

**LAMBETH AND TRENT: A  
BRIEF  
EXPLANATION OF THE  
THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES**

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Lambeth and Trent: a brief explanation of the Thirty-nine articles by F. E. Middleton

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*J. Calderbank*

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A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE  
THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

BY

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## PREFACE

THE Readings on the Articles contained in this little book were undertaken at the suggestion of a layman in the congregation of which the writer is a member, for insertion month by month in the parish magazine.

The endeavour has been, as briefly as is consistent with clearness, to bring out the meaning and object of these thirty-nine mainstays of the Church of England, in such a way that all who read may understand what the doctrines of the Established Church really are.

In the hope of reaching a wider circle of readers, more especially among the young, and those qualifying themselves to be teachers, and ministers, they have now been published in book form and are sent out in the hope that all who read them may be instructed, profited, and established in the faith once delivered to the saints, which is nowhere more clearly and fearlessly set forth—the writer firmly believes—than in the Confession of Faith with which the Church of England has been so richly endowed.

The division into short Readings has been retained, as most convenient for those who may wish for the purposes of study, to make this explanation of the Articles a text-book; and for the same reason questions are appended to each reading, for the perfecting of their knowledge by students.

In these perilous times, when we are being told on every hand that there is no real difference between the Church of England, and that of Rome, and when this lie is receiving corroboration everywhere in the ever increasing assimilation of the services of so many of our

Churches to those in vogue in the Church of Rome, and the subtle device adopted by the early Tractarians of leavening the whole Church with ritualism preparatory to re-union with Rome seems taking effect on all sides, it behoves us to be acquainted with the real differences between ourselves and Rome, that we may be on our guard lest we be carried away in the flood of Apostasy that is gathering force every day, and threatening to engulf us once more in the terrible vortex of the Papacy. To this end there is nothing to be compared with a thorough knowledge of the Articles; and to the acquisition of such a knowledge on the part of many, it is the earnest desire and prayer of the writer that this brief explanation of them may not a little contribute.

In conclusion, the writer would gratefully acknowledge that he owes a deep debt of gratitude to Boulton's "Book on the Articles." It is to the perusal of this treatise that he traces his deep interest in the subject treated in the following pages, and he would cordially recommend the study of that book to all who feel they would like to increase their knowledge of the doctrines of the Church of England.

He also owes much to a little book, now unhappily out of print, known by the name of a "Catechism on the Thirty-nine Articles" by J. W., published by Warren, Winchester.

It well deserves to be re-issued, as it is calculated to be most useful in imparting an immense amount of knowledge on the subject in a clear and interesting manner.

CLAPHAM, *October*, 1899.

# LAMBETH AND TRENT

## READINGS ON THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION

### I

#### THEIR HISTORY

“THE Articles of Religion”—to be found at the end of every properly printed Prayer Book—“do contain”—as His Majesty’s Declaration, which precedes them, expressly tells us—“the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God’s Word.” Hence, we must judge of ourselves and others as to whether we are true members of the Church of England or not, by bringing the doctrines that we and others hold to the test of this standard. If our doctrines will not stand this test, they are doctrines which show that our place as Christians is not in the ranks of the establishment, but in those of some other denomination.

The Articles were first published, forty-two in number, under the authority of a royal mandate in 1553, the last year of the reign of Edward VI, and may be regarded as a reply on the part of the Church of England to the Decrees and Canons of the Council of Trent, which, it is



acknowledged on all hands, are to be taken as representing the doctrines and discipline of the modern Church of Rome.

As this Council was a most important one in connection with the controversy between the Church of England and that of Rome, it may be well to state a few facts concerning it.

It was held at a place called Trent, situated in the Austrian Tyrol, on neutral ground, but on the borders of the Papal territories.

It was necessitated—"even our enemies themselves being judges"—by the fearful state of moral corruption in which the Church of Rome was sunk. A fierce flame of searching light had been thrown upon her by the Reformation movement in England, Bohemia, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, France, Switzerland, Spain, and even Italy, and her blackness and filthiness were discovered even to herself.

And so—greatly against the wish of the Pontiff, who dreaded that his supremacy and power of oppression would be taken from him—the Council was summoned, after many attempts to avoid so unpleasant a duty, by the Pope himself, with the ostensible object of reforming the abuses of Christendom.<sup>1</sup>

The Council met in 1545. The Protestant States of Europe were invited to send representatives, but they all refused, as it soon became known that freedom of debate would not be allowed, but that everything would be managed from Rome. As a proof that the Council *was*

<sup>1</sup> Those who seek further information on the subject will find it admirably summarised in a little book of an inexpensive nature called "The Council of Trent," published by the Religious Tract Society.

*not free*, we have only to refer to the accounts Rome's own historians give of it; from which we learn that the closure was immediately applied to everything to which the Pope objected.

Furthermore, one of the French ambassadors, a Romanist, who attended the Council, says in a letter written the day after his arrival to De Lisle, the French ambassador at Rome, that he feared that little advantage would be derived from the assembly, unless the Pope would suffer the deliberations and votes of the fathers to be free, and no more send the Holy Spirit in a travelling bag from Rome to Trent!

The Council met then in 1545, and continued to hold sessions until 1552. Owing to wars and commotions in the neighbourhood, it was suspended until the year 1562. The sessions were then resumed, and it came finally to an end in 1563.

It is universally agreed that the Decrees and Canons of this Council—every one of which is enforced by anathemas or curses on him who dares to hold a different opinion!—have crystallised and made obligatory on all who profess the Romanist religion, all the errors of doctrine, many of which existed only in solution up to that time, which were being inveighed against as unscriptural by all classes of reformers.

Let it be remembered, and remembered well, that every Romanist is bound by the Decrees and Canons of the Council of Trent, and just as the true doctrine of the Church of England must be based on and taken from the Articles, so the true doctrine of the Church of Rome must be based on and taken from the Decrees and Canons of the Council of Trent.

This is very important, as Romanists in England

nowadays, for the purpose of proselytising, are in the habit of ignoring somewhat these decrees, and the unhappy victim only finds out the tyranny of the Church to which he has thoughtlessly and ignorantly—in many cases—submitted his conscience, after the fatal step of admission into the Church has been taken.

Let it be remembered too, and remembered well, that that Council bases its Decrees and Canons on Scripture (which, according to Roman theologians, includes the Apocrypha)—*and Tradition*.

Hence the constant reference to Scripture and Scripture alone as the final appeal, which we find everywhere in the Articles.

It cannot be reiterated too plainly or too often that the Protestant position, so nobly taken up by our Articles, is that the human conscience dares not recognise any other keeper or lord, save the Word of God, revealed to us in those Canonical Scriptures of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church, and that every individual has a right to examine—nay, woe be to him if he refuses to examine—those Scriptures for himself in accordance with the commands of Christ and His Apostles, which tell us to search the Scriptures, prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

The Articles of Religion remained in abeyance during the reign of Mary, and until the fifth year of Elizabeth. In 1563 Convocation took action upon them, and ultimately sanctioned a revised copy, containing thirty-eight Articles.

In 1571, Elizabeth finally sanctioned another revision, which was subscribed by Convocation in that year. The Articles so ratified and sanctioned, thirty-nine in number, have remained to our time, without any alteration.