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By Whom, all things; for Whom, all things.

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## OPENING OF THE SYNOD OF DORT.

IT is no part of the object of the present article to enter upon a history of the Synod of Dort, or engage in any discussion on the points involved in the Arminian controversy. Nothing more is aimed at than to present a picture of this famous Synod at its opening, with such a sketch of the preliminary history as may make the subject intelligible to general readers.

In April of the year 1609, the Spanish Government, baffled, after more than forty years of the most savage and desperate efforts to crush the Protestants of the Netherlands, entered into a truce with the States-General. The land had rest from the Spanish fury; but the conflict of religious opinion, which had been raging since the beginning of the century, went on with increasing violence. It was a return of the condition of things prevailing at the opening of the fifth century in Italy, when the great controversy respecting sin, grace, and the divine purposes was convulsing the churches, while the Goths were laying siege to Rome, and ravaging the peninsula from end to end.

In the Netherlands, as everywhere else, an intimate union existed between church and state. Previously, it had been the state and the Romish Church. Now it was the state and Protestant Christianity, in the form of Presbyterianism. The Reformation had been introduced into Holland mostly from the south; from Switzerland and France. The Belgic Confession was composed in the French language by a Walloon from Mons, on the French border, Guido de Braes, and the pastors of the newly-formed churches had been mostly educated at Geneva and in the Palatinate. Although Germany was so near, Lutheranism never crossed the Rhine in any force, and such

Lutheran churches as established themselves in Holland were looked upon with almost as hostile eyes as the Romish communion itself. They had been so largely involved in the Anabaptist fanaticism as to make them objects of suspicion and fear. It was the faith and order of the Swiss and French churches that were adopted by the Reformed of Holland—a Calvinistic faith, and a Presbyterian polity.

But the Calvinism of the Church of the Netherlands was by no means of the highest-toned character. On the subject of the divine decree, the Belgic Confession is far less full and explicit than some of the other Reformed symbols. The article on "Eternal Election" affirms that "*all the posterity of Adam being fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of our first parents, God did manifest himself such as he is—that is to say, merciful and just: MERCIFUL, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel, of mere goodness, hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works; and JUST, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.*"

The Heidelberg Catechism, which was adopted by the Church of the Netherlands in 1573, wholly passes by the subject of the divine decree, and in regard to the atonement teaches that "*Christ bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race.*" The somewhat exaggerated type of Calvinism prevalent among the Dutch clergy had not been derived from these temperate statements, but from the writings and personal influence of that evil angel of the Reformation in France and Holland, Theodore De Beza—a man who bore the same relation to Calvin as the "*Predestinationists*" did to Augustine. Supralapsarian Calvinism, and an elaborate argument to prove that the civil magistrate is bound to punish heresy with death, were the gift Beza presented to the churches of the Netherlands; and it is not agreeable to remember that the translator of the latter treatise into the Dutch tongue was John Bogerman, afterwards Moderator of the Synod of Dort. Arminius is therefore to some extent justified when he asserts, that in holding a decree of election, conditioned on a previous decree to bestow preventing and co-operating grace on believers, he was not conscious of departing from the doctrine of the

confession ; and that his disagreement was not with the symbols, but only with the unauthorized construction which some divines had put upon them.

In a formal address to the States-General, he declared that "he neither had nor did meditate the introducing of any novelty, or any thing contrary to the Word of God ; but designed to adhere to the doctrine of the Christian Reformed churches all the days of his life. He had indeed, when driven to it, spoken against the peculiar opinions of some ministers, but never against the confession or the common sentiments of the churches."

Such language from a man who cannot be charged with lack of discrimination on the one hand, nor with deliberate disingenuousness on the other, can only be explained by the fact that the Sixteenth Article of the Belgic Confession, just referred to, is not only *not* Supralapsarian, but, especially when taken with the Heidelberg Catechism, the co-ordinate symbol of the Church of the Netherlands, must be regarded as studiously moderate in its statement of doctrine. It certainly comes far short of the explicitness of the corresponding articles (the Thirteenth, Sixty-seventh, and Sixty-eighth) in the Assembly's Catechism. It is even less explicit, as it is much briefer, than the Sixteenth of the Anglican Articles, the Calvinistic character of which there have not lacked plenty of champions hardy enough to deny.

