

## **The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion**

The Thirty-Nine Articles form the basic summary of beliefs of the Church of England. They were drawn up by the Church assembled in 1563 based on the 42 articles of 1553. Clergymen were ordered to subscribe to the 39 articles by the Act of Parliament in 1571. As part of the via media or middle way of Elizabeth I, the articles were deliberately latitudinarian in character but did not aim to provide a dogmatic definition of faith. They were undoubtedly expressed freely to allow for a variety of interpretations. The Church of England still requires its ministers to publicly acknowledge their faith towards these articles.

The articles were based on the work of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury (1533-1556). Cranmer and his colleagues prepared several statements of faith during the reign of Henry VIII but it was not until the reign of Edward VI that church reformers were able to implement more profound changes. Shortly before Edward's death, Cranmer presented a doctrinal statement consisting of forty-two points: this was the last of his major contributions to the development of Anglicanism.

Mary Tudor abolished the 42 articles with the restoration of the Catholic faith in England. However, Cranmer's work became the source of the 39 articles that Elizabeth I established as the doctrinal foundation of the Church of England. There are two editions of the 39 articles: the one from 1563 is in Latin and the one from 1571 in English.

The 39 articles repudiated the teachings and practices that Protestants generally condemned in the Catholic Church. For example, they deny the teachings concerning Transubstantiation (XXVIII), the sacrifice of the Mass (XXXI), and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin (XV). However, they affirm that Scripture is the final authority on salvation (VI), that Adam's fall compromised human free will (X), that both bread and wine should be given to everyone at the Last Supper of the Lord (XXX), and that ministers should get married (XXXII).

### **Article I: Of faith in the Holy Trinity**

There is only one living and true God, eternal, without body, members or passions; with infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in union with this divinity there are three Persons of one substance, power and eternity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **Article II: Of the Word or Son of God, who became man**

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, begotten of the eternity of the Father, the same and infinite God, and all One with the Father, assumed the nature of Man in the womb of the blessed Virgin, from her substance: in such a way that two whole and perfect natures, that is, divinity and humanity, were joined together in one Person, who can never be divided, from whom arises Christ, the same God and the same Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile us with his Father and serve as a sacrifice, not only for original guilt but for all the real sins of men.

### **Article III: From the descent of Christ into hell**

Since Christ died for us and was buried, it is also believed that he descended into hell.

### **Article IV: Of the resurrection of Christ**

Christ truly returned from death and took back his body with flesh, bones and everything pertaining to the perfection of the nature of Man, whereupon He ascended to Heaven and sits there until He returns to judge all men on the last day. .

### **Article V: Of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, forms a single substance, majesty and glory with the Father and with the Son, with the same and eternal God.

### **Article VI: Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scripture for salvation**

The Holy Scripture contains everything necessary for salvation in such a way that what is not read in it or can be proven through it, no man is required to be believed as an article of Faith, or is thought to be a requirement or condition for salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture, we understand those Canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, whose authority never offered any doubt in the Church.

Of the names and numbers of the Canonical Books:

Genesis	The First Book of Chronicles
Exodus	The Second Book of Chronicles
Leviticus	The First Book of Ezra
Numbers	The Second Book of Ezra
Deuteronomiov Joshua	The Book of Esther
Judges	The Book of Jobv The Psalms
Ruth	The Proverbs
The First Book of Samuel	Ecclesiastes
The Second Book of Samuel	The Song of Songs of Solomon
The First Book of Kings	The Four Major Prophets The
The Second Book of Kings	Four Minor Prophets

And the other Books (as Jeremiah says) are read by the Church as an example of life and instruction of manners and yet it applies them without establishing any doctrine. Such are the following:

The Third Book of Ezra	Baruch, the Prophet
The Fourth Book of Ezra	The Song of the Three Children

The Book of Tobit	The Story of Susanna
The Book of Judith	Bel and the Dragon
The Rest of the Book of Esther	The Prayer of Manasseh
The Book of Wisdom	The First Book of Maccabees
Jesus, the Son of Sirah	The Second Book of Maccabees

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we receive and consider them Canonical.

### **Article VII : From the Old Testament**

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New since in both the Old and New Testaments Christ offers eternal life to Humanity, and He is the only Mediator between God and Man, being simultaneously God and Man. So one should not listen to those who pretend that the ancient Fathers were only concerned with transitory promises. Although the law given by God to Moses regarding ceremonies and rites does not bind Christian men, nor should the civil precepts be compulsorily received in any commonwealth. However, no Christian is free from disobeying the so-called moral commandments.

### **Article VIII: Of the three Creeds**

The three Creeds, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and that commonly called the Apostles' Creed, should be fully received and accepted as beliefs because they are authorized by Holy Scripture.

