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# The Origin of the Thirty-nine Articles

Mark D. Thompson

The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion are Archbishop Matthew Parker's revision of the Forty-two Articles, which had been drafted under the supervision of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and received the royal assent on 12 June 1553. Cranmer had been working on a Protestant doctrinal statement for some time. Seventeen years earlier, in 1536, he was part of the team which produced *The Ten Articles*, a document which began to move the Church of England in the direction of Lutheran Protestantism. Right away Cranmer began work on the next stage and what became known as *The Bishop's Book*—a document that was never given royal assent nor that of Parliament—appeared a year later. Its official title was *The Institution of a Christian Man* and it was essentially an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacraments (it still held to seven!) and the Ave Maria. Of particular significance was the inclusion of articles on justification and purgatory. But movement in a more overtly Lutheran direction would be gradual and risky, especially given King Henry VIII's very limited agenda. What is clear, though, is that Cranmer was committed to developing a Protestant doctrinal statement for the Church of England from an early date.

Cranmer was also concerned that any Articles produced by the English church should have wider recognition as thoroughly orthodox and faithfully Protestant. In 1538 he initiated conversations between the English and German theologians with the hope of producing a common statement. The proceedings were hampered from the outset by political interference. At the king's insistence the English delegation included not only Cranmer and Nicholas Heath, another evangelical, but also a number of Catholics. After a while the king became directly involved (Henry always considered himself the equal of any of the theologians—after all, hadn't he crossed swords with Luther? wasn't he the *Defender of the Faith*?) and the negotiations, predictably, stalemated. Notes in Cranmer's papers give a sense of what might have been. In the draft there was clearly a great deal of dependence upon Melancthon's Augsburg Confession, but in the end no agreed statement emerged from this frustrating endeavour.

The negotiations of 1539 represent the high point of Lutheran influence on the emerging Church of England. A combination of political factors—not least Henry's disastrous marriage to the German duchess, Anne of Cleves—made further engagement with the Lutherans fraught with danger. What is more, the theological perspective of Bucer, Bullinger and later Calvin would begin to excite the minds of Cranmer and his evangelical contemporaries. Most significantly, though, on 5 June 1539 the English Parliament approved *The Six Articles* which brought theological reformation to an abrupt halt. These articles reaffirmed transubstantiation, the withholding of the cup from the laity, clerical celibacy, vows, private masses and auricular confession. Cranmer and his parliamentary 'partner-in-crime', Thomas Cromwell, were completely outmanoeuvred in the negotiations. When the vote was finally taken, Cranmer's dream of a confession of faith that would unite a Protestant England with the theological perspective of the German reformation instantly evaporated. He had to send his own wife and children to the Continent for safety. Five years later, *The King's Book*, Henry's own revision of The Bishops' Book, was published and although it attacked the use of images it defended the basic theological position of *The Six Articles*. There would be no more Protestant confessions in England during Henry's reign.

Henry died on 28 January 1547. His son Edward, who now succeeded him, had been placed under the tutelage of Protestant scholars and the leading politicians of his reign were committed to the new theology. With the constraining influence of the old king removed, Cranmer and his friends could proceed openly with the Protestant agenda. By 1549 Cranmer was requiring all who sought a preaching licence from him to sign a declaration of faith. The next year we know that formal discussions about a common doctrinal statement were underway among the bishops in England.

Meanwhile, Cranmer returned to his hope for an international confession that would unite Protestant England and Protestants on the Continent. But by now it was not so much the Lutherans as the Reformed with whom he hoped to make common cause. We know that as late as March 1552 he was corresponding with Calvin, enthusiastic about a reformed statement which could stand as an alternative to both the Augsburg Confession and the decrees of the Council of Trent. However, it soon became clear that this would be exceedingly difficult. Calvin, for one, was not particularly happy with the way reform had

progressed in England. The prayer books retained too much superstitious language, the theology was not always clear, too many compromises were being made.<sup>1</sup> But Calvin was in Geneva and Cranmer in London. Whatever might be the situation in Geneva, in England political expedience prevented the kind of theological clarity which Cranmer too would have preferred. The prospect of an international statement of reformed theology dissipated. England would have to go it alone.

