



**Adult E&F Fall 2018: Understanding Others' Beliefs & Our Own
Class 7 – October 21: Beginning the “Household of Faith” Articles: Articles 19-39
Articles 19-25**

Sources

The Principles of Theology by W.H. Griffith Thomas
The Thirty-nine Articles by J.I. Packer & R.T. Beckwith

Introduction

These articles focus on defining what constitutes the Church, the authority of the Church, who can minister to the Church and how, and introduces the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism. Like many of the previous Articles, these Articles often define themselves in part through direct rejection of specific Roman Catholic doctrines.

Article 19 – What is the Church?

It is a congregation of faithful believers who hear preaching based on Scripture and receive duly administered sacraments.

The Church is not infallible, as seen in the errors of the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches originally founded by the Apostles.

Articles 20 & 21 – What is the authority of the Church?

It is utterly dependent on Scripture and may not ordain anything contrary to Scripture or require beliefs or practices not found in Scripture for salvation.

The Church can decree ceremonial aspects of worship and has authority in controversies over the faith (e.g. the Council of Nicaea.)

General, ecumenical councils of the Church (again, like Nicaea) are not infallible and must be subordinate to Scripture.

Article 22 – How should we view the Roman Catholic doctrines of Purgatory, pardons, adoration of relics, and praying to saints?

They are not only un-Biblical, but anti-Biblical.

Thomas makes the case that, taken to their logical conclusion, they deny the full Atonement of sin by the Crucifixion and the direct relationship we have with God through faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Article 23 – Who may minister in the Church?

Only those lawfully called and sent within the congregation can administer sacraments and preach. A person cannot take on those duties by themselves.

Thomas terms the formality of ordination and the hierarchical form of the Anglican church as an evolution of the Church, not an essential element, since it is not contained in the New Testament.

“There is no function of the Christian priesthood which cannot be exercised by every individual believer at all times.” (Thomas, pg. 318)

Article 24 – How should members of the Congregation speak?

Clearly and in a language understood by other members of the congregation. This is in accordance with New Testament teaching on the spiritual gift of tongues and a rejection of the Latin Mass.

Article 25 – How should we view the Sacraments?

There are only two, Communion and Baptism. They are sacraments because Christ Himself ordained them according to Scripture.

They are a gift from God and a sign of His grace, enlivening and strengthening our faith.

They are not simply a remembrance but do not impart grace themselves.

Taking them “unworthily” (lacking faith) sins against the Lord’s Body and Blood (I Corinthians 11:27-32.)