

ARTICLES OF BELIEF

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of the Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II. Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead 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 his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

III. Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise from the dead, and took again his body with 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 on the last day.

IV. Of the Holy Ghost

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

V. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

The Holy Scriptures containeth 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 faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scriptures, 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 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, Canticles, or Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve Prophets the Less. All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

VI. Of the Old Testament

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, who feign that the old father did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called moral.

VII. Of Original Sin or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but in the 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 of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually

VIII. Of Free-Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have not 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.

IX. Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

X. Of Good Works

Although good works, which are the fruits of the faith and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be so evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit.

XI. Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary works, besides, over and above God's commandments which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy 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 said plainly, "When ye have done all that is commanded you say: We are unprofitable servants."

XII. Of Sin After Justification

Not every sin, willingly committed after justification, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification; after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

XIII. 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 duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

XIV. Purgatory

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory pardons, worshiping, and adoration, as well as of images as of relics, and also invocations of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

XV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand

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.

XVI. Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but so strengthen and confirm 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.

These 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 partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like natures of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because 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 received the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves condemnation, as Saint Paul saith.

XVII. Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The Baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

XVIII. 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 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, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given association to many superstitions. The body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

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

XIX. Both Kinds

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

XX. Of the One Oblation Of Christ, Finished Upon the Cross

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. Therefore, the sacrifice of masses, in which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable, and dangerous deceit.

XXI. Of the Marriage of Ministers

The ministers of Christ 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 Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

XXII. Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have always been different, and may be changed according to diversity of countries, times and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority ought to be rebuked openly that others may fear to do the like as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren, every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

XXIII. Of the Rulers of the United States of America

The President, the Congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the constitutions of their respective states, and the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

XXIV. Christian Men's Goods

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor according to his ability.

XXV. A Christian Man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle; we so judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity so that it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment and truth.

XXVI. The Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority

All Christians, especially all Christian ministers, should observe and obey the laws and commands of the legal and constituted civil authority of the country of which they are citizens or subjects, and/or states in which they reside, and use all laudable means to prevent any and all powers, either Church or state, who for political expedience would arrogate to themselves the right to control, dominate and dictate the affairs of free men through self-appointed powers.

XXVII. Of Separation of Church and State

Separation of Church and state as related to control of the government under which society exists is a principle upon which the freedom of men is based and therefore is worthy of being supported by all Christians.

XXVIII. Of Sanctification

Entire sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is cleansed from all inbred sin through faith in Jesus Christ. It is subsequent to regeneration and is wrought instantaneously by faith when the believer consecrates himself a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. The evidence of this gracious work is love out of a pure heart thus enabling us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, and to walk in God's holy commandment blameless.

We believe this gracious work does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance and mistakes common to man, nor from the possibilities of further sin.

XXIX. Conditional Salvation

The conditions to be met in order to be saved are repentance of sins (Luke 13:3 and 5) and personal faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16). The Scriptures teach that the believer is secure in Christ as long as he walks in obedience and faith. The Scriptures also declare that it is possible to depart from grace by knowingly and willingly continuing in sin. If one remains in that state he will be eternally lost. However, by the grace of God one may be restored from a back-slidden state to salvation and holiness through repentance and faith. (Phil. 1:6 & 2:12; Heb. 10:26-31; Matt. 18:15-35; Gal. 5:4; and Gal. 1:6).

XXX. Of Christian Marriage

Christian Marriage is the covenantal union before God of one natural born man and one natural born woman to live together as husband and wife.