We know that only two months after Cranmer wrote to Calvin, in May 1552, the Privy Council asked for a copy of the statement that had been under discussion by the bishops. In September a draft was submitted to the Council. Once again politics intruded in the process. Just at that time there was mounting tension between Cranmer and the new Lord Protector, the Duke of Northumberland. It was not surprising in such an atmosphere that the Council over which Northumberland presided should refer the document to a group of theologians of its own choosing for review and comment. Significantly, one of those theologians was the Scotsman John Knox.<sup>2</sup> It took him no more than a few weeks to sign off on the Forty-two Articles, then, after Cranmer had formally expressed his satisfaction with their final form, they received the royal assent and were sent to the printers.

Unfortunately, less than a month after the Forty-two Articles were published, the Protestant King Edward VI died and after an abortive attempt to place a Protestant relative on the throne as his successor, Edward's Catholic sister Mary became queen. She wasted no time in repealing all religious legislation passed in her brother's reign and consigning the Articles to oblivion. Many had not even had time to see them. Five years of turning back the clock and systematically exterminating all who had taken England away from the church of Rome ensued. The most high profile of the Marian martyrs was undoubtedly Cranmer himself, burnt outside the north gate of the city of Oxford on 21 March 1556. The Protestant cause in England seemed lost.

In God's providence, Mary would only be queen for five years and, besides burning aging Archbishops and others, she made a number of spectacular blunders which opened the door again to a Protestant religious settlement. It needs to be remembered that Mary's successor, Elizabeth, inherited a volatile religious situation dangerously intertwined with politics. The awkward domestic

reality she faced was a nation made up of disenchanted Catholics, resentful Protestants of both Lutheran and Reformed persuasions, and enthusiastic returned exiles who typically had spent Mary's reign in places like Geneva. Internationally, England was in a precarious position, with Catholic Spain and France keen to embark on a new holy crusade the moment the Pope gave the go ahead. Elizabeth had to tread cautiously. Added to all this was her own deep religious conservatism. Elizabeth might be a convinced Protestant, but she wasn't going to dispense with all ceremony and order. The only religious settlement Elizabeth was likely to accept was one that took each of these considerations seriously. Stability, unity and order would be the chief criteria. There was another complicating factor. Those of a more reformed bent, especially those exiles who had returned from Geneva, found their cause was not at all helped by the publication of Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. This tract originally had Mary in its sights but was unfortunately published in Geneva just as Elizabeth was ascending the throne.

It was Elizabeth who commissioned her Archbishop of Canterbury to revise Cranmer's earlier work, in order to provide an appropriate doctrinal standard for the Elizabethan Church of England. The modifications Parker made were, in the end, relatively minor and they did not change the overall theological position of the Articles. Contrary to the traditional explanation, it appears that most of these modifications were intended, not so much to mollify Catholics as to conciliate Lutheran Protestants in England and abroad.<sup>3</sup> Parker came up with Thirty-nine Articles but it appears that the Queen herself objected to one of them (Article 29) and so they were originally printed in 1563 as The Thirty-eight Articles. It would take another eight years for the offending article (entitled 'On the Wicked which do not eat the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper') to be reinstated. Nevertheless, in 1571 the Queen in Parliament consented to the publication of the Thirty-nine Articles as we now have them.

### The Function of the Articles

What were the Articles meant to do? Quite clearly they were meant to stake out the theological position of the reformed Church of England, especially on issues which were currently in dispute either in England or on the continent. They were part of a wider program of establishing the Protestant character of the Church of England, which is why, of course, they were immediately repealed when Mary ascended the throne. But precisely what part were they to

play in that program? In the twentieth century, scholars have been divided in their answer to that question, often betraying their own theological and ecclesiastical preferences in the process.