The controversy, though the materials for it had been for several years collecting, did not fairly open till, in 1602, Arminius, then one of the pastors of the church in Amsterdam, was called to fill the place in the department of theology at the University of Leyden made vacant by the death of Francis Junius. The pathetic circumstances leading to the founding of that famous seat of learning are well known. Nothing in all history weaves a more thrilling fascination around the mind than the story of the siege of Leyden. The investment of the city by Valdez and his ferocious Spanish and Walloon troops on the 26th of May, 1574 ; the desperation of the attack and defence ; the failure of provisions ; the heroic persistence of the burgomaster, Van der Werf ; the assembling of the fleet from Zealand, loaded with food for the starving citizens ; the cutting

of the dykes; and the long agony when, even God's providence seeming estranged, the wind blew steadily day after day from the wrong quarter; finally, the setting in of the gale from the west, the bursting in of the North Sea, the surging forward of the fleet over submerged fields and villages, the death or flight of the beleaguering forces, the triumphant entry of Admiral Boisot and his convoy into the canals of the city, and the solemn procession to the great church, where the rescued citizens, with their deliverers, amid tears of joy poured forth their thanksgivings and hymns of praise to God—all presents an aggregate of sublimity and pathos never exceeded in the history of human devotion. As a reward for the sufferings of the heroic city, and a monument of its patriotic fidelity, it was resolved by the Prince of Orange to erect in Leyden, not a triumphal arch or lofty pillar, but a seat of learning; a university, to raise up educated citizens for the service of the republic, was the fittest monument of the valor and fortitude of Leyden. The fiction was still kept up, of loyalty to the Spanish throne; and in the charter of the institution, Philip himself was represented as bestowing this gift on his faithful people of Leyden, as a compensation for their sufferings during the war. On the 5th of February, 1575, not six months after the raising of the siege, the city of Leyden decked herself for a fantastic pageant, in which the muses and the evangelists, the arts and the sciences, Pan and Moses, came forth in appropriate masquerade, to welcome the newly-chosen professors of the infant university. It was in worthy rivalry of this wise and noble act of beneficence, that when the city of Basle had escaped becoming the scene of a bloody battle in 1815 between the French and Russians, the people flocked to their churches, like the Leydeners, and resolved to rear as a monument of their deliverance a missionary institute to send the Gospel to the miserable Cossacks of the Don, thousands of whom they had just seen pouring across the Rhine. The illustrious patriot, scholar, and divine, Francis Junius, died of the plague on the 2d of October, 1602, and Jacobus Harmensen was chosen by the trustees to succeed him in the chair of theology. He was at the time forty-two years of age, and already distinguished for theological learning and eloquence, and already more than suspected of imperfect

loyalty to the Belgic Confession. He had published his notes on the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans ; and in a friendly correspondence with Junius, both of them men of kindly and pacific tempers, he had developed his dissent from the popular views on the subject of predestination. That he was not at variance with the spirit of the Belgic Confession, he then and ever after maintained ; and he professed that if the contrary were shown he was ready to resign his ministry. But the canons of the church no more permitted an ordained minister to demit his office then than they do now.

It is inevitable that in the history of every church that combines in the subscription to its articles a declaration of faith in the confession itself, and at the same time a declaration that all synods and councils may err, and are none of them, therefore, to be made the rule of faith and practice, but the Word of God only, the question should arise, to which of the two ultimate allegiance is owed. In subscribing the confession, the doctrine is at the same time subscribed, that the confession itself is not an infallible standard, and that the subscriber is to hold his conscience bound only by the authority of the Scriptures. But no sooner does he undertake, in the exercise of this expressly reserved right, to appeal from the confession to the Word, than he finds himself arraigned as an offender against the law of the church. Infallible churches have no difficulty on this point. No Romanist can pretend any warrant to appeal from the church to the Bible. The church herself is the infallible teacher. But all Protestant churches embody in their fundamental law an express renunciation of any such claim. The Belgic Confession, which Arminius had subscribed, affirms this principle with almost as much emphasis as the Westminster symbols. "We believe" (is the language of the Seventh Article) "that the holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught in them ; nor ought we to compare custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times or persons, decrees or statutes, with the truth of God, which is above all. Therefore we reject, with all our hearts, whatever doth not agree with this infallible rule, which the apostles have taught us, saying, ' Try the spirits whether they be of God.' " It is common

to say that any minister who has subscribed the articles of a church, and then finds himself materially at variance with them, is bound in honor to withdraw from it; which is true enough, if he could. But the church herself admits of no such method of relief. She holds her clergy in mortmain. The doctrine of the indefeasibility of allegiance, which we ourselves deny as a principle of international law, is still inflexibly maintained as an ecclesiastical principle. No man can divest himself of the office of the ministry, nor can be divested of it except by death or a sentence of degradation.

Changes in the law or practice of a church should, of course, be undertaken slowly, and only after mature consideration. The question of the demission of the ministry has been repeatedly overtured to the General Assembly, and dismissed without action; but the fact that, in the absence of any authorized measure of relief, individual presbyteries begin to adopt one for themselves, shows that the time is at hand when church legislation on this subject should be made to conform to changes of opinion and obvious moral necessities. It cannot be long before the church will generally conclude that, instead of compelling a man to remain dishonestly in her ministry, or, as the only alternative, subjecting him to an ignominious sentence of degradation, though chargeable with no moral offence, a door should be opened by which he may, without any other reproach than is involved in the fact of apparent instability or weakness of conscience, retire into the ranks of private church members. It is a serious evil that a devout and conscientious minister of the Presbyterian Church should find his mind so alienated from any of her doctrines as to forbid his any longer professing to believe them; but it is a more serious evil that, being willing under this condition of things quietly to withdraw into private life, he should be forbidden to do so, and only be thrust out with a sentence of degradation on his head.

