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 7:25, 9:24).

Jesus spoke of returning as Judge at the Last Day (Mt. 25:31-46 etc) and the apostolic Church declared it (Ac. 17:31, 2 Cor. 5:10). We ourselves may go to him (in death) before that day. The 'Day of Judgment' will establish the ultimate victory of justice.

²⁰ That women were the first witnesses of the empty tomb only makes the gospel accounts more credible because, in Jewish society at that time, a woman's testimony was generally discounted and no-one wanting to win acceptance for the truth of the story would state this point – unless it was undeniably true! See Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1969), p. 374.

²¹ London: IVF, 1950, reprinted up this today.

²² *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 110.

Article 5 **Of the Holy Ghost**

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

This was a new article added in 1563 from the Lutheran Confession of Württemberg (1552), presumably to complete the doctrine of God. The Latin version of this Article has *spiritus sanctus* which today we should translate ‘Holy Spirit’. Again ‘very’ is an over-literal rendering of *verus* which means ‘true’.

The opening of the article follows the Western version of the Nicene Creed: ‘We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son.’ St. Augustine had spoken of the Spirit as ‘proceeding from the Father *and the Son*’. It is thought that copyists added this phrase (just one word in Latin, *filioque*) to the (Nicene) Creed of the Spanish Council of Toledo (589), and gradually it spread throughout the Western Church, being accepted by the papacy in the 11th century. This caused a furious reaction from the Eastern Church which broke off relations with the West in 1054 for its presuming to add to the wording of the historic Nicene Creed. But combining Jn. 15:26, 16:7 and Ac. 2:33 it can be said that Jesus sent/poured out the Spirit which he had received from the Father. Orthodox theologians, however, have expressed more sympathy for the formula: ‘proceeding from the Father *through the Son*’. Note: the ECP BCP has unilaterally reverted to the original Nicene form ‘who proceeds from the Father’!

After the Council of Nicea there were those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. They were called ‘Pneumatomachi’ (‘Spirit-fighters’) or ‘Macedonians’ after Macedonius of Constantinople, one of their leaders. The Council of Constantinople (381) added to the earlier form of the Nicene Creed the words: ‘With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.’ It was left to the theologians Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus to assert that, if the Holy Spirit is God, the term *homoousios* ‘of the same substance’ applies to him too, though this appears in no creedal statement. The end of this article was surely influenced by the ‘Creed of Athanasius’ which asserts that the *glory* of the three divine Persons is equal, and the *majesty* eternal.

Article 5 is entirely about the divine status of the Holy Spirit and tells us nothing of his work.

How might this article be supplemented to give a summary of the Holy Spirit’s work?

The Christian Revelation

This chapter covers three articles, Articles 6 and 7 about the Scriptures and Article 8 on the creeds.

Article 6 **Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation**

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the names and number of the canonical books:

Genesis	The first book of Chronicles
Exodus	The second book of Chronicles
Leviticus	The first book Esdras
Numbers	The second book of Esdras
Deuteronomy	Esther
Joshua	Job
Judges	Psalms
Ruth	Proverbs
The first book of Samuel	Ecclesiastes
The second book of Samuel	Song of Solomon
The first book of Kings	Four Prophets the Greater
The second book of Kings	Twelve Prophets the Less

And the other books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners, but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine. Such are these following:

The third book of Esdras	Baruch
The fourth book of Esdras	Song of the Three Children
Tobias	Susanna
Judith	Bel and the Dragon
The rest of the book of Esther	The Prayer of Manasses
Wisdom	The first book of Maccabees
Jesus the Son of Sirach	The second book of Maccabees

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account them canonical.

The first paragraph is from 1553. The second, naming the books, was added in 1563 from the Confession of Württemberg except that 'The rest of the book of Esther', 'Baruch', 'The Song of the Three Children,' 'Bel and the Dragon' and 'The Prayer of Manasses were added in 1571. The article stands against the Council of Trent which declared early unwritten traditions and the Apocrypha to be of the same authority as our Scriptures, and against certain Anabaptists who claimed their prophetic revelations superseded the Scriptures.

This article is of fundamental importance within the Thirty-Nine Articles and shows them to be a product of the Reformation, an outworking of Luther's watchword *sola Scriptura*,

‘Scripture alone’. Why should Scripture have been posed as a rival authority to the pope in the Medieval Church, a means of purging out the false teachings and practices of that time? Because it contains in the Old Testament the Jewish Bible, and in the New Testament the teachings of Jesus and his apostles. The New Testament in fact constitutes almost the whole of the historical evidence we have for the life of Jesus and the Church in the 1st century. So when this article says that ‘whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith’ it sets aside such beliefs as ‘the immaculate conception’ and the ‘assumption’ of the Blessed Virgin Mary as being *without historical foundation*.

That the Bible contains ‘all things necessary for salvation’ is reaffirmed today by our bishops, priests and deacons at their ordination. They also declare it to be ‘the Word of God’. It uniquely contains God’s revelation of himself and his will for humankind, through the early history of Israel (OT) and supremely in the person and work of Jesus Christ (NT).

It is unparalleled – there was nothing comparable to the Ten Commandments in the ancient Middle East (cf. Deut. 4:6-8); and no historical parallel to the ‘Jesus event’ – the life, teaching, miraculous powers, death and resurrection of Jesus. What is meant by saying Scripture is ‘inspired’? This word comes from the Latin *inspiro* meaning ‘I breathe into’. So we are claiming God ‘breathed into’ our Scriptures in a special way (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:20). New Testament translators J. B. Phillips and E. V. Rieu spoke of the gospels as being ‘alive’ and said their work of translating them profoundly changed them.²³ Poet and philosopher S. T. Coleridge spoke of the Bible as ‘finding’ him in a way no other writing did.²⁴ And there are many other such testimonies. For the Bible to still be a ‘best-seller’ nearly 2,000 years after its last book was written is an eloquent testimony of its own. But we go too far if we claim the Scriptures are ‘infallible’ or ‘inerrant’ for God took a risk in entrusting his revelation to human authors. They have their individual styles of writing, occasionally express all too human attitudes (e.g. Ps. 137:7-9) and get their facts wrong (e.g. cp. Mt. 20:29 with Mk. 10:46, Lk. 18:35). In some matters they were limited by the knowledge of their age - so Gen. 1-3 does not give us modern scientific accounts of the origin of the universe and humankind.

In listing the books of the Old Testament Article 6 uses some terms perhaps new to us. ‘Esdras’ is the Greek for Ezra, so the ‘first book of Esdras’ is in fact our book of Ezra and the ‘second book of Esdras’ is Nehemiah, a book which in fact includes further information about Ezra. The ‘Four Prophets the Greater’ are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. The ‘Twelve Prophets the Less’ are our Hosea to Malachi.

In the statement that follows the first list of books ‘Hierome’ is St. Jerome who, in 382, was commissioned by Pope Damasus to begin an official translation of the Bible into Latin from the Greek and Hebrew. He completed his work by AD 405 and his translation, known as the Vulgate, has been accepted as the authorized translation of the Western (Roman Catholic) Church until modern times. Besides the books of the Hebrew Old Testament it contains other books listed in our article. Because these were not in the Jewish rabbis’ canon of Hebrew Scripture but were for the most part later works in

²³ J. B. Phillips, *Ring of Truth: A Translator’s Testimony* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967), pp. 55-56.

²⁴ S. T. Coleridge, *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, ed. H. St.J. Hart (London: A & C Black, 1956), Letter II.

Greek,²⁵ Jerome regarded them as of secondary importance, and called them ‘Apocrypha’ (Gk. ‘hidden things’). Article 6 declares they have value in that they provide examples of and instruction in godly living, but they should not be used to establish Christian doctrine. Almost all these books were written in the period between the Old and New Testaments and therefore provide valuable information about Judaism during that time.

Article 7 **The Old Testament**

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

This article was formed in 1563 from two of Cranmer’s 42 Articles. It stands against those Protestants who believed the OT ceremonial law to be still binding, and against those Anabaptists who (like Marcion in the 2nd century) entirely dismissed it.

The Bible’s two testaments are not contrary to one another. The Old Testament looks forward to Christ, the New Testament tells of him. Jesus fulfilled so many prophecies – Is. 9:2,6-7, 11:1-5, 53:1-12 - to mention just a few of the best known. *How many more can you think of?* Many humans in the Bible prayed to God for mercy but only Jesus, being both God and man, could be a true mediator between God and humans (1 Tim. 2:5). Those who say the Patriarchs and other great OT figures expected fulfilment of God’s promises only in their own days are wrong. Consider for instance the promises made to Abraham in Gen. 12:2, 15:5, cf. Rom. 4:9-12; also the Messianic promise in Is. 9:6-7.

The second half of this article helps us as Christians to take a realistic view of the OT laws. The sacrificial regulations in Leviticus and elsewhere are no longer binding on us, as the sacrifice of Christ has superseded animal sacrifices. How well the epistle to the Hebrews explains this (Heb. 9:1-10:23)! The civil laws too were designed for a particular place and time and are not in detail binding on us today. For instance the Torah provided six cities of refuge to which those guilty of unintended murder could flee to escape revenge from the families of the dead person (Num. 35:6-15). Our legal system today takes into account whether a murder was intentional or accidental; the latter is called ‘manslaughter’ and the sentence modified accordingly. But, stresses the article, Christians are still bound by the OT’s moral laws – we think especially of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17/Deut. 5:6-21), the ‘Shema’ (Heb. for ‘hear’) of Deut. 6:4, and the ‘Golden Rule’ of Lev. 19:18. There is of course much more in the OT besides such commandments that is valuable for us today: many vivid stories showing right and wrong behavior and the consequences, inspiring psalms and prophecies, and wise utterances in Proverbs and elsewhere.

But let us remember God *progressively* revealed himself and his will in the two testaments. In the words of Griffith Thomas, ‘The two Testaments are united in all

²⁵ All but the Fourth Book of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh (which were written later) are found in the Septuagint. There Sirach is found in Greek but in fact came from a Hebrew original.

essential features of a progressive revelation.²⁶ The OT for instance teaches the supreme importance of justice (e.g. Lev. 24:19-20), the NT of love (Jn. 13:34-35, 1 Cor. 13). The NT builds on and goes beyond the OT as so clearly shown in Mt. 5:17-48.

Article 8 Of the Creeds

The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

The original form of this article dates from 1553 when the Apostles' Creed was mentioned first. It refers to *three* creeds and was composed against the Anabaptists, who rejected all creeds. The form that received Royal assent in 1571 was, '*The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius' Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly...*' ('thoroughly' here represents the Latin *omnino* which means 'entirely'). The Athanasian Creed was omitted from the American Episcopal version of the Articles (from which came our ECP version), and it has not found a place in modern prayer books of the Church of England.

If repentance and faith were necessary before baptism, probably from the start some profession of faith was made. 1 Tim. 6:12 probably refers to Timothy's baptismal profession. In Rom. 10:9-10 and 1 Jn. 4:15 'confess' translates the aorist tense in Greek which suggests a single action - again confession of faith at baptism could be in mind.

Apostolic Tradition 21, which may well record the practice of baptism of the church in Rome in the early 3rd century, shows that baptismal candidates confessed their faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit in response to questions: 'Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God...?' 'Do you believe in the Holy Spirit...?' Normally these catechumens received Christian instruction for three years before baptism but keen ones could be fast-tracked (*AT* 17). Catechumenal training in the West became known as *traditio symboli* 'handing over the creed'; just before baptism the catechumens had to recite it back – *redditio symboli*.

By the 4th century there were established creeds in all the principal churches. (The word 'creed' is from Lat. *credo* 'I believe'.) Western creeds tend to be shorter, a recital of the facts of the faith; Eastern creeds are longer, combining fact and interpretation. Creeds from councils begin, "*We believe*". Let us look briefly at all three creeds mentioned in the original form of our article:

Apostles' Creed

Late in the 4th century we first hear the title 'Apostles' Creed' and the legend that, after receiving the Holy Spirit, the twelve apostles drew up this summary of the faith, each one contributing a clause. This is an attractive story but without any basis in history. It seems rather our creed developed out of the baptismal creed of the church in Rome. The phrase 'he descended into hell' was a late addition; this and 'the communion of saints' are distinctive to it. The present form of the creed is probably from Spain or Gaul in the 8th century. The creed is used only in the Western Church, at Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and baptisms. It is unknown in the Eastern Church.

²⁶ *Principles*, p.135.

Nicene Creed

The original form of the creed was issued by the Council of Nicea (325) to refute Arianism, which denied the divinity of Christ. It appears to have been augmented at the Council of Constantinople (381) to refute those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This form, ratified by the Council of Chalcedon (451), is the form we use.

The Nicene Creed was first used at a eucharist in Antioch in the late 5th century. From there the practice spread across the Christian world until in 1014 it was also adopted by the Church in Rome with the additional word *filioque*, stating the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father ‘and from the Son’. Orthodox churches use the Nicene Creed (without *filioque* of course) also at baptisms. The ECP has also omitted ‘and from the Son’ from this creed.

Athanasian Creed

While this is not referred to in the ECP form of Article 8, it is to be found among our ‘Historical Documents of the Church’ where it is also called the Quicumque Vult, the opening words of the Latin original, meaning ‘whoever wishes’. It is really a personal confession of faith and only in Anglicanism has it been used as a creed; elsewhere it was sung as a canticle. Since it was written in Latin clearly it does not come from Athanasius who wrote in Greek! It is not known by the Eastern Church and is thought to have been composed in southern Gaul in the 5th century.

It consists of two major sections, the first affirming in ponderous repetitive phrases the doctrine of the Trinity, the second stating the doctrine of the Incarnation. They are placed within a framework which declares that it is necessary for salvation to believe the Catholic faith in the terms it sets forth.

The 1662 BCP of the Church of England stipulates this creed is to be substituted for the Apostles’ Creed at Morning Prayer on major festivals, Trinity Sunday, and certain saints’ days (13 occasions in all) but it has scarcely ever been recited publicly in recent years.

According to Article 8 why should these creeds be entirely received and believed?

What is the value of creeds today?

Sin and Salvation

In this chapter we consider Articles 9 – 18 which focus on the sinfulness of human nature and the salvation offered through Christ. Today we should probably not wish to dwell at such length upon these subjects, but the fact that no less than ten articles are devoted to them including the longest, on predestination, shows they were a matter of major interest and debate in the 16th-century Church and there was a need to state clearly the position of the Church of England. Let us look at each article in turn.

Article 9 Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh) is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

This article dates from 1553 and clearly it was formulated against the Anabaptists for that original version ran 'as the Pelagians do vainly talk *and today the Anabaptists repeat*'. In the ECP version given above the words 'called in the Greek *phronema sarkis*'²⁷ that followed 'the lust of the flesh' have been cut out.

Originally humans are pictured as in a state of righteousness in the Garden of Eden. But Adam sinned and thereafter, said Augustine (interpreting Rom. 5:12), all mankind was tainted with a bias towards sin. This is inherited or 'original' sin. Pelagius however maintained that Adam's sin affected only himself; his offspring were sinful simply because they voluntarily copied his bad example. This Article is firmly on the side of Augustine. The statement that 'the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit' is taken from Gal. 5:17.

Any thought of original perfection before Adam 'fell' conflicts fundamentally with a scientific worldview which denies that, for humans, there ever was a state of original bliss and righteousness. Humans did not *fall* but have *risen* by a long evolutionary path from brute beasts (apes). In the struggle for survival self-centeredness and violence were necessary and cannot be condemned as 'sin'. Now, it is thought, we are evolving to an ever-better existence. This last statement is not realistic. Even a superficial study of the 20th century reveals the depths of depravity humans stooped to in war, the ruthless domination of Communism and the unfettered greed of capitalism. As Bicknell says, however great its technological and cultural achievements, human progress is always hampered by 'ineradicable selfishness and sloth'.²⁸ Is this not evidence of the bias towards sin in human nature (whatever its origin) which this article is speaking about,

²⁷ Quoting Rom. 8:6.

