

## **The Judgment of the National Synod**

of the Reformed Belgic Churches,  
assembled at Dort, Anno 1618, and 1619.

*In which SYNOD were admitted  
many Divines of note, being of  
the Reformed Churches*

Of Great Britain, Of the Countie Palatine of Rhene, Of Hassia, Of Helvetia, Of the  
Correspondence of Weterav, Of Geneva, Of Breme, and Of Embden,

*Concerning the five Articles:*

As also their sentence touching  
CONRADUS VORSTIUS

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*Acts 15: 25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled  
with one accord, &c.*

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## The Preface

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IN THE NAME OF  
our Lord and Savior  
Jesus Christ

Amen.

Amongst the manifold comforts, which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ hath imparted to his Church militant in this troublesome pilgrimage, that is deservedly extolled which he left unto her at his departure to his Father into the heavenly Sanctuary, saying, I am with you always unto the end of the world. The truth of this comfortable promise is manifested from time to time in all ages of the Church, which having from the beginning been oppugned, not only by the open violence of enemies, and impiety of heretics, but further by the underhand cunning of seducers, certainly, if at any time the Lord should have left her destitute of the guard of his saving presence, she had now long since been either oppressed by the power of tyrants, or, to her utter overthrow, seduced by the fraud of imposters.

But that good shepherd, who loves his flock to the end, for whom he hath laid down his life, hath always opportunely, and many times miraculously, with an outstretched arm, repressed the rage of persecutors, and discovered the winding by-paths of seducers, and scattered their fraudulent purposes; by each of which he hath evidently shown himself to be present in his Church. Fair evidence hereof is given in the histories concerning godly Emperors, Kings, and Princes, whom the Son of God hath so often raised up for the safeguard of his Church, and inflamed with a holy zeal of his house; and by their means hath not only curbed the fury of tyrants, but also, in his Church's behalf when it grappled with false teachers, diversely corrupting religion, hath procured the remedy of sacred Synods: wherein the faithful servants of Christ have jointly with their prayers, counsels, and labors courageously stood for God's Church, and his truth, fearlessly opposed the instruments of Satan, howsoever changing themselves into Angels of light, rooted up the weeds of errors, and dissention, preserved the Church in agreement of the pure religion, and left unto posterity the sincere worship of God uncorrupted.

With like favor our faithful Savior hath given a testimony of his gracious presence at this time to the long distressed Church of the Low-Countries. For this Church being by God's mighty hand set free from the tyranny of the Romish Antichrist, and from the fearful idolatry of Popery, so often wonderfully preserved amidst the dangers of a long continuing war, and flourishing in the concord of true doctrine, and of discipline to the praise of her God, the admirable increase of the weal-public, and joy of all other reformed Churches, hath first covertly, afterwards openly, with manifold both old and new errors been assaulted by one James Harmans, alias Arminius, and his followers, assuming the title of Remonstrants, and brought into so great hazard through the ceaseless turmoils of scandalous dissentions, and schisms, that, had not our Savior's merciful hand in time been interposed, these flourishing Churches had been utterly consumed with the horrible flames of discord and schism. But

blessed forever be the Lord, who, after he had for a while hidden his countenance from us (who had many ways provoked his wrath and indignation) hath witnessed to the whole world, that he is not forgetful of his covenant, and despises not the sighs of his people.

For when in man's understanding scarce any hope of remedy appeared, God did put into the minds of the most illustrious and mighty LL. the States General of the united Provinces, by the counsel and direction of the most renowned, and valiant Prince of Orange, to determine to meet with these outrageous mischiefs by such lawful means as have been longtime approved by the example of the Apostles themselves, and of the Christian Church following them; and also heretofore with great benefit used in the Belgic Church itself: and by their authority to call together a Synod out of all the provinces subject to their government, to be assembled at Dort: many most grave Divines being entreated thereto, and obtained by the favor of the most high and mighty James, King of Great Britain, and of most illustrious and potent Princes, Landgraves, and Commonwealths, that by the common judgment of so many Divines of the reformed Churches, those opinions of Arminius, and his followers might accurately be examined, and determined of by the rule of God's word only, the true doctrine established, and the false rejected, and concord, peace, and tranquility (by God's blessing) restored to the Church of the Low-Countries. This is that good gift of God, wherein the Belgic Churches triumph, and both humbly confess, and thankfully profess the never failing mercies of their Savior.

Wherefore (a fast, and public prayers being formerly enjoined and performed in all the Belgic Churches by the authority of the Chief Magistrate, for the deprecation of God's anger, and imploring his gracious aid) this venerable Synod, assembled together at Dort in the name of the Lord, inflamed with the love of God's honor, and salvation of his Church, and upon the invocation of God's holy name bound by oath, that they would hold the sacred Scripture as the only rule of their verdict, and demean themselves in the hearing and determining of this cause with a good and upright conscience, hath diligently and with great patience labored herein, to persuade the chief patrons of these assertions, cited to appear before them, more largely to unfold their opinion concerning the five notorious controverted Articles, as also the reasons of such their opinion. But they rejecting the judgment of the Synod, and refusing to answer to interrogatories in such manner as was fitting: when as neither the admonitions of the Synod, nor instance of the generous and worthy Deputies of the States General, nay nor the command of the most illustrious and mighty Lords the States General themselves, could prevail anything at all with them; the Synod, by the commandment of the said Lords, the States General, was fain to take another course, heretofore used and received in ancient Synods. And so the search of their Tenets concerning the five Articles was undertaken out of their own books, Confessions; and declarations partly heretofore set forth, partly now exhibited to this Synod.

Which search, and examination being now by God's singular mercy dispatched, and finished with all diligence, conscience, and faithfulness, and with the joint consent of all and everyone; this Synod for the advancement of God's glory, for the upholding of that truth which leads to salvation, and for the maintaining of peace and tranquility as well in men's consciences, as in the Belgic Churches, determines to publish this their judgment; wherein the true doctrine

agreeable with God's word, touching the five foresaid heads of doctrine is declared, and the false and disagreeing with God's word, is rejected; as follows.

**THE  
FIRST CHAPTER  
or head of Doctrine, namely  
*concerning God's Predestination.***

The first Article.

Forasmuch as all men have sinned in Adam, and are become guilty of the curse, and eternal death, God had done wrong unto no man, if it had pleased him to leave all mankind in sin, and under the curse, and to condemn them for sin: according to those words of the Apostle, Romans 3: 19. *All the world is guilty before God.* And verse 23. *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* And Romans 6: 23. *The wages of sin is death.*

II.

But herein was the love of God made manifest, *In that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have life everlasting, I John 4: 9, John 3: 16.*

III.

And that men may be brought unto faith, God in mercy sends preachers of this most joyful message, to whom he will, and when he will: by whose ministry, men are called unto repentance and faith in Christ crucified, *Romans 10: 14, 15. How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?*

IV.

Whosoever believe not these glad tidings, the wrath of God remains upon them: but they which receive them, and embrace our Saviour Jesus with a true and lively faith, they are delivered by him from the wrath of God, and destruction, and eternal life is given them.

V.

The cause, or fault of this unbelief, as of all other sins, is in no wise in God, but in man. But faith in Jesus Christ, and salvation thru him is the free gift of God, as it is written, *Ephesians 2:*

8 *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. In like manner, Philippians 1: 29, Unto you it is (freely) given to believe in Christ.*

## VI.

But whereas in process of time, God bestows faith on some, and not on others, this proceeds from his eternal decree. *For from the beginning of the world God knoweth all his works, Acts 15: 18, Ephesians 1: 11.* According to which decree, he graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however otherwise hard, and as for those that are not elect, he in just judgment leaves them to their malice and hardness.

And here especially is discovered unto us the deep, and both merciful and just difference put between men, equally lost; that is to say, the decree of election, and reprobation, revealed in God's Word. Which as perverse, impure, and wavering men do wrest unto their own destruction, so it affords unspeakable comfort to godly, and religious souls.

## VII.

Now election is the unchangeable purpose of God, by which, before the foundation of the world, according to the most free pleasure of his will, and of his mere grace, out of all mankind, fallen, through their own fault, from their first integrity into sin and destruction, he hath chosen in Christ unto salvation a set number of certain men, neither better, nor more worthy than others, but lying in the common misery with others: which Christ also from all eternity he appointed the Mediator, and Head of all the elect, and foundation of salvation; and so he decreed to give them to him to be saved, and by his Word, and Spirit, effectually to call, and draw them to a communion with him: that is, to give them a true faith in him, to justify, sanctify, and finally glorify them, being mightily kept in the communion of his Son, to the demonstration of his mercy, and praise of the riches of his glorious grace, as it is written, *Ephesians 1: 4, 5, 6 He hath chosen us in (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved and Romans 8: 30 Whom he hath predestinated, them also he hath called, and whom he hath called, them also he hath justified, and whom he hath justified, them also he will glorify.*

## VIII

This election is not manifold, but one and the same of all, which are to be saved, both under the old, and new Testament, because the Scripture speaks but of one only good pleasure, purpose, and counsel, of the will of God, by which he hath chosen us from eternity both unto grace, and glory, both unto salvation, and the way of salvation, which he hath prepared, that we should walk therein.

## IX

This said Election was made, not upon foresight of faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, or of any other good quality, or disposition (as a cause or condition before required in man to be chosen) but unto faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, &c. And therefore election is the fountain of all saving good; from whence faith, holiness, and the residue of saving gifts, lastly everlasting life itself, do flow, as the fruits, and effects thereof; according to that of the Apostle, *Ephesians 1: 4, He hath chosen us, (not because we were, but) that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.*

## X

The true cause of this free election is the good pleasure of God, not consisting herein, that, from among all possible means, he chose some certain qualities, or actions of men as a condition of salvation: but herein, that out of the common multitude of sinners he called out to himself, for his own peculiar, some certain persons, or men; as it is written, *Roman 9: 11 Before the children were born, when they had neither done good nor evil, &c. It was said unto her (namely to Rebecca) the elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, I have loved Jacob and hated Esau, and Acts 13: 48 As many, as were ordained to eternal life, believed.*

## XI

And as God himself is most wise, unchangeable, omniscient, and omnipotent: so the election made by him can neither be interrupted nor changed, revoked, or disannulled, the elect cast away, nor their number diminished.

