



The 67 Articles

Zwingli prepared these “Articles” as “talking points” for the First Zurich Disputation. That “Disputation” was to take place on the 29th of January, 1523. At the conclusion, the town council would decide whether or not to adopt Zwingli’s reformatory program. Naturally, they did. The Disputation itself was attended by over 600 persons who had crowded into the hall. Zwingli and his supporters sat at the front of the gathering at a table that had spread across it the Septuagint, the Hebrew Old Testament, and the Greek New Testament along with a copy of the Latin Vulgate.

The discussion was utterly dominated by Zwingli’s brilliance and his opponents made a very bad show of it indeed. Towards the end of the discussions a village parson stood up and said “if no one says anything against Zwingli and no one contradicts him then he must be right and the Bishop wrong.”

On July 14th, 1523 the 67 Articles and their explanation were published in Zurich by the printer Froschauer.

- 1- Everyone who says that the Gospel is nothing without the sanction of the Church, errs and blasphemes God.
- 2- The summary of the Gospel is that our Lord Christ , true Son of God, has made known to us the will of his heavenly Father and has redeemed us from death and reconciled us with God by his guiltlessness.
- 3- Therefore, Christ is the only way to salvation of all who were, are now, or shall be.

- 4- Whoever seeks or points to another door, errs. Indeed, he is a murderer of the soul and a thief.
- 5- Therefore, all who regard other teachings equal to or higher than the Gospel, err. They do not know what Gospel is.
- 6- For Christ Jesus is the guide and captain, promised by God and given to the entire human race.
- 7- That he is an everlasting salvation and head of all believers who are his body, which is dead and incapable of doing anything apart from him.
- 8- From this follows, first of all, that all who live in the head are members and children of God. And this is the church or communion of saints, a bride of Christ, ecclesia catholica.
- 9- It follows, secondly, that as the physical members are incapable of doing anything without the head managing them, so it is impossible for anyone in the body of Christ to do anything without Christ, the head.
- 10- As a person is demented when the members of his body effect something without the head, tearing and wounding and damaging themselves, so are the members of Christ demented, beating and burdening themselves with unwise laws, whenever they undertake something without Christ, their head.
- 11- From this we see the statutes of the so called clerics with all their pomp, riches, titles and laws to be the cause of every folly; for they do not in any way correspond to the head.
- 12- Thus, they still rave, not on account of the head (for the latter -- by God's grace -- one eagerly tries to uphold in our age), but because they are not allowed to rage any more but are forced, rather, to heed the head alone.
- 13- Whenever we give heed to the word, we acquire pure and clear knowledge of the will of God and are drawn to him by his Spirit and transformed into his likeness.
- 14- Hence all Christians should do their utmost so that everywhere only the gospel of Christ be preached.
- 15- For belief in the gospel constitutes our salvation, and unbelief, our damnation; for all truth is clear in it.
- 16- In the gospel we learn that human teaching and statutes are of no use to salvation.
- 17- That Christ is the one eternal high priest; from this we deduce that all those who pretend to be high priests, oppose the honor and power of Christ; indeed, they reject it.
- 18- That Christ who offered himself up once as a sacrifice, is a perpetual and valid payment for the sin of all believers; from this it follows that the mass is not a sacrifice, but a memorial of the sacrifice and a seal of the redemption which Christ has manifested to us.
- 19- That Christ is the sole mediator between us and God.
- 20- That God wants to give us all things in his name. It follows from this that we need no other mediator but him beyond the present time.
- 21- When we pray for one another here on earth, we do so in the confidence that all things are given us through Christ alone.
- 22- Christ is our righteousness. From this we conclude that our words are good insofar as they are Christ's; but insofar as they are ours, they are neither right nor good.
- 23- Christ rejects the riches and pomp of this world. From this we conclude that those who gather up riches for themselves in his name slander him greatly since they use him to cloak their own greed and wantonness.