²⁸ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 187.

and of which there are many fresh manifestations today including computer viruses and hacking websites and email accounts of innocent people!

While those who have put their faith in Christ and have been baptized are no longer under God's condemnation (Rom. 8:1), there remains a sinfulness within them, a *phronema sarkos* (Rom. 8:6) meaning 'the mind set on the flesh', and they need to join with the Holy Spirit in waging war against it (Gal. 5:16-26).

Article 10 **Of Free Will**

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

The second half of this article is from 1553 and is based on Augustine's *On Grace and Free Will*. The first half was added from the Confession of Württemberg.

Our free will, declares this article, was damaged by the fall of Adam. We cannot now by our own willpower and efforts live lives pleasing to God; only with God's help can we be enabled to do so. A key word in this article is 'grace'. In the English versions of the New Testament it translates the Greek *charis*. In secular Greek this word meant 'attractiveness' but in the New Testament it most commonly means 'unmerited favor'. This article says then that, though we do not deserve it, God helps us through Christ 'preventing us'. The Latin word behind this is *praevenire* meaning literally 'to come before'. What is being said is we cannot do good works without Christ's enabling us. This is explained in the next article.

Today, if we are honest, we have to admit that our natural inclination is to please *ourselves* rather than God - regardless of where that attitude came from. And so we still need God's help to enable us to please him.

Article 11 **Of the Justification of Man**

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily on Justification.

The present form of this article is from 1571, influenced by the Confessions of Augsburg and Württemberg. Justification by faith alone was condemned by the Council of Trent (1546-47).

It is by faith in the merit of Christ, who came to earth and died on the cross for our sins, that we are accounted righteous before God. The terminology here is Pauline. As Bicknell says, '(Paul's) religion was based not on what he had done and was to do for God, but on what God in Christ had done for him.'²⁹ Judging by the emphasis he places on it, 'justification by faith' was St. Paul's fundamental doctrine. He expounds it at length in Romans and Galatians, and mentions it in other letters. Key texts are Rom.

²⁹ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 200.

3:21-30, 5:1 and Gal.2:15-16. Griffith Thomas points out, justification by faith was ‘the theological and spiritual foundation of the Reformation Movement.’³⁰

- ‘To justify’ is from the Gk. *dikaioun* – a law court term meaning ‘to declare in the right’, ‘to acquit’. God acquits and accepts us as his children because we have put our faith in his son as our Lord and Savior. Augustine, who knew little Greek, used the Latin translation of this word, *iustificare* which had the rather different meaning ‘to make righteous’. This was taken into Medieval theology, and re-echoed by the Council of Trent: ‘Justification consists not in the mere remission of sins but in the sanctification and renewal of the inner man by the voluntary reception of God’s grace and gifts’ (Session 6, ch.16, 1547). This confuses the starting point, ‘justification’, with the ongoing process of making a person holy – ‘sanctification’ – the life-long work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian.
- ‘Faith’ translates Gk. *pistis*, which in the NT normally means ‘trust (in)’ or ‘commitment (to)’ a person.

Our article states we are justified by faith *only*. While this exact phrase is not found in the NT it is clearly meant in Rom. 3:28. Is there a clash with the words of James: ‘Faith without works is dead’ (Jas.2:17)? No, because Paul says elsewhere that we are saved by God’s grace through faith *that we may practice good works* (Eph. 2:10).

We should note also that ‘justification by faith’ is shorthand for justification *through* faith *on account of* Christ’s merit (as our article says). Faith is the *channel* not the *means* of justification.

Why does our article say that justification by faith is ‘a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort’? Consider the following incident from near the end of the life of a Jewish rabbi:

When Rabbi Johanan ben Zaccai was ill, his disciples went to visit him. On beholding them, he began to weep. His disciples said to him, “Oh lamp of Israel, right hand pillar (1 Ki. 7:21), mighty hammer, wherefore dost thou weep?” He replied to them, “If I were being led into the presence of a human king, who today is here and tomorrow is in the grave, whose anger, if he were wrathful against us, would not be everlasting, whose death sentence, if he condemned me to death, would not be for ever, and whom I could appease with words and bribe with money – even then I would weep; but now, when I am being led into the presence of the king of kings, the Holy One, blessed be he, who lives and endures for all eternity, whose anger, if he be wrathful against me, is eternal, whose imprisonment, if he imprisoned me, would be everlasting, whose sentence, if he condemned me to death, would be for ever, and whom I cannot appease with words or bribe with money – nay, more, when before me lie two ways, one towards the Garden of Eden and the other towards Gehinnom, and I know not towards which I am to be led – shall I not weep?”³¹

Lacking faith in Christ he was far from sure that he would go to the right place! The ‘Homily on Justification’ referred to at the end of this article is in fact the homily ‘Of the Salvation of Mankind’ in the *First Book of Homilies* (1547). A summary of this is given in Appendix 4 of this manual.

³⁰ *Principles*, p. 185.

³¹ Quoted W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 2nd edn (London: SPCK: 1955), pp. 315-116.

Article 12 **Of Good Works**

Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, in so much that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

A new article added in 1563 to show the Anglican position as against the Roman Catholic Church which overemphasized good deeds, and extreme Lutherans who declared that good deeds were not necessary at all (a standpoint known as 'solifidianism'). In this article 'albeit that' means 'though'.

Both Martin Luther and Bishop John Jewel said that, because of their insistence on justification by faith, their Roman Catholic opponents declared they rejected good works altogether. This article, which shows their true position, takes its stand on Eph. 2:8-10 and states that, though good works do not save us, they are pleasing to God as the fruit and evidence of a lively faith.

Article 13 **Of Works before Justification**

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

Unchanged from 1553; to oppose the scholastic theory of 'congruous merit'. 'Meet' in line three means 'fit'.

Medieval theological schools ('the School authors') developed the teaching that, at his fall, Adam lost the supernatural gift to do good³² he had originally received from God, but was left with his natural powers which he could still use to good effect and receive 'congruous' or 'corresponding' grace. With this he could go on to earn 'very deserving grace'. So Adam's natural powers, while not earning salvation, prepared for it. This article disowns such a view.

While the article seems to end on an unnecessarily negative note, as Griffith Thomas comments, 'Actions may be good in themselves, but if they proceed from...unworthy motives they cannot be regarded as praiseworthy.'³³ They tend to stem from human self-interest or pride rather than the desire to obey God's will. It was his *human* desire that his master should avoid pain that led Peter to try to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross – and incurred the crushing response, "Get behind me Satan!" (Mk. 8:31-33). J. H. Newman in writing 'Tract 90' (which we shall consider in some detail in Appendix 3) thought there are some meritorious human deeds of non-Christians which please God and he pointed, as an example, to the prayers and almsgiving of the Roman centurion Cornelius (Ac. 19:4).³⁴ Well, of course God knows if anyone sincerely intends to do good, but it is notable that the good deeds of Cornelius did not earn him salvation but God granted him the chance to hear the Gospel of salvation through Jesus – from Peter.

³² He was seen when created as being almost an angelic figure, a 'superman'!

³³ *Principles*, p. 213.

³⁴ See below p. 67, section 3.

Article 14 **Of Works of Supererogation**

Voluntary works besides, over and above God's commandments, which they call 'works of supererogation', cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety; for by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

Almost unchanged since 1553; to oppose 'works of supererogation'.

In 1 Cor. 7:25 Paul distinguishes between a 'command' of the Lord Jesus, and his own 'judgment'. So, in the later church there grew up a distinction between:

- 'commands' - binding on all Christians, and
- 'judgments' – 'counsels of perfection' or 'works of supererogation' (Lat. *supererogare* 'to pay more than necessary').

Poverty, celibacy, monasticism and martyrdom were considered among the latter and helped, along with Christ's sacrifice on the cross, to build up a 'treasury of merit' which belonged to the whole Church, and could be allocated by its head, the pope, to discharge temporal penalties for sin to be served in purgatory via indulgences.³⁵ Our article declares it is not possible to do more than God requires, and quotes Lk. 17:10 in support.

Article 15 **Of Christ alone without Sin**

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by the sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin (as Saint John saith) was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Dates from 1553. The statement of St. John referred to is 1 Jn. 3:5.

The statement about Christ here is one of no less than four references to the atonement in the Articles (the others being in 2, 28, 31). The sinlessness of Christ this article is referring to was essential for atonement. He needed to be a Lamb without blemish to provide a valid sacrifice (1 Pet. 1:19). He was tempted in every way like us, but resisted (Heb. 4:15).

But we, even after we are baptized and born again, still do wrong and deceive ourselves if we say otherwise (1 Jn. 1:8). Then what gain is there in becoming a Christian? Well, there certainly should be a change for the better from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives but we need to cooperate with him daily (Gal. 5:22-26), and the process of sanctification will not be complete in this life!

³⁵ For an explanation of purgatory and indulgences see the commentary below on Article 22.

Article 16 **Of Sin after Baptism**

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Dates from 1553, slightly changed. Aimed at Anabaptist errors.

The aim of the article is to condemn the idea that sins committed after baptism could not be forgiven. That some sins are 'deadly' ('mortal') and cannot be forgiven is from 1 Jn. 5:16-17. In the Early Church it was common to view murder, adultery and apostasy as belonging to this category. This article considers no sin is beyond God's grace apart from what Christ called unpardonable, namely, 'speaking against the Holy Spirit' (Mt. 12:31-2). It was fear of committing this sin that made the Early Church very wary of condemning prophetic messages (e.g. in *Didache* 11).

Article 17 **Of Predestination and Election**

Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture; and, in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

Composed in 1553 and only slightly altered subsequently. Based on Scripture. Not questioned by any Protestant before Jacob Arminius late in the 16th century.

This is the longest and most animated of the articles. It consists of five sections:

1. A definition of predestination: *Predestination...honor.*

This is based on Eph. 1:3-14 and Rom. 9:23 and deals only with predestination to life, not to damnation (following Augustine not the ‘double predestination’ of Calvin).

2. The cooperation of the elect (meaning ‘chosen’): *Wherefore...felicity.*
Echoing Rom. 8:28-30 and Eph. 1:4-5, this outlines a seven-fold path, some stages of which require the active cooperation of the elect.
3. The delight of the elect: *As the godly...love towards God.*
This says it is wonderful to think of oneself as chosen by God for salvation, feeling God’s Spirit overcoming one’s base desires (Gal. 5:16-24), lifting one’s heart to heavenly things (Col. 3:1-2), and strengthening one’s faith and love.
But how many Christians actually ‘feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh...’?
4. Danger for those not called: *So for curious...than desperation.*
For the unspiritual, feeling themselves already condemned by God may lead to despair or ruinous depraved living.
But, Bray points out, they are not totally powerless to escape condemnation. ‘They *are* condemned because of their unbelief, but it is not true that there is nothing they can do about it. If they have heard the Gospel...they can always repent and be saved.’³⁶
5. Conclusion: *Furthermore...Word of God.*
We must accept this doctrine because it is given us in Scripture.

How do we respond to the doctrine of predestination? It is based on belief in the sovereignty of God. To say, as Calvin did, that God has chosen some humans for eternal life and others for damnation fundamentally conflicts with our sense of fairness and the teaching that God is a God of love. Paul in fact does not say God chooses anyone for damnation, he just toys with the question: ‘What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction?’ (Rom. 9:22) He does not answer that question. Augustine did not go so far as Calvin; he believed that God chose some for salvation but left others to the consequences of their wicked ways. His belief in ‘positive’ predestination was influenced not only, as the closing part of our article says, by what is said in Scripture, but also by a strong sense that God he had personally been chosen to serve God. His autobiographical work *Confessions* (written 397-400) fascinatingly reveals the path of his spiritual life. But still, one might object, it is unfair of God just to choose some and not others.

Jacob Arminius (died 1609) thought he had found a way out of the difficulty which would allow a place for human free-will. Looking at Rom. 8:29 he concluded that God knew beforehand who would commit themselves to Christ and then he chose them for salvation. The problem is, having given free-will to humans, could even God predict how it would be used? Well, consider a chess novice playing a Grand Master: the Grand Master would know all the possible moves the novice could make and how to counter them. Is not this the same with God and us? Bicknell writes:

³⁶ *Faith*, p. 94.

We must maintain God's sovereignty. He knows all the possibilities that his universe contains. He is always able to overrule history to his purpose. But it may be that it rests with human choice and effort to determine by which of many possible roads the goal shall be reached.³⁷

While recognizing God chooses particular people for particular tasks (e.g. Moses and later David to lead Israel, Paul as 'Apostle to the Gentiles'), we can believe he desires *all* to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) but that he respects our freedom to respond positively or negatively to his offer of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Article 18 Of Obtaining Eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professes, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

Unchanged from 1553. 'They also' appears to be linking this article with Article 16.

The article refers to any religious or philosophical movement which offers salvation independently of Jesus Christ. We do not know exactly which it has in mind; the phrase 'light of nature' might suggest early free-thinkers like the deists of the 17th and 18th centuries.³⁸ Of the major world religions Judaism had long been well established in Europe;³⁹ Luther was upset with the German Jews for not supporting him. Islam was present as an active threat on the borders of Europe.

Today we are well aware also of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, many forms of animism, and numerous syncretistic and other religious and philosophical movements. Our article stands firmly against those in our society who say, "It doesn't matter what you believe so long as you believe it sincerely." Within the Church there are broadly speaking three different attitudes to other faiths which may be categorized as 'exclusivism', 'inclusivism' and 'pluralism'.

Exclusivism

The official standpoint of the Roman Catholic Church was, for much of its history: 'Outside the Church there is no salvation'. The conservative Protestant position has been somewhat similar, 'Outside the word (Gospel) there is no salvation', i.e. salvation is only possible through hearing and responding in faith to the message of the atoning death of Jesus Christ'. Exclusivists have tended to see little or no value in other religions and to insist converts from them make a complete break with the past.

Inclusivism

This respects other religions, believing they have found elements of truth, but it maintains *their adherents still need to find Christ for salvation and for a full revelation of God*. This was Sundar Singh's attitude to Hinduism as a Christian; he believed it had prepared

³⁷ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 226.

³⁸ Matthew Tindal for instance in his *Christianity as Old as Creation* (1730) declared that whatever is of value in Christianity coincides with 'natural religion'.

³⁹ Though, Bray points out, they were expelled from England in 1290 and were not readmitted till 1656 (*Faith*, p. 101).

him for Christ. It was the view also of the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council (1928). Its 'Council Statement' declared:

We recognize as part of the one Truth that sense of the Majesty of God and the consequent reverence in worship, which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and unselfish search for the way of escape, which are at the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with ultimate reality conceived as spiritual, which is prominent in Hinduism; the belief in a moral order of the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct, which are inculcated by Confucianism.

Vatican II (in its document *Nostra Aetate*) recognizes other religions 'often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men' but declares that it is in Christ that God reconciles all things to himself (2 Cor. 5:18-19).

But if adherents of other faiths still need Christ for salvation, what happens if they die without encountering him? John Wycliffe thought all such people would be given a vision of Christ on their deathbed. Sundar Singh was convinced devout pagans would be instructed about Christ in an intermediate state after death. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali suggests that the best Christians can do is to be 'positively agnostic' remembering the words of Abraham, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' (Gen. 18:25)⁴⁰

Pluralism

All religions are different and equally valid paths up the one hill to God. John Hick believed all world faiths enable people to lead integrated and holy lives, and that the universe of faith centers not on Christ but on God: 'He is the sun, the originative source of light and life, whom all the religions reflect in their own different ways.'⁴¹ Earlier E. Tröltzsch (1865-1923) declared there is an intimate bond between a religion and its culture. Christianity is unconditionally valid in the West, but so are other traditional religions in their cultures. Pluralism allows no place for Christian missions. It has been wryly remarked that pluralism 'fits...with a Christianity which has lost its confidence.'⁴²

Towards a Resolution

The authors of the Church of England report *The Mystery of Salvation*⁴³ list four theological perspectives within Christianity:

- God's love is unconditional to all and surely embraces *all* who throw themselves on God's mercy as they experience it.
- The Holy Spirit works in the world [cf. Jn.16:8-11]. Wherever the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-3) are found in people outside Christianity there is evidence of his work. But there are many in other faiths who do *not* show this evidence.
- The concept of the Logos (Word) connects Jesus to the whole world (Jn. 1).
- There is forgiveness at the heart of God, most closely revealed in Christ's words from the Cross, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'. Does this attitude not extend to the humble and good followers of another faith?

