

DECLARATION PREFIXED TO THE 39 ARTICLES

Charles I (1600–1649), King of England and Scotland (1625–1649)

14 April 1628

Being by God's ordinance, according to Our just title, *Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church within these, Our Dominions*, We hold it most agreeable to this, Our Kingly Office and Our own religious zeal to conserve and maintain the Church committed to Our charge, in unity of true religion and in the bond of peace. And not to suffer unnecessary disputations, altercations, or questions to be raised which may nourish faction both in the Church and commonwealth. We have therefore, upon mature deliberation and with the advice of so many of Our bishops as might conveniently be called together, thought fit to make this declaration following:

That the articles of the Church of England (which have been allowed and authorized heretofore, and which Our clergy generally have subscribed unto) do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England, agreeable to God's Word. Which We do therefore ratify and confirm, requiring all Our loving subjects to continue in the uniform profession thereof, and prohibiting the least difference from the said articles. Which to that end We command to be new printed and this, Our declaration, to be published therewith.

That We are supreme governor of the Church of England. And that if any difference arise about the external policy concerning injunctions, canons, and other constitutions whatsoever thereto belonging, the clergy in their convocation is to order and settle them, having first obtained leave under Our Broad Seal so to do, and We approving their said ordinances and constitutions; providing that none be made contrary to the laws and customs of the land.

That out of Our princely care that the churchmen may do the work which is proper unto them, the bishops and clergy from time to time in convocation, upon their humble desire, shall have licence under Our Broad Seal to deliberate of and to do all such things as, being made plain by them and assented unto by Us, shall concern the settled continuance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England now established; from which We will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree.

That for the present, though some differences have been ill raised, yet We take comfort in this, that all clergymen within Our realm have always most willingly subscribed to the articles established; which is an argument to Us that they all agree in the true, usual, literal meaning of the said articles; and that even in those curious points in which the present differences lie, men of all sorts take the articles of the Church of England to be for them. Which is an argument again that none of them intend any desertion of the articles established.

That therefore in these both curious and unhappy differences which have for so many hundred years in different times and places exercised the Church of Christ, We will that all further curious search be laid aside and these disputes shut up in God's promises, as they be generally set forth to us in the holy Scriptures; and the general meaning of the articles of the Church of England according to them. And that no man hereafter shall either print or preach to draw the article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof, and shall not put his own sense or comment to the meaning of the article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.

That if any public reader in either of Our universities, or any head or master of a college, or any other person respectively in either of them, shall affix any new sense to any article, or shall publicly read, determine, or hold any public disputation, or suffer any such to be held either way, in either the universities or colleges respectively; or if any divine in the universities shall preach or print anything either way other than is already established in convocation with Our royal assent; he, or they, the offenders, shall be liable to Our displeasure and the Church's censure in Our Commission Ecclesiastical, as well as any other. And We will see that there shall be due execution upon them.

Richard B.P. Kidd, *Testimonies and Authorities, Divine and Human, in Confirmation of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*
(Cambridge: Deightons, 1848):3-4.