At one end of the spectrum we might place Professor A. G. Dickens, author of one of the most widely used textbooks on the English Reformation. He argued that the most important function of the Articles was 'to bring a much-needed element of stability to the intellectual and social scene' which they did by representing a 'conscious attempt at a shrewd balance between the extremes of an unbalanced age'.<sup>4</sup> Anglican 'moderation' in theological matters was there from the beginning. Dickens concludes:

In very large part they represent what was most sensible and maturely-considered in the Reforming thought of the mid-century, and their authors cannot be blamed if in later times misguided people took them as something which Protestantism of its very nature cannot and must not suppose itself capable—an immutable, obligatory and comprehensive code of beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

Dickens' use of adjectives is meant to heighten the absurdity of the suggestion. The Articles remain an important part of Anglican history, they 'still deserve serious study as a historical monument' and might even provide 'a point of departure for any new codes which may be attempted'.<sup>6</sup> Yet according to Dickens that is where it ends. It would be an abuse of the Articles to suggest they continue to play a normative role four hundred and fifty years later. He decries 'a lingering, superstitious reverence' for the Articles 'from which a frank recognition of the historical and impermanent factors of 1552 might well help wean the Church of England four centuries later'.<sup>7</sup> He would find nothing odd about the comment from G. W. H. Lampe in 1964: 'The Articles do not now represent the general mind of the church'.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps at the other end of the spectrum we might place the important study of the Articles by J.I. Packer. He identifies four historic functions performed by the Thirty-nine Articles:

1. 'To act as the Church of England's theological identity-card, showing what she stood for in a split and warring Christendom. As such, the

Articles were intended to be a title-deed to catholic status' (which had nothing to do with ministerial succession and everything to do with orthodox doctrine);

2. 'To safeguard the truth of the gospel, for the good of souls, the welfare of the church itself, and the glory of God'. They were intended to ensure that the gospel of justification by faith and salvation by grace should never be lost to the church again;

3. 'To bring unity and order into the church ('the establishing of consent touching true religion'), and this in the realms of both doctrine and discipline';

4. 'To set bounds to the comprehensiveness of the Church of England... they were meant to ensure that all Anglican clergy, whatever their views on other matters, should unite in teaching an Augustinian doctrine of sin and a Reformed doctrine of justification and grace'.<sup>9</sup>

Packer's conclusion about the present state of the Articles flows directly out of these observations:

It belongs to the Anglican theological vocation to live in continuous dialogue of this sort with the Creeds and the Articles. It is part of our proper theological discipline to expose ourselves to the questions which they ask us and to allow them constantly to challenge our lopsidedness, to correct our aberrations, to rebuke our 'negligences and ignorances', to point us insistently back to the Scriptures, and to press upon us their classic clarifications of basic biblical and evangelical issues. Not that the dialogue should be one sided [and here Packer adds the critical element of a self-consciously evangelical approach to the Articles]: as the Articles cross-examine us in the name of Scripture, so we must cross-examine them with questions like: Why do you say this? What do you mean? What biblical warrant have you for it? (We must not, however, be surprised if we find, as others have found before us, that the Articles can give very satisfactory replies to such questions!)<sup>10</sup>

Packer's conclusion is remarkable for two reasons. In the first instance it suggests a continuing relevance of the Articles in correcting departures from sound biblical doctrine. They are not simply a description of what Anglicanism looked like in 1571 or even in 1662 when they were reinstated after the

republican experiment. That is, they are not simply an ‘historical monument’. Rather, genuine Anglicanism takes its bearings from the theological perspective the Articles give us. The second aspect of Packer’s conclusion is just as significant. Fidelity to the Articles means fidelity to the Scriptures first and foremost, and all formularies, including the Articles themselves, are to be measured against the teaching of Scripture. The determined biblical focus of the Articles requires us to recognise a prior loyalty that stands over and above our loyalty to the reformed confessions.

This is most obviously expressed in two of the thirty-nine:

VI. *Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation*

Holy Scripture 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 the faith, or be thought requisite [as] necessary to salvation...

XX. *Of the authority of the Church*

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God’s word written, neither may it so expound one place of scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ: yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same, ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation.

In other words, the Thirty-nine Articles present themselves as having contingent authority. Their authority is not that of inspired Scripture. Nor do they gain their authority primarily by virtue of their promulgation in the convocation held at London in 1562/3. Rather, their authority is derived from their faithful reflection of the teaching of Scripture. Articles of the faith must appear in the text of Scripture itself or else must be clearly proved by proper appeal to the teaching of Scripture.