These authors believe that where other religions are improving people's lives God is at work in them, but 'the fullness of relationship with God is possible only in Jesus Christ

⁴⁰ *Mission and Dialogue: Proclaiming the Gospel Afresh in Every Age* (London: SPCK, 1995), p. 127.

⁴¹ *God Has Many Names* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 52.

⁴² *The Mystery of Salvation*, A Report by the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England (London: Church House Publishing, 1995), p. 159.

⁴³ See note 42.

who is the definitive revelation of God'. Hence the need, by word and deed, to continue to proclaim the Gospel to all nations. They call their viewpoint 'an open and generous exclusivism' – but in the categories we have put forward we should call it a form of inclusivism.

Article 18 would appear compatible with both exclusivism and inclusivism, as we have described them, but not with pluralism.

The Church

In this chapter we bring together a number of articles relating to the life of the Church: its nature, its relation to the Bible, its traditions, its use of excommunication, and its official homilies. We shall also glance at General Councils of the Church, and then consider some important Roman Catholic doctrines and practices discarded at the Reformation.

Article 19 **Of the Church**

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch have erred so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.

Unchanged since 1553. It was patterned on the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession. The second paragraph of this article appears to have dropped out of the green booklet of the ECP by mistake for that booklet claims to reproduce the 'Historical Documents of the Church' in the ECP BCP where it occurs!

Our English word 'church' comes from the Gk. *kuriakos* meaning 'belonging to the Lord' (though it was not used for 'church' in the NT). The NT word for 'church' is *ekklēsia*:

- used in secular Greek for a citizens' assembly (so Ac. 19:39),
- in the LXX for the assembled nation of Israel (e.g. Deut. 9:10, 18:16, 2 Chron. 30:23),
- and in the NT for both the worldwide Church (e.g. Mt. 16:18, 1 Cor. 12:28) and, more commonly, local churches (e.g. 1 Thess. 1:1).

What *sort* of assembly, congregation, or perhaps rather society,⁴⁴ is the church according to Article 19?

- one of 'faithful men', that is people full of faith, where
- the 'pure Word of God' (from the Bible) is preached, and
- the sacraments are duly administered, as Christ instructed. Which sacraments did Christ instruct?
 - baptism - the means of entry to the church, and
 - communion – the shared meal.

Anglicanism thus requires a balance of 'word' and 'sacrament'.

How might Rome say this definition is deficient?

In speaking of the Church it is common to take from the Nicene Creed the four 'notes' used to describe it: one, holy, catholic and apostolic.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Bray points out that, since Cranmer in this article mentions the great patriarchates of the ancient world, he is thinking not of local congregations but rather of national or regional churches. (*Faith*, p. 107).

⁴⁵ These are explained in our companion lay-training manual 'An Outline of the Faith', pp. 32-34.

Calvin made a distinction between the ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ church:

- the ‘visible’ church is the organization all can see,
- the ‘invisible church’ consists of all genuine believers, known to God alone.

The first line of this article shows it is *not* making this distinction.

The second paragraph of the article likens the Church of Rome to the great sees of the Eastern Church in having erred in various ways: lifestyle, ceremonies, and declarations of faith. *Can you suggest examples of each? Not to say our church is perfect!*

Article 20 **Of the Authority of the Church**

The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ; yet as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

The purpose of this article is to define the authority of the Church as against the Puritans who denied the Church could ordain any ceremony not laid down in Scripture, and the Roman Catholics who exaggerated its authority to formulate doctrine. All except the first clause comes from 1553. The first clause was not in this article when drafted by Archbishop Parker in 1562 or subsequently passed by Convocation, but appeared in the 1563 authorized published edition of the Articles. Almost certainly it was added by Queen Elizabeth I. It was accepted by Convocation in 1571.

‘Authority’ is the right to enforce obedience. It can be:

- legislative – the making of one’s own rites and ceremonies, that are not contrary to Scripture. The Puritans objected to the having of godparents and making the sign of the cross on the candidate’s forehead at baptism, and the use of a ring at a wedding because these are not prescribed by Scripture;
- judicial – interpreting the Scripture in matters of dispute, e.g. defence of the divinity of Christ in the Arian dispute led to the formulating of the main part of the Nicene Creed.

The Church must not set one part of Scripture against another, as the second-century heretic Marcion did in his *Antitheses* where he contrasted OT and NT statements. On the contrary the Church is to be:

- a ‘witness’ to Scripture – e.g. attesting that in Christ God has been definitively revealed (Col. 2:9),
- and a ‘keeper’ (Lat. *conservatrix*) – conserving it from being contaminated by other material.

She must not decree anything against it, nor insist on anything not found in it as necessary for salvation. Is then the Church subject to the Bible, or the Bible to the Church? Clearly the former. What then of such Roman Catholic teachings as ‘the treasury of merits’, ‘the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary’, and ‘the infallibility of the Pope’? There have been attempts to defend such teachings as logical developments from the teaching of the apostles, like a mature tree growing from its seed - so J. H. Newman’s *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845). But, as

Bicknell points out, not all developments in nature are healthy ones, e.g. cancer. Further, how can they be said to be logically necessary if they are clearly contestable. 'At best they are pious opinions that grew up in the Church as the private beliefs of individuals and schools, and afterwards were exalted into dogmas.'⁴⁶

It is refreshing to read in the agreed statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission 'Authority in the Church 1' (1976) the central place accorded the Bible, or at least the New Testament, in the life of the Church:

Assisted by the Holy Spirit (the apostolic community) transmitted what they had heard and seen of the life and words of Jesus and their interpretation of his redemptive work. Consequently the inspired documents in which this is related came to be accepted by the Church as a normative record of the authentic foundation of the faith. To these the Church has recourse for the inspiration of its life and mission; to these the Church refers its teaching and practice. Through these written words the authority of the Word of God is conveyed. Entrusted with these documents, the Christian community is enabled by the Holy Spirit to live out the Gospel and so to be led into all truth. (Paragraph 2)

The well-known slogan 'The Church to teach and the Bible to prove' ignores the fact that the Bible itself teaches, i.e. can set the agenda, and not just the Church.

Is the Bible totally incomprehensible without the Church to interpret it?

Was Tyndale wrong to place the Bible in the hand of the laity?

Article 34 **Of the Traditions of the Church**

It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one or utterly like, for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the conscience of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

This article builds on Article 20. All but the last sentence dates from 1553 and was taken from the fifth of the thirteen articles agreed between Anglican and Lutheran theologians. The last sentence was added in 1563 and is substantially the proposition laid down by Anglican reformers in a debate with Roman Marian bishops in 1559. 'So that' at the beginning of the last clause of the first and last sentences means 'provided that', which is the meaning of the Latin version's *modo*. The article's position stands against the Council of Trent's hostility to national churches and, on the other hand, seeks to curb the excessive individualism of extreme Protestants who wished to submit to no traditions unless directly from the Bible.

Traditions and ceremonies need not be, and have not been, always alike. A fuller statement of the Anglican position is given in the old BCP preface 'Of Ceremonies', dating from 1549. In fact national and local cultures have always influenced church traditions. Greek, Syrian, Egyptian and Roman practices were all distinctive in some ways in the Early Church due to this. Moreover distinctive practices developed in

⁴⁶ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 260

different places. In the late 4th century Ambrose of Milan counseled the young Augustine, “When I am here I do not fast on Saturday; but when I am at Rome I do: whatever church you may come to, conform to its custom, if you would avoid either giving or receiving offence’ (*Epistle* 54). The limitation of acceptable diversity must be that nothing be contrary to Scripture.

This article goes on to say that all church members should conform to Church customs not contrary to Scripture, or they upset the life of the church, cause offence to the civil authorities (who had a duty to defend the practices of the Church of England established by law) and lead others astray. Those who disobey should be publicly reprimanded. Excessive individualism can spoil church life.

The final part of this article deals with the matter of changing church ceremonies. There were some ancient national churches such as that of Armenia. The Reformation led to the formation of others in England, Scotland, Holland and Scandinavia. Protestant states were also set up in Germany and Switzerland. This article asserts their right to change and abolish rites and ceremonies of purely human creation. The guiding principle is that all must be done for *edification* - spiritual upbuilding of people.

Customs tend to multiply (cf. BCP preface ‘Of Ceremonies’) and become outdated. The Council of Jerusalem demanded Gentiles abstain from meat containing blood (Ac. 15:29), a rule long since abandoned by most of the Church. The Council of Nicea declared that no bishop should move from one see to another and stipulated that all should stand for prayer during the Easter season, rules no longer obligatory.

It is sometimes asserted that there are ‘catholic’ customs which no local church has the right to abolish. Amongst these, it has been claimed, is the wearing of vestments in worship. But there were no such vestments at first. A celebrant simply wore his best clothes. Eventually the style of clothing changed, but the Church, being conservative, retained the earlier style, and so it became distinctive. Bicknell is surely right in saying, ‘The Catholic Church of one generation cannot bind the Catholic Church of the next generation’.⁴⁷ He points out that the Church of England’s use of English as the language of worship (Art. 24) and allowing clergy to marry (Art. 32) are examples of this right to change customs.

Are there any customs of the present-day church that you think should be modified or abandoned?

Article 33 Of Excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful as an heathen and publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a judge that hath authority thereto.

Composed in 1553.

The Church, like any other society has the right to exclude those who refuse to conform to its principles. If firm action is not taken the abuse will spread. That this article speaks of *public* denunciation clearly indicates a *serious* misdemeanor has been committed, and it can only be effectively countermanded by a *public reconciliation* effected by someone

⁴⁷ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 305.

in authority, clerical or lay. For 'penance' the Latin version has *poenitentia* which includes both repentance and discipline (Griffith Thomas). The terms 'heathen and publican' for the outcast are taken directly from Mt. 18:17.

Biblical Background

Disobedience could lead in the OT to exclusion from the congregation of Israel (Ezra 10:8). Exclusion from the synagogue was a regular punishment for serious offences in the time of Jesus (Jn. 9:22). For his followers Christ laid down a four-stage disciplinary procedure to deal with an offence committed by one against another (Mt. 18:15-17):

- The offended one is to try to resolve it personally.
- The offended one takes one or two others to resolve the matter.
- The matter is brought before the whole congregation.
- If the offender still does not repent he is then treated as an outcast.

The shock of public revelation of their deception appears to have caused the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Ac. 5:1-11), a very dramatic episode in the life of the Apostolic Church!

St. Paul used his apostolic authority sternly in excommunicating a man involved in open adultery/incest in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 5:1-5), and again in excluding Hymenaeus and Alexander from the Church for false teaching (1 Tim. 1:19-20, 2 Tim. 2:17-18). In each case he speaks of 'delivering (the offenders) to Satan' - the world outside the Church being envisaged as Satan's sphere, cf. Jn. 14:30. In the first of these cases he explains that, though the offender may die in consequence (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30-2), his spirit may be saved at the Last Day. The apostle John announces he will deal severely with Diotrefes for refusing to accept his authority and acting high handedly towards other Christians (3 Jn. 9-10). So we see it is for immorality, false teaching and insubordination that the apostles could use their authority to enforce severe discipline. In milder cases reasoning with the offender may be enough (cf. Gal. 6:1-2).

In the Later Church

In the life of the Early Church Valentinus, Marcion and Arius were excluded from the Church for heresy, and there were further examples of excommunication for insubordination and immorality (e.g. Cyprian's treatment of Felicissimus, *Epistle* 41.2). Without such discipline the Church could never have maintained her stand in the intellectual ferment and loose moral atmosphere of the Greco-Roman Empire. There developed a distinction between -

- 'lesser' excommunication which deprived the offender of receiving communion, and
- 'greater' excommunication for very serious offences which allowed the offender no participation in any activities of the church.

After the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as its official religion secular force could be called upon to enforce Church discipline, e.g. in the late 4th century against the North African schismatic Donatists. In the Church-State interplay of the Middle Ages, even popes could suffer at the hands of emperors.

The Church of England

The Church of England Canons (1604) and BCP (1662) show how excommunication was managed in the Church of England in the 17th century:

- In the rubrics at the beginning of the Holy Communion service the parish priest ('curate') is to exclude from communion any 'open and notorious evil liver' and those between whom he perceives malice and hatred to reign.
- Canon 109 specifies that (presumably the *names* of) the former category must be sent by the churchwardens and sidesmen to the bishop to decide what punishment is appropriate.
- Canon 85 specifies that one of the duties of the churchwardens is to keep the excommunicated out of the church building.
- Canon 65 declares that the names of the excommunicated are to be read out both in their parish church and their cathedral every six months. A rubric after the Nicene Creed in the Communion service specifies this be done during the notices before the sermon.
- Canon 68 declares that no-one who dies under the greater excommunication, still unrepentant, may be buried in the churchyard.

The overuse of these disciplines after the restoration of the monarchy (1660) brought them into disrepute and they fell largely into disuse.

The 6th edn. of the Canons of Church of England (2000) shows that today:

- The parish priest must *notify his bishop* before excluding any offender from communion (Canon B 16).
- Ecclesiastical Courts still exist for trying certain offences, including matters of doctrine, ritual or ceremonial (Canon G 1).

Are there any situations today in which you think excommunication might still be appropriate in our church?

Article 35 **Of the Homilies**

The Second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of King Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

Of the Names of the Homilies

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Of the right use of the Church | 11. Of Alms doing |
| 2. Against peril of Idolatry | 12. Of the Nativity of Christ |
| 3. Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches | 13. Of the Passion of Christ |
| 4. Of good Works: first of Fasting | 14. Of the Resurrection of Christ |
| 5. Against Gluttony and Drunkenness | 15. Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament
of the Body & Blood of Christ |
| 6. Against Excess of Apparel | 16. Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost |
| 7. Of Prayer | 17. For the Rogation days |
| 8. Of the Place and Time of Prayer | 18. Of the State of Matrimony |
| 9. That Common Prayers and Sacraments
ought to be ministered in a known tongue. | 19. Of Repentance |
| 10. Of the reverend Estimation of God's Word | 20. Against Idleness |
| 21. Against Rebellion | |

The article dates from 1563, superseding one written in 1553 which referred only to the first Book of Homilies. In 1571 the last homily was added following the northern rebellion in 1569. 'The several titles' means 'the various titles'; 'judge' means in effect 'stipulate'; 'understanded of' is old English for 'understood by'. The 1801 Convention of PECUSA (accepted by the 1999 Convention of the ECP) appends the note: 'This Article is received in this Church, so far as it declares the Books of Homilies to be an explication of Christian doctrine, and instructive in piety and morals. But all references to the constitution and laws of England are considered as inapplicable to the circumstances of this Church; which also suspends the order for the reading of said Homilies in churches, until a revision of them may be conveniently made, for the clearing of them, as well from obsolete words and phrases, as from the local references.' That task remains to be done!

'Homily' is from the Greek *homilia* meaning first a 'conversation', later 'sermon'.

At the time of the Reformation teaching was in disarray. Some clergy were illiterate, some still favored Rome, few were learned or capable, and of these some were hotheaded. There was need for worthwhile, unheretical material which could provide spiritual food for the people. Cranmer raised the subject of a book of official homilies in Convocation in 1541 but nothing appears to have come of it, perhaps because Henry VIII was not in favor. In 1547, however, soon after the accession of Edward VI, the first Book of Homilies was published with a royal declaration that they be read by the clergy to the people at High Mass every Sunday until further notice. It is thought they were composed by Cranmer himself with help from Bishop Ridley and others. Each homily was divided into two or three sections. The rubric after the creed in the 1549 English Prayer Book specified that one could be read, in part or whole, in place of a sermon.

