Propositions and Conclusions Concerning the True Christian Religion (1612-1614)

[1] TRVE CONFESSION OF THE FAITH, AND HVMBLE ACKNOVVLEDGMENT OE THE ALEGEANCE, vvhich vve hir Majesties Subjects, falsely called Brovvnists, doo hould tovwards God, and yeild to hir Majestie and all other that are ouer vs in the Lord. Set downn in Articles or Positions, for the better & more easie undersstanding of those that shall read yt: And published for the cleering of our selues from those vnchristian slanders of heresie, schisme, pryde, obstinacie, disloyaltie, sedicion, &c. vvhich by our adversaries are in all places given out against vs.

Wee beleeue with our hearts & confes with our mouths.

That there is buta one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Church, one truth, one Faith,b one Rule of obedience to all Christians, in all places.


2 That God is a Spirit, whosed beeing is of himself, and giveth beeing, movitig, and preservation to all other things beeing himself eternall, most holy, every way infinit, in greatnes, vvisdome, povvre, goodnes, justice, truth, &c. And that in this Godhead there bee threeg distinct persons hcoeternall, coequall, & kco-essentiall, beeing every one of the & the same God, & therfore not divided but distinguished one from another by their severall & peculiar propertie: The 1Father of none, the Sonne begotten of the Father from everlasting, the holy nGost proceding from the Father and the Sonne before all beginnings.


3 That Godo bath decreed in himself from everlasting touching all things, and the very least circumstances of every thing, effectually to vwork and dispose them according to the counsell of his ovvn vvill, to the prayse and glorie of his great name. And touching his cheeffest Creatures that God hath inp Christ before the foundation of the world,r according to the good pleasure of his vvill,s ordeyned som men and Angells, to eternall lyfe to bee accomplished through Iesus Christ, to the vprayse of the glorie of his grace. And on thother hand hath likewisse b before of old accorvingx to his just purposey ordeine[d] other both Angells and men, toe ternall condemna-[xii]tion, to
beezy accomplished through their own corruption to the prayse of his justice.

4 That in the ebeginning God made all things of nothing very good: and decreed man after his own image and lykene, in righteousnes and holines of truth. Thatestreight ways after by the subtiltie of the Serpent which Satan vsed as his instrument' himself with his Angells having sinned before and not kept their first estate, but justify their own habitation; first gEva, then Adam by hir meanes, did wittingly & willingly fall into disobedience & transgression of the commadment of God. For the which death reigned over all: yea even our infants also, which have not sinned, after the lyke maner of the transgression of Adam, that is, actually: Yet arek all since the fall of Adam begotten in his own likenes after his image, beeing conceyued and borne in iniquity, and soo by nature the children of wrath and servants of sinne, and subject to death, and all other calamities due vnto sinne in this world and for euer.

5 That all mankinde beeing thus fallen and become altogether dead in sinne, & subject to the eternall vvrath of God both by original/ and actuall corruption: The elect are redeemed, quickned, rasesd vp and saued againe, not of themselues, neither by vvorks, lest anie man should bost himself; but wholly and only by God of his free grace and mercy through faith in Christ Iesus,m vwho of God is made vnto vs visdome, & righteousnes, & sanctification, & redemption, that according as it is vvritten, Hee that reioyceth let him reioyce in the Lord.

6 That this therfore only is lyfen eternall to knovv the only true God, & vwho hee hath sent into the vworld Iesus Crist. And that on the contrarie the Lord vwill reder vengeance in flaming fire vnto them that knovv not God, & vwhich obey not the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ.

7 That the rule of this knowledge faith & obedience, Concerning the pvoorship & service of God & ‘all other christia dutyes, is not the ropinions, devises, lavves, or constitutions of men, but the vvritten vword of the everlyving God, conteyned in the canonicall bookes of the old and nevv Testament.

p Exod. 10, 4. 5. 6. Deu. 4, 2. 5. 6. Gen. 6, 22. Exod. 39, 42. 43. 1. Chron. 28. 19. q Psalm. 119. 105. r Esa. 29, 13. Mat. 15, 9. Joh. 3, 34. 9. Phil. 2, 7. 8. 3. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Act. 10. 38. g Joh. 3. 34.