Among the professors in the University of Leyden at the time of the nomination of Arminius was Francis Gomar, a stanch and unflinching champion of the theology of Beza. He protested at once against the election, alleging the unsoundness of the candidate, as shown by his Pelagianizing exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. It was replied that Arminius

had given satisfaction on this point; that what difference remained after his explanations was merely that unessential diversity which may find place among the soundest interpreters; and that Gomar had not even agreed with his unquestionably orthodox colleague, Francis Junius, on all the details of doctrine.

Gomar was a man of eminent learning in theology and in the original languages of Scripture, a keen and resolute polemic, but so hasty in temper and so rash in speech as to draw upon himself more than once the public censure of the Synod of Dort. An *Athanasius contra mundum*, he had the courage of his opinions, even when his party consisted of himself alone. When Martin of Bremen ventured to differ with him as to the "foundation of election," Gomar started up in the Synod, and, flinging his glove on the floor, hotly challenged him to a public debate. The president restored peace for the moment, and the session was closed, as usual, with prayer; but unsoftened by the act of devotion, Gomar again sought his antagonist, and called upon him to show himself a man, if he dared defend his proposition.

In person, Gomar was not greatly unlike Arminius—the same high, rounded forehead and bald front, a frowning brow, a solid, resolute Dutch face, the lower part covered, lip and chin, with a broad and heavy beard. He never softened in his opposition to the new Pelagianism; but at length, finding himself too isolated at Leyden, he resigned his professorship, and retired to teach elsewhere in a more humble capacity. Notwithstanding his opposition, the curators of the university insisted on their choice. Arminius was dismissed with high testimonials by the Classis of Amsterdam, and on the 11th July, 1603, delivered his inaugural address at Leyden, "on the priesthood of Christ."

For a few months a sort of armed truce existed between the two professors of theology. A little wisdom and moderation might have protracted it in the form of a permanent treaty of peace, each professor confining himself to his own proper line of instruction; but Arminius was the standard-bearer of a party, and could not long fail to come to the front. All the while professing loyalty to the Belgic Confession, he soon

developed his dissent from the received interpretation of that symbol. It was Arminius who threw the firebrand into the university, by publicly assailing the doctrine of predestination. Gomar replied. The flames burst out, and began spreading themselves over the whole ground of the "Arminian controversy."

Unhappily, the fatal union of church and state in Holland gave the controversy, not simply the character of a religious debate, but of a politico-ecclesiastical struggle; and party lines were drawn, not so much with reference to doctrine, as to the pretensions of the Stadtholder on the one side, and the independence of the church and rights of the provinces on the other. Arminius and his friends urged a resort to purely ecclesiastical provincial synods, for the arbitration of the dispute. They finally gave their consent with reluctance to the calling of a lawful national synod under the control of the government. "We esteem that to be a lawful synod," said they, "which is called by the civil magistrate; and where all matters are examined with brotherly love and Christian prudence by men of piety and impartiality, well versed in religious affairs; where no other judge is acknowledged but the Word of God, contained in the Old and New Testaments; and we are ready to submit to a definitive sentence on this foot, in case we can be convinced in our consciences that it is conformable to the said Word of God; or if it should not so appear to us, since all synods may err, then will we be no less ready to resign our public offices, so soon as the magistrate, to whom only the power of the external part of religion belongs, shall ratify such a sentence, and require us to quit our livings; only reserving to ourselves the liberty of conscience, which no man can or ought to take from us."

While the controversy was still surging forward on the flood-tide, the hand dropped which had given it the first impulse. On the 19th October, 1609, James Arminius, worn out by labor, and perhaps by grief and anxiety, died at the early age of forty-nine. His last pathetic exclamation, "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me, a man of strife to the whole earth!" expresses the remorse which preyed on his gentle and kindly nature, that by a rash dogmatism in dealing with the mysteries

of the divine foreordination he should have raised that spirit of polemic fury which now dominated like an Ate the whole land.

It is quite needless to violate historic truth and Christian charity by assuming that the teachers of false doctrine must of necessity have been bad and dishonest men. Pelagius and Arius were both of them earnest and devout preachers of righteousness, and quite unconscious themselves of the deadly error involved in their principles. They took it for their standard of truth, as Lord Bacon observes, "to get as far away as possible from the last preceding heresy." The pendulum does not stop on the perpendicular, but swings to the corresponding opposite degree on the arc of the dial; and the human mind, recoiling from one error, seldom rests until it has passed far beyond that middle line of truth at which an infallible intellect would arrest it.