The Second Book of Homilies, containing twenty more, chiefly written by Bishop Jewel, was completed by 1562, but publication was delayed until the next year due to Elizabeth's desire to edit them and Convocation's resistance. Records show that bishops in Elizabethan times frequently instructed their clergy to use them, but they were unpopular with those who still favored Rome and with some Puritans who felt reading inferior to preaching. In protest, they were read unintelligibly, which the article specifically forbids. Nonetheless the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church can say, 'From Elizabethan times the Homilies provided a considerable element in Anglican preaching and acquired status alongside the BCP and Thirty-Nine Articles as a repository of Anglican doctrine.'⁴⁸ The two Books of Homilies circulated separately until they were published together in 1623. Some medieval English parish churches still have large folio copies in gothic script.

The titles of the twelve homilies in the First Book are: A fruitful Exhortation to the Reading of Holy Scripture, Of the Misery of all Mankind, Of the Salvation of all Mankind, Of the True and Lively Faith, Of Good Works, Of Christian Love and Charity, Against Swearing and Perjury, Of the Declining from God, An Exhortation against the Fear of Death, An Exhortation to Obedience, Against Whoredom and Adultery, Against Strife and Contention. Considering these and the titles of the homilies of the Second Book listed above, it is clear that they cover a wide range of topics. Some reinforce and develop themes found in the articles; the majority are devoted to practical matters, and others were clearly intended for important days in the church's calendar.

Today the Homilies are largely of historical interest. But they retain quite a lot of sound teaching and, Griffith Thomas suggests, their occasional and partial reading by

⁴⁸ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* ed. E. A. Livingstone, 3rd edn (Oxford: University Press, 1997), 'Homilies, the Books of'.

clergy to laity might still be of profit.⁴⁹ A summary of the third Homily from the First Book can be found in Appendix 4 of this manual.

Article 21 **Of the Authority of General Councils**

This article was omitted by PECUSA (1801) ‘because it is partly of a local and civil nature, and is provided for, as to the remaining parts of it, in other Articles.’ This omission has been inherited by the ECP.

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.

Almost unchanged since 1553. It was aimed against the Council of Trent (1545-63) to show why the Church of England would not accept its decisions.

PECUSA would appear to have dismissed this article somewhat unfairly. Article 20 focused on the authority of the Church and Article 21 turns to one particular way in which this authority has been exercised, through General Councils. It was primarily focused against the Council of Trent, summoned by Pope Paul III. This article asserts that General Councils may not (the Latin says ‘cannot’) be convened except by ‘princes’. The fact is that all councils generally acknowledged as General (or Ecumenical) Councils, in the Early Church, *were* convened by Roman Emperors. To mention the first and most important:

- Nicea (AD 325), summoned by Constantine, dealt with the heresy of Arius who denied the divinity of Christ.
- Constantinople (381), summoned by Theodosius I, condemned Macedonius who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.
- Ephesus (431), summoned by Theodosius II, condemned Nestorius for separating the divine and human natures of Christ.
- Chalcedon (451), summoned by Marcianus, condemned Eutyches for fusing the divine and human natures of Christ into one, and issued the famous ‘Definition’ of faith.⁵⁰

The summons by the emperor, seen to be the leading layman of the Church, ensured widespread attendance by the bishops and other invited participants, and enabled both sides of the debate to be heard. The Council of Trent, summoned by Pope Paul III, gathered together only (Roman) Catholics who summarily condemned the teachings of the Reformers, who were not represented. There were also no representatives of the Orthodox churches, being out of communion with Rome. So this council’s claim to be a General Council is surely justly rejected.

The article goes on to point out that wide representation does not in itself guarantee the truth of the pronouncements of a General Council since all present may not be governed by the Holy Spirit and Scripture. Some councils have erred even in their statements about God. One might think perhaps of the large councils of bishops convened by imperial summons at Ariminum and Seleucia in 359 which decided in favor of Arianism, or of the council at Ephesus in 449 which declared Christ had only one

⁴⁹ *Principles*, p. 451.

⁵⁰ An English translation can be found as first of the ‘Historical Documents’ at the back of our BCP.

nature (Monophysitism). Ecclesiastical power politics, sad to say, played a significant part in many of these large councils. Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, chaired the last mentioned and refused to allow Pope Leo I's *Tome* to be read out; Leo denounced it as a 'robber council' and its decisions were reversed at Chalcedon two years later. Chalcedon itself broke up on a sour note with the important church of Alexandria refusing to accept its decisions and going into permanent schism. Such matters do not inspire confidence that the statements even of General Councils will necessarily convey the truth and our article is surely right in saying, unless they be firmly grounded on Scripture, 'things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority'.

In our day the ARCIC theologians felt able to assert that, 'When the Church meets in ecumenical council its decisions on fundamental matters of the faith exclude what is erroneous. Through the Holy Spirit the Church commits itself to these judgements, recognizing that, being faithful to Scripture and consistent with Tradition, they are by the same Spirit protected from error' ('Authority in the Church I' (1976), para. 19). This statement drew criticism as contradicting Article 21. We crave infallible authorities which cannot be questioned but, where imperfect humans are involved, can we find them?

Article 22 **Of Purgatory**

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.

From 1553. The title belies the wide scope of this article. The original draft condemned also praying for the dead, but this was struck out. In 1563 the opening words 'The doctrine of the school-authors' were changed to 'The Romish doctrine', presumably to make it clear that it represented current Roman Catholic teaching. The contents of the article reflect the seventh of the Schmalkaldic Articles composed by Luther in 1537. The Latin version of our article shows that 'pardons' refers to indulgences, 'fond' means 'futile', 'vainly' means 'uselessly' and 'repugnant to' is effectively 'contradicts'.

No article marks a more far-reaching break with medieval Roman Catholic doctrine and practice than this one. Let us look at each matter it mentions in turn.

Purgatory

The Schoolmen said the guilt for sin was forgiven in a priest's absolution through the merits of Christ's death, but sin also incurred temporal punishment which must be worked off in this world or, if not completed before death, in purgatory before one could go to heaven. Purgatory was viewed as a place of fiery torment from which few even devout Christians were exempt.

The idea of purification after death was connected by most Fathers before Augustine with the fires of hell, which it was supposed all would need to go through to some degree. Augustine suggested there might be a refining fire for the elect after death. His view is clearly based on 1 Cor. 3:12-15.⁵¹ Gregory the Great said it is to be believed there will be a purging fire after death for the guilt of small sins, he also derived this idea in part at least from 1 Cor. 3:15.

Purgatory developed into a dominant theme of Medieval Christianity. The prospect of it filled people with horror. A person's appointed time there could, it was believed, be

⁵¹ *City of God* 21.26, cf. 13.

reduced in advance by pilgrimages, good works and the purchase of indulgences. After death the soul's release could be hastened by other people's prayers, the celebration of Mass and purchasing indulgences for that person. Purgatory remains a belief of the Roman Catholic Church today, but not of the Orthodox churches. It has no foundation in Scripture, and denies the completeness of Christ's atonement. It also 'tends to rob the soul of peace and to fill it with fear of the future.'⁵²

Pardons

The Latin of this article uses the word *indulgentia* from which came 'indulgence'. Originally *indulgentia* meant 'gentleness'; later it became a legal term for the remission of punishment or taxation; then it was adopted into Medieval theology as a term meaning 'the remission by the Church of the temporal penalty due to forgiven sin, in virtue of the merits of Christ and the saints'.⁵³

The Early Church developed a system of penitential discipline for those who had denied their faith in Christ in the face of persecution; then later it was applied more widely to other sins. By about 7th century it was possible to cut short one's period of penance by payment of money. At the Council of Clermont (1095) Pope Urban II offered a plenary (complete) indulgence for anyone willing to go on the first crusade – that person, on death, would be exempted from purgatory and would go straight to heaven. The system was later extended to all who performed certain acts of devotion such as building a church or going on a pilgrimage. Indulgences continue in today's Roman Catholic Church. Yet the idea of 'buying forgiveness' which so provoked Luther's ire is indeed repugnant to the teaching of Scripture and to our sense of justice.

Images

Christianity inherited from Judaism the idea that no images of God, saints or holy things should be made or these would lead to idolatry. (Islam still holds this view.) Paganism knew no such ban. There is elementary artwork in the Catacombs, the underground Christian graveyard in Rome, dating from as early as AD 200. The Council of Elvira (c.305) in Spain forbade placing pictures in church lest they become objects of worship. Yet pictures appear to have been admitted in churches from the 4th century. In Orthodox churches only icons, stylized mosaic and pictures of Christ and the saints, were allowed. Objections to them led to the iconoclastic⁵⁴ controversy of the 8th and 9th centuries which was finally concluded in their favor in 843. In the West, Aquinas (1225-1274) advocated worship (Lat. *latria*) of images of Christ and the cross. In 1408 Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, went much further saying that images of the saints may also be venerated 'with processions, bending of the knees, bowings of the body, incensing, kissings, offerings, lighting of candles and pilgrimages.' The Council of Trent declared images should be venerated and retained in church. Nevertheless they posed a real temptation to break the second of the Ten Commandments. *Is this not true in church life today?*

⁵² Griffith Thomas, *Principles*, p. 303.

⁵³ *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd edn, 'Indulgences'.

⁵⁴ Meaning 'breaking of the icons'.

Relics

Interest in Christian relics appears to have sprung from the cult of the martyrs, so popular in the Post-Nicene Church. Having their relics was seen to provide access to the prayers of these dead saints, and the relics themselves were believed to be vested in supernatural power. Frequently healings were claimed as a result of touching them. It became imperative for new churches to have within them some such relics. As a result of the crusades in the 11th-13th centuries there developed a very lucrative trade in relics of all sorts from the Holy Land. The Council of Trent declared relics should be honored and are profitable for praying to the saint concerned. Such practices surely encouraged superstition. Today the sale of relics is strictly forbidden.

Invocation of the Saints

The NT says that angels are ministers of God (Heb. 1:14). Later this idea was extended to the departed saints. The practice of invoking saints (calling upon them in prayer) is mentioned from the 3th century. Leo I (pope AD 440-461) said the saints are our special intercessors, obtaining mercy from God by their prayers. Gregory I (pope AD 590-604) exhorted the faithful to put themselves under the protection of the saints. The Council of Trent endorsed the practice. In the Medieval Church a distinction was drawn between *latria* – worship for God alone, *doulia* – reverence for saints and angels, and *hyperdoulia* – devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Yet in practice these fine distinctions were scarcely maintained.

Attempts have been made to distinguish between asking the saints simply to pray for us, and asking them for other blessings. This distinction was made in the Bishops' Book, but not upheld in the King's Book or by the Council of Trent. It is hard to prevent one leading to the other and then leading to worship of the saints. In the 16th century the Reformers swept it all away, but in the 19th century the Oxford Movement reintroduced it. Bicknell makes a pertinent point:

The saints have often been more popular than God, because they have been supposed to be more human and less severe towards sin. So fallen man obtains what he craves for, an object of worship that does not make too great demands upon him for holiness of life.⁵⁵

Bicknell suggests also that the extravagant devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary came from the Church's so emphasizing the divinity of Christ that it obscured his humanity, making him seem remote and unapproachable.

In considering the practice of invoking saints one must bear in mind it is by no means certain that the saints are able to *hear* the prayers made to them! God alone is omnipresent. Further, invoking saints surely conflicts with the clear teaching of Scripture that there is *one* mediator between God and humans, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). If we have *direct* access to God the Father through Jesus Christ, why choose an indirect way?

⁵⁵ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 297.

Ministry and Worship

In this chapter we shall look at five articles concerned with various aspects of ministry. The first two articles focus on *who* may minister word and sacraments within the church, the other three deal with related matters.

Article 23 **Of Ministering in the Congregation**

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

The somewhat vague wording of this article is due to its coming from the tenth of the thirteen articles agreed between Anglican and Lutheran theologians in 1538. Our Article 36 makes a much more specifically Anglican statement. This present article was intended to exclude the view of Anabaptists that for ministering in the church one needed only an inward call by God. 'Congregation' here, as in Articles 19 and 20 means the society of Christ's followers, nationally or locally; the Latin version has *ecclesia*.

Ministry in the Church is a divine gift (Eph. 4:11-12). For it, first an *inward call* is necessary. It is not mentioned in this article presumably because it was not a matter of dispute between the churches. That the Church of England believed it essential is shown by the first question to the candidate in the service for the Ordering of Deacons (1552):

Do ye think, that ye truly be called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the due order of this realm, to the ministry of the church?

But from earliest times the *outward recognition* of the suitability of candidates for ordination was also felt vital. Hence Paul's instructions to Titus (Tit. 1:5-9), and Timothy (1 Tim. 3:1-13).

In the NT the apostles or their delegates appointed **elders** (or '**presbyters**' – Gk. *presbuteroi*) to lead the churches they had planted (Ac. 14:23, Tit. 1:5). The presbyter was also at that time known as **bishop** (Gk. *episcōpos*) – Tit. 1:5, 7. These presbyter-bishops were soon assisted by **deacons** (Phil. 1:1, 1 Tim. 3:8) whose office may have had its origin in the Seven appointed to serve (Gk. *diakonein*) tables for the Greek-speaking Jews in Jerusalem (Ac. 6:1-6). The apostles authorized them by laying hands on them (6:6). Besides these settled ministries there were charismatic **prophets** (1 Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:11), who travelled from church to church declaring God's messages, for example Agabus in Ac. 11:27-8.

By the beginning of the 2nd century the three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyters and deacons is attested in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch to churches in Asia Minor (c.110). This three-fold pattern appears to have spread during that century to most of the rest of the Church. It seems the leading presbyter had been elevated to the higher office of bishop providing a focus of unity in each church. With the appearance of heretical teachers and prophets, each gathering disciples around them, it was important for local churches to be able to trace their current leadership back through a succession of sound

leaders to the apostles.⁵⁶ Hence the idea of an ‘apostolic succession’ of ministry. Anglicanism claims its present bishops have such a pedigree. But it seems our 16th century reformers and their successors also accepted the validity of the non-episcopal ministries of the other churches of the Reformation. Their validity was questioned by Archbishop Laud in the 17th century but not rejected outright until the Oxford Movement in the 19th century.⁵⁷ But ‘apostolic succession’ of ministry was not an end in itself but a means of ensuring that the teaching of the apostles and not heresy was preserved in the Church. If a local church or denomination today takes the Bible as its primary authority it surely intends to make apostolic teaching (as found in the NT) central to its life. Must we then still insist its clergy need episcopal ordination? In a church, however, that unites episcopal and non-episcopal denominations, episcopal ministry may be adopted as the best pattern to preserve the unity of the church. Such was the case with the Church of South India (founded in 1947) and the Church of North India (founded in 1970). Bishops could then be said to be for the *bene esse* (well-being) of the church rather than being of its *esse* (essence).

Article 36 Of the Consecration of Bishops and Ministers

The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, as set forth by the General Convention of this Church in 1792, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering neither hath it anything that, of itself, is superstitious and ungodly. And, therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to said Form, we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

In 1792 the General Convention of the American Episcopal Church set forth a new Ordinal and Article 36 was accordingly revised to relate to it. The previous form of the article, dating from 1563, defended the validity of the 1552 Ordinal of the Church of England. For the ECP this article should surely be amended to read ‘set forth by the Provincial Synod of this Church in 1999’ and the date changed whenever in future the ECP services of ordination are revised.

The first English Ordinal was issued in 1549 separately from the first English Prayer Book; the revised Ordinal was bound with the 1552 Prayer Book but with a separate title page. When Mary came to the throne in 1553 this Ordinal and Prayer Book were repealed and the old Roman Pontifical, used up to the last year of the reign of Henry VIII, reintroduced. In 1559, the year after Elizabeth came to the throne, the 1552 Prayer Book (with a few changes) and the Ordinal bound with it were reinstated but, because the Act of Parliament authorizing this did not mention the Ordinal, some who still favored Rome declared all the consecrations and ordinations using it were invalid because the Ordinal remained repealed. Article 36, written in 1563, was intended to rebut that view and it was reinforced in 1566 by an Act of Parliament specifically declaring that all consecrations under the 1552 Ordinal were valid.

