

CHURCH ASSOCIATION DECLARATION.

Church Association Tract 115

*Read at the Conference of the 26th and 27th November, 1867,
at Willis's Rooms, London.*

We, the Council of the Church Association, having convened this Conference for the discussion of the existing circumstances of the Church, make the following declaration:—

We avow our cordial attachment to the United Church of England and Ireland, as by law established, as being alike scriptural in her doctrine and apostolical in her order. We accept her Articles as the basis of membership, because they are “agreeable to God’s word,” being such as can either be “read therein or proved thereby.”¹

While we feely allow to every member of the Church the same liberty of conscience, within the latitude of her Articles and other Formularies, which we claim for ourselves, we protest against the public inculcation, by Clergymen ministering within her pale, of doctrines repugnant to the letter and the spirit of her authorised Formularies.

The doctrines against which we specially protest at the present time, are as follows:-

1st. That the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is a sacrifice for sin and an oblation to God the Father of the body and blood of Christ, corresponding on earth to the intercession of Our Lord and Master in Heaven.²

2nd. That the body and blood of Christ are objectively present, under the outward visible part or sign, or form of bread and wine.³

3rd. That the wicked receive the body of Christ in the use of the Lord’s Supper, albeit they do not receive it to salvation.⁴

4th. That Ministers of the Church of England are Sacrificing Priests, representatives of the Great Head of the Church, and exercise by delegation His powers and prerogatives.⁵

5th. That, in the exercise of these powers, the Clergy of the Church of England possess judicial authority to forgive sin, and that the forgiveness of sin is not complete without the absolution of the Priest.⁶

6th. That, in order to exercise the disciplinary powers of their office, for the exclusion of unbelieving or impenitent persons from Communion, Clergymen of the Church of England are authorized to hear Confessions, as a habitual part of religious practice, and to give formal absolution from sin.⁷

7th. That, “Christ Himself, really and truly, but spiritually and ineffably, present in the Sacrament, is therein to be adored.” (that is, under the form of bread and wine.)⁸

We utterly reject the seven doctrines above enumerated, inasmuch as they are innovations on the faith once delivered to the saints, and are “grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.”⁹

We protest against the attempt to represent these doctrines as the doctrines of the Church of England, not only because her authorised Formularies do not contain them, but also because they specifically exclude and condemn them.¹⁰

Considering (1) that the xxxix Articles were put forth by the joint authority of the Crown and of Convocation, for the avowed purpose of avoiding diversity of doctrine; (2) that the Royal declaration¹¹ “prohibits the least difference from the said Articles,” and requires them to be accepted in their “plain and full meaning,” “the literal and grammatical sense;” (3.) that every member of the Church of England in holy orders is bound by virtue of his subscription to the 36th Canon to the acceptance of the Articles as “agreeable to God’s Word;” we publicly declare our conviction, that the teaching of doctrines, alike beyond the scope of the Articles, and repugnant to their contents, is inconsistent with faithful membership of the Church of England.

We recognize in the attempt to teach these doctrines within the pale of the Church of England an organised effort, in some cases openly avowed, to change the doctrinal basis of the Church, as established at the Reformation, and to bring back that “Corruption of Popery,” which our forefathers deliberately abolished, and against which many of them witnessed unto death.¹²

We declare that such variations from the doctrinal teaching of the Church of England, in her authorised Formularies, are a violation of the basis of her union with the State; are calculated to alienate the affection and confidence of all true Protestants; and to bring down the displeasure of Almighty God upon the Church and Nation.

We declare it to be our object to maintain the Church of England on her existing doctrinal basis, and we pledge ourselves to use every constitutional means to defend the integrity of her teaching, and the apostolic simplicity of her worship.

With that object we call upon our brethren of the Clergy and Laity of the Church, who are attached, in common with ourselves, to the principles of the Reformation, as being the principles of the Word of God, to combine with us in resisting by common and organised action the introduction of mediaeval corruptions into the teaching of the Church of England, and the re-introduction of the superstitious rites of the Church of Rome into her practice.

Signed on behalf of the Council,

J. C. COLQUHOUN, *Chairman*.

T. R. ANDREWS, *Vice-Chairman*.

FREDERICK DITMAS, MAJOR, *Secretary*.

Footnotes:

1 36th Canon. Article VI.

2 Charge of Bishop of Salisbury, 1867, p. 53-81. Evidence of Rev. W. J. Bennett, before the Ritual Commission. Charge of the Bishop of Salisbury, 1867, p. 49-53.

3 Bp. of Salisbury, Charge, p. 75. Declaration of 21 Clergyman, May 30, 1867.

- 4 Bishop of Salisbury's Charge, pp. 75-79.
- 5 Bishop of Salisbury's Charge, pp. 59, 81. Rev. W. J. Bennett's Evidence, 2608. Ditto, Plea for Toleration, p. 14.
- 6 Bishop of Salisbury's Charge, pp. 24, 56, 59, 64.
- 7 Ibid. pp. 54, 56, 64.
- 8 Declaration of 21 Clergyman, May 30, 1867. Bennett's Plea for Toleration, p.14
- 9 Article XXII.
- 10 Articles XXVIII and XXIX.
- 11 Royal Declaration of 1562, prefixed to the Articles.
- 12 Latimer, Cranmer, Ridley, at Oxford. Phillpot's Examinations.