Arminius was naturally of a sweet and genial temper; a man of warm domestic affections; hospitable, generous, a lover of flowers and music, enthusiastically beloved by his friends and his children. If his own repeated and most solemn declarations can be trusted, he believed, at least, he was acting in the interests of truth, of charity, and of a rational Christian liberty. Under other circumstances his opposition to the Belgic Confession might have been a trivial or passing incident; but the Church of the Netherlands was just coming out of the great and terrible trial that had come upon them for the faith's sake. Their wounds were still fresh, their minds excited and suspicious. The truth for which their fathers, their brothers, had fallen, sword in hand, on the field, or died in tortures under the sentence of the Council of Blood, was unspeakably dear to them in its smallest particular. It had been saved at too great a sacrifice to be now surrendered at the bidding of a reckless polemic; and they rallied to the defence of the doctrine of predestination in the same determined spirit as they had manned the walls of Leyden, or rushed out on their iron skates to repel the assault on Harlaem. The portraits of Arminius represent him with high and bare forehead, the short hair drawn back from the sides and top of the head, the eyes round and bright, the features regular, the whole set off by a heavy mustache

and the pointed beard of the period; a vivid, alert, and not unpleasing countenance.

To Arminius in the chair of theology at Leyden succeeded Simon Episcopius, who soon developed the views of his predecessor into naked Pelagianism. The year following, the Arminians laid before the States-General that declaration of their theological views and that protest against a hasty and prejudiced judgment, in their case, which led to their being thenceforward distinguished as Remonstrants. They laid down the five points on which they differed from the received interpretation of the Belgic Confession, and prayed that "a free, lawful, and synodical assembly might be held, at which their doctrines might be candidly examined and a just judgment rendered."

The States-General moved with characteristic slowness and caution. For eight years longer the discussion went on; classes and synods urging the calling of a national council, a majority of the States consenting, and yet delaying; men's passions becoming more and more heated, and the imperfect confederacy brought to the verge of dissolution. Prince Maurice held himself in reserve, saying he was a soldier, and not a theologian; but from political ambition and jealousy became alienated from the Remonstrants, and in favor of a national synod for their condemnation. Out of the chaos of conflicting sentiments came out ultimately this party division: that the States in which the Remonstrants held a majority, alarmed at the attitude of the Stadtholder, and perhaps still more by the furious hostility of King James, who kept urging the States-General to take the severest measures against them, withdrew their consent to the proposed synod. The grounds of objection they alleged were that the business had not yet been sufficiently matured in the provincial synods, and that to force a national council upon them, by the vote of a majority of the States, was a violation of the principle of the confederation. The majority, encouraged by their powerful friends at home and abroad, became fixed in the determination to improve their opportunity. On the 20th November, 1617, the final vote passed the States-General for the calling of the long-delayed Synod, Dort being chosen as the place, where in 1578, at the darkest period of the Reformation in the Netherlands, the first National Dutch Synod had been

held. The 1st of November of the year following was fixed on for the time. On the adoption of this measure the deputies of Holland, Utrecht, and Overijssel, and some other members, rose up from their seats and withdrew from the chamber. In general, the friends of the state church and of the ambitious views of the Stadtholder favored the council. The friends of the independence of the church, and of the states rights of the individual provinces, opposed it; but the opposition of the latter was based not merely on the solid ground of their just fears of the usurpation of power by Prince Maurice, but, under cover of this, on their hostility to the doctrines of the Belgic Confession.

The first jubilee of the Reformation had just passed, and ushered in a century of fierce controversy, of church distraction and schism, and of a more bloody and fearful religious war than had ever yet scourged human society. The little republic, just escaped from the struggle with Spanish tyranny, was buzzing all over with the fiercest theological rage. Every petty town was an arena of debate; a dogma of the schools divided households, rent societies asunder, revolutionized municipalities, brought provinces to the verge of secession, and, stretching its influence across the waters of the Northern Sea, drew into the whirl the policy of England, as on the Continent it involved those of France and the states of Germany. It took thirty years of ravage and desolation to exhaust the fire which the rash hand of Arminius had kindled.

The Synod being resolved on, invitations were sent out by the States-General to the King of England, the Reformed churches of France, the Elector Palatine, to the various Swiss states, and to other Reformed cities and provinces, to participate by delegates in the convention. The Synod was to be national, not œcumenical, the results, so far as they involved personal rights and interests, being limited to the Netherlands alone; but the presence of foreign delegates was sought in order to give a quasi-œcumenical character to the proceedings, and an air of weight and impartiality which might be lacking to a purely national synod. Only three Remonstrants, two pastors and an elder, were invited to attend, and they with no other liberty than that of explaining the positions of their party. Like the Arians at Nice and the Macedonians at the second general

council, they were regarded from the start as self-confessed heretics; and the object of the contra-Remonstrants was simply to draw out their errors for more public exposure and condemnation. To defray the expenses of the Synod, the States-General voted, with great liberality, the sum of 100,000 guilders. The Dutch guilder is worth, at present, not much over forty cents; but the purchasing power of money in Holland in 1618 may be judged by the fact, that to provide their honored guests with lodging, food, equipage, fuel, etc., each delegate was allowed the sum of four guilders a day. The commissioners from the only crowned head represented, their great ally and friend, King James, were allowed considerably more. First and last, the Synod is said to have cost near a million of guilders.