### **Article IX: Of original sin or birth**

Original sin did not arise as a consequence of Adam (as the Pelagians vainly maintain), but proceeds from the fault and corruption of the nature of each man, which is naturally engendered by the offspring of Adam by which man departs from the original innocence inclining by its own nature towards sin in such a way that the flesh desires lustfully opposing the spirit. And therefore every person born into this world deserves the wrath and condemnation of God. And this infection of nature remains, in fact, in those who are regenerated through the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, *phronema sakos*, which manifests in some wisdom, in some sensuality, in others affection or love. desire of the flesh that is in no way subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for those who believe and are baptized, the apostle nevertheless confesses that concupiscence and lasciviousness contain in themselves the nature of sin.

### **Article X: Of free will**

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot, by his own natural effort and good works, return to or prepare himself for faith and petition before God. Therefore we have no power to do good works pleasing and acceptable before God if we lack the grace of God through Christ, who enables us to achieve good will and works with us when we possess that good will.

## **Article XI: Of the justification of man**

In the eyes of God we are esteemed as righteous but only by the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through faith and not by our own works or merits. Therefore the fact that we are justified by faith is only a very benevolent and comforting doctrine as expressed mostly in the homily on justification.

## **Article XII : Of good works**

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow justification, cannot turn away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, they are nevertheless pleasing and acceptable to God through Christ, necessarily springing from a faith. true and alive to the point that thanks to them this energetic faith can evidently be known in the same way that a tree is known by its fruit.

## **Article XIII: Of works before justification**

Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit are not pleasing to God, since they do not flourish from faith in Jesus Christ nor do they enable men to receive grace, or (as learned authors say) to deserve it. of congruence: in fact, rather because they are not consumed as God desires and orders them to be fulfilled, we do not doubt that they possess the nature of sin.

## **Article XII: Of supererogation works**

Voluntary works apart from, above and beyond the commandments of God, which are called works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety since by means of them men declare that they not only give an account before God of everything about which they are obligated but also perform it for His good as part of the requirement of this inescapable obligation. Whereas according to what Christ clearly said, "when you do all that you are commanded," we are unmerited servants.

## **Article XV: Of Christ alone without sin**

Christ in the truth of our nature was created like us in all things except sin, of which he was clearly devoid of both his flesh and his spirit. He became the spotless Lamb, who once the sacrifice was made, had to bear the sins of the world and sin, as Saint John said, was not part of him. But the rest of us, although baptized and reborn in Christ, nevertheless offend in a multitude of things and if we maintain that we are sinless, we deceive ourselves and depart from the truth.

## **Article XVI: Sin after baptism**

Not every mortal sin voluntarily committed after baptism constitutes a sin against the Holy Spirit and is unforgivable. Therefore, the granting of repentance need not be denied to those who fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy Spirit, we can turn away from the grace granted and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we can rise again and amend our lives. And

therefore those will be condemned who say that they cannot sin again as long as they live or that they cannot be denied forgiveness if they truly repent.

### **Article XVII: Of predestination and election**

The predestination of life is the eternal purpose of God by which (before the foundation of the world was accomplished) He has constantly secretly decreed that He will deliver from curse and perdition those human beings chosen in Christ and whom by Christ It will bring eternal salvation, like vessels to which honor has been paid. Therefore, those to whom God grants such an excellent benefit will be called, according to the purpose of God through his spirit that will have its fruit in the proper season. Those who obey the call through grace will be freely justified, they will be made children of God by adoption, they will be made in the image of his only begotten son Jesus Christ. They walk religiously in good works and in the end, through the mercy of God, they will achieve eternal happiness.

As the pious consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is for pious people a source of a sweet, pleasant and inexpressible tranquility, typical of those who feel in themselves the work of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and his earthly members, directing his mind towards high and heavenly things, also because it largely establishes and confirms that his faith of eternal salvation will be enjoyed through Christ and because it fervently kindles his love towards God: for all this, for the curious and carnal people who lack the spirit of Christ, having continually before their eyes the condemnation of God's predestination, supposes a dangerous fall by which the devil can push them either towards despair or towards the misery of the most filthy beings, not less dangerous than such despair.

Furthermore, we must receive the promises of God in the following terms, as they are generally explained to us in the Holy Scripture and in our actions we must follow the will of God, expressly declared in the Word of God.

### **Article XVIII: Obtaining eternal salvation only through the name of Christ**

They must also be cursed who presume to say, That every man must be saved by the law or sect he professes, so that he must be diligent in structuring his life in accordance with said law and the light of nature. The Holy Scripture shows us only the name of Jesus Christ, by which men are to be saved.

### **Article XIX: Of the Church**

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached and in which the sacraments are to be duly administered according to the ordinances of Christ in all those aspects which of necessity are requisite therefor.

Just as the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch have erred, so has the Church of Rome, not only in its life and procedures of holding ceremonies but also in matters of faith.