## XII

Of this their eternal, and immutable election unto salvation, the elect, in their time (although by several degrees, and in a different measure) are assured, and that, not by searching curiously, into the depths and secrets of God, but by observing in themselves, with spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election, signed out unto us in God's word, such as are, a true faith in Christ, a filial fear of God, grief for our sins according to God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, &c.

## XIII

Out of sense, and certainty of this election, the children of God daily draw more and more matter of humbling themselves before God, of adoring the depth of his mercies, of purifying themselves, and of loving him fervently, who first loved them so much: so far is this doctrine

of election, and the meditation thereof, from making them carnally secure, backward in observing God's commandments. Which abuse by God's just judgment is wont to befall those, who either rashly presume, or vainly and malapartly prate of the grace of election, refusing withal to walk in the ways of the elect.

#### XIV

And as this doctrine touching God's election was by God's appointment declared by the prophets, Christ himself, and the Apostles, as well under the old Testament, as the new, and afterwards commended to the records of holy Writ: so at this day in God's Church (for which it is peculiarly ordained) it is to be propounded with the spirit of discretion, religiously, and holily, in its place and time, without any curious searching into the ways of the most High, and that to the glory of God's most holy name, and lively comfort of his people.

Moreover, the holy Scripture herein chiefly manifests, and commends unto us this eternal and free grace of our election, in that it further witnesses, that not all men are elected, but some not-elected, or past over in God's eternal election, whom doubtless God in his most free, most just, unproveable, and unchangeable good pleasure hath decreed to leave in the common misery (whereinto by their own default they precipitated themselves) and not to bestow saving faith, and the grace of conversion upon them, but leaving them in their own ways, and under just judgment, at last to condemn, and everlastingly punish them, not only for their unbelief, but also for their own sins, to the manifestation of his justice. And this is the decree of reprobation, which in no wise makes God the author of sin (a thing blasphemous once to conceive) but a fearful, unproveable, and just judge, and revenger.

#### XVI

Those who as yet do not effectually perceive in themselves a lively faith, or a sure confidence of heart in Christ, the peace of conscience, an endeavor of filial obedience, a glorying in God through Christ, and nevertheless use the means, by which God hath promised, that he will work these things in us, such as these ought not be cast down at the mention of reprobation, nor reckon themselves among the reprobate, but must diligently go forward in the use of those means, and ardently desire, and humbly and reverently expect the good hour of more plentiful grace. Much less then ought those to be terrified with the doctrine of reprobation, who, albeit they heartily desire to turn unto God, to please him only, and be delivered from this body of death, yet cannot make such progress in the way of godliness, and faith, as they wish. For our merciful God hath promised that he will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the shaken reed: But to those, who forgetting God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, have wholly enthralled themselves to the cares of the world, and pleasures of the flesh, this doctrine is not without cause terrible, so long as they are not seriously converted unto God.

## XVII

Seeing we must judge of God's will by his word, which testifies unto us that the children of the faithful are holy, not in their own nature, but by benefit of the gracious covenant, wherein they together with their parents are comprised; godly parents ought not to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom God calls out of this life in their infancy.

## XVIII

Whosoever murmurs at this grace of free election, and severity of just reprobation, we stop his mouth with that of the Apostle, Romans 9: 20 *O man who art thou, that repliest against God?* And that of our Saviour Matthew 20: 15 *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* But we for our part, religiously adoring these mysteries, cry out with the Apostle, Romans 11: 33 – 36 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out? For who hath known his mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath given to him first, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to him be glory forever. Amen.*

### **A REJECTION of the Errors wherewith the Churches of the Low-Countries have now a long time been troubled.**

*The Synod having delivered the  
Orthodox doctrine concerning election  
and reprobation, rejects the  
errors of those,*

First,

Who teach, that *the will of God to save such as shall believe, and persevere in faith, and the obedience of faith, is the whole and entire decree of election unto salvation, and that nothing else concerning this decree is revealed in the word of God.* For these teachers deceive the simple sort, and plainly gainsay the holy Scripture, which witnesses, that God not only will save such as shall believe: but also from eternity hath chosen some certain men, upon whom, rather than others, he would bestow faith in Christ, and perseverance; as it is written, John 17: 6, *I have declared thy name unto the men which thou gavest me.* In like manner, Acts 13: 48, *As many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed.* And Ephesians 1: 4 *He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, &c.*

Which teach, that *the election of God unto salvation is manifold, one general and indefinite; another singular, and definite: and this again either incomplete revocable, not peremptory or absolute.* Likewise that *there is one election unto faith, another unto salvation: so that election unto justifying faith may be without peremptory election unto salvation:* For this is a figment of man's brain devised without any ground in the Scripture, corrupting the doctrine of election, and breaking that golden chain of salvation. Romans 8: 30 *Whom he hath predestinated, them also he hath called, and whom he hath called, them also he hath justified, and whom he hath justified, them also he hath glorified.*

### III

Who teach, that *the good pleasure and purpose of God, whereof the Scripture makes mention in the doctrine of election, doth not consist herein, that God did elect some certain men rather than others; but in this, viz. that God from all possible conditions (amongst which are the works of the Law also) or out of the rank of all things did choose, as a condition unto salvation, the act of faith (in itself ignoble) and the imperfect obedience of faith, and was graciously pleased to repute it for perfect obedience, and account it worthy of the reward of everlasting life.* For by this pernicious error, the good pleasure of God, and merit of Christ is weakened (besides that, by such unprofitable questions men are called off from the truth of free justification, and from the single plainness of the Scriptures;) and that of the Apostle is outfaced as untrue, II Timothy 1: 9 *God hath called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us through Christ Jesus before the world began.*

### IV

Who teach, that *in the election unto faith this condition is formerly required, viz. That a man use the light of reason aright, that he be honest, lowly, humble, and disposed unto life eternal, as though in some sort election depended on these things.* For these teachers have a strong tang of Pelagius, and, broadly enough, tell the Apostle that he is wide, when he says, Ephesians 2: 3, &c. *We all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the will of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, as well as others. But God which is rich in mercy, through his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that he might show in ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ. For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

## V

Who teach, that *the incomplete and not-peremptory election of singular persons is made by reason of foreseen faith, repentance, sanctity, and godliness begun, or continued for some time: but the complete, and peremptory election by reason of the final perseverance of foreseen faith, repentance, sanctity and godliness; and that this is the gracious, and evangelical worthiness, by which he that is chosen, becomes worthier than he that is not chosen: and therefore that faith, the obedience of faith, sanctity, godliness, and perseverance are not the fruits or effects of unchangeable election unto glory, but conditions and causes, sine quibus non* (that is to say, without which a thing is not brought to pass) *before required, and foreseen, as already performed by those, who are completely to be chosen.* A thing repugnant to the whole Scripture, which everywhere beats into our ears and hearts, these and such like sayings. Romans 9: 11, *Election is not of works, but of him that calleth: Acts 13: 48 As many as were ordained unto life eternal believed, Ephesians 1: 4 He hath chosen us that we should be holy. John 15: 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. Romans 11: 6 If of grace, not of works, I John 4: 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he first loved us, and sent his Son, &c.*

## VI

Who teach, that *not all election unto salvation is unchangeable, but that some which are elected, withstanding God's decree, may perish, and forever do perish:* By which gross error they both make God mutable, and overthrow the comfort of the godly concerning the certainty of their salvation, and contradict the holy Scriptures teaching, Matthew 24: 24 that the *elect cannot be seduced.* John 6: 39 That Christ *doth not loose those which are given to him of his father.* Romans 8: 30 That God *whom he hath predestinated, called, justified, them he doeth also glorify.*

## VII

Who teach, that *in this life there is no fruit, no sense, no certainty of immutable election unto glory, but upon condition, contingent, and mutable.* For besides that it is absurd to make an uncertain certainty, these things are contrary to the experience of the godly: who with the Apostle, triumph upon the sense of their election, and extol this benefit of God, who rejoice, with the disciples, according to the admonition of Christ, Luke 10: 20, that *their names are written in heaven:* and lastly who oppose the sense of their election against the fiery darts of devilish temptations, demanding, Romans 8: 33, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*

## VIII

Who teach, that *God out of his mere just will hath not decreed to leave any man in the fall of Adam, and common state of sin and damnation, or to pass over any in the communication of grace necessary unto faith and conversion.* For that stands firm. Romans 9: 18 *He hath compassion upon whom he will, and whom he will he hardens.* And that Matthew 13: 11, *To you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.* In like manner, Mathew 11: 25, 26 *I glorify thee, o Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise, and understanding men, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, o Father, because thy good pleasure was such.*

## IX

Who teach, that *the cause, why God sends the Gospel rather unto this nation than to another, is not the mere and only good pleasure of God, but because this nation is better, and more worthy of it than that, unto which he hath not communicated the Gospel.* For Moses gainsays this, speaking thus unto the people of Israel, *Deuteronomy 10: 14, 15, Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, and the earth with all that therein is: notwithstanding the Lord set his delight in thy fathers to love them, and did choose their seed after them, even you above all people, as appeareth this day.* And Christ Matthew 11: 21, *Woe be to thee, Corazin, woe be to thee Bethsaida: for if the great works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre, and Sidon, they had repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes...*

## **THE SECOND CHAPTER or head of Doctrine, concerning *Christ's death and the redemption of men by it***

### The first Article

God is not only most merciful, but most just also. Now his justice requires (as he hath revealed himself in his word) that our sins committed against his infinite majesty, be punished not with temporal pains only, but eternal also, and those both of body and soul: which punishments we cannot escape, unless God's justice be satisfied.

## II

But seeing we ourselves cannot make satisfaction, and free ourselves from the wrath of God, God of his infinite mercy hath given us his only begotten Son to become a surety for us, who, that he might satisfy for us, was made sin, and a curse upon the cross for us, or in our stead.

### III

This death of the Son of God is the only, and most perfect sacrifice, and satisfaction for sins, of infinite price, and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.