The rules adopted by the States-General for the procedure of the Synod exhibit the devout and prudent temper in which this important measure was undertaken. A day of general fasting and prayer was proclaimed throughout the provinces, "to beseech Almighty God to bless the approaching assembly, to the end that peace may be established both in church and state, and mutual unity restored, to the honor of God." The rules then proceed, after specifying the regular and corresponding members who were to compose the assembly, as follows:

"It shall be free to all and singular, of those divines and ministers of God's holy Word, having first obtained leave of the president of the assembly, to offer their scruples or grievances, upon condition that they submit the same to the judgment of the Synod."

"The famous Five Articles shall be first treated by the Synod, as also the difficulties which have arisen from thence, to the end that it may be plainly seen how the same may be removed with the least trouble and in the most proper manner, as far as the peace of the said churches, and especially the purity of doctrine, will allow."

"In all which, if there happen any dispute about the truth of doctrines, the states commissioners shall take care that a due and strict inquiry be made into the Word of God, as the only sure and infallible rule of faith, and not into any human writings; in order to which, that so it may plainly appear that nothing else is intended but the honor of God and the peace of the church, all the deputies shall oblige themselves thereto upon their oaths."

"And whatsoever passes in this manner by a plurality of votes shall be decreed and holden for a decree of the Synod; but so, nevertheless, that those who may otherwise vote shall not upon that account be suspected or blamed, or brought unto any kind of trouble."

In accordance with the summons, the home deputies and the commissioners of the various foreign states, from Bremen on the north to Geneva on the south, began in October of the year 1618 to make their way to the city of Dordrecht. With much loss of bile, Dr. George Carlton, Bishop of Llandaff, and his three associates sailed across the German Ocean and disembarked at the Hague, where they were received with great distinction. From Basle came Dr. Wolfgang Meyer, who, in his itinerary, has left us a lively sketch of the condition of the country between that city and his place of destination. Leaving Basle on the 1st October, furnished by the senate with two hundred gold ducats for travelling expenses, the party proceeded by carriage as far as Heidelberg, where they embarked on the Neckar. They visited in the city the castle and the famous Heidelberg Tun. Floating down the Rhine, they passed in succession Worms, where was a splendid Jewish synagogue, and Mentz, where they landed for the night. By way of recommending his cellar to them, the landlord of "the White Castle" repeated the jingling proverb, "*Wartzburg am Stein, Hochheim am Mayn, Bacharach am Rhein, da wächst gewöhnlich der beste Wein.*" Then Ingelheim, where was a castle of Charlemagne; then Bingen and Bishop Hatto's Mausthurm; then Katzenellenbogen, which Meyer affirms possesses so remarkable an echo as to repeat twice perfectly its own name; then Cologne, where they landed and visited the cathedral, climbing two hundred and forty-seven steps to the top of the unfinished spire. At Dusseldorf they began to find themselves within the limits of the Spanish occupation, and to see here and there the ruins of towns destroyed during the war. They were hailed now and then by armed Spanish sentinels, and obliged to come to for examination of passports. At the long island where the Spey enters the Rhine they passed the Schenkenschantz, the fortress of the grim, freebooting patriot, Martin Schenk, who, in his retreat from his night attack on Nimguen, sunk in his armor to the bottom of the river. On the 21st they arrived at Dort, and were lodged at the hotel provided by the municipality till their private quarters were got ready. The next day a billet was sent in, to the effect that "Mynheer Cornelis Ruys, wine cooper, would lodge Dr. Wolfgang Meyer and servant." Meyer had in

his youth spent some time in England, studying at Oxford. He spoke the language readily, and naturally came into social relations with the English deputies. He kept an album, in which many of the members of the Synod entered their names, with a sentiment in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew.

Down the Rhine also voyaged John Jacob Breitingger, pastor at Zurich, and Giovanni Diodati, professor of theology in the University of Geneva, both of them passionate opponents of the Remonstrants.

Walter Balcanqual, a young scholar from beyond the Tweed, but educated at Cambridge, appeared as representative of the Scottish Kirk. His national dress of kilt and short hose proved so offensive to the decorous Hollanders, that he was forced to exchange it for more clerical raiment. Balcanqual was much trusted by King James, and kept up correspondence from Dort with the English Government.