- 24- Every Christian is free from any of the works which God did not command and is allowed at all times to eat everything. From this we learn that the dispensations concerning cheese and butter are a Roman fraud.
- 25- Times and places are subjected to Christians and not vice versa; from this we learn that those who tether times and places, rob Christians of their freedom.
- 26- Nothing is more displeasing to God than hypocrisy. From this we learn that everything that simulates goodness to human eyes is utter hypocrisy and infamy. This applies to vestments, insignia, tonsures, etc.
- 27- All Christians are brothers of Christ and of one another and no one on earth ought to be elevated to be called Father. This brings to naught religious orders, sects and illegal gatherings.
- 28- Everything which God permits or which he has not forbidden is lawful. From this we learn that it is proper for everyone to marry.
- 29- That all those whom we call 'spiritual' sin when, having discovered that God did not grant them the ability to remain chaste, they, nonetheless, do not protect themselves through marriage.
- 30- Those who take a vow of chastity childishly or foolishly undertake too much. We learn from this that anyone who accepts such vows, does injustice to good people.
- 31- No private person may impose the ban on anyone, except the church, i.e., the community of those among whom the person to be excommunicated lives, together with its guardian, i.e., the minister.
- 32- Only the person who causes public offence may be banned.
- 33- Ill gotten possessions which cannot be restored to their rightful owner, are not to be given to temples, cloisters, monks, priests and nuns, but to the poor.
- 34- So called spiritual authority cannot justify its pomp on the basis of the teaching of Christ.
- 35- But temporal authority derives strength and affirmation from the teaching and work of Christ.
- 36- All judicial authority and the administration of justice which the so called priestly estate appropriates to itself, really belongs to temporal authority inasmuch as it seeks to be Christian.
- 37- Furthermore, all Christians, without exception, owe obedience to them.
- 38- All Christians without exception owe obedience to them, provided they do not command anything which is opposed to God.
- 39- Therefore all their laws ought to conform to the divine will so that they protect the oppressed person, though he may not actually lay a charge.
- 40- They alone are entitled to impose the death penalty and then only on those who give public offence, without thereby incurring the wrath of God, unless he commands something else.
- 41- When they provide just counsel and aid to those for whom they will have to give account before God, these in turn, are duty-bound to give them physical support.
- 42- Should they become unfaithful and not act according to the precepts of Christ, they may be deposed in the name of God.
- 43- In short, the dominion of the one who rules with God alone is the best and most stable; but the dominion of one who rules by his own whim, is the worst and most insecure.

- 44- True worshippers call on God in spirit and in truth, without any clamoring before people.
- 45- Hypocrites do their works to be seen by people, they receive their reward in this world.
- 46- Thus it follows that chanting and loud clamor, without true devotion and done for money only, either seek human praise or else material gain.
- 47- A person should suffer physical death rather than offend or disgrace a Christian.
- 48- One who, because of infirmity or ignorance, tends to take offence without any cause, should not be left weak or ignorant. Rather, he should be strengthened so that he may not regard as sinful what is not sinful at all.
- 49- I know of no greater offence than to forbid priests to have wives, yet allow them to engage prostitutes.
- 50- God alone remits sin through Jesus Christ his son, our only Lord.
- 51- Whoever ascribes this to a creature, robs God of his honor and gives it to one who is not God. This is sheer idolatry.
- 52- Therefore, confession which is made to a priest or to a neighbor should not be advocated as the remission of sin, but simply as seeking advice.
- 53- Imposed works of penance derive from human counsel-- with the exception of the ban. They do not remove sin and are imposed merely to deter others.
- 54- Christ has borne all our pain and travail. Hence, whoever attributes to works of penance what is Christ's alone, errs and blasphemes God.
- 55- Whoever refuses to remit any sin of a penitent person, cannot claim to be acting in the name of God or Peter, but in that of the Devil.
- 56- Whoever remits certain sins for money alone, is fellow to Simon and Balaam and the very messenger of the Devil.
- 57- The true Holy Scriptures know nothing of purgatory after this life.
- 58- The sentence of those who have died, is known only to God.
- 59- And the less God has let us know about it, the less we should undertake to know about it.
- 60- That a person, out of concern for the dead, calls on God to show them mercy, I do not disapprove. But to stipulate a time for this and to lie for the sake of gain, is not human, but devilish.
- 61- Of an indelible character which priests have appropriated to themselves in recent times, scripture knows nothing at all.
- 62- Scripture knows of no priests other than those who proclaim the Word of God.
- 63- To them who proclaim God's Word, Scripture bids us show respect by giving them physical sustenance.
- 64- All those who acknowledge their errors, should not be forced to make amends, but are to be allowed to die in peace, and their endowments are then to be administered in a Christian spirit.
- 65- Those who are willing to recognize their error, will be dealt with by God. Therefore, no violence is to be done to their bodies, unless, of course, they behave in such an unseemly fashion that one cannot do without it.
- 66- All clerical superiors are to humble themselves instantly and erect the cross of Christ only and not the money box. Otherwise they will perish; the axe is laid to the root of the tree.

67- Should anyone want to discuss with me interest rates, tithes, unbaptized children or confirmation, I declare myself willing to respond.