8 That in this vvords Iesus Christ hath reveled vvatsoever his father thought needfull for vs to knovv, beleeeue & obey as touching hist person & Offices, invvhom all the promises of God are yea, & in vvhom they are Amen to the prayse of God through vs.


[xiii] 9 That touching his person, the Lord Iesus, of vvho Moses & the Prophets vvrote, & vvho the Apostles preached, is the yeverlasting Sonne of God, by eternall generation, the brightnes of his Fathers glorie, & the engrauen forme of his Person; coessential, coequall, & coeternall, god vvith him & vvith the holy Gost, by vvho hee hath made the vworlds, by vvhom hee vphouldeh & governeth all the works hee hath made; vvho also vwhen thez fulnes of tyme vvas come, vvas made man of a vvoman, of athe Tribe of Zudah, of the bseed of David & Abraham, to vvyt of Mary that blessed Virgin, by the holy Ghost comming vpon hir, & the povvre of the most high ouershadowvving hir; & vvas alsoc in all things lyke vnto vs, sinne only excepted.


10 That touching his Office, heed only is made the Mediator of the nevv Testament, even of the eternall Couenant of grace between God & man, to bee perfectly & fully the eProphet, Priest & King of the Church of God for euermore.


11 That heef vvas from eternall, by the lust & sufficient authoritie of the father, & in respect of his manhood from the womb, called & seperated heervrto, & anoynted also most fully & abundantly vvith all necessarie gifts, as isg vvritten; God hath not measured out the Spirit vnto him.

f Pro. 8, 23. Esa. 42, 6, 49. 1, 5. and 11, 2, 3, 4, 5. Act. 10. 38. g Joh. 3. 34.
12 That this Office, to bee Mediator, that is, Prophet, Priest and King of the Church of
God, is so proper to him, as neither in the whol, nor in anie part therof, it can be trasferred
from him to anie other.


13 That touching hist Prophecie, Christ hath perfectly revealed out of the bozome of his
father, the vvholl vvord & vvill of God, that is needfull for his seruants, either ioynly or
seuerally to knowv, beleue & obey: That hee hath spoken & doth speake to his Church in
his ovvnk ordinance, by his ovvn ministers and instruments only, and not by anie
falsel ministrie at anie tyme.

16, 17. k Pro. 9, 3. Joh. 13; 20. Luk. 10. 16. Mat. 10. 40. 41. Deu. 33, 8. 10. 1 Mat. 7, 15. 16.
& 24. 23. 24. 2. Pet. 2. 2. Tim. 4. 3. 4. Rom. 10, 14. 15. ier. 23, 21. 2. ioh. 10.

14 That toching hism Priesthood, beeing consecrated, hee hath appeered once to put
avvay sinne, by offring & sacrificing of himself; and to this end hath fully performed aud
suffred all those things, by which God through the blood of that his crosse, in an acceptable
sacrifice, might bee reconciled to his elect; & having brok dovvn the partition vvall, &
thervvith finished & removed all those legal rites, shadowvves, & ceremonies, is nowo entred
within the yavel into the holy of Holies to the very heauen, and presence of God, vvhere hee for euer lyueth, and sitteth at the right hand of Maiestie* appering before the face of
his Father, to make intercession for [xiv] such as come vnto the Throne of grace by that
nevv & living vway; And not that only, but maketh his people ap spiritual1 hovvse, an holy
Priesthood, to offer up spiritual1 sacrifices, acceptable to God through him. Neither doth
the Father accept, or Christ offer anie other sacrifice, vvorship, or vvorshippers.

Eph. 5, 2. n Eph. 2, 1. 4. 15. 16. Heb. 9, & 10. o Heb. 4, 24. 16. & g. 24. and 10. 19. 20. *
4 23. 24. Mat. 7, 6. 7. 8. Esa. 1, 12. etc.