This determined orientation towards Scripture gives a particular character to the enterprise as a whole. Ashley Null, perhaps the world’s leading Cramnerian scholar, summarises Cranmer’s project in this way: the Thirty-nine Articles were intended to be an official formulary for Anglicanism which:



1. established the Bible's clear authority over the Church, and not the other way around;
2. laid down general rules for its acceptable interpretation;
3. and then applied this method to the current issues in controversy at the time.<sup>11</sup>

### The Theology of the Articles

What kind of theology finds expression in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion? Gerald Bray describes it as 'uncompromisingly Protestant, and even Calvinist in tone'.<sup>12</sup> However, one leading Catholic historian of the period has described it as 'a restrained Calvinism' in which we might find, particularly on the issues which—then and now—divide Protestants, 'theological compromise and determined ambiguity'.<sup>13</sup> The oft-repeated caricature has been that Anglican theology, as epitomised by the Articles, seeks to steer a middle course between Rome and Geneva—neither Roman Catholic on the one hand nor Calvinist on the other, deliberately distancing itself from both the Pope and the Puritans. The reality, as most modern studies observe, is that the extremes against which the Articles defined themselves weren't so much Rome and Geneva as Rome and Münster.<sup>14</sup> The Articles explicitly attacked the teaching of the papists and that of the so-called Anabaptists. In contrast, various degrees of influence from both the Lutheran and Reformed sources can be discerned in them.

At the time, Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor in Zurich, informed his city council that the theology of the Forty-two Articles was recognisably reformed, encouraging councillors to read and see 'that the kingdom of England has entirely the teaching and faith that we also have'.<sup>15</sup> He may have been more generous than the evidence warranted, after all, the repeated attempts to amend the Articles by returned Marian exiles of Puritan persuasion suggests the official wording was not quite as Reformed as they would have liked.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that Bucer, Calvin and Bullinger himself had influenced Cranmer by this stage and that influence was not erased by Parker's revisions in 1563.

It is regularly observed that the Thirty-nine Articles were never intended to be a comprehensive systematic treatment of the Christian faith. In this sense they are somewhat different from a number of the Protestant confessions produced on the Continent. Broughton Knox's comment is a good summary of the scholarly consensus:

The Thirty-Nine Articles were not designed as a comprehensive survey of Christian belief or a complete theological system, however summary. Though to some extent they fulfil this role, they are really heads of doctrine drawn up for the purpose of defining the Church of England's dogmatic position in relation to the controversies of the time. This explains their somewhat eclectic character and emphasis. In doctrines which the authors regarded as of central importance their language is very clear, full and forthright, as in the two crucial doctrines of the Reformation, the supremacy of Holy Scripture and justification by faith only. But in some of the other doctrinal areas where Christians differ the Articles are intentionally minimal. For example, in an earlier draft certain literalistic views of the millennium were condemned but in the final form of the Articles this explicit condemnation was omitted.<sup>17</sup>

For many of us, this is one of the great strengths of the Articles. They do not try to cross every 't' or dot every 'i'. There is room for freedom where Scripture is silent or itself allows for freedom. Consciences and Christian intellect are not bound more tightly than the word of God requires. You can hold different views on the millennium without being totally disenfranchised! As Oliver O'Donovan puts it: '[True] Anglican moderation is the policy of reserving strong statement and conviction for the few things which really deserve them'.<sup>18</sup> For others though, this 'minimalism' appears as a most serious weakness. By not spelling out the theological connections and implications of the positions being taken on central issues, there remains the potential for inconsistency and even fatal contradiction. On this account, perhaps the seeds of the current difficulties experienced by Anglicans can be discerned in their classic formularies.

This fact, though, has another very important implication. If the Articles do not represent a comprehensive systematic presentation of Christian doctrine—a watertight theological system that is long on consistency but short on biblical warrant—attempts to derive such a system from them are on the wrong foot to begin with. Here we are returned to the biblical orientation of the Articles: the articles of the faith are to be read in Scripture or proved by it. So, that Jesus' death for sinners was a substitution in which he bore our penalty is a truth read directly from Scripture in places like Isaiah 53; John 12:50–52; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and 1 Peter 2:24. On the other hand, the

doctrine of the Trinity, though not read on the surface of any one text, may be proved from a number of texts and is in fact necessary in order to understand those texts as presenting coherent teaching about the living God. The Articles themselves resist any attempt to put them in the place of Scripture.<sup>19</sup>

The Thirty-nine Articles might helpfully be outlined in four sections:<sup>20</sup>

**Articles 1–5 GOD**—against the teaching of the anti-trinitarians and certain other ‘Anabaptists’, these articles reaffirm an orthodox Christian understanding of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the atoning death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**Articles 6–8 SCRIPTURE**—against the Roman magisterium and appeals to fresh revelations of the Spirit, these articles establish the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith for salvation, and the true way of knowing God and his will for us.

