

## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

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### PERJURING PRELATES

**Why there is a reluctance by many Church of Ireland clerics to affirm their belief in Article 31 of the 39 Articles of Religion.**

*For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed*, Isaiah 9:16.

A sermon preached by Rev. Ivan Foster

The 39 Articles of Religion form the doctrinal basis of Anglicanism. They were first compiled in 1562, replacing the Articles compiled by Henry VIII. Henry's Articles grew out of the confusion of doctrine that was being preached in the land at that time of reformation and upheaval. The king sent a circular to all the bishops on 12th July 1536, forbidding all preaching until Michaelmas (September 29th) by which time articles of religion would be set down as a doctrinal guideline. The king, believing himself to be something of a theologian, drew up the articles himself and they were duly agreed by both houses of the Anglican Convocation. The Articles were anything but Biblical and were filled with popish superstition. Baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation, purgatory, prayers to saints, holy water, the sign of the cross, kissing the cross and images as part of worship were all sanctioned by Henry's Articles. In 1552, Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop Ridley compiled 42 articles which, after an examination by bishops and learned men, were further reviewed by Cranmer and Ridley and ratified by King Edward VII. These articles became the basis of the present 39 Articles.

The 31st article deals with the finished sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. It was a subject that lay at the very heart of the controversy between the Reformers and Rome. The article states: *The offering of Christ once made is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits*.

Here are set forth firstly the Purpose, the Parameters and the Peerlessness of the Saviour's death. Christ died to redeem His people by making satisfaction for their sins, both original and actual, and there is no other satisfaction for sin. It then deals with the false doctrine of Rome. It calls Masses, blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits. Rome claims that the Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice that Christ made upon the cross and that during the Mass, there takes place the miracle of transubstantiation. The bread and wine are turned into the actual body and blood of Christ and the bread is then eaten by the worshipper in order to receive eternal life.

In today's Ecumenical Movement, which is designed to reverse the Reformation, there is a great loathing for these Articles and indeed all the Creeds that come down to us from that time of glorious revival. Anglican ministers, by and large, do not believe them even though they swore to uphold them when they were ordained.

In our controversy with Bishop Hannon, the Bishop of Clogher, he has epitomised the an-



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tipathy of the ecumenists within his church toward these articles, by his silent response to my challenge to state clearly that he believes this article. He has claimed to believe these articles on a number of occasions during his rise up through the clerical ranks of the Church of Ireland. I refer to his ordination to the Church of Ireland ministry and to the occasion when he was installed in the Clogher diocese as bishop. Such affirmations, however, are inclined to go unnoticed in the ritual and pomp of Anglican services.

I challenged him to proclaim his rejection of the popish mass in a clear and simple manner that could not be disguised or concealed by ritual or pomp. That, it appears, he would not do. What does that make the bishop when he is prepared to affirm, in the relative privacy of an Anglican service, that which he appears reluctant to affirm in the much more public arena of a newspaper column? In thirty years of preaching in this area I have challenged many clerics on this issue. Bishop Hannon is not alone. Despite the opportunity such a public challenge gives these men to expose me as the ignorant and unlearned man they privately claim me to be, they have passed up the challenge again and again. Why is there this reluctance by ecumenists to affirm publicly the official teaching of their own churches? I will give an answer which I believe can be substantiated. Of course, if I am wrong or misrepresent the views and attitudes of Bishop Hannon and his fellow ecumenists, I can always be challenged to a public debate on the issue!!  
Let me state firstly about the ecumenical clerics: --

### **I. THEY NO LONGER REALLY BELIEVE THESE DOCTRINES BUT WISH TO AVOID DRAWING ATTENTION TO THAT FACT**

The evidence that they no longer believe these doctrines is clear.

**1. They are never heard preaching them** . Any reference to the 39 Articles is usually in the midst of some vain attempt to deny their Protestantism. I think it true today to say that the average member of the Church of Ireland knows little or nothing at all about the 39 Articles. He most certainly never hears anything of the strong anti-Roman Catholicism contained in them.

**2. They are most embarrassed by their links with them.** Why should a Bishop of the Church of Ireland suffer the embarrassment of having to back down publicly from a challenge, and that from a man he would have his people believe knows nothing about the Bible and theology nor possesses the more common aspects of a proper education? Simply because anyone able to read out to the Bishop the 39 Articles and the vows that he has taken when he was inducted to his office would leave the Bishop with nothing to say. Hence his silence in the face of my challenge. It was the same with his pompous predecessor, Bishop Hanson and his neighbouring bishop, Bishop Wilson. Not one of them was prepared to enter a public debate with us on the issue of ecumenism and the Bible. Instead, they hung their heads in silence and hoped that their people would not notice their inability to defend their position.