15 That touching Kingdom, beeing risen, ascended, entred into glory, set at the right
hand of God, al povvre in Heaven and earth giue vnto him; vvhich povvre heernovv
exerciseth ouer all Angells and men, good and dad [bad], to the preservation and saluation
of the elect, to the overruling and destruction of the reprobate;5communicating and
applying the benefits, virtue and frutes of his prophecy and Priesthood vnto his elect,
namely to the remission, subduing, and takeing avvay of their sinnes, to their justification,
adoption-of-sonnes, regeneration, sanctification, preservation & strengthing in all their
spirituall conflicts against Sathan, the vworld & the flesh &c. continually dwelling in,
governing & keeping their hearts in his tue [true] faith and fear by his holy spirit, vvhich
havingt once give yt, hee never taketh avvay from them, but by yt still begetteth and
nourisheth in them repentance, faith, loue, obedience, comfort, peace, ioy, hope, and all
christian vertues, vnto immortallitie, notwithstanding that yt be sometymes through sinne and tentation, interrupted, smothered, and as yt vvere overvyhelmed for the tyme. Againe on the contrary ruling in the vworld over his enemies, Sathan, and all the vessels of vvrath; limiting, vsing, restrayning them by his mightie povvre, as seemeth good in diuiue vvisdome and justice, to the execution of his determinate counsell, to vvit to their seduction, hardnинг & condemnation, delyveryng them vp to a reprobate mynde, to bee kept in darcknes, sinne and sensuallitie vnto judgment.


16 That this Kingdom shall bee then fully perfected vwhen hee shal thex second tyme come in glorie vwith his mightie Angells vnto judgment, to abolish all rule, authoritie and povvre, to put all his enemies vnder his feet, to separete and free all his chosen from them for ever, to punish the vicked vvith everlasting perdition from his presence, to gather, ioyne, and carry the godly with himself into endlesse glory, and then to delyvery, up the Kingdome to God, even the Father, that so the glorie of the father may bee full and perfect in the Sonne, the glorie of the Sonne in all his members, and God bee all in all.


[yv] 17 That in the meane tyme, besides his absolute rule in the world, Christ hath here in earth a\y spirituall Kingdome and anonical regiments in his Church ouer his servants, which Church hee hathz purchased and redeemed to himself, as a peculiare inheritance (notwithstandinga manie hypocrites do for the tyme lurk emongst the) calling and winning them by the powre of his word vnto the faith, seperating them from amongst vnbelievers, from idolitrie, false worship, superstition, vanitie, dissolute lyfe, & works of darknes, &c; making them a royall Priesthood, an holy Nation, a people set at libertie to shew foorth the virtues of him that hath called them out of darknes into his meruolous light, gathering and vniting them togetherr as members of one body in his faith, loue and holy order, vnto all generall and mutuall duties, einstructing & governing them by such officers and lawes as hee hath prescribed in his word; by which Officers and lawes hee governeth his Church, and byf none other.


18 That to thisi Church hee hath made the promises, and giuen the seales of his Covenant, presence, loue, blessing and protection: h Heere are the holy Oracles as in the side of the Arke, suerly kept & puerly taught. Heere are all the fountaynes and springs of his grace continually replenished and flowing forth. Heere isk hee lyfted up to all Nations, hither heel inuiteth all men to his supper, his manage feast; hither oughtm all men of all estates and degrees that acknowledg him their Prophet, Priest and King to repayre, to been enrolled amongst his househould seuerants, to bee vnder his heauenly conduct and government, to leade their lyues in his walled sheepfold, & watered orchard, to haue communion heere with the Saincts, that they may bee made meet to bee partakers of their inheritance in the kingdome of God.


19 That aso all his seuerants and subiects are called hither, to present their bodys and soules, and to bring the guyfts God hath given them; so beeing come, they are heer by himself bestowed in their severall order, peculiar place, due vse, beeing filly compact and knit together by eueri ioynt of help, according to the effectuall work in the measure of eueri parte, vnto the edification of yt self in loue; wherunto whe heepascended vp on high hee gaue guyfts vnto men, [xvi] that hee might fill all these things, and bath distributed these guyfts, vnto seuerall functions in his Church, hauing instituted and ratified toq contynue vnto the worlds end, only this publick ordinarie Ministerie of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons, Helpers to the instruction, government, and seruice of his Church.