The reference to the Ordinal’s containing nothing ‘superstitious or ungodly’ was to rebut the Puritans (many of whom favored a Presbyterian church polity) who objected to episcopacy, of which indeed there had been many unworthy examples in the later Middle Ages, and who thought the ordination charge: ‘Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins thou dost forgive are forgiven...’ superstitious since it came from the Roman Catholic

⁵⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.4.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this see Griffith Thomas, *Principles*, pp. 330-38, also Bray, *Faith*, p. 125.

Pontifical. But in fact these words actually come from Jn. 20:22-3 and were spoken by Christ to his disciples.

In the reign of Elizabeth the Roman Catholic polemicists tried by various means to discredit Anglican Orders. First they attempted to show the consecration of Matthew Parker, Elizabeth's Archbishop of Canterbury, was invalid:

- The 'Nag's Head fable' was spread around declaring that, as Parker could not find bishops in office to consecrate him, he and several others had met at the Nag's Head tavern in Cheapside, London, and J. Scory (who, with the advent of Mary, had been deprived of being Bishop of Chichester) had laid a Bible on their necks saying, 'Take thou authority to preach the Word of God sincerely.' This story was soon discredited.
- Then Parker's chief consecrator Bishop Barlow was alleged to be not validly consecrated. This again was shown to be untrue, and anyway three other bishops were involved in Parker's consecration.

Then they turned their attack on 'insufficiency of form' of the Church of England's Ordinal, saying:

1. Anglican ordination includes neither chrism nor the holding out of a paten and chalice to the candidate (in Latin *porrectio instrumentorum* meaning literally 'stretching out of the instruments') with the words: 'Receive authority to offer sacrifice to God and to celebrate Masses as well for the living as the dead'. This had in fact been deliberately omitted in the Ordinals of Edward VI. The Church had existed for a thousand years without them. In fact there is no stress in Scripture on the eucharistic functions of the clergy, rather on the need for faithful preaching of the word and care for the flock (Ac. 20:28-31, cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-7).
2. There are no words in the Ordinal to distinguish the post to which the candidate is being admitted. For the ordination of a priest it simply says, 'Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven...' For the consecration of a bishop it says, 'Take the Holy Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by imposition of hands...' (cf. 2 Tim. 1:6).

The rest of the wording of the services, however, makes the intended offices clear. Further, in the 1662 Prayer Book, the words 'for the office and work of priest/bishop' were added. The Preface to the Ordinal makes it plain that the Church of England had no intention of innovating but rather wished to continue the traditional orders of bishop, priest and deacon. Our conception of the ministry is based on the New Testament and Early Church.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the validity of Anglican orders was raised with the papacy once more, but in *Apostolicae Curae* (1896) Pope Leo XIII once again declared them invalid, the Anglican Ordinal being defective in form (no *porrectio instrumentorum*) and intention (no sacrificing priesthood). More recently, however, the ARCIC reports (1970s) display significant agreement by Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians on their understanding of the eucharist, ministry and ordination suggesting that reappraisal of Anglican orders might now produce a different result.⁵⁸ But the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion has presented a new barrier and rejection of Anglican orders is likely to remain for the foreseeable future.

⁵⁸ See the ARCIC report 'Ministry and Ordination', *Elucidation* (1979), para. 6.

Article 24 Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People Understandeth

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people.

This strongly worded article from 1563, replacing one of milder tone from 1553, was in response to the Council of Trent's forthright denunciation of celebrating the Mass in the vernacular in 1562. 'Understanded of' is old English for 'understood by'.

It is a fact that in the Early Church the Scriptures were translated into various languages such as Latin and Syriac, and liturgies were developed in those languages. While the NT does not specifically deal with the language for worship this article can draw on Paul's instructions about 'speaking in tongues' where the languages spoken were, without interpretation, unintelligible to the speaker or listeners. The 1553 version of this article specifically alludes to 1 Cor. 14:27-28 which says that, if no interpretation will be given, those with messages in tongues should not deliver them in church. Paul has laid down the general principle that all that is done should *edify* the people present (1 Cor. 14:12, 26).⁵⁹

With such teaching in mind this article is surely right in saying prayer or ministry of the sacraments in church in a language not understood by the people is 'repugnant to the Word of God'. At the Reformation translating the Scripture into local languages was regarded as a priority. Luther's German translation of the NT was published in 1522, Tyndale's English NT in 1525. Hymns too were written in those languages, and in England Cranmer composed an English Prayer Book (1549, 1552). But in the Roman Catholic Church it was not until Vatican II (1962-65) that worship in local languages was permitted in place of Latin. This article gives encouragement today to those who wish to translate our services of worship into local languages, though the use of English liturgy sometimes has the virtue of reminding us we are also part of a world-wide church.

Article 26 Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the Effect of the Sacrament

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

⁵⁹ This point is clearly made in Homily 9 of the Second Book of Homilies (1562).

From 1553, based on the 8th Article of the Council of Augsburg. There were small changes in 1563 and 1571. It is against the Anabaptist view that the ministry of the sacraments by bad priests is invalid, and perhaps also against the Roman Catholic doctrine of ‘intention’.

This article recognizes there are bad clergy around, even some in the highest offices of the Church, but the grace conferred by the sacraments they minister is not affected because the sacraments were instituted by Christ. In the 3rd century Cyprian followed Tertullian in denying the validity of heretical (and schismatic) baptism. In the 4th century the Donatists said a Catholic Primate of North Africa’s consecration was invalid, and therefore the sacraments he ministered were valueless, because one of his consecrating bishops was a *traditor*, i.e. had handed over the Scriptures to the persecutors of the Church. Augustine responded that the grace brought through the sacrament is independent of the minister. This of course has a present-day application: should we cease to attend church because the priest is immoral, a drunkard, or a lazy SPO (Sunday Priest Only)? This article clearly tell us we should not. But it may be right to report that priest to his/her diocesan bishop!

In the Middle Ages there was considerable debate about ‘intention’ – did the one ministering *intend* to minister the sacrament correctly or not? Aquinas said, if a man performed it in mockery it was valueless.

Article 32 **Of the Marriage of Priests**

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God’s Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

The 1553 article consisted of just the first half of this one. By adding the second half in 1563 Archbishop Parker both strengthened its insistence on the lawfulness of clerical marriage against the Roman Catholic insistence on clerical celibacy, and reflected Queen Elizabeth’s concern about clergy choosing unsuitable wives.

In the NT, while being a celibate Christian is blessed by Christ (Mt. 19:12) and preferred by St. Paul to the married state (1 Cor. 7), yet marriage is honored (e.g. Jn. 2:1-11, Eph. 5:22-33). In 1 Cor. 9:5 Paul claims the right to ‘be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas.’ Celibacy was in fact almost unknown among the Jews. That acceptable candidates for bishop and deacon are to be ‘married only once’/‘husband of one wife’ (1 Tim. 3:2, 12, Tit. 1:5-6) may suggest that normally clergy were married. But there were Christians in the Early Church who chose to be chaste from baptism onwards even if married (e.g. Tertullian). This was before the time of monasticism.

In 305 the Council of Elvira in Spain forbade priests to live in wedlock with their wives. In 385 Pope Siricius instructed the bishop of Tarragona to forbid the marriage of priests and deacons. Only in 1102, under Archbishop Anselm, was celibacy made obligatory for English clergy. But the rule was often breached and by very many by the time of the Reformation.

Henry VIII sought to enforce clerical celibacy by his Six Articles and the King’s Book, embarrassing Cranmer who had recently married. Soon after Henry’s death, in 1547 Convocation repealed the canons against the marriage of the clergy. This was ratified by Parliament in 1549. After her accession in 1553 Mary ordered all married

priests (amounting by then to about a third of all in active ministry) to be deprived of their parishes and she demanded they be forthwith divorced. Elizabeth I was not very favorable to clerical marriage and in her 1559 Injunctions required clergy who wished marriage to get the permission of their bishop and two justices of the peace! In 1563 Trent forbade clerical marriage and this has remained the rule of the Roman Catholic Church to this day, though clergy of Uniate⁶⁰ churches may be married and, in our time, married Anglican priests joining the Roman Catholic Church over the ordination of women have been allowed to remain married.

The Orthodox Church never adopted the rule of clerical celibacy. On the contrary those preparing for parish ministry are encouraged to marry before their ordination (but not afterwards). Bishops, however, are normally chosen from the monks.

Article 32 adopts a moderate position based on Scripture, permitting but not insisting on clerical marriage. However it seems some Anglican clergy were not discreet in their choice of wives for Elizabeth's 29th Injunction alleges:

There hath grown offence and some slander to the Church, by lack of discreet and sober behavior in many ministers of the Church, both in choosing of their wives, and indiscreet living with them.

The article therefore insists clergy must assess whether their marriage will 'serve better to godliness'.

Bicknell comments that the root of the problem over clerical marriage has been the failure to recognize that celibacy is a vocation (or a *charisma*, 'gift' – 1 Cor. 7:7). Mission work, he says, would seem to be more cheaply and efficiently achieved by single clergy while, for maintenance of Christianity in a settled, professedly Christian country, married clergy are often desirable. They can model Christian family life. Enforcing celibacy opens the way to grave moral scandals.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Churches of Eastern Christendom who are in communion with Rome, acknowledging the supremacy of the pope, but retaining many of their independent customs, e.g. the Maronites of Lebanon.

⁶¹ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, pp. 313-14.

The Sacraments

In this chapter we shall consider six articles, 25 and 27 – 31. Some who are unfamiliar with the articles may be surprised by their teaching which clearly distinguishes Anglican sacramental doctrine from that of Rome and the more extreme Protestants Zwingli and the Anabaptists.

Article 25 Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

The 1553 article was extensively rewritten in 1563 to give the wording above. The first paragraph (which was the last in 1553) comes from the Augsburg Confession via the 13 Anglo-Lutheran articles.

The word 'sacrament' is from the Latin *sacramentum* which meant 'a sacred pledge', as for example a soldier's oath of loyalty to the emperor. In the Latin version of the Greek New Testament *sacramentum* translates the Greek word *mustērion* which means not simply a 'mystery' but 'something once secret which has now been revealed' (Col. 1:26-27, 2:2). It was first applied to baptism and the eucharist in the early 3rd century (Tertullian), but could also be used of many other matters such as the statements of the Lord's Prayer (Cyprian). Gradually sacrament came to have the meaning given in our Catechism of 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'.

The first paragraph of this article says three things:

1. They are 'badges or tokens', i.e. a public confession, of our allegiance to Christ and membership of the Church. This was Zwingli's view.
2. They are 'signs of grace', symbolizing the spiritual truths of forgiveness (by washing in baptism) and strength (by feeding at communion) through Christ.
3. They are 'effectual', working in us to stimulate ('quicken') and confirm our faith.

The second paragraph of the article underlines the special nature of baptism and the 'supper of the Lord'. Only they (a) have a visible sign, (b) impart an invisible grace, and (c) were instituted by Christ. Thus they alone fully deserve the name sacrament.

It was Peter Lombard (c. 1100-60) in his influential writing the *Sentences* who first listed seven sacraments. The third paragraph of our article declares that the five ‘commonly called sacraments’: confirmation, penance, (holy) orders, matrimony, and extreme unction are not to be ‘counted a sacraments of the Gospel’, i.e. they were not ordained by Jesus Christ. Our Catechism recognizes this when it calls them ‘sacramental rites’. When the article says some ‘have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles’ it surely has in mind confirmation, penance and unction whose significance has changed in the course of time. Let us look at each in turn:

- Confirmation came ultimately from the apostles’ laying hands on those baptized who had not received the Holy Spirit (Ac. 8:17, 19:6). It soon became a regular part of the baptism procedure of the Western Church (cf. Heb. 6:2) and was performed by the bishop (*Apostolic Tradition* 21), while the rest of baptism could be performed by presbyters (priests). Because bishops were far fewer in number than presbyters a delay developed between the administration of water baptism and the bishop’s laying on of hands. But through this ‘corruption’ came in time an important benefit - that of making the confirmation of those who had reached the age of discretion a time when, after instruction in the faith, they could publicly profess their allegiance to Christ. In the Eastern Church the laying on of hands was replaced in the baptismal procedure by anointing with oil performed by the local priest with oil blessed by a bishop; so the baptismal procedure remained unified and is administered to infants as well as adult converts. But it does not allow a personal confession of faith by those baptised.
- Penance ultimately derives from Jesus’ giving to his disciples the right to pronounce sins forgiven or retained (Mt. 16:19, 18:18, Jn. 20:23). The penitential system of the Early Church evolved, it seems, from the discipline imposed on those who denied their faith during persecutions (e.g. that of the Roman Emperor Decius, AD 250). The penances prescribed by this system came to be the only remedy for sins committed after baptism. Any penances incomplete when the person died were expected to be completed in purgatory. This could indeed be called a corruption of apostolic teaching.
- Extreme Unction was administered to the dying that they might make ‘a good death’. Formerly it had been an anointing for *healing* as indicated in Jas. 5:14-15. This change in emphasis was complete by the 9th century.

Marriage and Orders can be described as ‘states of life allowed in the Scriptures’ – see for instance for the former 1 Cor. 7:2-7, 28, Eph. 5:25-33, for the latter Ac. 14:23, 1 Tim. 3:1-11.

The Council of Trent fumed at this categorization of the sacraments: ‘If anyone shall say that the Sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ, or are more or fewer than seven, let him be anathema.’

The final paragraph of our article appears to have in mind the ceremonies of the Feast of Corpus Christi, observed in the Western Church from the 13th century, when the Sacred Host (reserved sacrament) was carried in procession. At Benediction in the Roman Catholic Church today the reserved sacrament is held up for worship. But the sacraments were not intended to be treated like magical charms, or kept and worshipped as Christ himself, but used. Here our article is focusing on the eucharist, and it goes on to emphasize the importance of a reverent attitude if one is to receive grace from this sacrament. It rejects the view upheld by Aquinas and later Trent that a sacrament confers grace simply by being performed (Lat. *ex opere operatum*). The article appeals to 1 Cor.

11:27-32 to justify its position. Should we not be stressing this to our congregations today? Does it not also place a serious question mark against today's common practice of giving communion to small children who are unaware of the significance of what they are receiving?

Article 27 **Of Baptism**

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from other that be not christened, but is also a sign of Regeneration or New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.

The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

In the main this wording is from 1553, but the reference to infant baptism was strengthened in 1563 and a further slight change introduced in 1571. The article is intended to rectify the deficiencies of the Zwinglian view of baptism and to contradict the Anabaptist prohibition of infant baptism.

In the New Testament 'baptism' is from the Gk. *baptisma* meaning 'immersion'. Certain ritual washings are specified in the OT Law, e.g. of Aaron and his sons to be priests (Lev. 8:6) and of those who had been lepers (Lev. 14:9). By the 1st century AD proselytes (Gentile converts) were accepted into Judaism by circumcision of men and boys and by baptism of women and girls. John the Baptist offered, not repeated washings like those of the Jewish Essene community, but a single baptism with repentance for sins in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Jews needed it and were therefore on the same level as Gentiles. Full Christian baptism was only possible after Jesus was glorified and the Spirit conferred on believers (Jn. 7:39). Before leaving his disciples Jesus commanded them to baptize in the three-fold Name (Mt. 28:19), though possibly in the earliest days of the Church baptism was performed in Jesus' name alone (cf. Ac. 2:38).

The first sentence of this article acknowledges the view of Zwingli that being baptized is a public acknowledgement that a person has turned to Christ as Lord and Messiah. This is particularly significant in a non-Christian country. Enquiring about Christ or reading the Bible may be permitted there, but to be baptized is to cross a line. After that step has been taken the person's family sometimes enacts a funeral to say that s/he is now dead to them, or even tries to kill that person whom they believe, by becoming a Christian, has badly shamed them.

