

## 42 Articles of Religion

Articles agreed on by the Bishops and other learned men in the Synod at London, in the year of our Lord God, 1552, for the avoiding of controversy in opinions and the establishment of a Godly concord in certain matters of religion.

### I

#### Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

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

### II

#### That the Word, or Son of God, was Made a Very Man.

The Son, which is the word of the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary from her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together into 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 for all sin of man, both original and actual.

### III

#### Of the Going Down of Christ into Hell.

As Christ died and was buried for us, so also it is to be believed that he went down in to hell. The body laid in the sepulcher 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 does testify.

### IV

#### The Resurrection of Christ.

Christ did truly rise 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 sits until he returns to judge men at the last day.

## V

### The Doctrine of Holy Scripture is Sufficient to Salvation.

Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to Salvation, so that whatsoever is neither read therein nor may be proved thereby, although it is sometimes received of the faithful as Godly and profitable for an order and comeliness, no man ought to be constrained to believe it as an article of faith or repute it requisite to the necessity of salvation.

## VI

### The Old Testament is Not to Be Refused.

The Old Testament is not to be put away as though it were contrary to the New, but to be kept still, for both in the Old and New Testaments 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.

## VII

### The Three Creeds.

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

## VIII

### Of Original or Birth Sin.

Original Sin stands not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk, which also the Anabaptists do nowadays renew, 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 his former righteousness which he had at his creation and is of his own nature given to evil, so that the flesh desires always contrary to the spirit, and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserves God's wrath and damnation. This infection of nature does remain in them that are baptized, whereby the lust of the flesh called in Greek φρονημα σαρκος, (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. Although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, the Apostle does confess that concupiscence and lust has of itself the nature of sin.

## IX

### Of Free Will.

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 in us when we have that will.

## X

### Of Grace.

The Grace of Christ, or the Holy Ghost by him given, does take away the stony heart and gives a heart of flesh. Although those that have no will to good things, he makes them to will, and those that would evil things, he makes them not to will the same, he nevertheless enforces not the will. Therefore, no man, when he sins, can excuse himself as not worthy to be blamed or condemned by alleging that he sinned unwillingly or by compulsion.

## XI

### Of the Justification of Man.

Justification by only faith in Jesus Christ, in that sense as it is declared in the Homily of Justification, is a most certain and wholesome doctrine for Christian men.

## XII

### 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. Because they are not done as God has willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

## XIII

### Works of Supererogation.

Voluntary works besides, over, and above God's commandments, which they call works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and iniquity, for by them men do declare that they do not only render to GOD as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake then of bounden duty is required, whereas Christ says plainly, "when you have done all that are commanded you, say, 'we are unprofitable servants.'"

## XIV

### No Man is Without Sin, but Christ Alone.

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 sacrifice of himself made once forever, should take away the sins of the world, and sin, as Saint John says, was not in him. But the rest, although we are baptized and born again in Christ, all offend in many things. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

## XV

### Of Sin Against the Holy Ghost.

Every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is not sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable, wherefore the place for penitents 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 rise again and amend our lives. Therefore, they are to be condemned which say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place for penitents to such as truly repent and amend their lives.

## XVI

### Blasphemy Against the Holy Ghost.

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is when a man of malice and stubbornness of mind does rail upon the truth of God's word manifestly perceived, and being enemy thereunto persecutes the same. Because such are guilty of God's curse, they entangle themselves with a most grievous and heinous crime, whereupon this kind of sin is called and affirmed of the Lord as unpardonable.

## XVII

### Of Predestination and Election.

Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he has constantly decreed by his own judgment, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he has chosen out of mankind, and to bring them to everlasting salvation by Christ as vessels made to honor, whereupon such as have so excellent a benefit of God given unto them are called according to God's purpose by his spirit working in due season, and they through grace obey the calling, they are justified freely, they are made sons by adoption, they are made like the image of God's 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, drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it does greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it does fervently kindle their love towards God, 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 may thrust them either into desperation or into a recklessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, although the Decrees of predestination are unknown unto us, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they are 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.

### XVIII

#### We Must Trust to Obtain Eternal Salvation Only by the Name of Christ.

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

### XIX

#### All Men are Bound to Keep the Moral Commandments of the Law.

The Law, which was given from God by Moses, although it binds not Christian men concerning the ceremonies and rites of the same, neither is it required that the civil precepts and orders of it should of necessity be received in any commonwealth, no man, be he never so perfect a Christian, is exempt and loose from the obedience of those commandments which are called moral. Wherefore they are not to be harkened unto who affirm that Holy Scripture is given only to the weak and do boast themselves continually of the spirit, of whom (they say) they have learned such things as they teach, although the same is most evidently repugnant to the Holy Scripture.

### XX

#### 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 are duly ministered according to Christs ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

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

XXI.

Of the Authority of the Church.

It 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 is repugnant to another.

Wherefore although the church is a witness and a keeper of holy writ, it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation.

XXII.

Of the Authority of General Councils.

General councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes, and when they are gathered (forasmuch as they are an assembly of men whereof all are not governed with the spirit, and word of God) they may err, and sometime have erred, not only in worldly matters but also 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 are taken out of Holy Scripture.

XXIII.

Of Purgatory.

The doctrine of school authors concerning Purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration as well of images, as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly feigned and grounded upon no warrant of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.

XXIV.

No Man May Minister in the Congregation, unless he is Called.

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 is lawfully called and sent to execute the same. Those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which are 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.

XXV.

Men Must Speak in the Congregation in Such Tongue as the People Understand.

