

Cornerstone Church Colchester – 39 Articles

39 Articles

These 39 Articles summarise the historic Christian faith as received by the Anglican Church. They are substantially the statements agreed in 1570, with minor revisions and scripture verses designed to make the original meaning more explicit.

1. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

Deut. 4:15, Jn. 1:1-2, 4:24, Num. 23:19, Heb. 6:17, Jm. 1:17, Dan. 2:20, Lam. 5:19, 1 Tim. 3:16, Titus 2:13.

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 Spirit.

2. Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man

Jn. 1:1-1, 14, Col. 1:19, Heb. 4:15, 1 Pet. 2:24.

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 Godhood 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 us to his Father, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of Men.

3. Of the going down of Christ into Hell

1 Pet. 3:19, Eph. 4:9, Acts 2:27-31.

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

4. Of the Resurrection of Christ

Mk. 8:31, 16:6, Lk. 24:26-27, 1 Cor. 15:20.

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 sitteth, until he returns to judge all Men at the last day.

5. Of the Holy Spirit

Ps. 139:7-8, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Cor. 2:10-11, Mat. 10:20, Jn. 15:26.

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

6. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

Mat. 22:29, Mk. 7:13, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 3:16, Rev. 22:18-19.

Holy Scripture contains 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

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

The First Book of Samuel

The Second Book of Samuel

The First Book of Kings

The Second Book of Kings

The First Book of Chronicles

The Second Book of Chronicles

The Book of Ezra

The Book of Nehemiah

The Book of Esther

The Book of Job

The Psalms

The Proverbs

Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher

Cantica, or Songs of Solomon

Four Prophets the greater – Isaiah, Jeremiah (including Lamentations), Ezekiel, Daniel.

Twelve Prophets the less – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The Books commonly called “The Apocrypha,” form no part of the Canonical Scriptures; and, therefore, are not to be used to establish any doctrine; nor are they to be publicly read in the Church.

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

7. Of the Old Testament

Mat. 5:20, Lk. 24:26-27, Acts 10:15, 13:39, Gal. 3:8.

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.

8. Of the Three Creeds

1 Thes. 5:20-21, 1 Cor. 15:3-5.

The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostle's Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture.

9. Of Original or Birth-sin

Gen. 6:5, Jer. 13:23, Ps. 51:5, Mk. 7:20, Rom. 5:19.

Original Sin stands 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 lusts always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserves God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature does remain, even in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, φρόνημα σαρκός, 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 baptised, yet the Apostle does confess, that concupiscence and lust has of itself the nature of sin.

10. Of Free Will

Jn. 6:44, 8:34, Eph. 2:1. Rom. 7:18, Titus 2:11.

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.

11. Of the Justification of Man

Rom. 4:2-3, Gal. 3:11.

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

12. Of Good Works

Lk. 17:10, Gal. 5:6, Eph. 2:10, Col. 3:17, Titus 1:1, Heb. 6:10, 1 Pet. 2:5.

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 Judgement; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

13. Of Works before Justification

Isa. 64:6, Jn. 8:34, Rom. 2:15.

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not of saving efficacy, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive or to deserve grace.

14. Of Works of Supererogation

Mk. 10:23, Lk. 17:10, Jms. 3:2, 1 Jn. 1:8.

Voluntary Works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance 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 says plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

15. Of Christ alone without Sin

Jn. 14:30, Gal. 3:22, 1 Jn. 3:5, 1 Pet. 1:19.

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like 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 once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin, as Saint John says, was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptised, 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.

16. Of Sin after Conversion

Mt. 12:32, 1 Jn. 1:9, 5:16, Eph. 2:5, Col. 1:23, Heb. 4:15-16.

Not every sin willingly committed after Conversion is sin against the Holy Spirit, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after conversion. After we have received the Holy Spirit, 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.

17. Of Predestination and Election

Jn. 6:37, 10:27-29, Rom. 8:29, Eph. 1:5.

Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he has constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he has chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. 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 does 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 the wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation. Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such ways, 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.

18. Of Obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ

Jn.3:36, Acts 4:12, Eph. 2:12.

They also err 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 does set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby anyone must be saved.

19. Of the Church

Deut. 5:22, Mat. 18:20, Acts 2:42, Eph. 5:32, Lk. 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:23-44, 1 Thes. 1:1.

The Holy Catholic Church is “the blessed company of all faithful people,” who, united to Christ by Faith, and made partakers of the Holy Spirit, are the “Spouse and Body of Christ.” The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men and women, in the 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.