But baptism is more than just a mark of distinction between Christians and non-Christians (those that 'be not christened'), it is a sign of 'regeneration or new birth' (Jn. 3:3, 5, Tit. 3:5) - in much the same way, Bray suggests, as a marriage contract is a sign of a marriage.⁶² Thus it is an 'instrument' - Griffith Thomas points out this is a legal term meaning a 'deed of conveyance' (like in buying a house!) - and by it a person is 'grafted into the church'. Here a gardening metaphor is added from Rom. 11:17 to explain we do

⁶² *Faith*, p.154. He goes on to say, 'What baptism cannot do is bring about real regeneration. If it could, there would be no need to preach the Gospel at all, since it would be enough just to pour water over everybody who comes along. If baptism could make people Christians, then there would be millions of people in the world who would be Christians without realizing it, and often in spite of denying it...' (p.155).

not enter the life of the church by right or merit but by God's free gift. The article goes on to say that baptism imparts other blessings too: it is a visible sign and seal of the promise of forgiveness of sins (Ac. 2:38, 3:19 etc.) and of our adoption as God's children (Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:5), and it confirms our faith - this assumes there was faith in Christ already before baptism in the candidate or the sponsor (cf. Ac. 16:31). Finally, 'grace (is) increased by virtue of prayer unto God' - God's unmerited favor for the candidate is increased through prayer.

Griffith Thomas adds a further aspect: 'We may regard Baptism as the formal act by which we embrace God's covenant...Baptism introduces us into a new and special relation to Christ.'⁶³ He is drawing a parallel here with circumcision in the OT (Gen. 17:1-14) which introduced Abraham and his offspring into a covenant, a binding relationship with God.

But Bicknell asks a pertinent question: if baptism conveys all these blessings, why are so many of the baptized living in sin and filling our prisons? His answer is that holiness requires cooperation on our part. If baptism incorporates us into the Church, it must be supplemented by a personal surrender of the will to God and a life lived in fellowship with the Church.⁶⁴

In its second paragraph this article declares the baptism of young children should be retained 'as most agreeable with the institution of Christ'. This is a strong rejection of the Anabaptist position that declared only believers could be baptized. Let us look at some key points in favor of infant baptism:

- Infant boys one week old were circumcised and bought within God's covenant established with Abraham (Gen.17:10-12). If God's *old* covenant embraced children, would his *new* covenant (Jer. 31:31-34 fulfilled in Mk. 14:24 and //s) do less for them? Surely not. St. Paul speaks of baptism as the spiritual counterpart of circumcision (Col. 2:11-12).
- Believers 'and their households' were baptized from the earliest days of the Church (Ac. 11:14, 16:14-15, 33, 1 Cor. 1:16). 'Household' would normally include children and slaves. If a sceptic should say, "You can't prove any of these households had children," one can quickly answer, "You can't prove they did not"!
- St Paul devotes specific messages to *children* as well as adults in some of his epistles implying they too are members of the Church (Eph. 6:1-3, Col. 3:20).
- As already mentioned, when a Gentile family was accepted into Judaism (became 'proselytes') women *and girls* were *baptized*, while men and boys were circumcised

There was vigorous debate in the Early Church about the appropriateness of baptizing infants. In the first half of the 3rd century Origen declared that the practice of baptizing infants was received *from the apostles* (*Hom. Lev.* 8.3, *Comm. Rom.* 5.9), though he admitted not all liked the practice. Some decades earlier Tertullian objected to the practice of baptizing little children, urging it be delayed until they are old enough to know Christ (*Bapt.* 18). Such a view caused various people in the early centuries of the Church to delay baptism until adulthood or even near death. By the 5th century infant baptism became the universal practice.

⁶³ *Principles*, p. 376.

⁶⁴ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, pp. 374-75.

What does baptism achieve for infants? Bicknell, while admitting the teaching about baptism in the NT is ‘coloured by the prevalent practice of adult baptism’, points to Jesus’ blessing little children (Mk. 10:13-16) and says that at baptism ‘we believe that they receive from Him the best that they are capable of receiving.’⁶⁵ Griffith Thomas stresses that, though baptism brings the child within the new covenant established by Christ and into a new relationship to God as Father, this needs later to be appropriated by faith.⁶⁶ Confirmation can provide such an opportunity for the public declaration of faith in Christ and making a meaningful commitment to him, but candidates need to be carefully prepared. Confirmation can then be seen as a ‘completion’ of baptism.⁶⁷

Article 28 **Of the Lord’s Supper**

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another: but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ’s death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up or worshipped.

Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 are from 1553 with slight changes in 1563 and 1571. The first paragraph excludes an Anabaptist view that the Lord’s Supper was just a love feast and the Zwinglian view that it was just a memorial of Christ’s death. The second paragraph excludes the Roman Catholic belief in ‘transubstantiation’. The original paragraph 3 denied ‘the real and bodily presence... of Christ’s flesh and blood’ and was replaced in 1563 by the present one, it seems to avoid offending those in the Church of England with Lutheran views of the sacrament.

The idea of communing with a god through a fellowship meal was common in the ancient world. There are four accounts of the Last Supper in the New Testament: in Mt. 26:20-29, Mk. 14:17-25, Lk. 22:14-23 and 1 Cor. 11:23-26 (the last is generally thought to be the earliest, dating from AD 55). The Last Supper was a Passover meal reinterpreted by Jesus. The title ‘Lord’s Supper’ comes from 1 Cor. 11:20. Only the Pauline account specifically says ‘Do this in remembrance of me’, but this has been universally followed in liturgies. In 1 Cor. 11:17-34 the eucharistic celebration was in the context of a fellowship meal. ‘This do as often as you drink’ may imply *whenever* you hold a common meal. Such common meals were held at first daily in people’s homes (Ac. 2:42, 46). Perhaps because of the abuse of these in Corinth, corrected by Paul (1 Cor. 11:20-22)

⁶⁵ *Thirty-Nine Articles*, pp. 376-77.

⁶⁶ *Principles*, p.386.

⁶⁷ Does it not make sense to admit them to communion at that point, honoring 1 Cor. 11:27-29 – which is why, at the Reformation, catechisms were introduced for those at the age of discretion?

the custom developed of separating a service of worship from fellowship meals. By the time of Justin Martyr (mid-2nd century) the eucharist is mentioned without a meal (*I Apology* 66). But the latter continued as a sort of charity supper till at least the late 7th century.

The first paragraph of this article declares the Lord's Supper is not just a 'sign of the love Christians ought to have among themselves'. Probably the wording here reflects Jn. 15:12-13 where Jesus, at his last supper with his disciples, commanded them to love one another. So the common fellowship meal between Christians became known as the 'agape' (the Greek word for this love), translated 'love-feast' in Jude 12. Anabaptists appear to have held the Lord's Supper to be just that. 'But rather,' continues the article, 'it is the sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death'. It is an outward and visible memorial of Christ death for our sins (1 Cor. 11:24-26). But, the article insists, only if we receive the consecrated bread and wine in a reverent and worthy manner and with faith do we partake of the body and blood of Christ. This is based on 1 Cor. 11:27-29, 10:16.

The second paragraph of the article rejects the Roman Catholic doctrine of 'transubstantiation'. This declared that, when the bread and wine were consecrated, there came a change in their underlying 'substance' (their real essence) while their 'accidents' (their outward properties) showed no difference. This distinction between substance and accidents comes from Aristotelian philosophy which was combined with theology by influential Medieval theologians ('Schoolmen'). So Christ's body was believed to be actually present in the bread even though unseen. This idea, first put forward it seems by Paschasius Radbertus (831), was refined by the Schoolmen, and declared official doctrine by the Lateran Council of 1215. The Council of Trent anathematized (cursed) anyone who denied it. Article 28 condemns this view as unscriptural, against the nature of a sacrament (by speaking of a *change* in the bread), and one that has brought about many superstitions. In the Middle Ages there were indeed those who claimed the consecrated bread sometimes turned into raw flesh or from it came drops of blood.⁶⁸ So, what is a correct understanding of the consecrated bread and wine? The third paragraph of the article declares 'the body of Christ is given, taken and eaten...only after a *heavenly and spiritual manner*' and the means of participation is *by faith*. Two different interpretations of this are widely held within Anglicanism today:

- There *is a change* in the bread and wine. During consecration Christ's body and blood become spiritually present intermingling with the bread and wine. This was Luther's view and is known as 'consubstantiation'. (An analogy used was that of a piece of iron heated to red heat in which iron and fire mingle.) It is commonly referred to today as the 'real presence' of Christ. This standpoint is taken by the ARCIC theologians: 'Communion with Christ in the eucharist presupposes his true presence, effectually signified by the bread and wine which, in this mystery, become his body and blood. The real presence of his body and blood can, however, only be understood within the context of the redemptive activity whereby he gives himself, and is himself reconciliation, peace and life, to his own.'⁶⁹ This last statement points

⁶⁸ Some details are given by Bicknell, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, p.398, and by Daniel E. Bornstein ed., *Medieval Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), pp. 88-95.

⁶⁹ 'Eucharistic Doctrine' (1971), para.6.

to the presence of Christ crucified (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19). Other statements add also it is Christ risen.⁷⁰

- There is *no change* in the bread and wine at consecration, but they signify Christ's body crucified and blood shed and, through receiving them with faith, one has a spiritual encounter with Christ. This approach is from Calvin. He refused to accept Zwingli's belief that the bread and wine were *just* signs of Christ's crucified body and blood. He said rather a sign is closely connected with what it points to. He tried to do justice to the statement in Jn. 6:53-56 that those who 'eat the flesh and drink the blood' of Christ have life in them, while yet firmly believing Christ is now 'at the right hand of God' in heaven (Ac. 2:33-35, Eph. 1:20). So he concluded that, when a believer partakes of the consecrated bread and wine, the Holy Spirit lifts his soul to heaven to feed spiritually on the risen Christ.⁷¹ Calvin's view has also been called 'receptionism' because it is only when a person *receives* the bread and wine *with faith* that there is anything special about them and an encounter with Christ is possible.

The article ends with a declaration that Christ did not ordain that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper should be 'reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.' To believe Christ is bodily present in the consecrated bread has led to exaggerated veneration of it: carrying the Sacred Host in procession (Feast of Corpus Christi), lifting it up for worship (at Benediction). But those who framed this article did not foresee that the sacrament might be reserved *simply for later use*. This is surely allowable.⁷²

Article 29 Of the Wicked, which do not eat the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper

The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ: yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

This was composed by Parker in 1563 and accepted by Convocation but was struck out by Elizabeth so as not to offend those with a Lutheran view of the sacrament. In 1571 Parker reinserted it and the Queen accepted it.

This is the corollary of the first paragraph of Article 28. The first part of it refers to Augustine's *Tractate on John 26*, the last part is based on 1 Cor. 11:27-29. Roman Catholic teaching says that the wicked eat the sacrament (Lat. *res sacramenti*, lit. the 'thing' of the sacrament), but do not benefit from its grace (*virtus sacramenti*).

⁷⁰ Particularly, 'In the whole action of the eucharist and in and by his sacramental presence given through bread and wine, the crucified and risen Lord, according to his promise, offers himself to his people' (para. 3).

⁷¹ Deciphering Calvin's actual view of this subject is not easy, but I have been most grateful for the analysis of François Wendel in *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, tr. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), ch. 5.

⁷² 'The practice of reserving the sacrament for reception after the congregation has dispersed is known to date back to the second century...communion administered from the reserved sacrament to those unable to attend the eucharistic celebration is rightly understood as an extension of that celebration' (ARCIC, 'Eucharistic Doctrine', Elucidation para. 8).

Article 30 **Of Both Kinds**

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: For both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christian men alike.

Composed by Parker in 1563.

There is no support for denying the cup to the laity in Scripture or the Early Church. Communion was given in both kinds until the 12th century, except possibly when the sacrament was taken to the absent and sick. The Council of Clermont (1095) condemned giving it in one kind and this was reaffirmed by Pope Paschal II (1118), but it was officially accepted at the Council of Constance (1415) and then defended by saying that the whole of Christ is received in either element (the doctrine of 'concomitance'). Trent anathematized those who rejected it, but held out the possibility the rule might be relaxed in the future. It was not relaxed until Vatican II some 400 years later! The cup was restored to the laity in England immediately after Henry VIII's death in 1547. Communion in both kinds has been retained by the Eastern Churches. They practice 'intinction', dipping the bread in the wine. This practice is surely desirable in *any* church when there is danger of passing on infection (e.g. when a communicant has a cold), but otherwise it is important for all to share a common cup as a sign of Christian unity (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16-17).

Article 31 **Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross**

The Offering of Christ once made is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

From 1553 with small changes in 1563 and 1571.

This article echoes the words of the English BCP consecration prayer. 'Redemption' means buying back; 'propitiating' means appeasing anger; 'satisfaction' from Lat. *satisfactio* 'giving enough' was first used by Anselm: only the death of the God-Man Jesus Christ could satisfy God's honor offended by the sins of humankind. The article says Christ's death completely atones for both original⁷³ and actual sin.

'The sacrifices of masses' – 'Mass' is from *ite missa est* ('Go, it is sent', i.e. finished)', the last words of the Latin eucharist service. The service focuses on the sacrifice of Christ. In time it came to be seen that, at the Mass, the priest offered to God the sacrifice of Christ, and this had value in itself. Later medieval Roman Catholic teaching says that while Christ's death on the cross availed for the forgiveness of *original* sin, the Mass made satisfaction for men's *actual* sins. Trent declared 'the sacrifice of the Mass' was propitiatory for the living and the dead, and anathemizes all who do not accept that.

⁷³ For explanation of original sin see back to our commentary on Article 9.

Newman in Tract 90 (1841) declared ‘the sacrifices of masses’ must refer to popular perversions of Roman Catholic teaching not the church’s official teaching about ‘the sacrifice of the Mass’. It seems he later withdrew this view. Griffith Thomas points out the plural form of the phrase was quite often used in Roman Catholic literature, and Trent appears to have had Article 31 in mind when it anathematized those who said this doctrine was ‘blasphemy’ or ‘imposture’ (‘deceits’ in the Lat. form of the article is *imposturae*).

The ARCIC theologians seek to clarify the relationship between Christ’s sacrifice and the eucharist:

Christ’s redeeming death and resurrection took place once and for all in history. Christ’s death on the cross, the culmination of his whole life of obedience, was the one, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. There can be no repetition of or addition to what was then accomplished once for all by Christ...Yet God has given the eucharist to his Church as a means through which the atoning work of Christ on the cross is proclaimed and made effective in the life of the Church. The notion of *memorial* [Gk. *anamnesis*] as understood in the passover celebration at the time of Christ – i.e. the making effective in the present of an event in the past – has opened the way to a clearer understanding of the relationship between Christ’s sacrifice and the eucharist...In the eucharistic prayer the Church continues to make a perpetual memorial of Christ’s death, and his members, united with God and one another, give thanks for all his mercies, entreat the benefits of his passion on behalf of the whole Church, participate in these benefits and enter into the movement of his self-offering.

They wish to make it clear that they believe today that the eucharist conveys no merit independent from the cross.

Living in the World

What the final three articles deal with may seem meager under the general topic ‘Living in the World’, but these were the matters of particular concern when the articles were composed in the 16th century.

Article 37 **Of the Power of the Civil Magistrates**

The Power of the Civil Magistrate extendeth to all men, as well Clergy as Laity, in all things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual. And we hold it to be the duty of all men who are professors of the Gospel, to pay respectful obedience to the Civil Authority regularly and legitimately constituted.

This skillful revision of the article for the situation in the United States of America was issued by the 1801 Convention of PECUSA. It replaced a form of the article established in 1563, with one minor change in 1571.⁷⁴ The latter was itself a major revision of the earliest form of the article in 1553.