20 That this ministerie is exactlyr described, distinguisht, limited, concerning their office, their calling to their office, ther administration of their office, and their maintenance in their office, by most perfect and playne alawes in Gods word, which lawes it is not lawfull for these Ministers, or for the wholl Church wittinly to neglect, transgresse, or violate in anie parte; nor yet to receiue anie other lawes brought into the Church by anie person whatsoever.

r Pro. 8, 8. 9. heb. 3. 2. 6. the first Epistle to Timothy wholly. Act. 6, 3. 5. 6. & 14. 23. &
20, 17. etc. 1. pet. 5, 2. 3. 1. Cor. 5, 4. 5. 11. 12. 13. etc. and 9. 7. 9. 24. s Heb. 2. 3. and 3. 3. and 12. 25. etc. 2. Tim 3, 14.15. Gal. 1, 8. 9. 1 tim. 6, 13. 14. Deut. 12, 32. and 4. 2. Revel. 22, 18. 19.

21 Thatt none may vsurp or execute a ministerie but such as are rightly called by the Church whereof they stand ministers; and that such so called ought to gyve all diligence to fulfill their ministerie, to bee found faithful! and vnblamable in all things.


22 That this ministerie is alyke given to euery Christian congregation, with like povvre and commission to haue and enjoy the same, as God offereth fit men and meanes, the same rules given to all for the election and execution therof in all places.


23 That as every christian Congregationx hath povvre and commandement to elect and ordaine their owvn ministerie according to the rules prescribed, andy whilst they shal faithfully execute their office, to haue them in superaboundant loue for their vvorke sake, to provide for them, to honoure them and reuerence them, according to the dignitie of the office they execute. So have they alsoz povvre and cormandement when anie such defalt, either in their lyfe, Doctrine, or administration breaketh out, as by the rule of the word debarreth them from, or depriveth them of their ministerie, by due order to depose them from the ministerie they exercised; yea if the case so require, and they remayne obstinate and impenitent, orderly to cut them off by excommunication.


24 Thata Christ hath given this povvre to receiue in or to cut off anie member, to the vvholl body together of euery Christian Congregation, and not to anie one member aparte, or to moe members sequestred from the vvholl, or to anie other Congregation to doo it for the: yet thatb ech Congregation ought to vse the best help they can heer vnto, and the most meet member they have to pronounce the same in their publikk assembly.


[xvii] 25 That euery member of ech Christian Congregation, hovy excellent, great, or
learned soever, ought to be subject to this censure & judgment of Christ; Yet ought not the Church without great care & due advise to procede against such publick persons.


26 That for the okeeping of this Church in holy & orderly communion, as Christ hath placed some speciall men over the Church, who by their office are to governe, ouersec, visite, watch, &c. Sod lykevwise for the better keeping thereof in all places, by all the members, hee hath giuen authoritie & layd duty vpon tho all to watch one ouer another.


27 That vvhilest the Ministers and people thus remayne together in this holy order and christian communion, ech one endeovering to do the will of God in their calling, & thus to vvalke in the obedience of faith Christ hath promised to bee present with them, to blesse & defend them against all adverserie povvre, & that the gates of Hell shall not prevayle against them.

Deu. 28, 1. etc. Mat. 28, 20. Luk. 12, 35. 36. 37. 38. Mat. 16. 18. Zach. 2, 5. & 12, 2. 3. 4. Psal. 125, 2. & 132. 12. 13. etc.

28 But when & vwhere this holy order & diligent vvatch was intermitted, neglected, violated. Antichrist that man of sinne corrupted & altered the holy ordinances, offices, & administratios of the church brought in & erected a strange new forged ministerie, leitourgie and government & the Nations Xingdoms & inhabitants of the earth, were made drunken vvhith this cup of fornications & abominations, & all people enforced to receiue the Beasts marke and worship his image & so brought into confusion & babilonish bondage.


29 That the present ministerie reteyned & vsed in Engladv Arch. bbb. Lobb.3Deanes, Prebendaries, Canons, Peti-Canons, Arch-Deacons, Chancellors, Commissaries, Priests, Deacons, Parsons, Viccars Curats, Hireling rouing Preachers, Church-wardens, Parish-clerkes their Doctors, Proctors, & iwholl rable of those Courts with all from & vnder them set ouer these Cathedrall & Paris/hionall Assemblies in this confusion, are a strange & Anti-christian ministerie & offices; & are not that ministerie aboue named instituted in Christs Testament, or allovved in or ouer his Church.

