

**THE ARTICLES OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND, WITH  
SCRIPTURE PROOFS, AND A  
SHORT COMMENTARY**

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The Articles of the Church of England, with Scripture Proofs, and a Short Commentary by  
Various

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*By a Member of the University of Oxford.*

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## PREFACE.

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IN the present edition of the Thirty-nine Articles, it has been thought proper to subjoin a short Commentary, besides the Scripture proofs. The Commentary is selected from the most approved writers<sup>a</sup> on the Articles, and is intended briefly to unfold the substance of each Article—to explain the sense of any terms made use of in them—and to give some account of the Sect against whose tenets any particular Article is levelled.

The Thirty-nine Articles owe their origin to the following circumstance: At the Reformation, the several Churches, which had separated themselves from the Roman Communion, found it expedient to publish Confessions of their faith; and in conformity to this practice, Edward the Sixth, the first Protestant King of England, caused to be published by his royal au-

<sup>a</sup> Burnet, Tomline, Bennet, Welchman, and Beveridge.



thority, Forty-two "Articles, agreed upon by the Bishops and other learned and good men, in the Convocation held at London in the year 1552, to root out the discord of opinions, and establish the agreement of true religion." These Articles were repealed by Queen Mary, soon after her accession to the throne. But Queen Elizabeth, in the beginning of her reign, gave her royal assent to "Thirty-nine Articles, agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy, in the Convocation holden at London in the year 1562, for avoiding diversities of opinion, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion." These Articles were revised, and some small alterations made in them in the year 1571: since which time they have continued to be the criterion of the faith of the members of the Church of England. The Articles of 1562 were drawn up in Latin only; but in 1571, they were subscribed by the members of the two Houses of Convocation, both in Latin and English: and therefore the Latin and English copies are to be considered as equally authentic. The original MSS. subscribed by the Houses of Convocation were burnt in the

fire of London: but Dr. Bennet has collated the oldest copies now extant, and it appears that there are no variations of any importance.

It is generally believed that Cranmer and Ridley were chiefly concerned in framing the Forty-two Articles, upon which our Thirty-nine are founded. But Bishop Burnet says, that "questions relating to them were given about to many Bishops and Divines, who gave in their several answers, which were collated and examined very maturely: all sides had a free and fair hearing before conclusions were made." Indeed, caution and moderation are no less conspicuous in them, than a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and of the early opinions and practice of Christians.

Bishop Burnet, in his History of the Reformation, has preserved the Forty-two Articles published by King Edward the Sixth, and has pointed out in what respects they differ from the Thirty-nine Articles which are now in force.

These Thirty-nine Articles are arranged with great judgment and perspicuity: the first five contain the Christian doctrines concerning the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Ghost; in the sixth, seventh, and eighth, the rule of faith is established; the ten next relate to Christians as individuals; and the remaining twenty-one relate to them as they are members of a religious society. But as all Confessions of Faith have had reference to existing heresies, we shall here find, not only the positive doctrines of the Gospel asserted, but also the principal errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, and most of the extravagancies into which certain Protestant sects fell at the time of the Reformation, rejected and condemned.