The 1801 article distils the essence of the second paragraph of the 1563 version as appropriate for the situation in the USA where there was no monarchy but a republic. It stressed that Civil Authority, legitimately elected, must be obeyed in all temporal (secular) matters by clergy as well as lay people. Behind this statement lie Rom. 13:1-7 and 1 Pet. 2:13-17 which declare that secular authorities are God’s agents to promote law and order, rewarding the good and punishing the bad in society, and must be obeyed. In 1 Tim. 2:1-3 Christians are told to pray for these officials ‘so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life’ – hence the prayers for them in our intercessions in church. In a democracy like ours we are entitled to take part in peaceful demonstrations for what we consider just causes but must still respect the officers of the law. But, as the article also insists they have ‘no authority in things purely spiritual’. This distinguished the situation in England and America from that in Germany and Scandinavia where secular rulers often took an active role in the affairs of the church.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ The Queen’s Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of England, and over her dominions, unto whom the chief government of all estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain [belong], and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to the Queen’s Majesty the chief government, by which titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folk to be offended; we give not to our princes the ministering either of God’s Word, or of Sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen doth most plainly testify: But that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evildoers.

The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England.

The laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death, for heinous and grievous offences.

It is lawful for Christian men at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.

⁷⁵ Cf. Bray, *Faith*, p. 206.

The 1563 article also states bluntly that the Bishop of Rome has no legal authority over the realm of England. That point was firmly made in the 1530s in the series of laws passed by the English parliament that broke the country's ties with Rome and declared Henry VIII to be 'Supreme Head of the English Church and Clergy'. This last point was accepted by the Convocation of the Church of England with the restriction 'as far as the law of Christ permits'. More than 200 years later in the republic of the USA, where there was separation of church and state, the article no longer needed to stress the church's independence from the pope. More surprising perhaps is its omission of the final clauses of the earlier article stating the legitimacy of the death penalty and of Christians' serving in the army.

The Bible nowhere condemns a soldier's life, so it would seem legitimate, contrary to the Anabaptist position, for Christian men to wear arms and fight in just wars. The Sermon on the Mount forbids a Christian to take *personal* revenge (Mt. 5:39-41, 44) but where wrong is being done *to others* it would seem a duty to resist. But wars should only be for a just cause, when all means to establish peace have been exhausted; and response to aggression must be proportionate, avoid unnecessary cruelty and, so far as possible, avoid civilian casualties. Today of course these are matters for legitimate debate.

Article 38 Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not common

The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

Composed in 1553 against the claim of some Anabaptists that holding all possessions in common is essential to Christianity.

These Anabaptists, whom we might infer lived in England as well as on the Continent, based their view on the Christian communal living of the earliest Church (Ac. 2:44-5, 4:32). For the early Christians the sharing of goods appears to have been a spontaneous product of their spirit of Christian brotherhood. It was neither compulsory nor universal. Peter says Ananias had the right to retain his property or the money from its sale (5:4). Before long, however, the church in Jerusalem was needing financial help from outside (cf. Rom. 15:25-28), indicating it seems the failure of their zealous experiment. Such communal living does not seem to have been replicated in the Church outside Jerusalem until the later monastic movement.

But Christians must not neglect the poor. Almsgiving is frequently urged in the New Testament (Mt. 6:1-4, Rom. 12:13, 2 Cor. 9:7, Heb. 13:16, 1 Jn. 3:17), but no proportion of income like the Old Testament tithe (Lev. 27:30, Mal. 3:8-10) is specified, rather people are urged to give as they feel right and to do it cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). Such almsgiving continued in the Patristic Church. Justin Martyr for instance says that, after the eucharist, the wealthy who are willing contribute what they see fit and this is deposited with the president (bishop) who administers it to the orphans, widows, sick, Christians in prison, visitors and others in need (*1 Apology* 67). Tertullian speaks of a chest to which all church members, if they can, contribute money once a month which is used to feed the poor and bury them, to help destitute orphans, old slaves and shipwrecked mariners, and Christians who have been sent to work in the mines, exiled to islands, or put in prison for their faith (*Apology* 39.5-6).

Jesus' teaching about wealth might be summed up as:

- Wealth brings great responsibility to use it for others as well as oneself (Lk. 6:24, 30).
- Wealth tempts us to rely on it rather than God (Mk. 10:24).

Too often the Church has not protested about exploitation of the poor and weak. People have been allowed to suppose Christian morality applied to private life but not to business relationships. Some have salved their consciences by making donations to the church from their profits. The Church is bound to investigate the causes of poverty but not accept uncritically political or economic systems that aim to rectify it. People in Britain can rightly applaud their post-war 'Welfare State' but its gifts of free education, medical attention and 'social security' (payments to the poor and unemployed) must not prevent people from a sense of personal responsibility to do what they can to help themselves and others.

Article 39 **Of a Christian Man's Oath**

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle; so we judge that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

From 1553, directed against Anabaptists who refused oath-taking in courts of law.

An oath is a solemn declaration, with appeal to God (or some substitute), that one is speaking the truth. This article is referring here to Mt. 5:33-7 and Jas. 5:12. These passages appear to be condemning the Pharisees' practice of swearing not by God (for fear of misusing his name no doubt – Ex. 20:7), but by parts of his creation: heaven, earth etc. Such oaths were viewed as less binding than those in God's name. Jesus (followed by James) goes so far as to declare that, for his followers, all oaths are unnecessary in everyday speech. The answers 'yes' and 'no' should be quite sufficient, as they are expected always to tell the truth, and do not need to confirm their statements by oaths. So far, the Anabaptists and later the Quakers, seem vindicated.

But in courts of law where people, perhaps due to their lack of Christian commitment, do not always tell the truth, oaths in the name of God may sometimes be necessary. The OT does not condemn such oaths (Deut. 6:13); Jesus himself was prepared to answer when put under oath by Caiaphas (Mt. 26:63). Paul occasionally called upon God to witness the truth of his statements (2 Cor. 1:23, Gal. 1:20), probably because the converts he was writing to had not yet reached the full Christian standard of morality. But such oaths, says our article, must be 'in a cause of faith and charity', and in accordance with the teaching of Jeremiah (Jer. 4:2), that such should be taken 'in justice, judgment, and truth' ('in truth, in justice, and uprightness', NRSV).

* * * *

Today for many other issues in our world we may wish there were articles to guide us. But Anglicanism respects the individual conscience and tolerates a variety of views on many subjects. Where Scripture gives no clear guidance we can turn to tradition, reason

and experience for help. If by 'the world' we mean humans living regardless of the will of God, we can be sure of two things: God loves them (Jn. 3:16) and so should we, but at the same time we should not conform to their patterns of behaviour but rather be submitted to God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Tailpiece

So how shall we evaluate the Articles? In his influential book *The English Reformation* A. G. Dickens, a leading scholar of the Reformation period, makes an assessment. He notes the influence of Calvinism particularly on Articles 13, 17 and 18, the much wider influence of Lutheranism via the 13 Articles agreed between Anglican and Lutheran divines (which we have noted in our studies), and concludes that the Articles as whole represent indeed a *via media*, a middle way between Roman Catholicism and the extreme Protestantism of the Anabaptists in the 16th century. Finally he declares:

The present writer must confess whenever he re-reads the Articles, he finds admiration becoming preponderant over other emotions. This no doubt, is in part a literary admiration, yet it has some more solid ingredients. However strongly one may reject the Articles as a statement of twentieth-century thinking in the Anglican Church, one must admit that they wore remarkably well until the later nineteenth (century)...

They still deserve serious study as a historical monument, and even as a point of departure for any new codes which may be attempted. Despite the bargaining which seems to underlie them, the Articles cannot justly be dismissed as a timid compromise; their flexibility represents at least the dawning of the notion that honest doubt, alternative solutions and agreements to differ have their places in the doctrinal sphere. In very large part they represent what was most sensible and maturely-considered in the Reforming thought of the mid-century...

The most important function of the Articles was a pragmatic one. They were in due course to bring a much needed element of stability to the intellectual and social scene. In their conscious attempt at a shrewd balance between the extremes of an unbalanced age, they are intensely English, and a student of English history unfamiliar with their text suffers from a grievous gap in his documentary knowledge.⁷⁶

So what, reader, is your evaluation? Has your study of the Articles helped you in some measure to understand better the nature of Anglicanism as against the teachings and practices of other denominations today?

⁷⁶ *The English Reformation*, rev. edn (London: Collins, 1967), pp. 348-49.

THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Via Media

between Roman Catholicism and Extreme Protestantism

Contrary to Roman Catholicism	Contrary to Extreme Protestantism
<p data-bbox="279 745 722 954"><u>The Apocrypha</u> (Art. 6) The books of the Apocrypha are of value for examples of and instruction in Christian living but should not be used to establish any doctrine.</p> <p data-bbox="279 1568 730 1742"><u>Justification by Faith</u> (Art. 11) We are accounted righteous before God only by trusting in the merit of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross not in our own good works.</p>	<p data-bbox="858 674 1313 813"><u>Christ's Humanity</u> (Art. 4) Christ's humanity was not absorbed into his divinity after his resurrection.</p> <p data-bbox="858 999 1294 1207"><u>The Old Testament</u> (Art. 7) The Old Testament is not contrary to the New. While its ceremonial and civil laws are not binding on Christians, its moral laws most certainly are.</p> <p data-bbox="858 1245 1286 1420"><u>The Creeds</u> (Art. 8) The historic creeds ought to be wholeheartedly received and believed for they are firmly based on Scripture.</p> <p data-bbox="858 1458 1294 1597"><u>Original Sin</u> (Art. 9) Original sin is not merely a matter of copying Adam's error but is a defect in the nature of all humans.</p> <p data-bbox="858 1854 1278 1921"><u>Our Good works not Meritorious yet Pleasing to God</u> (Art. 12)</p>

<p><u>No Earning of ‘Congruous’ Grace</u> (Art. 13) The good works of fallen humanity do not earn corresponding grace from God.</p> <p><u>No Works of ‘Supererogation’</u> (Art. 14) It is not possible for us to do more good than God requires of us.</p> <p><u>The Church</u> (Art. 19) Like other important churches, the Church of Rome has erred in matters of lifestyle, ceremony and faith.</p> <p><u>Various Doctrines & Practices</u> (Art. 22) Purgatory, indulgences, adoration of images and relics, and praying to saints are empty human inventions contrary to Scripture.</p> <p><u>Ordination & Ministry</u> (Arts. 23, 32, 36) Ordinations performed under the Anglican Ordinals are completely valid.</p> <p>Clergy may marry if they think it will further godliness.</p> <p><u>Worship</u> (Art. 24) Public worship should be in a language understood by the worshippers.</p>	<p>Although our good works, which spring out of a lively faith, cannot earn forgiveness, they are yet pleasing to God.</p> <p><u>Forgivable Post-Baptismal Sin</u> (Art.16) Not all sin after baptism is ‘against the Holy Spirit’ and therefore unpardonable. If there is repentance other sins can be forgiven.</p> <p>Authorization is necessary by church authorities before anyone can engage in public ministry in the church. Anglican ordination is not superstitious or ungodly.</p>
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<p><u>Sacraments</u> (Arts. 25-31) There are two sacraments ordained by Christ, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The other five so-called sacraments are either false developments from apostolic practice (confirmation, penance, extreme unction) or states of life allowed in the Scriptures (marriage, orders).</p> <p>Sacraments are not to be worshipped but used. Unworthy use leads to God's condemnation.</p> <p>Transubstantiation has no basis in Scripture, is contrary to the nature of a sacrament, and has given rise to many superstitions.</p> <p>The cup at communion is not to be denied to the laity, for Christ instituted it to be administered to all Christians alike.</p> <p>Christ's death on the cross pays for both original and actual sins. The celebration of the 'Mass' has no propitiatory value of its own.</p> <p><u>Church Traditions</u> (Art. 34) These may vary from place to place so long as they are not contrary to Scripture. National and particular churches have the right to introduce, change and abolish them, so long as this edifies the people.</p>	<p>The sacraments are not just signs that mark Christians out from others, but effectual signs, ministering God's grace.</p> <p>The grace of the sacraments comes from Christ and is therefore not invalidated by the unworthiness of the minister.</p> <p>Baptism is a sign of regeneration (new birth) which actually grafts us into the Church and brings great spiritual blessings.</p> <p>Infant baptism is agreeable with what Christ has taught us.</p> <p>The Lord's Supper (eucharist) is not just a love-feast or memorial of the cross, but a spiritual partaking of the body and blood of Christ for those with faith.</p> <p>Christians must observe local traditions not contrary to Scripture – or face a public rebuke for disrupting the peace of the church.</p> <p><u>Other Matters</u> (Arts.37-39) Christians may serve in the armed forces.</p>
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	<p>The possessions of Christians are not all to be held in common, though Christians should give generously to the poor.</p> <p>It is acceptable for Christians to take oaths in a law court so long as it is for a just cause.</p>
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What Happened to the Articles?

In the 16th Century

- 1553 – The Forty-Two Articles were published in the last days of Edward VI's reign. All clergy, schoolmasters and members of the universities (Oxford & Cambridge) were required to subscribe. But with the death of Edward VI this became a dead letter.
- 1563 – The Thirty-Nine Articles were issued by Convocation but Elizabeth I refused to submit them to Parliament feeling that to make them law would limit her flexibility in dealing with Roman Catholics and others. She struck out Article 29, it seems, to conciliate Lutherans.
- 1571 – Having been excommunicated by the Pope in 1570 Elizabeth now submitted the Articles to Parliament (Art. 29 having been restored) and they became law. All clergy and members of the universities had to subscribe. Not strictly enforced.
- 1583 – Archbishop Whitgift issued Three Articles which included the wording for the subscription: 'Willingly and *ex animo* ('from the heart') I ... do believe all the Articles...to be agreeable to the Word of God.'

In the 17th Century

- 1604 – Publication of the revised Canons of the Church of England
- Canon 5 states that anyone dissenting from the Articles is to be excommunicated.
 - Canon 36 gives the words of subscription for all being newly ordained, installed to a parish, all who preach, catechize or teach divinity within England as: 'I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion...I believe the doctrine of the Church of England and Ireland, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God.'
- 1628 – King Charles I, in the face of much controversy within the church as the Calvinist Puritans grew in power, on his own authority had the Articles reprinted with his own preface demanding loyalty to the 'literal and grammatical sense' of them by *all* his subjects (laity included). Puritan-dominated Parliament never endorsed this. Civil War broke out in 1642 and the next year the Westminster Assembly (Calvinist) appointed a committee to revise them. This achieved no lasting result as, though the Parliamentary forces won the war and a Commonwealth was established, the monarchy was restored in 1660.
- 1689 – The Toleration Act allowed Dissenters (Protestants who did not support the Church of England) to hold their own worship separately. But all their pastors had to subscribe to the doctrinal articles (Baptists were given exemption from infant baptism, Quakers from taking oaths). This Act continued in force until 1779 when it was replaced simply by a declaration of adherence to Christianity and belief in the Scriptures.

In the 18th Century

Unitarian views gained influence both outside and inside the Church of England. There was thus resentment by some clergy against subscription to the Trinitarian doctrine of the Articles.

In the 19th Century

1801 – The Convention of PECUSA set forth the ‘Articles of Religion’ with revisions to Articles 8, 35, 36 and 37, and with the omission of all but the title of Article 21. (The revised wording has been noted in the commentary above.)

1841 – John Henry Newman, a leader of the Oxford Movement within the Church of England, published ‘Tract 90’ trying to make the Articles compatible with Catholic doctrine. There was a public outcry, and he subsequently joined the Church of Rome (see Appendix 3).

1865 – Following influential opposition to enforcing subscription to the Articles, particularly for graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, and the appointment of a Royal Commission to reconsider subscription, the Clerical Subscription Act of the British Parliament changed the wording of the assent (subscription) to: ‘I...do solemnly make the following declaration, I assent to the 39 Articles of Religion...I believe the doctrine of the Church of England therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God.’ Every clergyman on ordination had to subscribe, and on the first Sunday after his institution to a new parish had to read the Articles and make the declaration of assent. Those at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge no longer had to subscribe.