28. Articles aforesaid.

30 That their eOffices, Entrance, Administration and maintenance, with their names, titles, privileges, & prerogatives the povre & rule they usurp over and in these Ecclesiastical assemblies over the whole ministerie, whole ministry and affairs thereof, yea one over another by their making Priests, citing, suspending, silencing, deposing, absolving, excommunicating, &c. Their confounding of Ecclesiastical and Civile jurisdiction, causes & proceedings in their persons, courts, [xviii] cessions, Visitations, the rest of lesse rule, taking their ministry from and exercising it vnder them by their prescription and limitation, swearing Canonicall obedience vnto them, administering by their devised imposed, stinted popish Leiturgie, &c. are sufficient proofs of the former assertion, the particulars thereon being duly examined by and compared to the Rules of Christs Testament, or allotted in or vnder his Church.


31 That these Ecclesiastical Assemblies, remaining in confusion and bondage vnder this Antichristian Ministerie, Courts, Canons, worship, Ordinances. &c. without freedom or povre to redresse anie enormities, have not in this confusion and subjection, Christ their Prophet, Priest, and King, neither can bee in this estate, (whilst wee judge them by the rules of Gods word) esteemed the true, orderly gathered, or costituted churches of Christ, wherof the faithfull ought to become or stand Members, or to haue anie Spirituall communion vth them in their publick worship and Administration.


32 That by Gods Commandement all that will bee saued, must with speed come forth of this Antichristian estate, leaving the suppression of it vnto the Magistrate to itbelongeth. 4 And that both all such as haue recyued or exercised anie of these false Offices or anie pretended function or Ministerie in or to this false and Antichristiafl constitution, are willingly in Gods feare, to giue over and leaue those vnlavfull Offices, and no longer to minister in this manner to these Assemblies in this estate And that none also, of what sort or condition soever, doo giue anie part of their Goods, Lands, Money, or money vnder the maintenance of this false Ministerie and vworship vpon anie Commandemeflt, or vnder anie colour vwhatsoever.


33 That being come forth of this antichristian estate vnto the freedom and true profession of Christ, besides them instructing and [xix] vvell guying of their owne Families, they are vwillingly to ioyne together in christian communion and orderly couenant, and by confession of Faith and obedience of Christ, too vnite themselves into peculiar Congregations; vherin, as members of one body vherof Christ is the only head, they are to vworship and serue God according to his vvord, remembringpto keep holy the Lords day.

34 That such asq God hath giuen guiftes to enterpret the Scriptures, tryed in the exercise of Prophecie, giving attendance to studie and learning, may and ought by the appointment of the Congregation, to teach publickly the vvord, vntill the people bee meet or, and God manifest men vvith able guifts and fitnes to such Office or Offices as Christ hath appointed to the publick ministerie of his church; but rno Sacraments to bee administred vntill the Pastora or Teachers bee chosen and ordeyned into their Office.

35 Thatvs vheras ther shalbee a people fit, and men furnished with meet and necessarie guifts, they doe not only still continue the exercise of Prophesie aforesayd, but doe also vpon due tryall, proceed vnto choyce and ordination of Officlers for the ministerie and servise of the Church, according to the rule of Gods vvord; And that soe theyt hold on still to vvalke forward in the wayes of Christ for their mutuall edification and comfort, as it shall please God to giue knowledge and grace thervnito. And particularly, thatv such as bee of the seed,5 or vnder the government of anie of the Church, bee euem in their infancie Receiued to Baptisme, ond made pertakers of the signe of Gods Covenant made with the faithfull and their seed throughout all Generations. And that all of the Church that are of yeeres, and able to examine themselues, doe communicate also in the Lords Supper both menyand vwomen, and inz both kindes bread and vvyne in whicha Elements, as also in the vvater of Baptisme, euene after their are consecrate, there is neyther transubstantiation into, nor Consubstantiation with the bodye and bloode of Jesus Christ; vwhome bthe Heauens must conteyne; vntill the tyme [xx] that al things bee restored. But they are in the ordinance of God signes and seals of Gods euerlasting covenant, representing and offering to all the receiueres, but exhibiting only to the true beleevers the Lord Iesus Christ and all his benefits vnto righteousnes, sanctification and eternall lyfe, through faith in his name to
the glorie and prayse of God.