**3. They openly fraternise with those condemned by the doctrines** . The Bishop of Clogher calls Christian those whom his Articles call blasphemers and deceivers. Each Christmas, Dr. Hannon issues a joint statement with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Clogher,



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Dr. Duffy. Dr. Hannon's creed calls Bishop Duffy a blasphemer and a deceiver yet he calls him a fellow Christian. Were I to fraternise openly with someone I called a preacher of dangerous deceptions and blasphemous fables could I not be charged with hypocrisy? Could I not be asked if I really believed what I claimed to believe?

**4. Legally and morally Dr. Hannon could not continue as Bishop of Clogher if he acknowledged that he does not believe Article 31.** If I drew my stipend on the basis of swearing to uphold the 39 Articles and yet showed open contempt for them, I think I could be charged with something more than hypocrisy. I think I would be guilty of fraudulently receiving money under false pretences! If someone does not believe the 39 Articles, then illegally and immorally they continue to hold the office of Bishop by concealing the fact that they reject their own standards from their people.

### II. ECUMENISTS ARE MEN BLIND TO THE TRUTH OF GOD

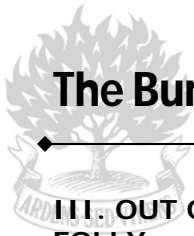
They can engage in this masquerade because they cannot see what its consequences will be. They are the present day successors of a long line of opponents of God's Truth.

**1. Blind religious leaders are not new .** The Saviour encountered them in His day. He said of them, *Let them alone: they be blind leaders . . .* Matt 15:14. The attitude of the Pharisees to the Saviour, their taking offence at His words, verse 12, could be explained only by their blindness to the Son of God. The word *offended* means *scandalised* . That was their reaction to the Saviour's doctrine and teaching. The Lord had quoted the words of Isaiah regarding the blind leaders in His day, verses 7-9, and thus showed that the character of Christ-rejecters does not change from age to age. The disciples were alarmed at the reaction of the Pharisees, being brought up to respect their views. Christ says to them, however, Let them alone. 'Do not fear their frowns or be concerned about their opposition. Put their views far from you'.

**2. Some are foolish enough to follow them .** Who? Why those that are likewise blind to Christ. To follow a blind leader is to be blind. It is to put your own eyes out! How many refuse to see the wrongs of ecumenists! They close their eyes and join the ecumenist in the dark. Such wilful rejection of the truth is foolish in the extreme.

**3. Such leaders will lead you astray.** As it was said of false prophets in a former time so it may be said of the ecumenists today. *But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts ,* Mal 2:8. Poor Ulster has been, and still is, led by false and deceitful men.

**4. Leaders and led are heading for disaster .** Christ says such shall fall into the ditch. *For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed ,* Isa 9:16. The price of being deceived by such leaders is very high, very final. *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction ,* 2 Pet 2:1.



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### III. OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE SOULS OF MEN WE MUST CRY OUT AGAINST SUCH FOLLY

An apostolic admonition tells us what a good minister of Christ is., *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ* 1 Tim 4: 6. The things about which a good minister reminds the people are the warnings of the Holy Spirit about false teachers who lead others astray by their devilish doctrines. We must be faithful to our calling and cry out against the deceptions of evil men, irrespective of their high standing in society.

**1. Without the witness of Truth the lie will flourish** . If we see the advance of false gospels today it is a condemning of the silence of those who know the truth. Study Judges 5: 16-17, 23. Here is reference to a people too busy with business considerations to help the cause of the Lord in a day of battle. Meroz was a town or city near at hand to the scene of the battle between Israel and the Canaanites. It was particularly cursed of God for its attitude. *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty* , Judges 5: 23. Today, the location of Meroz is unknown, having disappeared from the map.

**2. The method of witness seen in Article 31 is to be followed** . Let our witness be as that set forth in the 31st Article. Let us commend Christ by preaching His all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross. Let us show to all that there is an answer to sin in the blood of the Lamb.

Man of Sorrows! what a name  
For the Son of God, who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim!  
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood:  
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!

Guilty, vile and helpless, we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He:  
Full atonement! -- can it be?  
Hallelujah! what a Saviour!

But let us also, in the fashion of Article 31, condemn the lie. We must preach up Christ and also expose the falsehoods that threaten to damn the souls of this generation. This is the method God has ever honoured. It was the method of the Saviour. He who would plant seeds and hope to see them grow must also pull up weeds.