**Articles 9–18 SALVATION**—against the prevailing Catholic soteriology, these articles deal with the inability of fallen human beings to please God or save themselves and also with God’s gracious salvation in Christ ‘by faith only’.

**Articles 19–39 CHURCH**—against certain Roman and radical views of the church, these articles address the nature of the church, its authority, ministry within the church, discipline, the relation of church and state, and elements of Christian corporate life.

Two things are immediately obvious when this sort of analysis is done. Firstly, the shape of the Articles was in large measure determined by the controversies of the period. This much has already been said. The threat of religious and political instability from both directions—from papal attempts to counter the Reformation and undo royal supremacy in the church and from the more radical elements of the Reformation which had created such havoc elsewhere—played a critical role in the decisions on which issues would be addressed and which would be left alone. Secondly, this bird’s eye view of the Articles reveals an extraordinary imbalance which only goes to underline the lack of a comprehensive and systematic agenda. Twenty-one of the thirty-nine articles concern the church and the corporate life of Christians. By contrast the

doctrines of God, Christ, humanity, sin and salvation are all dealt with in the first eighteen articles. Here we are reminded that the entire document was framed as part of a larger program to reform the nation and the church in England by establishing its theological foundation in the teaching of Scripture. This is a church document first and foremost, but it is also a document of public policy enacted by Parliament. It is true that in the first instance it is the teaching, practice and decisions of the churches which were and are to be tested, corrected and transformed in the light of God's word. But elements of biblical teaching are given particular prominence because of their role in the English reform program.

Attention has already been drawn in the quote from Broughton Knox above, to the unambiguously Protestant character of the Articles as evidenced by their clear teaching on the supreme authority of Scripture in the churches (Articles 6, 20) and their exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith alone (Articles 11–14). To this should be added the subject of the most extensive of the articles, Article 17: *Of predestination and election*. By the time this article was first drafted, this doctrine had been under considerable fire both on the Continent and in England. Calvin's clear and unambiguous teaching on the subject excited some but repelled others, in particular his willingness to affirm divine reprobation as well as divine election. Article 17 is not quite as forthright. It concentrates on election or 'predestination to life', as that part of the doctrine which forms the bulk of the Bible's teaching on the subject, and leaves its teaching on reprobation for another day. Its standpoint is essentially infralapsarian, for God's everlasting purpose is 'to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christe out of mankynde'. The very fact that the Articles feel the need to affirm that only a wrong use of the doctrine leads to the 'wretchedness of most unclean living' suggests that the earlier view of Augustine, soon to be revived by Arminius—predestination is based on a foreknowledge of our faith and obedience—is rejected.

In the current climate, where the reality of religious pluralism presses in on us, we should also mention the very next article, Article 18, which speaks clearly and unambiguously for itself:

They also are to be had accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to

frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

There can be no doubt what judgement the Articles would pass on the concept of an ‘anonymous Christian’.

The evidence confirms the propriety of Gerald Bray’s assessment: the theology of the Thirty-nine Articles is ‘uncompromisingly Protestant, and even Calvinist in tone’.<sup>21</sup> Yet, at least on the doctrine of predestination, that Calvinism is not expounded in full. The Articles do not feel the need to say everything, merely enough to establish the contours of biblical teaching on the subject at hand. But enough is said to establish the doctrinal affinity of Cranmer’s Anglicanism with the teaching of the Swiss reformers.<sup>22</sup>

It is sometimes suggested that in Anglicanism, authority in matters of doctrine is in fact dispersed.<sup>23</sup> Some appeal to the writing of the Elizabethan theologian, Richard Hooker, who was engaged to defend Anglican doctrine and polity against the protests of the Puritans. He is supposed to have written of a threefold basis for authority within Anglicanism (the famous, or infamous, ‘three-legged stool’): Scripture, reason and tradition. The problems with this appeal, as a misreading of Hooker and especially as it is often used to relativise the authority of Scripture, have been spelt out by many, including Ashley Null.<sup>24</sup> Others have insisted that the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal supplement and interpret the teaching of the Articles. This latter approach was actually tested in the English courts. In 1850 the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council rejected the argument of the Bishop of Exeter and others that the wording of the baptism services implies a doctrine of baptismal regeneration which is then legitimately read into the Thirty-nine Articles. The Articles are certainly subject to the authority of Scripture, but they interpret the theology of the Prayer Book and not *vice versa*.