20. Of the Authority of the Church

Mat. 28:20, 1 Cor. 14:40, 1 Tim. 3:15, 2 Tim. 1:13-14.

The Church has power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet 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 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 any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

21. Of the Authority of General Councils

Acts 15:15-19, Eph. 6:17, 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

General Councils (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men and women, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) 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 proved that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.

22. Of Purgatory

Ex. 20:4-5, Heb. 9:27, Eph. 6:18, Col. 1:2.

The Roman Catholic 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.

23. Of Ministering in the Congregation

Jn. 20:21, 1 Tim. 5:22, Titus 1:5.

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 do this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

24. Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a tongue as the people understand

1 Cor. 14:15-17.

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 by the people.

25. Of the Sacraments

Mat. 28:19-20, Lk. 22:14-19, 1 Cor. 11:27-32.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses to Divine truth, and signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by which he strengthens and confirms 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 are they of spiritual benefit: but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves judgement, as Saint Paul says.

26. Of Unworthy Persons ministering in the Congregation

Mat. 23:2-3, Jn. 6:70, 1 Cor. 3:7, Titus 1:11, 1 Tim. 5:22.

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, the believer is not deprived of the benefits

of God's ordinances; because, though they be ministered by evil men, yet are they Christ's institution, and set forth his promise.

Nevertheless, it appertains 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 judgement be deprived.

27. Of Baptism

Ps. 22:9, Mat. 28:19-20, Jn. 3:5, Acts 16:33, Col. 2:12.

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, but it is also a sign or symbol, of Regeneration or new Birth. They that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the visible Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Spirit, are visibly set forth; 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 not contrary to the institution of Christ.

28. Of the Lord's Supper

Mat. 26:26-29, Lk. 22:14-19, 1 Cor. 11:27-32.

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 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, overthrowes the nature of a Sacrament, and has given occasion to many superstitions. Consubstantiation (or the doctrine that Christ is veiled under the unchanged Bread and Wine) is utterly without warrant of Scripture, and is productive, equally with transubstantiation, of idolatrous errors and practices. The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is by faith. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

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

1 Cor. 11:27-32.

The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine says) 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.

30. Of both kinds

Mat. 26:26-29.

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 ministered to all Christian men alike.

31. Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross

Jn. 19:30, Heb. 10:12.

The Offering of Christ once made is that 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 which it was commonly said, that the Priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

32. Of the Marriage of the Clergy

1 Tim. 4:3, Titus 1:6.

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.

33. Of Auricular Confession

Mk. 2:7, Heb. 4:14-16, James 5:16.

Private confession of sins to a priest, commonly called Auricular Confession, has no sanction in the word of God, and is a human invention. None can forgive sins as against God but God alone.

34. Of the Traditions of the Church and Books of Homilies

1 Cor. 11:16, 14:33, Titus 3:10.

It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgement, 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 offends against the common order of the Church, and hurts the authority of the Magistrate, and wounds the consciences 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.

The second Book of Homilies 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 Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood by the people.

35. Of Apostolical Succession

Jn. 14:26, Titus 1:5-9, 2 Pet. 1:16, 1 Jn. 1:1-4.

That doctrine of "Apostolic Succession," by which is taught that the Ministry in the Christian Church must be derived through a series of uninterrupted ordinations from the Apostles themselves, and that without the same there can be no Christian Church, no valid Ministry, and no due ministration of the Sacraments, has no foundation in Scripture, and is productive of great mischief.

36. Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers

1 Tim. 3:1-13.

The Book of Consecration of Bishops, and Ordering of Presbyters and Deacons, set forth by this Church, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither has it any thing, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

37. Of the Civil Magistrates

Rom. 13:1-7, 1 Pet. 2:13-17, Phil. 4:22.

The King's Majesty has the chief power in this Realm of England, and other his Dominions, unto whom the chief civil Government of all Estates of this Realm, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction. Where we attribute to the King's Majesty the chief government, we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments; 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 states and degrees committed to their charge by God, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evildoers. The Bishop of Rome has 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 to serve in the wars.

38. Of Christian men's Goods, which are not common

Ex. 20:15, Eph. 4:28, 1 Tim. 6:17-19, 1 Jn. 3:17.

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesses, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

39. Of a Christian man's Oath

Jer. 4:2, Mat. 26:63-64, 2 Cor. 1:23.

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 does not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requires, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgement, and truth.