



Adult E&F Fall 2018: Understanding Others' Beliefs & Our Own

Class 6 – October 14: The “Protestant”/“Reformed” Articles: Articles VI-XVIII

Recap: Articles I – V (the “catholic” articles)

- **The Thirty-nine Articles**, like other “confessions” of the Reformations, sought to return to simple faith of Scripture. These Anglican Articles of Religion were developed over 35 years and finalized in 1571.
- **Articles I-V** affirm basic doctrines of the Christian faith as stated in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. They underscore Anglicanism’s common ground with the universal church before moving into disputed issues.
- **Elaborating on the summary statements of faith found in the creeds, Articles I-V address:** Faith in the Trinity and its attributes; the Son of God, his two natures (fully man, fully God), and the gospel message; Christ’s descent ‘into hell’ (understood as either to the dead, or as his forsakenness on the cross); the bodily Resurrection of Christ and implications for man; the Holy Spirit as equal to the Father and Son, and proceeding from the Father and Son.

Recap: Articles VI – XI (“protestant”/“reformed” articles)

- **Articles VI-XVIII** are referred to as “protestant”/“reformed,” addressing issues of the Reformations.
- **Building on creedal, “catholic” Christian faith, and seeking to give clarity to the gospel message, Articles VI-XI address:** the authority and Sufficiency of Scripture for Salvation and the names of the canonical books of Scripture; the continuity of the Old and New Testaments, the non-binding nature of ceremonial law, and the binding nature of moral commandments; Original Sin as the corruption of human nature; limited nature of Free-Will and reliance on God; Justification only by faith in merit of Christ.

Articles XII - XVIII

Fun aside: Anglican cassocks traditionally had 39 buttons, and the priest would recite each article as he buttoned himself up. Anglican clergy would leave unbuttoned the buttons corresponding to articles they did not agree with! Beware clergy whose cassock is flapping! Roman Catholic cassocks had 33 – one for each year of Jesus’ life.

Article XII – Of Good Works

- Remember, the preceding Article XI was justification through faith. Is the order of these articles communicating anything to us?
- The origin of good works
 - o “The fruits of faith”
 - o “Follow after justification”
- The nature of good works
 - o “Cannot put away our sins”
 - o “Cannot endure the severity of God’s judgment”
- The purpose of good works
 - o “Pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ”
 - o “Spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith...as a tree discerned by the fruit.”

Fun aside: *The Protestant Work Ethic* by Max Weber

Article XIII – Of Works before Justification

- A question remains after reading Article XII, what about non-believers?
- “Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are not pleasant to God.”
- Why?
 - o “They spring not of faith in Jesus Christ.”
 - o “Neither do they make men meet to receive grace”
 - o “They (works) are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done”
 - o “They have the nature of sin”

Article XIV – Of Works of Supererogation

- What is a work of supererogation? An extra or sacrificial work – beyond God’s Commandments
 - o Martyrdom, monastic vocation, poverty, chastity, obedience, etc.

- The Roman Catholic Church during the 16th century taught (and still do teach) that works of supererogation would earn the Christian recompense or rewards from God that could be gathered into the Church's Treasury of Merit. The Church could transfer these merits to the accounts of others who had died in a state of grace but had done too little to pay for their venial sins before they died.
- Article instructs:
 - o "Works of Supererogation cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety"
 - o "Whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants."
- By denying the denying the RCC's teaching on supererogation, this article attacks the entire merit system of the unreformed Church

Article XV – Of Christ Alone without Sin

- The nature of Christ:
 - o "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"
- The purpose of Christ:
 - o "Should take away the sins of the world"
- Christ alone:
 - o "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."
- Logical conclusions of this article?
 - o Rejection of the notion that Mary, the Mother of our Lord, was sinless. *Ineffabilis Deus*

Article XVI – Of Sin after Baptism

- Sin is present after baptism:
 - o "After we have received the Holy Ghost (baptism), we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives"
- All sins can be forgiven after baptism?
 - o "Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism."
 - o All sins are deadly (the wages of sin is death) – no distinguishing minor or venial sins. This article rejects notion of "eternal sin" or "unforgivable sin"
 - o Not to confuse with sin's unequal weight in temporal affairs. MLK Jr. "I want my neighbors to love me, but until they do, I would like them to stop lynching me." Not loving \neq active hate.

Article XVII – Of Predestination and Election

- Predestination to Life defined:
 - o "The everlasting purpose of God"
 - o "He hath decreed by his counsel secret to us"
 - o "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 his honor"
 - o "Through grace obey the calling...walk religiously in good works"
- Benefit of this doctrine: "Full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons"

A warning: "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"

Article XVIII – Of Obtaining Eternal Salvation Only by the Name of Christ

- Salvation through Christ alone – exclusionary of other religions/sects
- "For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved"
 - Orthodoxy v. Orthopraxy
- What constitutes the Name of Jesus Christ?
 - Jesus Christ – as defined through the Creeds, Article I
 - Historic revelation (story of Scripture), divine-human fellowship (nice to meet you), mission or godly representation (wearing of an emblem)