It is most seemly and most agreeable to the word of God that in the congregation nothing be openly read or spoken in a tongue unknown to the people, the which thing S. Paul did forbid, unless some were present that should declare the same.

## XXVI.

### Of the Sacraments.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has knit together a company of new people with Sacraments, most few in number, most easy to be kept, most excellent in signification, as is Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

The Sacraments were not ordained by Christ to be gazed upon or to be carried about, but that we should rightly use them. In such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect and operation, and yet not that of the work wrought, as some men speak, which word, as it is strange and unknown to Holy Scripture, so it engenders no Godly, but a very superstitious sense. They that receive the Sacraments unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul says.

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

## XXVII.

### The Wickedness of the Ministers Does Not Take Away the Effectual Operation of God's Ordinances.

Although in the visible Church the evil is ever mingled with the good, and sometime the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word and Sacraments, forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but do minister by Christ's commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both in hearing the word of God and in the receiving the sacraments, neither is the effect of God's ordinances taken away by their wickedness, or the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly receive the Sacraments ministered unto them, which are effectual because of Christ's institution and promise, although they are ministered by evil men. Nevertheless, it appertains to the discipline of the Church, that enquiry be made of such, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences, and finally being found guilty by just judgment, be deposed.

## XXVIII.

### Of Baptism.

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that are not Christened, but it is also a sign and seal of

our new birth whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted in the Church, the promises of forgiveness of sin and our adoption to be the sons of God are visibly signed and sealed, faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The custom of the Church to Christian young children is to be commended and in any wise to be retained in the Church.

## XXIX.

### 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 communion of the body of Christ. Likewise, the cup of blessing is a Communion of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood cannot be proved by holy writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, and has given occasion to many superstitions. Forasmuch as the truth of man's nature requires that the body of one and the self-same man cannot be at one time in diverse places, but must needs be in some one certain place, the body of Christ cannot be present at one time in many and diverse places. Because (as Holy Scripture does teach) Christ was taken up into heaven, and there shall continue unto the end of the world, a faithful man ought not, either to believe or openly to confess the real and bodily presence (as they term it) of Christ's flesh and blood in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not commanded by Christ's ordinance to be kept, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

## XXX.

### Of the Perfect Oblation of Christ Made Upon the Cross.

The offering of Christ made once forever is the perfect redemption, the pacifying of God's displeasure, 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 sin, were forged fables and dangerous deceits.

## XXXI.

The State of Single Life is Commanded to No Man by the Word of God.

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are not commanded to vow the state of single life without marriage, neither by God's law are they compelled to abstain from matrimony.

XXXII.

Excommunicate Persons are to Be Avoided.

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

XXXIII.

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 diverse and may be changed, according to the diversity of countries and men's manners, so that nothing is ordained against God's word. Whosoever through his private judgment willingly and purposely does openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church which are 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 one that offends against the common order of the church, hurts the authority of the Magistrate, and wounds the consciences of the weak brethren.

XXXIV.

Homilies.

The homilies of late given and set out by the king's authority are Godly and wholesome, containing doctrine to be received of all men, and therefore are to be read to the people diligently, distinctly, and plainly.

XXXV.

Of the Book of Prayers, and Ceremonies of the Church of England.

The Book which of very late time was given to the Church of England by the king authority and the Parliament containing the manner and forms of praying and administering the Sacraments in the Church of England, likewise also the book of ordering Ministers of the Church set forth by the foresaid authority, are Godly, and in no point repugnant to the wholesome doctrine of the Gospel, but agreeable thereunto, furthering and beautifying the same not a little, and therefore of all faithful members of the Church of England and chiefly of the ministers of the word, they ought to be received and allowed with all readiness of mind and thanksgiving, and to be commended to the people of God.

## XXXVI.

### Of Civil Magistrates.

The king of England is Supreme head on earth, next under Christ, of the Church of England and Ireland. The Bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in this Realm of England. The Civil Magistrate is ordained and allowed of God; wherefore we must obey him, not only for fear of punishment, but also for conscience sake. The Civil laws may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offences. It is lawful for Christians, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons and to serve in lawful wars.

## XXXVII.

### Christian Men's Goods 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 possesses liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

## XXXVIII.

### Christian Men May Take an Oath.

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbid Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostle James, so we judge that Christian religion does not prohibit that a man may swear, when the magistrate requires in a cause of faith and charity, so it is done (according to the Prophets' teaching) in justice, judgment, and truth.

## XXXIX.

### The Resurrection of the Dead is Not Yet Brought to Pass

The Resurrection of the dead is not as yet brought to pass, as though it only belonged to the soul, which by the grace of Christ is raised from the death of sin, but it is to be looked for at the late date, for then (as Scripture does most manifestly testify) to all that are dead, their own bodies, flesh, and bone shall be restored that the whole man may (according to his works) have other reward, or punishment, as he has lived virtuously, or wickedly.

## XL.

### The Souls of Them That Depart this Life Do Neither Die with the Bodies, nor Sleep Idly.

They which say that the souls of such as depart hence do sleep, being without all sense, feeling, or perceiving, until the Day of Judgment, or affirm that the souls die with

the bodies, and at the last day shall be raised up with the same, do utterly dissent from the right belief declared to us in Holy Scripture.

XLI.

Heretics called Millenarii.

They that go about to renew the fable of heretics called Millenarii are repugnant to Holy Scripture, and cast themselves headlong into Jewish dotage.

XLII.

All Men Shall Not Be Saved at the Length.

They also are worthy of condemnation who endeavor at this time to restore the dangerous opinion that all men, be they never so ungodly, shall at length be saved when they have suffered pains for their sins a certain time appointed by God's justice.

**GOD SAVE THE KING**