### IV

And therefore this death is of so great value and price, because the person, which suffered it, is not only a true, and perfectly holy man, but the only begotten Son of God also, of the same eternal, and infinite essence with the Father, and the holy Ghost: such a one as it behoved our Savior to be. Again, because his death was joined with a feeling of God's wrath and of the curse, which we had deserved by our sins.

### V

Furthermore it is the promise of the Gospel: That whoever believes in Christ crucified, should not perish, but have life everlasting: Which promise together with the injunction of repentance and faith, ought promiscuously, and without distinction, to be declared and published to all men and people, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the Gospel.

### VI

But forasmuch as many being called by the Gospel do not repent, nor believe in Christ, but perish in their infidelity, this comes not to pass for want of, or by any insufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ offered upon the cross, but by their own proper fault.

### VII

But as many as truly believe, and are freed by Christ's death from their sins, and saved from destruction; they by God's grace alone (which he owes to no man) given unto them from eternity in Christ, obtain this benefit.

### VIII

For this was the most free counsel, gracious will, and intention of God the Father, that the lively and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should manifest itself in all the elect, for the bestowing upon them only justifying faith, and bringing them infallibly by it unto eternal life, that is, God willed, that Christ by the blood of his cross (whereby he was to establish a new covenant) should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and

language, all them, and them only, who from eternity were elected unto salvation, and given to him of the Father, that he should bestow faith on them (which as also the other saving gifts of the holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death) that by his blood he should cleanse them from all sins both original, and actual, as well committed after, as before they believed, and finally should present them before him in glory without all spot, or blemish.

## IX

This counsel proceeding from his eternal love toward the elect, the gates of Hell bootlessly (*vainly*) resisting it, hath from the beginning of the world to this present time, been mightily fulfilled, and hereafter also shall be fulfilled: so that the elect in their times must be gathered into one, and there must always be some Church of the believers founded in the blood of Christ, which constantly loving, steadfastly worshipping, and here and forever and ever praising him her Savior, who laid down his life upon the cross for her, as the bridegroom for his bride.

### **A REJECTION of the errors The Synod having delivered the Orthodox doctrine, rejects the errors of them;**

#### First

Who teach, that *God the Father ordained his Son unto the death of the cross without any certain and determinate counsel of saving any particular man expressly; so that its necessity, profit, and dignity, might have remained whole, and sound, and perfect, in every respect, complete, and entire, to the impetration of Christ's death, although the obtained redemption had never actually been applied to any particular person.* For this assertion is reproachful unto the wisdom of God the Father, and the merit of Jesus Christ, and contrary to the Scripture; Where our Savior Christ says, John 10: 15, *I lay down my life for my sheep. (verse 27) and I know them.* And the prophet Isaiah speaks thus of our Savior. Isaiah 53: 10. *When he shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.* Lastly, it overthrows an article of our faith: namely that, wherein we believe, that there is a Church.

#### II

Who teach, that *this was not the end of Christ's death, that he might establish a new covenant of grace by his blood, but that he might only procure unto his Father the bare right of making again with men any covenant whatsoever, whether of grace, or of works.* For this thwarts the

Scripture which teaches that Christ is made the surety, *and mediator of a better, that is, a new covenant, Hebrews 7: 22 and 9: 15 – 17. The Testament is confirmed when men are dead.*

### III

Who teach, that *Christ by his satisfaction did not certainly merit for any man salvation itself, and faith, by which the satisfaction of Christ may be effectually applied unto salvation, but only, that he purchased to his Father a power, or resolution to enter into a new match with mankind, and to prescribe then what new conditions soever he pleased: the performance of which conditions should depend upon man's free will, and that therefore it might fall out that either no man, or every man might fulfill them.* For these esteem too, too basely of Christ's death, in no wise acknowledging the chiefest, and most excellent fruit, and benefit procured thereby, and call up again the Pelagian error out of hell.

### IV

Who teach, that *the new Covenant of grace which God the Father, by the mediation of Christ's death made with men, doth not consist herein, viz. that we are justified before God, and saved by faith, in so much as it apprehends the merit of Christ: but herein, viz. that God, the exaction of perfect legal obedience being abrogated, reposes faith itself, and the imperfect obedience of faith for perfect obedience of the law, and graciously thinks it worthy of the reward of eternal life.* For these contradict the Scripture, Romans 3: 24, 25 *all are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption, that is, in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood.* And, with wicked Socinus, they bring in an uncouth and strange justification of man before God, contrary to the consent of the whole Church.

### V

Who teach, that *all men are received into the state of reconciliation and grace of the covenant, so that nobody shall be condemned for original sin, nor, in respect of it, be liable unto death or damnation, but that all are acquitted, and freed from the guilt of that sin.* For this opinion is contrary to the Scripture, which affirms, that *we are by nature the children of wrath.*

### VI

Who employ the distinction of impetration, and application, to the end that they may infuse this opposition into unskillful and unwary wits, namely; that *God, as much as concerns him, would confer upon all men equally these benefits, which are procured by Christ's death. And whereas some, rather than others, are made partakers of forgiveness of sins, and life eternal, that this diversity depends upon their own free will, applying itself unto grace indifferently offered: but not upon the singular gift of mercy, effectually working in them rather than others,*

*that they may apply this grace unto themselves.* For they, while they bear the world in hand, that they propound this distinction with a sound meaning, go about to make the people drink of the poisonous cup of Pelagianism.

## VII

Who teach, that *Christ neither could, nor ought to die, neither did die for those, whom God dearly loved, and chose unto eternal life, seeing such stood in no need of Christ's death.* For they contradict the Apostle, who says, Galatians 2: 20 *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.* In like manner, Romans 8: 33, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's chosen? it is God that justifieth, who shall condemn? it is Christ which is dead,* to wit, for them. And our Savior averring, John 10: 15, *I lay down my life for my sheep.* And John 15: 12, 13, *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you: greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

**The Third and Fourth Chapters, or  
Doctrinal Heads, namely,  
Concerning MAN'S CORRUPTION,  
and conversion to God, together with  
the manner thereof**

### The first Article

Man in the beginning, being made according to God's image, was adorned in his mind with true, and saving knowledge of his creator, and of things spiritual, in his will and heart with righteousness, in all his affections with purity; and so was in all his parts, and faculties holy: But he, by the Devil's instigation, and liberty of his own will, revolting from God, bereaved himself of these excellent gifts, and contrariwise, in lieu of them, he contracted in his mind horrible darkness, vanity, and crookedness of judgment, in his heart and will, malice, rebellion, and obduration, and in all his affections impurity.

## II

And such as man was after the fall, such children he begat, namely a corrupt issue from a corrupt father, this corruption being by the just judgment of God derived from Adam to all his posterity (Christ only excepted) and that not by imitation (as of old the Pelagians would have it) but by the propagation of nature with her infection.

## III

All men therefore are conceived in sin, and born the children of wrath, untoward to all good tending to salvation, forward to evil, dead in sins, slaves of sin; and neither will nor can (without the grace of the holy Ghost regenerating them) set straight their own crooked nature, no nor so much as dispose themselves to the amending of it.

#### IV

Indeed, there are still in lapsed men some remains of the light of nature, by virtue whereof he retains some principles concerning God, and of things natural, and of the difference between good and evil, as also he shows some care of virtue, and of outward discipline: But so far short is he from being enabled by this inbred light, to come to the saving knowledge of God, and to convert himself unto him, that he doth not make right use thereof in natural things, and civil affairs: nay, that which it is, he many ways defiles it all, and withholds it in unrighteousness; and by so doing becomes inexcusable before God.

#### V

As it is with him for the light of nature, so is it also touching the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, delivered to the Jews from God in special manner by the hand of Moses. For, inasmuch as the Law doth indeed lay open the grievousness of sin, and more and more deeply attends man at the bar of justice, but neither extends any remedy, nor affords strength to escape out of misery, and so being weakened through the flesh, it leaves a sinner under the curse, it is not possible that by it a man should obtain saving grace.

#### VI

That therefore, which neither the light of nature, nor the Law could do, God brings to pass by the power of the holy Ghost, through his word, or the ministry of reconciliation, namely the Gospel concerning Messiah, whereby it pleased God to save those that believe, as well under the Old, as New Testament.

#### VII

Under the Old Testament God disclosed unto but a few this secret of his will, but in the new (the distinction of people being taken away) he manifests the same unto many. The cause of which his divers dispensation is not to be imputed to the worthiness of one nation above another, or to the better using of the light of nature by some than by others, but to God's most free good-pleasure, and undeserved love. And therefore they, to whom, without any their good desert, nay, notwithstanding all their ill-desert, so great a favor is vouchsafed, are bound for their part, to acknowledge the same with all humility, and thankfulness, and as for others, to whom such grace is not afforded, without curious sifting, to admire (with the Apostle) the severity and justice of God's judgments upon them.

## VIII

Now, as many soever as are called by the Gospel, are called seriously. For God by his word doth seriously, and most truly declare, what is acceptable to him, namely, that those that are called, come unto him: and moreover doth seriously promise to all such, as come to him, and believe in him, rest for their souls, and life eternal.

## IX

Whereas many, being called by the Gospel, do not come, and are not converted, this default is not in the Gospel, nor in Christ offered by the Gospel, nor in God, who calls them by his Gospel, and moreover bestows divers special gifts upon them, but in themselves, that are called; of whom some are so careless, that they give no entrance at all to the word of life: others entertain it, but suffer it not to sink into their hearts, and so, having only a fading smack of joy, bred by a temporary faith, afterward revolt: others choke the seed of the word with the thorns of worldly cares, and fleshly pleasures, and so bring forth no fruit at all, as our Savior teaches us in the parable of the sower, Matthew 13.

## X

But whereas others, being called by the ministry of the Gospel, do come, and are converted, this is not to be ascribed unto man, as by his free-will differencing himself from others, enabled with the same, or with like sufficient grace for their belief, and conversion (so Pelagius, in the pride of his heresy, would have it) but must be attributed unto God, who, as he hath from all eternity chosen in Christ those, that are his, so in process of time effectually calls them, enduing them with the gift of faith, and repentance, and delivering them out of the power of darkness, translates them into the kingdom of his Son, to the end, that they should magnify him, who hath so mightily called them out of darkness, into this wondrous light, and that they should not boast in themselves, but in the Lord, as is often avouched by the Apostle, in many passages of his epistles.