One of the prominent members of the Synod was Antony Walaëus, pastor and professor in Middleburg. He was sent, at the request of the States-General, to prepare John of Barneveld for death. The advocate said, "Why have you come? I am an old man, and may be presumed to know very well what I have to do under these circumstances. I have other things to occupy me than listening to you." But afterwards, as he drew nearer the hour of execution, he joined devoutly in worship with his chaplains. On the 13th May, a few days before the final adjournment of the Synod, he suffered death in the inner court at the Hague. Diodati observed, with a jest, that "the *canons* of Dort had shot off the advocate's head."

By the beginning of November the deputies were all assembled, except that those from the French churches were forbidden by order of the king to attend. The members actually present consisted of five professors of the Dutch universities, thirty-six pastors of the French and Walloon churches, the latter speaking the French language, twenty elders, and twenty-eight foreign deputies. Besides these, the States-General appointed eighteen lay commissioners, who sat by themselves in the Synod, with their own chairman and secretary, and supervised all the proceedings under the authority of the government.

The place of meeting was the *Doele*, or guild hall—a large

edifice, previously used for military exercises. The identical building is still standing, but unworthily employed as a place of low amusement. The first public service was held on the morning of the 13th November. The members of the Synod marched in solemn procession to the great church of St. Mary, where, in the presence of a crowded assembly, Balthazar Lydius, the senior pastor of Dort, preached a sermon from Acts 15 : 20, on the authority and value of church synods. The members then proceeded to the appointed place of meeting, and the Synod was formally opened with prayer in the Latin language by the same distinguished minister. The sentiments of this prayer are so worthy of the occasion that it will not be unsuitable to quote them in part. After the introductory topics of adoration and confession of sin, the prayer proceeded as follows :

“Thou hast confounded our language, and the conclusion of our foreign war is become almost the beginning of a civil one. The bitterness of thy bride hath been most bitter in the time of peace. Many laborers have trodden down thy vineyard ; and according to thy threatenings, O Lord, we were very near falling into that unhappy state in which one province and city had taken up arms against another. But in thy wrath thou hast remembered mercy. Thou hast inclined the hearts of the rulers of our country, and inflamed them with the zeal of thine house, so that they have earnestly sought for that which makes for the peace of Jerusalem. For this purpose is this national synod assembled, to the end that we may inquire at the mouth of the Lord concerning the differences that have arisen amongst us, and that thy law may be a light to disperse the clouds of error. But forasmuch as all depends, O Lord, upon thy blessing, we beseech thee that, according to thy promise, where two or three are gathered together in thy name thou wilt be in the midst of them, that thou wilt vouchsafe to preside over this Synod by thy Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of peace and truth. And since the Holy Scriptures must be explained by the same Spirit by which they were delivered, and can only be understood by the pure in mind, we pray thee that thou wilt first purify our minds, and afterwards enlighten them, that we may thoroughly understand and then devoutly handle thy Word. Suffer us not, O Lord, to deceive any man by thy Scriptures, nor let us ourselves be deceived ; but grant that, seeking the truth therein, we may find it, and having found it may defend it with a steady faith. Let us not aim at vainglory, thwarting one another, envying one another, but carefully preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Cause us always to remember that the contention which joins us to God is much better than the peace which separates us from him ; that there are two dear and twin sisters, Truth and Peace ; and that Peace will not abide with us unless we cherish her sister Truth. Grant that any who are deceived and have wandered into error may be brought back into the right way. May we remember that the confession

of our ignorance is the highest wisdom; that there may be truth in what appears incredible to men, and falsehood in the greatest probability; and that the noblest of all victories is to triumph over an abandoned error."

No one who considers the poverty of our information in regard to the proceedings of that greater assembly which met, twenty-five years later, in the Abbey Church at Westminster, and reflects upon the satisfaction it would give us to have some such record of its opening services, will object to these particulars. We know a good deal about the arrangements for the Synod of Dort, its official proceedings and the course of debate. We know who drew its canons, and a great variety of incidents illustrating its views and spirit; but of the Westminster Assembly we do not even know what hands shaped our unequalled symbols. What would we not give for a full record of even one day's discussion, such as Baillie could have left us, with characteristic descriptions of the leading debaters: of that "very active and sharp man," Dr. Burgess; of the acute Gillespie and the saintly Rutherford; of Herbert Palmer, the author, as now appears, of those "Characteristics of a Good Christian" which have been heretofore attributed to Lord Bacon; of the stout Erastians, Nye and Coleman; and the stubborn and impracticable Independent, Burroughs, whom Lightfoot, with unusual acrimony, styles "a wretch who ought to be branded to all posterity, who seeks for some devilish end to hinder so great a good of the two nations;" or of OLIVER himself, who took his seat as a member of the Assembly on the 5th January, 1644? In what archives lie hid, packed away in ponderous oaken chests, any full, original records of the Assembly, like those which, closed with eight strong padlocks, are from time to time solemnly opened and inspected by the representatives of the seven original provinces which took part in the Synod? Alas, that if any such ever existed, they have perished beyond the hope of recovery!