### **Article XX: Of the authority of the church**

The Church has power to decree rites or ceremonies, as well as authority in controversies of faith. And yet it is not legitimate for the Church to command anything contrary to the written Word of God, nor to expand a part of Scripture that may be repugnant to another. Therefore, although the Church is a witness and guardian of the sacred texts and although it should not decree anything against them, neither should they enforce anything that can be believed to be necessary for salvation.

#### **Article XXI: Of the authority of the general councils**

General councils should not be convened without the mandate and will of the princes. And when they do (as they constitute an assembly of individuals, not all of which are governed by the spirit and word of God) they can err and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God. Therefore, matters ordained by them as necessary for salvation have neither force nor authority unless they are declared to come from Holy Scripture.

#### **Article XXII: Of purgatory**

The Roman doctrine concerning purgatory, forgiveness, worship and adoration together with images and relics, and also the invocation of Saints, forms a vainly invented hobby, which is not based on a guarantee of the Scriptures but is rather repugnant to the Word of God.

#### **Article XXIII: Of the ministry in the congregation**

It is not legitimate for any man to ascribe to himself the office of public preaching or of the ministry of the sacraments in the congregation, before being legitimately called and sent to execute this. And those called and sent, we should legitimately judge, those who are chosen and called to this work by individuals who enjoy public authority in the congregation to call and send in turn the ministers of the Lord's vineyard .

#### **Article XXIV: Speaking in the congregation in an understandable language**

Something clearly repugnant to the Word of God and the custom of the early Church is to pray publicly in the Church or administer the sacraments in an incomprehensible language.

#### **Article XXV: Of the sacraments**

The sacraments ordained by Christ are not only insignia or tokens of the profession of faith of Christian men, but rather sure witnesses and effective signs of the grace and good will of God towards us, through which he works invisibly. in us and not only quickens but reinforces and confirms our faith in Him.

There are two sacraments that Christ, our Lord, ordained in the Gospel, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The five commonly called sacraments, that is, confirmation, forgiveness, priesthood, marriage and extreme unction, should not be considered sacraments of the Gospel since they

have arisen partially from the corrupt following of the apostles, and partially are vital states permitted in the Scriptures. However, they do not possess the proper nature of sacraments such as those of baptism and the Lord's Supper, since they lack any visible sign or ceremony ordained by God.

Christ did not ordain the sacraments to be contemplated or carried with him but to be properly used. And in this sense, as they are received meritoriously, they have a salutary effect or operation, but those who receive them unworthily earn damnation, as Saint Paul said.

#### **Article XXVI: Of the unworthiness of ministers, which does not affect the dignity of the sacrament**

Although in the visible Church evil is always intermingled with good, and sometimes evil enjoys a prominent authority in the administration of the Word and the sacraments, nevertheless since those who distribute them do not do so in its name but in that of Christ and exercise ministry through the commission and authority of Christ, we can turn to his ministry, both when listening to the Word of God and receiving the sacraments. Neither does the effect of Christ's ordinance disappear because of its evil, nor does the grace of God's gifts diminish in those who by faith and truly receive the sacraments administered to them, which are efficacious because of the institution and promise of Christ, despite being administered by evil men.

However, it is within the discipline of the Church to investigate these perverse ministers and to have them accused by those who know of their offenses so that when they are finally found guilty, they may be deposed by a fair trial.

#### **Article XXVII: Of baptism**

Baptism is not only a sign of the profession of faith and a mark of differentiation, by which Christian individuals are distinguished from the rest who have not been baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, by which, as by an instrument, those who receive baptism are rightly introduced into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and our adoption as children of God through the Holy Spirit are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed and grace increased by the virtue of prayer before God. The baptism of young children must in any case belong to the Church, a fact highly concordant with the institution of Christ.

#### **Article XXVIII: Of the Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is not only a sign of the love that Christians should have among themselves but rather a sacrament of our redemption thanks to the death of Christ, to such an extent that for those who with faith, justly and meritoriously receive said supper, the bread we break is a part of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a part of the blood of Christ.

The transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of the bread and wine) in the Lord's Supper cannot be proven by means of the sacred text, but is repugnant before the clear words of Scripture, demolishes the nature of the sacrament and causes many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, received and eaten at supper, only in a heavenly and spiritual way. And the means by which the body of Christ is received and eaten at the supper is faith.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not reserved, carried, elevated, or worshiped by the ordinance of Christ.

#### **Article XXIX: Of the wicked who do not take communion with the Body of Christ according to the Lord's Supper**

The perverse, such as are devoid of a living faith, although carnally and visibly pressing with their teeth (as St. Augustine said) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, do not in any way share Christ, but rather, for their own sake, own damnation, they eat and drink the sign or sacrament of something so wonderful.