1888 – Lambeth Conference, resolution 19 stated that new Anglican provinces need not ‘be bound to accept in their entirety by the Thirty-Nine Articles’ though they should give ‘satisfactory evidence that they hold substantially the same doctrine as our own and that their clergy subscribe Articles in accordance with the express statement of our own standards of doctrine and worship.’ Few provinces in fact have done this, though a number continue to reprint the Articles, making some amendments.

The Current Situation

Those being ordained in the Church of England have simply to declare before the bishop that they believe in ‘the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England [the preface to this mentions first the Thirty-Nine Articles] bear witness.’

Anglican provinces outside England tend to place the Articles under ‘Historical Documents’ of the church to which subscription is not required. This is the case with the ECP whose 1999 Convention set forth an edition with the wording established by its mother church PECUSA in 1801. Though Doctrine Commissions from time to time issue statements on individual matters of belief, in place of an overall statement of the doctrinal stance of the Anglican Communion there tends to be a vacuum. So what does Anglicanism stand for? A study of the Articles today is still surely beneficial in developing anew our understanding of this important matter.

The Storm over Tract 90

Fearing the British Government would take up reforming the Church of England as it had changed the structure of the Church of Ireland in its 1833 Irish Church Temporalities Act, which suppressed 2 archbishoprics and 8 bishoprics out of 22 sees, John Keble in his Assize Sermon (July 14th) raised the alarm. Other academics in Oxford and beyond quickly took up the cause, which led in 1834 to the presentation of an *Address of the Clergy* (with 7,000 signatures) and a *Lay Address* (signed by 230,000 heads of families) to the Archbishop of Canterbury, pledging support for the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. From September 1833 John Henry Newman and others had begun to write 'Tracts for the Times', seeking to define the nature of the Church. They dealt with many aspects of doctrine and practice: the apostolic succession, the visible Church, the *Via Media*, the sacraments, fasting and so on. These were relatively brief until the ponderous Edward Bouverie Pusey, Professor of Hebrew, contributed some. Their authors and sympathizers were dubbed 'Tractarians' though Newman called the new movement 'Anglo-Catholic'. They had much in common with Roman Catholicism though stopped short of recognizing the authority of the Pope. Those who opposed them accused them of reintroducing 'popery' into the English Church. The Tractarian leaders viewed themselves as introducing a 'New Reformation' based not on the 16th-century Reformers but on the ancient and undivided Church. In 1836 they began to prepare the 'Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church', the first systematic publication in English of patristic works.

By early in the next decade Newman realized that many of his younger supporters were veering towards Rome. They accepted the Church of England's liturgy, but found in the Thirty-Nine Articles 'the breath of Protestantism'. But if, he reasoned, the Church of England was a continuation of the Old Church, as the Church of Rome was in France or Spain, its doctrine must speak through Anglican formularies, including the Thirty-Nine Articles. This he determined to reveal. In March 1840, retiring to his home at Littlemore outside Oxford, he began work on Tract 90 in which he sought to give to the Articles the most Catholic sense they would bear. He was not interested in the meaning of those who originally wrote them.

In a somewhat offensive introduction he spoke of the Church of England teaching 'with the stammering lips of ambiguous formularies' (words removed from the 2nd edition of the tract), but declared he was not seeking to relax subscription to the Articles as liberals wished but just wanted an interpretation of them that those with Catholic sympathies could subscribe to with a clear conscience. Then, in twelve sections, he went on to consider the articles they found most problematic; what follows is a summary of his words⁷⁷:

1. *Holy Scripture and the Authority of the Church* (Articles 6, 20)

To say that the NT contains only books 'of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church' is to speak of the verdict of the Church as a whole, for some books

⁷⁷ This is my summary. I have attempted to state Newman's points fairly without comment. Some of his points seem quite reasonable, others, particularly his comments on Articles 22 and 31 which caused the greatest outcry, clearly distort the intention of the authors of the articles. A.D-F.

were at first questioned in particular churches. Further, Article 6 does not say the books of the Apocrypha are devoid of inspiration but only that they are not to be used to establish doctrine. Jerome and our Homilies quote these books, speaking of them with respect. Though it is commonly assumed so today, it is not the Scriptures that Church Fathers call the 'rule of faith' but the Creeds.

2. *Justification by Faith Only* (Article 11)

The Article does not deny baptism as a means of justification. Faith is the *internal* instrument of justification, baptism the *external* instrument, and Christ the *meritorious cause* of justification. One could also say, using the language of St. James, that works also are a means of justification. In what ways does faith justify? By pleading for and by anticipating what is promised.

3. *Works Before and After Justification* (Articles 12, 13)

Between good works done after justification, which please God (Art. 12), and those done before justification, which have the nature of sin (Art. 13), there is an intermediate category of works done before justification but in accordance with God's will, e.g. Cornelius' alms, fastings and prayers (cf. Ac. 10:4) which prepared him for the Gospel.

4. *The Visible Church* (Article 19)

What is described here is the one, holy, catholic Church. Many other Christian writers through the ages have referred to it as 'the assembly of the faithful', 'the congregation of the faithful' and by other similar terms. This is not a definition but a description.

5. *General Councils* (Article 21)

'While councils are a thing of earth, their infallibility of course is not guaranteed; when they are thing of heaven, their deliberations are overruled, and their decrees authoritative. In such cases they are Catholic councils.' According to the Homilies there have been four or even six of these [2nd Book 4.1; 2.2].

6. *Purgatory, Pardons, Images, Relics, Invocation of Saints* (Article 22)

The article objects to the 'Romish' doctrine, not to that of the Early Church, nor to the statement of the Council of Trent for that had not yet been issued. It is opposing the 'received doctrine of the day' or that of the Roman schools (schoolmen). The Homilies and other authors [extensive quotations given] show the extravagant excesses which this article condemns.

7. *The Sacraments* (Article 25)

Though Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only two 'sacraments of the Gospel' ordained by God or Christ, the other five rites mentioned in this article are not denied the name 'sacrament'.

8. *Transubstantiation* (Article 28, cf. 29)

What is opposed here is not belief in a Real Presence but the view 'generally received or taught both in the schools and in the multitude that the material elements are changed into an earthly, fleshly, and organized body', which sometimes even shows through to the senses.

9. *Masses* (Article 31)

Nothing shows more clearly than this that the Articles were not written against the creed of the Roman Church, for it is opposing not 'the sacrifice of the Mass' but 'the sacrifice of Masses' - certain, mostly private, observances which the writers of the Articles knew had taken place. What is condemned here as 'blasphemous fables' is the view that the Mass has a value independent of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and as 'pernicious imposture' is the performing it for money.

10. *Marriage of the Clergy* (Article 32)

The celibacy of the clergy is the Catholic Church's rule, but Trent only anathematizes those who have broken a vow of celibacy to marry.

11. *The Homilies* (Article 35)

It is not *every* statement of the Homilies that this article says we must subscribe to but their *doctrine*. I dissent from the Homilies' declaration that Papal Rome is Antichrist because it is not doctrine but opinion. Those who insist on this ignore many statements in the Homilies which could be construed as 'Catholic' [list given]: their stressing of the authority of the Fathers, and of the first six Councils, their speaking of the inspiration of the Apocrypha, the sacramental character of ministry, the Real Presence in the Eucharist...

12. *The Bishop of Rome* (Article 38)

The Reformers could not destroy the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, begun by the Apostles, but only his dominion. Our authority does not come from the pope but from the Apostles.

It is alleged that the Articles were drawn up to establish Protestantism, and only an evasion of their meaning allows other views, but a close examination of them and the Homilies shows they were formed to embrace others who did not go so far in Protestantism as their framers (e.g. Article 28, which originally denied the Real Presence but was later changed). And so this 'Protestant Confession was drawn up with the purpose of including Catholics; and Catholics now will not be excluded.'

Tract 90, completed on the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, was published on February 27th 1841. Newman did not expect it to attract attention. But in fact it provoked a storm of indignation. His treatment of Articles 22 and 31 aroused the strongest protests with his picking on the terms 'Romish' and 'sacrifices of Masses' as indications that official Roman Catholic teaching was not being opposed. The Heads of the Oxford Colleges declared Newman's mode of interpretation evaded the sense of the articles and was inconsistent with the statutes of the University. The popular press ('Morning Star') quipped, 'According to the authors of the Tracts we are all good papists without knowing it!' Under pressure from Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Bagot of Oxford arranged with Newman that the tracts should cease and Newman write a letter to him showing he still opposed the Church of Rome. In return Bagot agreed not to denounce Tract 90 publicly. This did not prevent other bishops from doing so, and popular opinion continued to believe Newman wanted to take the Church of England back into the fold of the Roman Church.

The establishment in June of a joint Anglican-Lutheran bishopric in Jerusalem further eroded Newman's confidence in the Church of England for he regarded Lutherans as

heretics. By the end of the year he was on his deathbed as an Anglican. In 1842 Bishop Bagot, despite kind words about the Tractarians, condemned Tract 90 as putting forward 'a system of interpretation which is so subtle, that by it the articles may be made to mean anything or nothing.' Newman retired to his semi-monastic home at Littlemore. In 1843 he resigned his living of St. Mary's Oxford with St. Mary's Littlemore. In October 1845 he, along with a number of others, was received into the Roman Catholic Church, quickly issuing his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* to explain his change of allegiance. The leadership of the Anglo-Catholics fell to Pusey.

Homily on the Salvation of Mankind

(Summary of the third Homily from the First Book of Homilies)

Because all are sinners and have broken God's commandments none of us is justified by our deeds. Instead we must seek another righteousness or justification from God which brings forgiveness of sins: it comes, from God's mercy and Christ's merits, embraced by faith.

God sent his only Son, our Savior, as a sacrifice to make amends for us, to appease God's wrath and indignation caused by our sins. By virtue of this dying infants, being baptized, are washed of their sins and go to heaven. And those who sin after baptism, yet sincerely repent, are also completely cleaned. This is the justification by faith St. Paul talks of (Rom. 3:20, 22, Gal. 2:16). This ransom satisfied both God's justice and his mercy (Rom. 3:23-5...).

And so there are three things that go together for our justification: God's mercy, Christ's (fulfilling) justice and our true and lively faith. This faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:6) and from it spring good works.

Part 2:

[Recap of the last points] If righteousness came through law Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:21...). That it is by faith alone, without works, that we receive remission of our sins is attested by all the ancient Greek and Latin Fathers including Hilary, Basil and Ambrose [all quoted] and many others. This is the foundation of the Christian religion. It beats down the vain glory of man. Whoever denies it is an enemy of Christ and the Gospel. We do not render our justification to God but receive it from him. Our faith and other virtues are not meritorious. It is the sacrifice of Christ Jesus that obtains remission in baptism of our original sin and subsequent actual sin if we repent and sincerely turn to him again. John the Baptist was virtuous and godly, yet he pointed to Christ and said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

Part 3:

[Lengthy recap] And our response, quite contrary to the empty faith of the devils (Jas. 2:19), must be to give ourselves wholly to God, to serve him in all good deeds, keeping his commandments, trying to do good to all, and honoring him with our lives.

This is my summary of the original homily by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. A.D-F.

The 39 Articles and the Episcopal Church of the USA

In the newly constituted USA [after independence from Britain] thirty-eight of the Articles were retained though still numbered 1 – 39 (leaving only the title of Article 21), and the 1789 Preface declared, ‘...this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require’.

At PECUSA’s convention in 1801:

- Article 8 – The reference to the Creed of Athanasius was removed leaving only the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds.
- Article 21 retained only its title, the omission of the text of the article being explained as ‘because it is partly of a local and civil nature, and is provided for, as to the remaining parts of it, in other Articles.’
- Article 35 was printed but an explanation in square brackets said that, though this article is endorsed as it declares the Homilies are an explanation of Christian Doctrine and for instruction in piety and morals, references to the constitution and laws of England are inapplicable, and reading of the Homilies is suspended until they are suitably revised.
- Article 36 was changed to read:

The Book of Consecration of Bishops and the Ordering of Priests and Deacons, as set forth by the General Convention of this church in 1792, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering; neither hath it anything that, of itself, is superstitious and ungodly. And, therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to said Form, we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.
- Article 37 was given the new title ‘Of the Power of Civil Magistrates’ and cogently rewritten:

The power of the Civil Magistrate extendeth to all men, as well Clergy as Laity, in all things temporal; but he hath no authority in things purely spiritual. And we hold it to be the duty of all men who are professors of the Gospel to pay respectful obedience to the Civil Authority, regularly and legitimately constituted.

References to the Bishop of Rome, capital punishment and the bearing of arms were removed.

Some Key Words

ANABAPTISTS – various groups of Protestants in the 16th century who insisted those baptized as infants should be re-baptized for, they declared, the NT knew nothing of infant baptism.

APOCRYPHA – those books found in the Greek OT (Septuagint) and authorized Latin version of the OT (Vulgate) but which were not part of the Hebrew OT.

APOSTASY – falling away from the faith and denying Christ.

ARCIC – The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission resulting from the Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966.

AUGSBURG CONFESSION – the Lutheran confession of faith presented to Emperor Charles V at Augsburg in 1530.

CANON (of Scripture) – the list of sacred books of the Old and New Testaments.

CATECHUMENS – those in the Early Church (and in the Roman Catholic Church today) being prepared for baptism.

CONFESSION OF WURTTEMBERG – a Protestant confession of faith for presentation to the Council of Trent in 1552.

CONVOCATION – assembly of bishops and some senior priests of a province of the Church of England for passing church legislation.

COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-63) – Roman Catholic council to reform that church and combat Protestantism.

DEISTS – those who believed in a Supreme Being known by reason or from nature rather than from revelation (as contained in the Scriptures). The movement developed first in England in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

ECUMENICAL – from the Gk. *oikoumenē* meaning ‘the whole inhabited world’. Today it refers to the drawing together of Christians from different denominations for cooperative work or discussion.

EPISCOPAL – having a church structure based on bishops, e.g. Anglicanism.

FATHERS – the leaders and theologians of the Early Church.

GRACE – unmerited favor.

HOMILIES – sermons as preached regularly in church or in books of published sermons.

INCARNATION – the taking of flesh by Christ, born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem.

LXX – the Roman numerals for 70; it is an abbreviation for Septuagint, the official Greek translation of the OT and much of the Apocrypha, a work begun in Alexandria in the 3rd century BC purportedly by 72 translators.

MONOTHEISM – belief that there is only one God.

NON-EPISCOPAL – having a church structure without bishops, e.g. Presbyterianism.

ORDINAL – liturgy for the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons.

ORIGINAL SIN – the sin of Adam from which all humanity has inherited a nature with a tendency to sin. Even in our progressive, scientific age this tendency remains.

PATRISTIC – pertaining to the Fathers of the Early Church.

PECUSA – the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America. The name of the Episcopal Church in the USA until 1979.

PENANCE – a church system of paying penalties for serious sins; one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

REFORMATION – the 16th-century movement to reform the Western Church by substituting the authority of the Bible for that of the pope.

RENAISSANCE – the 15th/16th-century movement bringing a ‘rebirth’ in art and literature in Western society.

SCHOOLMEN – the teachers of philosophy and theology at the medieval European universities, then usually called ‘schools’, of which Paris and Oxford were pre-eminent.

SEPTUAGINT – see LXX above.

SYNCRETISM - (in a Christian context) the mixing of foreign beliefs with genuine Christianity.

TORAH – the Law, the first five books of the OT, written in Hebrew.

TRENT – see Council of Trent.

UNITARIANS – a movement from within the Western Church which rejected the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ but still believed in one God.

UNIVERSALISM – the belief that all humans will be saved.

VULGATE – the official Latin translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek made by St. Jerome, AD 382-405. The standard translation of the Bible for Roman Catholics until the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

WURTTEMBERG – see Confession of Württemberg.

YAHWEH – the personal name of God revealed to Moses (Ex. 3:13-15). It is closely related to the Hebrew for ‘he is’. In many English versions of the Bible it is rendered by ‘the Lord’.

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