## XI

Furthermore, whereas God brings to pass this his own good pleasure in the elect, namely, when he works true conversion in them, he not only provides that the Gospel may be outwardly preached unto them, and powerfully enlightens their minds by the holy Ghost, that they may understand aright, and judge of the things of the Spirit of God; but also, by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, he pierces into the most inward parts of man, whose heart being closed shut, he opens it, being hard he softens it, being uncircumcised he circumcises it, and, as for the will, he infuses new qualities into it, and make it of a dead heart

lively, of an evil good, of a nilling willing, of a stubborn buxom; and stirs it up also, and strengthens it, whereby it is enabled, like a good tre, to bring forth the fruits of good works.

## XII

And this is that regeneration, second creation, raising from the dead, and quickening, (so often inculcated in the holy Scriptures) which God works in us, but not with us; and is not brought to pass by bare instruction, sounding to the outward ear, nor by moral inducements, no, nor by any kind of operation so carried, that, when God hath done his part, it should remain in man's choice to be, or not to be, regenerate; to be, or not to be, converted: but is a very supernatural, a most powerful, and withal most sweet, a wonderful, hidden, and unspeakable working, being, for the mightiness thereof (according to the Scriptures, which are the doubtless word of the very Author of this mighty work) not inferior to the creation of the world, or raising up the dead. So that all those, in whose hearts God works after this admirable manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and actually believe.

And then the will, being now renewed, is not only drawn, and moved by God, but, God having now set it on going, itself also works: Whereupon a man is rightly said, by this grace received, himself to repent, and believe.

## XIII

The faithful cannot in this life attain to the full knowledge of the manner of this working: yet in the mean time, they content themselves, and rest in this, namely, that by the same grace of God, they know and feel, that in their hearts they believe, and love their Savior.

## XIV

So then faith is the gift of God; not in that it is proffered by God unto man's free-will, but because it is really bestowed, inspired, and infused into man: likewise, not as though God did give only a power of believing, and then should wait at the leisure of man's will for consenting, or for the very act of believing; but because both the willingness to believe, and the act itself of belief is wrought in man by him that works the will, the deed, and works even all in all.

## XV

This grace God owes no man. For how can God become debtor to him, who hath nothing to give first, that it might be recompensed to him again? Nay what can God owe him, who hath naught of his own, but sin and untruth? Whosoever therefore is made partaker of this kind of grace, ever owes, and ever pays thanks to God only: and whoever hath it not, he either being

content in what he finds in himself, regards not all these special things, or in carnal security vainly boasts of having that, which indeed he hath not.

Furthermore, as for those that make outward profession of faith, and amend their lives, we are, by the example of the Apostles, to judge, and speak the best of them; the closet of the heart being to us unsearchable. But as for those, who are not as yet called, we must pray for them to God, who calls those things that are not, as if they were: but in no wise may we wax proud against them, as if we ourselves had caused that distinction, whereby we are made unlike them.

## XVI

On the other side, as by the fall, man ceased not to be man, endued with understanding and will, nor did sin, spreading itself through all mankind, abolish nature with us, but corrupted and spiritually slew it; in like manner this regenerating grace of God works not upon men, as if they were stocks and stones, nor doth it abolish the will, and properties thereof, or constrain it unwillingly by force, but doth spiritually revive it, heal, and rectify it, powerfully, and yet gently ply and bend it; so that where formerly the rebellion of the flesh, and stubbornness did domineer without control, now a willing, and sincere obedience to the Spirit begins to reign: in which change the true and spiritual rescue, and freedom of our will doth consist. And surely, unless the wonderful worker of all goodness should deal with us in this sort, there were no hope left for man to arise from his lapse by his free-will, through which, when he stood sound, he threw himself headlong into destruction.

## XVII

Moreover, as that powerful operation of God, by which he gives being to this our natural life, and sustains the same, does not exclude, but require the use of those means, by which it pleased God, according to his wisdom and goodness, to employ this his own power: even so the aforesaid supernatural working of God, by which he regenerates us, does in no wise exclude, or overthrow the employment of the Gospel, which God, in his great wisdom, hath ordained to be the seed of regeneration, and food of the soul. Wherefore, as the Apostles, and their successors did piously deliver unto the people the doctrine of this grace of God, for the advancing of his glory, and beating down of all manner of pride; and yet withal neglected not by holy admonitions, taken out of the Gospel, to keep their Christian flocks within the compass of the Word, Sacraments, and exercise of discipline: so in these days also far be it from either teachers, or learners in the Church, to presume to tempt God by disjoining those things, which God, according to his good pleasure, hath appointed to go together inseparable. For by such admonitions grace itself is derived to us: and the more readily we perform our duty, thereby is the good gift of God working in us made more sensible unto us, and his work itself best comes to perfection. To which God alone is due forevermore all the glory of these means, and of the saving fruit, and efficacy of them. Amen.

**THE REJECTION of the Errors.**  
**The Synod, having laid down the**  
*true doctrine, now rejects the*  
*Errors of those*

First

That teach, that *it cannot well be avouched, that original sin of itself is sufficient for the condemning of all mankind, or for the deserving of temporal and eternal punishment.* For they go against the Apostle, who says, Roman 5: 12, *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* And verse 16, *The judgment was by one to condemnation.* Also Romans 6: 23, *The wages of sin is death.*

II

That teach, that *spiritual gifts, or good qualities and virtues (such as are goodness, holiness, and righteousness,) could not be seated in the will of man, in his first creation, and therefore in his fall the will could not be bereft of them.* For this is contrary to the description of the image of God, laid down by the Apostle, Ephesians 4: 24, where he describes it by righteousness, and holiness, which doubtless are place in the will.

III

That teach, that *in spiritual death no spiritual gifts were separated from the will of man, for that the will of itself was never corrupted, but only encumbered by the darkness of the understanding, and unruliness of the affections: which impediments being removed, the will may exert her own inbred faculty of freedom, that is, of her self will, or nill, choose, or refuse any kind of good set before her.* Verily, this is a new fangled, and erroneous piece of doctrine, bent on purpose for enhancing the forces of free-will, contrary to that of the Prophet Jeremiah chapter 17 verse 9, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:* and that of the Apostle, Ephesians 2: 3, *Among whom (namely, children of disobedience) all we also had our conversation in times past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the wills of the flesh, and of the mind.*

IV

That teach that *an unregenerate man is not properly, nor totally dead in sins, nor destitute of all strength tending to spiritual good, but that he is able to hunger and thirst after righteousness, or everlasting life, and to offer the sacrifice of a humble and contrite heart, even such, as is acceptable to God.* For these assertions march against the direct testimonies

of Scripture, Ephesians 2: 1, 5 *Ye were dead in trespasses and sins.* And Genesis 6: 5 and 8: 21 *Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually.* Moreover the hungering, and thirsting for deliverance out of misery, and for life eternal, as also the offering to God the sacrifice of a broken heart, is proper to the regenerate, and such, as are called blessed, Psalm 51: 19, Mathew 5: 6.

## V

That teach, that *a corrupt and natural man can so rightly use common grace* (by which they mean the light of nature) *or those gifts, which are left in him after the fall, that, by the good use thereof, he may attain to a greater, namely evangelical, or saving grace, and by degrees at length salvation itself.* And that God, for his part, shows himself ready in this manner to reveal Christ to all men: *seeing he doth sufficiently, and efficaciously afford to every man necessary means for making Christ known, and for faith and repentance,* for this is convinced to be false, as by the experience of all ages in the world, so also by the Scriptures, *Psalm 147: 19, 20. He shows his word unto Jacob, his statutes, and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments, they have not known them.* Acts 16: 67 Paul, and his companions were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, and after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

## VI

That teach, that *in the true conversion of a man there cannot be infused by God any new qualities, habits, or gifts into his will: and so that faith, by which we are first converted, and from which we are styled faithful, is not any quality, or gift, infused by God, but only an act of man: and that this faith cannot be called a gift otherwise than in regard of the power or means given us, of attaining it.* For these strange positions are contradictory to the holy Scriptures, which testify unto us, that God doth infuse or shed down into our hearts new qualities of faith, obedience, and sense of his love toward us. *Jeremiah 31: 33, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. Isaiah 44: 3 I will pour water upon him, that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed. Romans 5: 5, The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, which is given unto us.* They contradict also the continual practice of the Church which used to pray after the manner described by the Prophet, *Convert me, O Lord, and I shall be converted,* Jeremiah 31: 18.

## VII

That teach, that *the grace, whereby we are converted unto God, is nothing else but a gentle inducement; or (as others explain it) that the most noble kind of working in man's conversation, and most suitable to our nature is that, which is performed by persuasion or*

*advise: and that no cause can be alleged, why even such moral grace alone, should not of natural men make spiritual: nay moreover that God doth not produce the consent of our will otherwise, than by way of moral counseling: and that the efficacy of God's working, wherein he exceeds the working of the Devil, consists in this, that the Devil promises temporary things, but God things eternal.* For this is down right Pelagianism, and wars against the whole course of the Scriptures: which besides this moving via persuasion, acknowledges in the conversion of a man, another manner of God's Spirit working, and that more divine, and of far greater efficacy, Ezekiel 36: 26. *I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, &c.*

## VIII

That teach, that *God, in regenerating a man, doth not employ that omnipotent strength, whereby he may powerfully and infallibly bow, and bend his will unto faith and conversion: but that all the gracious operations (which God uses for our conversion) being accomplished, nevertheless man can withstand God, and his holy Spirit, intending that man's conversion, yea and often times doth make actual resistance, to the utter defeating of his own regeneration: so that it lies in man's power to be, or not to be, regenerate.* For this amounts to no less, than the denying of all efficacy to God's grace in our conversion, and to subjecting the work of the Almighty unto the will of man: which is flat contrary to the Apostles, Ephesians 1: 19. That we *believe according to the working of his mighty power.* And Thessalonians 1: 11, that *God fulfilleth all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.* And II Peter 1: 3, that *Gods power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life, and godliness.*

## IX

That teach, that *grace and free-will are both partial causes, jointly concurring to the beginning of conversion; and that grace doth not in order of causality go before the action of the will: that is, that God doth not effectually help man's will unto conversion, before the will of man moves, and determines or settles itself thereunto.* For this doctrine was long ago condemned by the ancient Church among the Pelagian errors, out of the Apostle's authority, Romans 9: 16, *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that shows mercy.* And I Corinthians 4: 7, *Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* Item Philippians 2: 13, *It is God, which worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure.*

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER or Doctrinal head,**  
*which is concerning the perseverance of*  
*the Saints*

The first Article

Whomsoever God according to his purpose, calls unto the fellowship of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and regenerates by the holy Spirit, those certainly, even in this life, he frees from the dominion of sin, and slavery under sin, but not altogether from the flesh, and the body of sin.