#### **Article XXX: Of both species**

The cup of the Lord should not be denied to the laity, since both parts of the sacrament of the Lord, according to the ordinance and command of Christ, are to be administered to all Christians equally.

#### **Article XXXI: Of the oblation of Christ consummated on the cross**

The offer made by Christ is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction in exchange for all the sins of the whole world, both original and real, and there is no other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Therefore the sacrifices of the masses, in which the priest is commonly said to have offered Christ for the living and the dead to redeem them from punishment or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous frauds.

#### **Article XXXII: Of the marriage of priests**

The law of God does not command bishops, priests and deacons to recognize the status of a single life or to abstain from marriage, so it is legitimate for them as well as for the rest of Christians to marry as they see fit, as well as judge what is appropriate to better serve divinity.

#### **Article XXXIII: How to avoid excommunicated people**

That person who, by open denunciation of the Church, is legitimately excluded from the unity of the Church and excommunicated, should be considered, by the entire multitude of the faithful, as a pagan and publican, until he is clearly reconciled through repentance and is received in the Church by a judge who has authority in this regard.

#### **Article XXXIV: Of the traditions of the Church**

It is not necessary that the traditions and ceremonies be the same and exactly identical in all places, since in different times they have been divergent and can be altered according to the diversity of countries, times, and customs of men, so that nothing is ordered in against the Word



of God. Whoever through his private judgment, voluntarily and deliberately, breaks openly with the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and which are ordained and approved by the common authority, should be publicly rebuked ( so that others fear doing the same), as a person who has offended the current order of the Church, injured the authority of the magistrate and damaged the consciences of weak brothers.

Each particular or national Church has the authority to order, change, and abolish the ceremonies or rites of the Church commanded only by human authority, so that everything is done to edify.

### **Article XXXV : Of the homilies**

The second Book of Homilies, whose various titles we have included in this article, contains a pious, beneficial, and necessary doctrine for these times, like the previous Book of Homilies, which we explained in the time of Edward VI and therefore, We consider that ministers should read them in churches, diligently and clearly so that people understand them.

Of the names of the homilies

1. Of the correct use of the Church.
2. Against the danger of idolatry.
3. Of the repair and cleaning of churches.
4. Of good works: first of fasting.
5. Against gluttony and drunkenness.
6. Against excesses in clothing.
7. Of prayer.
8. Of the place and time of prayer.
9. Common prayers and sacraments should be administered in understandable language.
10. Of the reverent estimation of the Word of God.
11. From the practice of alms.
12. Of the nativity of Christ.
13. Of the passion of Christ.
14. Of the resurrection of Christ.
15. Of the deserved reception of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.
16. Of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
17. For the days of prayers.
18. Of the state of marriage.
19. Of regret.
20. Against indolence.
21. Against the rebellion.

### **Article XXXVI: Of the consecration of bishops and ministers**

The book of the consecration of archbishops and bishops, and of the ordination of priests and deacons, lately explained in the time of Edward VI, and confirmed at the same time by the authority of Parliament, contains all that is necessary for such consecration and ordering and

does not include anything that in itself is superstitious or irreverent. And therefore whoever has been consecrated or ordained according to the rites of that book, from the second year of the previously mentioned King Edward until this time or who subsequently is consecrated or ordained following the same rites, we decree that they all be justly, orderly, and legally consecrated or ordered.

#### **Article XXXVII : Of civil magistrates**

Her Majesty the Queen has the supreme power in this kingdom of England and in her other dominions, to which the supreme government of all the States of this kingdom, whether ecclesiastical or civil, and in all causes belongs and is not or should be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to her majesty the queen the supreme government, by whose titles we understand that the minds of some slanderous persons may be offended, we do not grant to our princes the ministry, either of the Word of God or of the sacraments, of which the commands recently raised by Elizabeth, our queen, clearly testify. But only that prerogative, which we estimate that God has always given to all pious princes in the Holy Scriptures, that is, that they should govern all the States and classes that God has entrusted to them, whether ecclesiastical or temporal, and limit with the civil sword to the obstinate and perverse.

The bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in this kingdom of England.

The laws of the kingdom can punish Christians with death for heinous and cruel offenses.

It is legitimate for Christians, according to the magistrate's command, to bear arms, and to serve in wars.

#### **Article XXXVIII: Of the goods of Christians, which are not common**

The riches and property of Christians are not common, as regards the right, title and possessions thereof, as certainly the Anabaptists falsely boast. However, every man should, from all that he possesses, give alms liberally to the poor, according to his situation.

#### **Article XXXIX: Of the oath of a Christian**

Just as we confess that our Lord Jesus Christ has prohibited vain and imprudent swearing by Christians and his apostle James, we judge that the Christian religion does not prohibit a man from swearing when the magistrate requires it in a cause of faith and charity, so that it may be carried out. according to the teaching of the prophet, in justice, in judgment and in truth.