36 That thuse beeinge righly gathered, established, and still proceeding in christian communion & obedience of the Gospell of Christ, none is to separe for falts and corruptions which may and so long as the Church consisteth of mortall men, will fall out & arise emong them, even in a true constituted Church, but by duef order to seeke redresse therof.


37 Thatg such as yet see not the truth, may heare the publik doctrine and prayers of the church, and with al meeknes are to bee sought by all meanes: Yet hnone who are growne in yeeres to bee receiued into their communion as members, but such as doe make confession of their faith, publiquely desiring to bee receiued as members, and promising to walke in the obedience of Christ. Neither aniei Infants, but such as are the seed of the faithfull by one of the parents, or vnder their education and gouernment. And further not aniek from one Congregation to bee receiued members in another, without bringing certificate of their former estate and present purpose.


38 That though Congregations bee thus distinct and severall bodyes, every one as a compact Citie in it self, yet are they all to walke by one and the same rule, & by all meanes convenient to have the counsell and help one of another in all needfull affayres of the Church, as members of one body in the common Faith, vnder Christ their head.

Look Articles 1, 22. 23. Psal. 122 3. Cant. 8, 8, 9, 1. cor. 4, 17. and 16. 1.

39 That it is the Office and duty of Princes and Magestrates, who by the ordinance of
God are supreme Governers under him over all persons and causes within their Realmes and Dominions, to suppress and root out by their authoritie all false ministeries, voluntarie Relligions and counterfeyt worship of God, to abolish and destroy the Idoll Temples, Images, Altares, Vestments, and all other monuments of Idolatrie and superstition and to take and convert to their own civile vses not only the benefit of all such idolitrous buyldings & monuments, but also the Revenues, Demeanes, Lordships, Possessions, Gleabes and maintenance of anie false ministeries and vnlawfull Ecclesiasticall functions whatsoever within their Dominions. [xxi] And on the other hands to establish & mayntein by their lawes every part of Gods word his pure Relligion and true, ministerie to cherish and protect all such as are carefull to worship God according to his word, and to leade a godly lyfe in all peace and loyalltie; yea to enforce al their Subiects whether Ecclesiasticall or civile, to do their dutyes to God and men, protecting & mainteyning the good, punishing and restreyning the evill according as God hath commanded, vvhose Lieuetenants they are heer on earth.


40 That therothe protection & commandement of the Princes and Magistrats maketh it much more peaceable, thought no whit at all more lawfull, to vvalke in thevayes and ordinances of Iesus Christ vvhich hee bath commanded his church to keep vvwithout spot and vnrebukeable vntill his appearing in the end of the vworld.qAnd that in this behalf the brethren thus mynded and proceeding as is beforesaid, doo both continually supplicate to God, and as they may, to their Princes and Gouernours that thus and vnder them they may leade a quiet and peaceable lyfe in allgodlynes and honestie.


41 That if God encline the Magistrates hearts to the allowance & protection of them therm they accompt it a happie blessing of God who granteth such nourcing Fathers and nourcing Mothers to his Church, & be carefull to walke vvorthie so great a mercy of God in all thankfulnes and obedience.

Psal. 126, 1. etc. EsA. 49, 13. and 60 16. Psal. 72, 1. etc. Rom. 13, 3. 1 Tim. 2, 2. 3. 4.

42 That if God vv withhold the Magistrates allovvance and furtherace heerin, thyr yet proceed together in christian covenant & communion thus to vwalke in the obedience of Christ eve through the midst of all tryalls and affictions, not accompting their goods, Lands VVeves, Children, Fathers, Mothers, brethren, Sisters, no nor their own lyues dear
vnto the, so as they may finish their course with ioy, remembrance alvvayes that wee sought to obey God rather the may, & groundingt vpon the commandement, commission and promise of our Saviour Christ, vwho as hee hath all povvre in heaue & in earth, so hath also promised if they keep his commandements vwhich hee hath giue without limitatio of tyme, place, Magistrates allovvance or disallowance, to bee with them vnto the end of the world and


Now vnto him that is able [able] to keep vs that wee fall not, & to present us faltiesse before the presence of his glorie with joy; that is to God only wise our Sauiour, bee glory, & Majestic & dominion, & powre both now & for ever. Amen.