*This article will be continued in the next issue.*

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## ENDNOTES

1. An illuminating study of John Calvin's interaction with Cranmer and others in England can be found in B. Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 251-66.
2. MacCulloch, Cranmer, pp. 524-5.
3. D. MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 289.
4. A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (2nd edn.), (University Park, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p. 282.
5. *Ibid.* See also the older judgement of Henry Wakeman: 'The reformed formularies of the English Church contained no systematic statement of belief, of worship or of government. They appeal for their interpretation to the witness of the Church Universal.' H.O. Wakeman, *An Introduction to the History of the Church of England: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Rivington, Percival & Co., 1897), p. 357.
6. Dickens, *Reformation*, p. 282.
7. Dickens, *Reformation*, p. 281.
8. G. W. H. Lampe, *The Articles of the Church of England* (1964), p. 107.
9. J. I. Packer, *The Thirty-nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today*, Latimer Studies 20-21 (Oxford: Latimer House, 1984), pp. 53-54.
10. Packer, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 55.
11. A. Null, *The Thirty-Nine Articles and Reformation Anglicanism Biblical Authority Defined and Applied* (Mukono, Uganda: Global South Institute, 2005), p. 10.
12. G. L. Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation 1526-1701*, (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2004), p. 284.
13. C. Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 181.
14. D. D. Wallace, 'Via Media? A Paradigm Shift', *Anglican and Episcopal History* 72/1 (2003), pp. 2-21.
15. Zurich Staatsarchiv MS E II 102, 279; cited C. Euler, *Couriers of the Gospel: England and Zurich, 1531-1558* (Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte 25; Zurich: TVZ, 2006), p. 96.
16. B.M.G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Reformation* (2nd edn; London: Longman, 1995), pp. 254-5.
17. D. B. Knox, *Thirty-Nine Articles* (Sydney: ACL, 1976), p.49. The reference is to Article 41 of the Forty-two Articles: 'They that go about to renew the fable of heretics called Millenarii, be repugnant to holy Scripture, and caste themselves

headlong into a Jewish dotage.’

18. O. O’Donovan, *On the Thirty Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1986), p. 14.
19. This is a somewhat more focussed argument than Oliver O’Donovan’s tentative suggestion ‘...Anglicans have taken the authority of the Scriptures and the Catholic creeds too seriously to be comfortable with another single doctrinal norm’. O’Donovan, *Articles*, p. 12. Though I have quoted O’Donovan twice within a relatively short space, it must be said that the introduction to his book includes quite a deal of special pleading.
20. This analysis is by no means original. See, for example, the Report of the Archbishops’ Commission on Christian Doctrine entitled *Subscription and Assent to the 39 Articles* (London: SPCK, 1968), §3.
21. In support of this note the conclusion of Richard Cust that ‘From the Elizabethan settlement to the period of William Laud’s ascendancy most educated English Protestants were Calvinists in their theology; after the decisive defeat of the Presbyterian campaign in Elizabeth’s reign, most were Episcopalian in their ecclesiology’. R. Cust & A. Hughes, “Introduction: After Revisionism,” in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics*, R. Cust & A. Hughes (eds.), (London: Longman, 1989), pp.5-6.
22. Patrick Collinson adds, ‘Whatever view may be taken of the theology of the Articles, there can be no doubt that their parliamentary enactment at this time would have served to range England less equivocally with the Swiss and South German churches.’ P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Cape, 1967), p. 66.
23. E.g. ‘Appendix: The Meaning and Unity of the Anglican Communion (Lambeth 1948)’, pp. 284–6 in *Authority in the Anglican Communion: Essays presented to Bishop John Howe*, ed. By S. W. Sykes (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1987). Note also in that volume the article by J. E. Booty, “The Judicious Mr. Hooker and Authority in the Elizabethan Church,” pp. 94-115.
24. A. Null, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, pp. 30-32.