II

From hence arise in holy men daily sins of infirmity, and even their best works have their blemishes, which yield unto them perpetual matter of humbling themselves before God, of making their recourse unto Christ crucified, of mortifying the flesh more and more by the Spirit of prayer, and by holy and godly exercises, and of striving and sighing after the goal of perfection, so long till, being delivered from this body of death, they may reign with the Lamb of God in the heavens.

III

By reason of these relics of sins dwelling in them, and besides this, the temptations of the world, and Satan, they, which are converted, could not continue in the state of grace, if they were left to their own strength: but God is faithful, who mercifully confirms them in that grace, wherein he hath once accepted them, and mightily preserves them in the same, even unto the end.

IV

But although that power of God, confirming, and keeping the truly faithful in the state of grace, is greater, than can possibly be overcome by the flesh: nevertheless they, which are converted, are not always so led, and moved by God, that they cannot through their own fault stray, and depart from the guidance of grace in some particular actions, and be seduced by the concupiscence of the flesh, and give way unto the same. Wherefore they must continually watch, and pray, that they be not led into temptation. Which when they do not, it is not only possible, that they should be carried away by the flesh, the world, and the Devil, into grievous, and heinous sins, but sometimes also, by God's just permission, they are carried away: Which the lamentable falls of David, Peter, and other of the Saints, described unto us in the Scripture, evidently show.

## V

Now, by such enormous sin they greatly offend God, incur the guilt of death, grieve the holy Spirit, break off the exercise of faith, most grievously wound the conscience, now and then for a time loose the sense of grace, until, upon their returning into the way by a true and earnest repentance, God's fatherly countenance shine again upon them.

## VI

For God, who is rich in mercy, according to the unchangeable purpose of election, doth not wholly take away his holy Spirit from his, no not in their grievous slips, nor suffers them to wander so far, as to fall away from the grace of adoption, and state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death, or against the holy Ghost, or to be altogether forsaken of him, and throw themselves headlong into everlasting destruction.

## VII

For first of all, in these slips, he preserves in them that his immortal seed, (by which they were once born again) that it die not, nor be lost by them: afterward, by his Word, and Spirit, he effectually, and certainly renews them again unto repentance, so that they do heartily, and according unto God, grieve for their sins committed, and with a contrite heart, by faith in the blood of the Mediator, craving forgiveness of them, obtain it, recover the apprehension of the favor of God reconciled unto them, adore his mercies and faithfulness, and from thence forward more carefully work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

## VII

So, not by their own merits, or strength, but by God's free mercy, they obtain thus much, that they neither totally fall from faith, and grace, nor continue to the end in their falls, and perish: which, in regard of themselves, not only full easily might, but doubtless would come to pass: yet in respect of God it cannot so fall out; since neither his counsel can be changed, nor his promise fail, nor the calling according to his purpose be revoked, nor Christ's merit, intercession, and custody be made of none effect, nor the sealing of the holy Spirit be frustrated, or defaced.

## IX

Of this preservation of the elect unto salvation, and perseverance of true believers in the faith, the faithful themselves may be and are ascertained, according to the measure of their faith, by which they assuredly believe, that they are, and shall forever continue true, and lively members of the Church, and that they have remission of their sins, and everlasting life.

## X

And therefore this certainty is not from any special revelation made beside, or without the word, but from faith in God's promises, which he hath most plentifully revealed in his word for our comfort, from the testimony of *the holy Spirit, bearing witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God, and heirs, Romans 8: 16*. Lastly, from a serious and holy care of keeping a good conscience, and endeavor of good works. An if God's chosen should want in this world this solid comfort of obtaining the victory, and this infallible pledge and earnest of eternal glory, they were surely of all men the most miserable.

## XI

Nevertheless, the Scriptures witness, that the faithful do wrestle in this life with divers doubts of the flesh, and being plunged in deep temptations, do not always perceive in themselves this full assurance of faith, and certainty of perseverance: But God the Father of all consolation, *suffers them not to be tempted above that they are able, but with the temptation makes a way to escape, I Corinthians 10: 13*, and by his holy Spirit revives in them the certainty of perseverance.

## XII

Now so far is assurance of perseverance in the truly faithful from making them proud, and carnally secure, that, on the contrary, it is the very root of humility, of filial reverence, of true godliness, of patience in all conflicts, of fervent prayer, of constancy in bearing the cross, and in confessing God's truth, and lastly of solid joy in God: and that moreover the consideration of this benefit becomes a goad, or spur, to incite them to a serious, and continual exercise of thankfulness, and good works as appears by the testimonies of the Scriptures, and examples of the Saints.

## XIII

Nor doth the revived confidence of perseverance beget wantonness, or reckless neglect of piety in those, who are restored upon their fall, but a far greater care to walk more circumspectly in the ways of the Lord, which are prepared to this end, that by walking therein they may hold fast the certainty of their perseverance; lest by reason of the abuse of his fatherly bounty, God's gracious countenance (the beholding whereof is sweeter than life to the godly, the withdrawing more bitter than death) be again turned away from them, and so become more grievously wracked in conscience, than before.

## XIV

And, as it pleased God to begin this his work of grace in us by the preaching of the Gospel, so by hearing, reading, meditation, exhortations, threats, and promises of the same, as also by use of the Sacraments, he maintains, continues, and perfects his said gracious work.

## XV

This doctrine concerning the perseverance of true believers, and saints, and the certainty thereof (which God to the glory of his name, and comfort of godly souls hath most abundantly revealed in his word, and imprints in the hearts of the faithful) howsoever flesh and blood apprehends it not, Satan hates it, the world laughs at it, ignorant men and hypocrites abuse it, and erroneous spirits oppugn it, yet the spouse of Christ hath always most tenderly loved, and constantly defended it, as a treasure of invaluable price. Which that she may still do, God will provide, and bring to pass: against whom neither can any counsel avail, nor strength prevail.

To which only God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, be honor, and glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **THE REJECTION of the Errors touching the *Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints***

**The Synod having declared the Orthodox  
doctrine, no proceed to  
disavow the errors of those;**

First,

That teach, that *the perseverance of the faithful is not an effect of election, or any gift of God, purchased by the death of Christ, but that it is a condition of the new covenant; which is to be performed on man's part, by his own free will, before his* (as they themselves speak) *peremptory election and justification.* For the holy Scripture witnesses, that it follows upon election, and is given to the elect by virtue of Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession, Romans 8: 32, &c. *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God, that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ, that died, yea or rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

## II

That teach, that *God indeed furnishes the faithful man with sufficient strength to persevere, and is ready to maintain that strength in him, if he himself not be wanting to his duty: yet notwithstanding, when as all habilities necessary unto perseverance, and all things, which God is pleased to use for the preservation of faith, are granted, and set in readiness, that it still remains in the choice, and pleasure of man's will to persevere, or not.* For this opinion is easily discovered to be an imp of Pelagianism: which, while it strives to make man free, makes him sacrilegious, contrary to the uniform, and perpetual consent of evangelical doctrine, which quite strips man of all matter of boasting, and ascribes the glory of this benefit to God's grace only: and contrary to the Apostle, witnessing, that it is God, *who shall confirm us even unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

## III

That each, that *the regenerate, and true believers, not only may totally, and finally fall from justifying faith, as also from grace, and salvation, but that frequently also they indeed do fall from all these, and perish everlastingly.* For this opinion makes the very grace of justification, and regeneration, and Christ's continual custody void, and of no effect, contrary to the express words of St. Paul, *Romans 5: 8, &c. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* And contrary to the Apostle Saint John, *I John 3: 9, Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him, neither can he sin, because he is born of God.* And also contrary to the words of our Savior, *John 10: 28, 29, I give eternal life unto my sheep and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand: my Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

## IV

That teach, that *the regenerate, and truly faithful, may sin the sin unto death or against the holy Ghost.* Whereas the same Apostle John, in the fifth chapter of his first epistle, having (verse 16) made mention of such, as sinned unto death, and forbidden to pray for them, presently (verse 18) adds; *we know, that, whosoever is born of God, sinneth not* (to wit that kind of sin) *but he, that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

## V

That teach, that *no certainty of future perseverance can be had in this life, without special revelation.* For by this doctrine the solid comfort of true believers in this life is quite taken away, and the doctrine of doubtfulness (avouched by the Papists) is brought again into the Church. Whereas the holy Scripture everywhere draws this assurance, not from special, and extraordinary revelation, but from the proper marks and signs of God's children, and from the

infallible promises made by God himself: especially the Apostle, *Romans 8: 39, No creature is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ.* And Saint John, *I John 3: 24, He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know, that he abideth in us, even by the Spirit, which he hath given us.*

## VI

That teach, that *the Doctrine maintaining assurance of perseverance, and of salvation, is of its own nature, and guise, a soft pillow for the flesh, and hurtful to good manners, godliness, praying, and other holy courses: and contrariwise, that it is a very commendable thing to be doubtful of such perseverance.* For the opposers of this assurance do evidently show, that they know not the powerfulness of God's grace, nor the operation of the holy Ghost dwelling in the heart, and spare not to outface the Apostle Saint John, affirming the contrary in express terms, *I John 3: 2, 3, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man, that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* They are also refuted, by the examples of holy men, both in the old and new Testament, though well assured of their own perseverance and salvation, yet gave not over prayers, and other exercises of godliness.

