

The Articles of the Remonstrance, 1610

The Articles of Remonstrance were theological propositions written in 1610 by followers of Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian who had died a year earlier. The document was drafted as a protest against the theological determinism of the followers of another Dutch theologian, Theodore Beza, who was the successor of John Calvin.

The main purpose of the Articles was to set forth the Arminian understanding of the doctrine of predestination, as opposed to the Calvinist view. The Arminians, or Remonstrants as they were called, held that God's predestination of individuals for salvation was based on His foreknowledge of their faith and obedience, rather than being unconditional as the Calvinists maintained. This placed a greater emphasis on human free will in the process of salvation.

The Articles of Remonstrance include five main points:

- 1) Conditional Election based on foreseen faith and perseverance,
- 2) Universal Atonement (Christ died for all, but only believers are saved),
- 3) Human inability to achieve saving faith without the grace of God,
- 4) Resistible Grace (God's grace can be resisted and rejected), and
- 5) Uncertainty about the perseverance of the saints (believers could, in principle, fall from grace).

The Remonstrants presented these points to the Dutch government in 1610, which led to a convocation of the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619. This Synod, consisting mainly of Calvinist delegates, condemned the Articles of Remonstrance and produced the Canons of Dort, which affirmed the five points of Calvinism (often known by the acronym TULIP).

In the contemporary period, the Articles of Remonstrance are foundational documents for Arminian theology, which is influential in many Protestant denominations, including the Methodist and Wesleyan traditions, among others. As we receive these Articles today, they serve as a historical touchstone for ongoing discussions about the relationship between divine sovereignty and human free will in the process of salvation, a topic of enduring relevance in Christian theology.¹

ARTICLE 1

That God, by an eternal, unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined, out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake, and through Christ, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on this his Son Jesus, and shall persevering this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even to the end; and, on the other hand, to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath, and to condemn them as alienate from Christ, according to the word of the gospel in John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but wrath of God abideth on him," and according to other passages of Scripture also.

ARTICLE 2

That, agreeably thereto, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer according to the word of the Gospel of John 3:16: "God so love the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in the First Epistle of John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

¹ <https://www.thefaithreceived.com/articles-of-remonstrance>

ARTICLE 3

That man has not saving grace himself, nor of the energy of his free will, inasmuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself, neither thing, will, nor do any thing that is truly good (such as saving Faith eminently is); but that it is needful that he be born again of God in Christ through his Holy Spirit, and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers, in order that he may rightly understand, think, will, and effect what is truly good, according to the Word of Christ, John 15:5: "Without me ye can do nothing."

ARTICLE 4

That this grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of all good, even to this extent, that the regenerate man himself, without prevenient or assisting, awaking, following and co-operative grace, can neither think, will, nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds or movements, that can be conceived, must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But as respects the mode of the operation of this grace it is not irresistible, inasmuch as it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51), and elsewhere in many places.

ARTICLE 5

That those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby become partakers of his lifegiving Spirit, have thereby full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory; it being well understood that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost; and that Jesus Christ assists them through his Spirit in all temptations, extends to them his hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, and desire his help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling, so that they, by no craft or power of Satan, can be misled nor plucked out of Christ's hands, according to the Word of Christ, John 10:28: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." But whether they are capable, through negligence, of forsaking again the first beginnings of their life in Christ (Heb 3:6, 14; 2 Pet 1:10; Jude 3; 1 Tim 1:19; Heb 11:13), of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered to them, of losing a good conscience, of becoming void of

grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scripture, before we ourselves can teach it with full persuasion of our minds.

These Articles, thus set forth and taught, the Remonstrants deem agreeable to the Word of God, tending to edification, and, as regards this argument, sufficient for salvation, so that it is not necessary of edifying to rise higher or to descend deeper.