The little city of Dordrecht, on its island at the confluence of the Maas and Wall, was, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a strongly fortified town of not more than fifteen thousand inhabitants; compactly built, with narrow streets and tall houses, some of them of great magnificence. On the walls, the soldiers of Prince Maurice kept faithful watch and ward against Span-

ish treachery. Woe to the unhappy delegate who, tempted by an invitation to some neighboring villa, or by the attractions of a sail to Gorkum or Gertruydenberg, failed to return before the gates were closed at evening gun-fire. Vain were all solicitations for admission. He was inexorably left to wander by the side of the moat, hearing the city clocks chime the hours, and the sentinels on the walls pass the challenge, till at sunrise bars were drawn and drawbridge lowered for the tide of traffic to flow in and out the busy city. Reassembled in the Doele on the day following the opening services, the Synod after prayer, with which each session invariably began and ended, was organized by the election of a president. From Mr. Motley, whose casual notices of the Synod of Dort are hasty and prejudiced to a degree unworthy so accomplished a writer, we may take at least a truthful portrait of that officer: "The great John Bogerman, with fierce, handsome face, beak and eye of a bird of prey, and a deluge of curly brown beard reaching down to his waist, took his seat as moderator."

For imposing presence, strength of voice, and rude, imperious force of character to sway such an assembly, no better choice could have been made; but he was often overbearing towards the members, and it is universally confessed that his treatment of the Remonstrants was in the last degree harsh and insolent. When Episcopius and his associates contumaciously refused to proceed according to the method prescribed by the Synod, Bogerman dismissed them with a long speech of reproach and insult. "You may pretend what you please," he said, "but the real motive of your obstinacy is, that you regard the Synod as a party, and presume to set yourselves on a level with it. You have been treated with all gentleness, mildness, patience, and long-suffering; all the return you have made has been nothing but base artifices, cheats, and lies. You are not worthy that the Synod should trouble itself to have any further dealings with you. You began with a lie and you end with a lie. We shall take care to inform all Christendom of your obstinacy, and you will find that the church wants no spiritual weapons for your punishment. I therefore dismiss you. In the name of the Lords Commissioners and of this Synod, begone!"

With the president were associated two vice-presidents and two scribes. The States Commissioners sat by themselves at the president's right, and had their own chairman and secretary. At the left of the moderator's chair, towards the fire, on elevated seats, sat the English deputies; next to them the other foreign delegates; then the home members. The Remonstrants had a place in the middle of the room, a little like the prisoners' dock. Each member had a desk provided with stationery and candles, for in the dark winter days and the ill-lighted room the supply of daylight was often very imperfect. The assembly was not numerous—scarce a hundred—and in the large room there was much space to spare. Into this, so long as the Synod sat with open doors, or until the middle of January, the public were permitted to enter; and such was the interest taken in the settlement of this exasperated controversy, that the vacant space was packed day after day, not only with the clergy, with students, reputable burghers, and foreign visitors, but with boys and artisans. The ladies attended in great force, and had, we are happy to know, the best places assigned them. Hostile observers were not lacking. Jesuits mixed themselves with the crowd, as spies on the proceedings of the Protestants. Some of them spread the report among the country people that the devil had come in bodily shape, and flown away with Dr. Bogerman, which brought a great crowd of rustics to Dort to learn the particulars.

It was decided that the medium of communication in the Synod should be the Latin; but whether all the members were able to express themselves or understand others in that tongue better than the bishops at the late Vatican Council, may admit of a doubt. Much bad Latin was probably spoken; and one learned Theban was found busy with his Lexicon trying to spell out a speech he was anxious to deliver.

The most distinguished and honored of the members from abroad were the English delegates, Dr. Carlton, Bishop of Llandaff; Dr. George Hall, Dean of Worcester; Drs. Davenant and Ward, and Dr. Goad, who on the withdrawal of the Dean of Worcester took his place. Hall, Davenant, and Ward were all of them afterwards raised to the episcopate. Too much importance, perhaps, has been attached by Presbyterian writers to

the presence of these Anglican divines in the Synod, as giving an episcopal sanction to the validity of ordination by presbyters. They had no authority to speak or act for the English Church. They represented only the conceit and prejudices of that burlesque British Solomon, who was a doctrinal Calvinist, while maintaining at the same time that "Presbytery and Monarchy agree no better than God and the Devil."