## VII

That teach, that *the faith of those, that believe but for a season, differs not from justifying and saving faith, but only in respect of continuance.* For Christ himself, *Matthew 13: 20 and Luke 18: 13,* manifestly puts a threefold disparison between temporizers, and true believers; saying that those receive the seed in a stony ground, these in good ground; that is, in an honest and good heart: those want root, these have a fast root: those are fruitless, these bring forth fruit with diversity of yield, and that with patience, that is, with constancy, and perseverance.

## VIII

That teach, that *it is not absurd, that a man should loose his first regeneration, and be again and again new-born spiritually.* For they, that teach this, do thereby deny the incorruptibleness of that divine seed, whereof we are born anew: contrary to the testimony of the Apostle, *St. Peter I Peter 1: 23, Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible.*

## IX

That teach, that *Christ never prayed for the faithfuls' infallible perseverance in faith.* For they contradict Christ himself, saying to Peter, *Luke 22: 32, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith*

*fail not: And also witnessing, (I John 17: 20) that himself prayed, not only for his Apostles, but also for all, that should believe by their word, when he said, (verse 11,) Holy Father, keep through thine own name those, whom thou hast given me. And verse 15, I pray not, thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

## **The Conclusion**

And this is the plain, simple, and natural explication of the Orthodox Doctrine, concerning the five Articles controverted in the united Provinces of the Low-countries, as also the rejection of those errors, wherewith the Churches of the said Netherlands, have for a time been much troubled. Which their determination, the Synod holds to be taken out of God's word, and agreeable to the Confessions of the Reformed Churches. Whereby it manifestly appears, with how small truth, equity, or charity, some, whom such dealings least beseemed, have labored to beat into the peoples heads,

*That, the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, concerning Predestination and the other points thereon appendant, doth, of its own bent, and inclination, call off men's minds from all religion, and piety: that it is the cushion, which the Devil lays under our flesh, the very castle of Satan, out of which he lays watch for all, wounds most men, and strikes dead very many, with the darts, as well of despair, as of security.*

*That, this doctrine makes God the author of sin, unjust, a tyrant, a hypocrite; and that it is nothing else, but a patched composure of Stoicism, Manichaeism, Libertinism, and Turkism.*

*That, it makes men carnally secure, as being thereby persuaded, that the elect, live they how they list, must needs be saved, and therefore may on God's name run through all the outrageous villainies in the world: and contrariwise, that it boots not the reprobates for their salvation, though they should sincerely perform all good works, which any Saint hath done.*

*That, by it we are taught, that God, out of his own absolute will, and mere purpose, without any respect at all of sin, hath for-ordained, and created the far greatest part of men in the world, to be damned forever.*

*That, as election is the fountain and original cause of faith, and good works, so in like manner reprobation is the cause of infidelity and wickedness.*

*That, many of the children of the faithful are in their infancy, without any guilt at all, taken from their mother's breasts, and tyrannously cast headlong into hell-fire; so that neither the sacrament of baptism, nor the prayers of the Church at their baptizing, can at all avail them.*

And many other obloquies of this strain, which the Reformed Churches not only do not admit, but also detest with all their heart.

Wherefore this Synod, held at Dort, requests, and in the name of the Lord adjures all, whosoever in godly zeal call upon the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, that they would be pleased to judge of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, no out of the calumnies raked up here and there, no nor out of the private Tenets of some, whether old or new, doctors, and those oftentimes either sinisterly cited, or corrupted, or strained to a sense never intended by the authors, but out of the published Confessions of the Churches themselves, and (for these points) out of this declaration of the orthodox doctrine agreed upon, and enacted by the joint consent of all and every the members of this whole Synod.

And, as for rash, and slanderous traducers, the Synod earnestly advertises them to look unto it, and consider how heavy an account they are to give unto God, that bear false witness against so many Churches, and so many Church confessions, trouble the consciences of the weak, and labor to draw the society of true believers into suspicion with many.

Lastly, this Synod exhorts all their fellow ministers of the Gospel, to have a pious, and religious care, in handling of this doctrine, whether in schools, or pulpits; and whensoever they undertake it by word, or pen, discreetly to accommodate the same to the advancement of God's glory, to the promoting of holiness of life, and to the comforting of the afflicted, and affrighted souls: to frame not only their judgment, but also their style of speech, to the square of the Scriptures, and suitably to the analogy of faith: Lastly to forebear all such phrases, or manner of speech, as pass the bounds, set out unto us, of the right meaning of the holy Scriptures, and withal give wayward wranglers just occasion of traducing, or slandering the doctrine of the Reformed Churches.

The Son of God Jesus Christ, who sitting at the right hand of the Father, bestows gifts on men, sanctify us in his truth, bring back into the way of truth those that are gone astray, stop the mouths of those, that slander sound doctrine, endue the faithful ministers of his word, with the spirit of wisdom and discretion, that all they utter, may tend to the glory of God, and edification of their hearers. Amen.

**This is our opinion and judgment**

*In witness whereof we have hereto  
subscribed*

*Johannes Bogermannus  
Minister of the Church of Lewerden, and president of the Synod.*

*Jacobus Rolandus  
Minister of the Church of Amsterdam, and Assistant to the said President.*

*Hermannus Faukelius  
Minister of the Church of Middelburg, and Assistant to the said President*

*Sebastianus Dammar*  
*Minister of the Church of Zutphen, and Secretary to the Synod*

**From GREAT BRITAIN**

*George*  
*Bishop of Landaf*

*John Davenant*  
*Priest, Doctor, and public Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and Master of Queens College there.*

*Samuel Ward*  
*Priest, Doctor of Divinity, Archdeacon of Taunton, and Master of Sidney College in the University of Cambridge*

*Thomas Goad*  
*Priest, Doctor of Divinity, Chief Chanter of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in London*

*Gaulter Belcaeaquall*  
*a Scotch-man, Priest, Bachelor of Divinity*

**From the County Palatine of the  
RHENE**

*Abraham Scultetus*  
*Doctor of Divinity, and Professor of the same in the University of Heidelberg*

*Paulus Toffanus*  
*Doctor of Divinity, and Counselor in the Ecclesiastical Senate of the lower Palatinate*

*Henricus Altingius*  
*Doctor of Divinity, and Professor thereof in the University of Heidelberg*

**From HASSIA**

*Georgius Cruciger*  
*Doctor of Divinity, Preacher of the Court, and Professor in the College of Gentry, called Adelpicum Mauritanum, at Castels*

*Daniel Angelocrator*

*Minister of the Church of Marpurg, and Superintendent of the neighbor Churches, upon Laun,  
and Edder.*

*Rodolphus Goclenius the elder  
Chief Professor of Sound Philosophy in the University of Marurg, and now dean there.*

**From ZVITSERLAND**

*Johannes Jacobus Breytingerus  
Minister of the Church of Zurik*

*Marcus Rutimeyerus  
Doctor of Divinity, and Minister of the Church of Bearne*

*Sebastianus Beckius  
Doctor of Divinity, and Professor of the New Testament in the University of Basile, and Dean  
of the faculty of Divinity there.*

*Walgangus Mayerus  
Doctor of Divinity, and Pastor of the Church of Basile*

*Lohannes Conradus Cockius  
Minister of the Church of Scaphuse.*

**From the Correspondence of  
WEDDERAV**

*Johannes Henricus, Alstedius  
ordinary Professor in the famous Nassauique School at Herborne*

*Georgius Fabricius  
Minister of the Church of Windech in the County of Hanow, and overseer of the adjoining  
Churches*

**From the common-weale and Church of  
GENEVA**

*Johannes Deodatus  
a Pastor in the Church of Geneva, and Professor of Divinity there*

*Theodorus Tronchinus  
Minister of God's word in the Church of Geneva, and Professor of Divinity there*

**From the common-weale and Church of  
BREME**

*Matthias Martinus*

*Rector of the famous School of Breme, and Professor of Divinity in the same*

*Henricus Isselburg*

*Doctor of Divinity, the servant of Jesus Christ at the Parish of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Breme, and Professor of the New Testament in the School there.*

*Ludouicus Crocius*

*Doctor of Divinity, Minister of St. Martin's Parish in the Church of Breme, and in the famous School there Professor of the Old Testament, and practical Philosophy*

**From the common-weale and Church of  
EMBDEN**

*Daniel Bernardus Eilshemius*

*the ancient Pastor of the Church of Embden*

*Ritzius Lucas Grimershemius*

*Pastor of the Church of Embden*

**The BELGIQUE Professors of  
Divinity**

*Johannes Polyander*

*Doctor of Divinity, and Professor in the University of Friesland*

*Franciscus Gomarus*

*Doctor of Divinity, and Professor in the University of Gronningen, and Oneland*

*Antonius Tysius*

*Professor of Divinity in the renowned School of Harderwik in Gelderland*

*Antonius Walaeus*

*Pastor of the Church of Middelburg, and called from the renowned School there, among other Divines to the Synod*

**From the Dutchy of GELDER-LAND  
and county of ZUTPHEN**

*Gulielmus Stephani*  
*Doctor of Divinity and Pastor of the Church of Arnhem*

*Ellardus a Mehen*  
*Pastor of the Church of Harderwick*

*Johannes Bouillet*  
*Minister of Warnesfield*

*Jacobus Verheyden*  
*Elder of the Church of Numeghen, and Rector of the School there*

**From South-HOLLAND**

*Balthasar Lydius*  
*M.F. Pastor of God's Church in the city of Dort*

*Henricus Arnoldi*  
*Preacher at Delf*

*Arnoldus Musius*  
*ab Holy Bailif of South Holland, Elder of the Church of Dort*

*Johannes Latius*  
*Elder of the Church of Leyden*

**From North-HOLLAND**

*Jacobus Triglandius*  
*Minister of the Church of Amsterdam*

*Abrahamus à Dooreslaer*  
*Minister of the Church of Enchusen*

*Samuel Bartholdus*  
*Pastor of the Church of Monichodam*

*Theodorus Heyngius*  
*Elder of the Church of Amsterdam*

**From ZEE-LAND**

*Godefridus Vdemannus*  
*Pastor of the Church of Zurick-zee*

*Cornelius Regius*  
*Pastor of the Church of Tergoose*

*Lambertus de Ryck*  
*Pastor of the Church of Bergen up Zoon*

*Josias Vosbergius*  
*Elder of the Church of Middleburg*

*Adrianus Hofferus*  
*Counselor of the Town of Zurick-see, and Elder of the Church there*

**From the Province of UTRECHT**

*Johannes Dibbezius*  
*Minister of Dort, Deputy of the Orthodox Synod of Utrecht*

*Arnoldus Oortcampius*  
*Pastor of the Church of Amesfort*

**From FRIESLAND**

*Florentius Johannis*  
*Servant of Jesus Christ crucified, in the Church of Sneek*

*Philippus Danielis Eilshemius*  
*Pastor of the Church of Harling*

*Kempo Harinxma à Donia*  
*Elder of the Church of Leuerdin*

*Tacitus ab Aysma*  
*Elder of the Churches in Buirgirt, Hichtum, and Hartwardt*

**From OVER-ISELL**

*Casparus Sibelius*  
*Pastor of the Church of Deuenter*

*Hermannus Wiferding*  
*Minister of the Gospel of Christ, in the Church of Swoll*

*Hieronymus Vogelius*  
*Pastor of the Church of Hasselt, now deputed by the Orthodox Church of Campen*

*Johannes Langius*  
*Preacher of Woollenhoof*

*Wilhelmus à Broickhuysenten Doerne*  
*deputed for an Elder*

*Joannes à Lauwick*  
*deputed for an Elder*

**From the Towne of GRONNINGEN,  
and the territories thereabout**

*Cornelius Hillenius*  
*the Servant of Christ in the Church of Gronningen*

*Georgius Placius*  
*Pastor of the Church of Apingdam*

*Wolfgangus Agricola*  
*Minister of the Church of Bedam*

*Wigboldus Homerus*  
*Minister of the Church of Midwold*

*Egbertus Halbes*  
*Elder of the Church of Gronningen*

*Joannes Rufelaert*  
*Elder of the Church of Stedum*

**From DRENT**

*Themo ab Asscheberg*  
*Pastor of the Church of Meppelen*

*Patroclus Romelingius*  
*Pastor of the Church of Rhvine*

**From the WALLON Churches**

*Daniel Colonius*  
*Minister of the Church of Leyden, and Regent of the College of Wallons in the University of*  
*Leyden*

*Joannes Crucius*  
*Minister of Harleim*

*Joannes Doucher*  
*Minister of Vluishing*

*Jeremias de Pours*  
*Minister of the Wallon Church at Middleburg*

*Petrus Pontanius*  
*Elder of the Church in Amsterdam*

To testify, that all the premises, touching the five controverted points, were thus judged and enacted, we the Deputies of the Illustrious and mighty LL. the States general, appointed for the Synod, have here set to our hands.

**From GELDERLAND**

*Martinus Gregory*  
*Doctor, Counselor of the Dutchy of Gelderland, and County of Zutphen*

*Henricus van Essen*  
*Counselor of the Dutchy of Gelderland, and county of Zutphen*

**From HOLLAND**

*Walrauis de Brederode*

*Hugo Muys van Holy*

*Jacobus Boelius*

*Gerardus de Nieuburch*

**From ZEELAND**

*Symon Scotte*  
*Counselor and Secretary of the Towne of Middleburg*

*Jacobus Campe*  
*Counselor of the States of Zeeland*

**From the Province of UTRECHT**

*Fredericus van Zuylen van Nyeuelt*

*Wilhelmus van Hardeuelt*

**From FRIESLAND**

*Ernestus ab Aylua*  
*Counselor of the States of Friesland, Griet-man of East Danglerland*

*Ernestus ab Harinxma*  
*Chief Counselor in the Provincial Court of Friesland*

**From OVER-ISSEL**

*Henricus Hagen*

**From GRONNINGEN and the OMLANDS**

*Hieronymus Isbrants. I.V.D*

*Edzardus Jacobus Clant à Stedum*

*And*

*Daniel Heinsius*  
*Secretary to the said Worshipful Deputies*

**THE SENTENCE**  
**of the Synod concerning**  
*the Remonstrants*

The truth, by God's grace, being hitherto explained, errors rejected, and unjust calumnies removed out of the way; this Synod of Dort, (of whose task this part yet remains) doth seriously, vehemently, and by the authority (which according to God's word, it obtains over all the members of her Churches) in Christ's name entreat, exhort, warn, and enjoin all, and every Pastor of the Churches in the United Provinces, all Professors, Doctors, and Rectors of Universities, and Schools, and briefly all in general, to whom either the charge of souls, or instruction of youth is committed, that they abandon the five known articles of the Remonstrants (which are both erroneous in themselves, and lurking holes for other errors) for their parts, and as much as in them lies, preserve, clear, and untainted, this wholesome doctrine of saving truth, drawn from the most pure fountain of God's word, that they propound, and expound it discreetly, and faithfully to the people and youth; and diligently declare the use of it, which will be most comfortable, and profitable both in life and in death unto them: that they instruct with mildness, and inform with the evidence of truth, such of the flock as wander, and are of another mind, being carried out of the way with new opinions (if at any time God shall give unto them repentance to acknowledge the truth) that, being restored to a better mind, they may with one spirit, mouth, faith, and love, return again unto the Church of God, and Communion of Saints. That so at the last, the wound of the Church being closed up, and grown together, all the members thereof may have one heart, and one soul in the Lord.

And, forasmuch as there are some gone out from among us under the title of Remonstrants as also of Contra-Remonstrants, the Synod thinks fit henceforth forever to be forgotten and abolished) who, violating the discipline, and order of the Church, and contemning the admonitions, and judgments of their brethren, have by their factious projects, and unlawful means greatly, and very dangerously troubled, about these points of doctrine, the Netherland Churches, heretofore most flourishing, and linked together in faith, and love: have renewed old and noxious errors, and also forged new; dispersing them among the people both in public, and private, by word, and writing, and most eagerly maintaining them: moreover have, without measure, or cease, laid on load of slanders, and reproaches, to disgrace the doctrine hitherto received in these Churches: and filled all places far and near with scandals, dissensions, turmoils, and scruples of conscience: which heinous offenses against the faith, against charity, against good manners, and against the unity and peace of the Church, seeing they are not sufferable in any, certainly in Pastors they must of necessity be punished with a very severe censure, such as hath in all ages been inflicted by the Church in such cases.

Hereupon the Synod, having called upon God's most holy name, well knowing their own authority, warranted out of God's word, insisting in the footsteps of all lawful Synods, as well ancient, as those of later times, and strengthened with the authority of most illustrious LL. the States General, declares, and judges those Pastors, who were leaders of factions, and parties, and teachers of errors, to be guilty and convict of corrupting religion, rending the unity of the Church, and raising most grievous scandals; and moreover those that were cited to this Synod,

to be further guilty of intolerable contumacy against the decrees of the supreme Magistrate published in this Synod, and against this venerable Synod itself.

For which causes the Synod first of all, straightly inhibits and debars the said cited persons, from all ecclesiastical function, discharges them of their places, and also holds them unworthy of any office in the Universities, until by serious repentance, fully evidenced by their contrary words, actions, and endeavors, they make satisfaction unto the Church, and be truly and fully reconciled unto her, and re-entertained into the communion thereof, which we most heartily wish in our Lord and Savior Christ, for their own good, and the joy of the whole Church.

But as for the rest of whom this national Synod hath not taken notice, we commit them (according to the accustomed order) to the Provincial Synods, Classes, and Presbyteries: which are to provide with all diligence, that the Church may neither receive any hurt for the present, nor have cause to fear it for the time to come: to distinguish, with the spirit of discretion, between the followers of those errors, namely to deprive with all speed the stubborn, clamorous, factious, and turbulent, of their ecclesiastical and scholastic offices, which belong to the cognizance of those Synods: for which purpose we warn them presently, and without delay, upon the receipt of the judgment of this National Synod (the license and authority of the Magistrate being obtained thereto) to assemble and meet together, lest by lingering and slackness, the mischief gather strength, and get further ground. But as for those, that have fallen through weakness, being transported by the storm of the times, and happily waver, yea or differ in matters of lesser moment, yet are modest, peaceable, of blameless conversation, and willing to be better instructed, they are to provoke and stir up such, with all gentleness, charity and patience, to true and perfect concord with the Church: yet with this proviso, that they be very cautious, that they admit none into the sacred ministry, who shall refuse to subscribe unto, and teach the doctrine declared in these Synodical Constitutions: and further, that they retain none in the ministry, by whose manifest dissention, the doctrine, with so universal a consent, approved in this Synod, may be impeached, and the concord of pastors, and tranquility of the Church again disturbed.

Moreover, this venerable Synod, earnestly advises all ecclesiastical assemblies to be careful and watchful, over the flocks committed to their charge, in time to meet withal innovations, covertly springing up in the Church, and to pluck up such tares out of the Lord's field: likewise, that they have a special eye and care over schools, and the Governors of schools, lest by private and crooked opinions instilled into the youth, the like mischief hereafter grow again upon the Church, and Commonwealth.

Finally, as this Synod yields humble thanks to the most illustrious, and mighty LL. the States General of the United Provinces, for that in so needful and seasonable a time, they have relieved the afflicted and decayed estate of this Church, by affording the remedy of a Synod, received into their protection the true and faithful servants of God; taken order to have the pledge of all blessings, and of God's presence, namely the truth of his word, religiously, and holily preserved, in their Dominions, and spared neither cost, nor pains, to advance and perfect so great a work (for which good offices performed by them, the Synod most heartily wishes of God, a most plentiful both spiritual, and temporal reward, into the bosoms of them

all in the public, and of everyone of them in their particular:) so also it earnestly, and humbly entreats the said most gracious LL. that they would be pleased, to will and command this wholesome doctrine, faithfully expressed by this Synod, according to God's word, and the consent of the Reformed Churches, to be solely and publicly taught in their dominions; to nip in the head all upstarting heresies, and errors; to curb unquiet and turbulent spirits; still to approve themselves true and loving foster fathers of the Church; to ratify this Synodical Sentence decreed against the forementioned persons, according to the ecclesiastical authority, confirmed by the laws of the Land: and lastly, by their approbation, and strength of their authority thereto added, to confirm the determinations concluded by this Synod, and make them forever inviolable.

***Subscribed in the name, and by the  
appointment of the Synod.***

*Sebastianus Damman, Secretary of the Synod  
Festus Hommius, Pastor of the Church of Leyden,  
and Register of the National Synod*

***In witnessing of the enacting hereof,***

*Daniel Heinius*

**The  
Approbation  
of the LL. the Estates  
General**

The Estates General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands to all that shall see, or read these presents,

**Greetings,**

Whereas, for the abolishment of those lamentable, and most hurtful controversies, some years since (to the great damage of our Common-weal, and breach of our Church-peace) raised about the notorious *Five Articles*, (so-called) and the points appendant thereon, We thought fit, according to the good course usually taken both in God's Church generally, and particularly in the Belgic Church itself, to summon a National Synod of all the Churches of our united Provinces, to be assembled at Dort; and for the better celebrating of the said Synod to the especial benefit of these counties, have, without spare of our labor or charges, requested, and obtained to be sent thither many worthy, learned, and notable Divines of the Reformed Churches in divers foreign nations, as by their several subscriptions unto the Synodical Judgment doth appear: and have also, for the well ordering of the said Synod, deputed for every several Province our Delegates. who by their presence from the beginning to the ending of the sessions of that Assembly, might take care, that all things might be carried there

(according to our sincere intention) in the fear of God, in decent order, and by the rule of God's word only. And whereas the said Synod hath now, by God's singular blessing, with so joint a consent of all and every, as well strangers, as domestics, given their judgment concerning the afore said heads of doctrine, and hath moreover passed Synodical censure upon the teachers of those erroneous points; and also, with our knowledge, and consent, hath upon the sixth of May last past, published the said decree and sentence: We, being desirous, that the Churches of these countries may fully enjoy the fruits of this great, and holy work, (being such as the Reformed Churches never saw before) and holding nothing more dear, nor more pertinent to our charge, than the glory of God's most sacred name, the maintaining and spreading of the true Reformed Religion (which is the foundation of our prosperity, and the bond of combination among the confederate provinces) then the concord, peace and tranquility of our Churches; as also the preserving of correspondence, and communion between the Churches within these countries, and all other foreign Reformed Churches, from which we neither may, nor can dis sever ourselves, *having viewed*, recognized, and duly examined and weighed the aforesaid Judgment and Sentence of the Synod, have fully in all points approved, confirmed, and ratified, and by these presents do approve, confirm, and ratify the same.

Hereby willing also, and ordaining, that no doctrine concerning the aforesaid five doctrinal heads, other than that, which shall be conformable and agreeing with the forenamed judgment, shall be taught, or spread in the Churches of these Countries. And accordingly, we enjoin and command all ecclesiastic assemblies, all Church ministers, Professors, and Doctors of Divinity, Rectors of Colleges, and all and everyone, whom these things may any way concern, faithfully and sincerely to follow the same, and to conform themselves thereunto in the performance of their ministry and functions.

And to the end that our good intention may attain full effect on all sides, we enjoin, and command, the States Generals, and Deputies of States, the Counselors, and Deputies of the Provinces of Gelders, Zutphen, Holland, and Westfriesland, Zeland, Vtrecht, Friesland, Over-Issel, Gronning, and the Omlands, and all other Officers, Judges, and Justicers, to observe and maintain, and cause to be observed and maintained, the aforesaid Synodical Judgment, with the appurtenances: so that neither themselves make any alteration of them, nor suffer to be attempted by others in any sort: For that we hold, and judge this course necessary to be taken for the promoting of God's glory, for the welfare and securing of this State and for the peace and tranquility of this Church.

*Given under our seal, signed by our President, and  
subscribed by our Secretary, at Gravenhage,  
July 2, 1619 A. Ploos*

*By order from the said States General*

*C. Aarsen*

*The Seal in red wax underneath.*

**The  
SENTENCE OF  
the National Synod  
of Dort,**

**Concerning the doctrine of Conradus  
Vorstius, Doctor in  
Divinity**

**Whereunto is annexed the Decree of the Illustrious and mighty LL.  
the Estates of Holland and West-Friesland,  
ensuing upon the said sentence.**

Whereas it hath pleased the high and mighty LL the States general, by their noble and worthy Commissioners, to require this Synod, to deliver summarily their judgment concerning the divinity, or doctrine broached by Conradus Vorstius, Doctor of Divinity in his writings, and withal to declare, whether such his doctrine be fit to be taught in the Reformed Churches or Schools, as wholesome and tending to edification, or might without breach of piety be tolerated in the same: this venerable Synod, having in the fear of God dually weighed, and examined the premises, hath with joint suffrages declared, and by this present sentence doth declare, that the said Conrade Vorstius (besides that concerning the five controverted Articles, he defends and maintains the errors of the Remonstrants, rejected by this Synod) does in his later writings, but especially in the tractate, entitled, *Of God, and his attributes*, make bold with, not one or two Articles of the reformed religion, but most of the fundamental heads of divinity; namely, such as concern the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the Simplicity, Infiniteness, Immensity, Essential Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Wisdom, and Immutability of the Essence of God; as also concerning the Creation, the Providence of God, the Hypostatic Union of two natures in Christ, the full and perfect satisfaction performed by Christ for our sins, the justification of man before God by Faith, and many other articles particularized, as well by the most high and mighty King of Great Britain, as by divers professed divines; the said Vorstius in those points, partly calling into question many things, the certain and resolved truth whereof hath long since out of God's word been received, and professed by all reformed Churches: and partly avouching expressly many things contrary to the truth of God, revealed in the holy Scriptures, and to the Confessions of all Reformed Churches, impeaching God's glory, hurtful to piety and man's salvation, and either wholly consorting, or very near bordering upon the blasphemies of the baleful heretic Socinus.

And moreover, that he in many passages of his writings, doth most dangerously undermine the chief grounds, founded upon God's word, and thence soundly deduced both by venerable antiquity, and also by later Reformed Doctors, for the establishing of orthodox doctrine, especially such as prove the eternal deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, without substituting in the

place of those arguments any other for the further confirmation of the true doctrine. Also, that he uses busily to propound, and urge to the utmost such sophisms, as may involve and encumber the truth; and, as for assoiling them, never to attempt it, but rather to leave them in their full strength, that they may stick in the minds of his readers. So that it manifestly appears, that his intent was cunningly to make way for the secret instilling of the impious heresies of Socinus and others: and that he, under pretence of inquiring, doth bestir himself to seduce others. And for amends, he hath, though to no purpose, endeavored for the hiding of his said slights, to daub them over with divers vain distinctions, frivolous excuses, wretched shifts, and juggling dissimulations.

And therefore, that not only this his dissolute license in skeptical questioning of the principle heads of Christian religion, his slippery, doubtful, and winding manner of teaching is pernicious to God's Church, ill befitting such high and sacred matter, and in that regard most unworthy an orthodox teacher; but more especially, that his doctrine itself concerning many very weighty points, is in no wise to be tolerated in Reformed Churches and schools, but to be thence banished and rooted out, with detestation, as being contrary both to the word of God, and to the Confessions of the Reformed Churches, impious, blasphemous, and many ways contumelious against the Majesty and truth of God.

But as for Conradus Vorstius himself, who as yet hath abated no whit of his errors, and hath obstinately contemned the admonitions, and judgments of Reformed Princes, Doctors, Universities, and Churches, not caring to make any due reparation of that scandal, which by his book he hath raised, the Synod declares him to be altogether unworthy of the function and name of an Orthodox Professor, and Doctor.

Lastly, this Synod doth earnestly, and fervently entreat the Illustrious and mighty LL. the Estates General, that they would be pleased by their authority, quickly to take away this scandal from the Reformed Churches; and withal to take, order that the Belgic Churches be no longer infected with this spot, and with such heresies, and blasphemous opinions; and that for the effecting hereof the writings of this Vorstius, and of other the like, may with all possible caution be suppressed. And withal prayeth unto God, more and more to keep, and establish the Reformed Churches in peace, and in the profession of Orthodox Doctrine, against such profane heresies, and contentions, and confusions, arising out of them: and mercifully to enlighten, and bring back into the way of truth, the said Conradus Vorstius, and all others, that wander with him, that the Church may rejoice, rather for their conversion, than their confusion.

*Concluded, and pronounced in the National  
Synod of Dort, May 1619*

*This we testify,*

*Of the Synod:*

*Johannes Bogermannus, President*

*Jacobus Rolandus, Assistant*

*Heamannus Faukelius, Assistant  
Sebastianus Damman, Scribe  
Festus Hommius, Scribe*

## **THE DECREE**

*The Illustrious and mighty LL. the Estates of Holland, and West-Friesland, having in their Assembly viewed the Sentence pronounced by the National Synod of Dort, against the person, writings, and books of Conradus Vorstius, Doctor of Divinity, all things dually considered, have upon have upon fore-deliberation judged and determined, that inasmuch as he was after a peculiar manner admitted to the Professorship of the University of Leiden, it therefore belongs most properly to themselves to determine that which is fit in his case.*

*Whereupon accordingly they remove the aforementioned Conrade Vorstius from his functions in the said University, and from henceforth call in his stipend there. And forasmuch, as it is evident, that his remaining in these parts is hurtful, as well to the common-weal, as to the Church, they banish him out of Holland, and West-Freisland, charging him to depart thence within the space of six weeks, and not to return thither upon such arbitrary penalty as shall in that case be inflicted upon him, as a troubler of the public peace; affording him notwithstanding, for the discharge of his journey, the half year's stipend, whereinto he is now entered.*

*Moreover they command, that special letters be dispatched to him, whereby he may be certified of these particulars, with express charge unto him to address himself to the performance hereof.*

*Enacted at the Hage June 17 — 27, 1619.*

*By the appointment of the Illustrious and mighty  
LL. the Estates of Holland and West-Friesland*

*Subscribed,*

*A. Duycke*

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