But it is true, also, that Bishop Carlton, Dr. George Hall, and the others, did actually represent very faithfully the dominant spirit of the Anglican Church at the period, viz., an exaggerated opinion of the value of episcopacy on the one hand, and the beginning of that sagging down into Arminianism on the other, which developed itself in such disastrous completeness before the close of the century. Bishop Carlton, and Dr. Goad after him, called Gomar sharply to account in the Synod for quoting the Seventeenth Article in the high Calvinistic sense, thus giving a pre-intimation of the tendency to put an Arminian construction upon it; and he did not hesitate to say, that all the troubles in the Netherlands were due to their want of the blessing of episcopal government. Of the Dean of Worcester (who is too often called, in his relation to the Synod, "Bishop Hall"), it is well known that he was a zealot for episcopacy. He was the chief of several disputants who managed the argument in favor of prelacy, against Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, and the other divines, who wrote under the name of Smectymnus. No episcopal champion of modern times has added any thing of value to the argument for the divine right of bishops, contained in the Polemics of Bishop Hall. He maintained that "the presbyterian government has no footing either in Scripture or in the practice of the church in all ages, from Christ's time to the present." It would not seem of much consequence to quote Hall's presence in the Synod of Dort as involving a sanction of presbyterian orders, when he only *excused* them in the churches of the Netherlands, on the ground of insuperable difficulties. The Kirk of Scotland, which might easily have had bishops, he utterly rejected, as wilfully contumacious against Christ's appointment.

The English delegates to the Synod disapproved of the severe measures adopted against the Remonstrants, and refused

to take any part in the sentence of their condemnation. The abrupt withdrawal of the Dean of Worcester and his return home is believed (notwithstanding his oft-quoted saying that "the Synod of Dort was the place likest heaven of any he had ever known") to have been owing not so much to sickness, as to dissatisfaction with the spirit of the proceedings. The report which he and the other deputies made on their return is supposed not to have been too favorable. It was soon after that the famous Echo Distich on the Synod appeared in London :

"Dordrechtī synodus, nodus ; chorus integer, æger ;  
Conventus, ventus ; sessio, stramen. Amen !"

Back among the crowd towards the door, wedged in among whispering women and unruly boys, sat one whom, if the Synod had known his merits and his reputation at home, and the important place the notes he was trying to take would occupy in the opinion of later times, they might have been glad to accommodate with a seat of privilege on the floor, the "ever memorable Mr. John Hales, of Eaton." He came to Dort as the chaplain and confidential correspondent of the English Minister, Sir Dudley Carleton, bringing letters of introduction from him to "Mr. Bogermannus." It would have been worth while to see the interview between these two men : the small, gentle, bright-eyed English scholar, and the big, burly moderator, with his coarse voice, and the elaborately amiable manner he was able on occasion to assume. He made profound acknowledgments to the English Minister for the honor of his letters, and promised, at Hales' request, to see that he received a full report of whatever had occurred in the Synod before his arrival ; but he probably found no time to attend to the matter. When Hales called on Festus Hommius, chief scribe of the Synod, he got very little satisfaction. Without the help of a candle, in the dim back part of the room, he attempted to jot down the notes for those celebrated letters, which are still our best source for an understanding of the interior working of the Synod. His opinion of that body, and of the business it was engaged about, underwent considerable modification during the course of his attendance. On the 1st February, 1619, he wrote his last letter

but one to Sir Dudley Carleton, desiring that arrangements might be made for the payment of his bills, so that he could withdraw. "*Necque enim* (said he), *patribus, ita ut solent, negotium tractantibus, operæ pretium esse arbitror, diutius hic commorari.*" In his closing letter he excused his departure by adding that the public sessions, on which alone he was permitted to attend, were simply for show and popular effect; the real business was all managed, as at Trent, in secret committees. "*Horologii non dissimile nostrorum est concilium; instrumenta quæ totam versant machinam, sub aspectum non cadant. Quæ ponderis non nihil habent, omnia in privatis agitantur conventibus; quæ publice geruntur, ad ostentationem et captandam benevolentiam, unice comparantur.*" Perhaps the complaint was unreasonable; but he thought it was not a very dignified employment for him to be staying at Dort merely to report the time of day: anybody else could do that.

Near the English delegates, but on a lower bench, sat Walter Balcanqual, deputed by King James to represent the Scottish Kirk. We can easily conceive that his Scottish Latin orthoepy was as much a matter of wonder to the Synod as his costume. On his first entrance at the Doele, the scribes, and two other members appointed for the purpose, met him at the door and conducted him to his seat. The president then welcomed him in the name of the Synod, and caused his credentials to be read; after which he took the usual synodical oath. Balcanqual then returned thanks to the Synod for their welcome, informing them how zealously the Scottish nation had always labored for the peace and welfare of the republic; and that he had now come with the desire and purpose to contribute any thing he could towards the pacification of the churches of the Netherlands. The king his master had straitly charged him at his departure, and with greater earnestness than could be imagined, to exhort the clergy of the provinces to peace. In the result, however, his hopes were a good deal disappointed. Somewhat surprising in a Scots commissioner, he was more moderate in his views, and more in sympathy with the Remonstrants, than even the English delegates. Writing to Sir Dudley Carleton as to the second contra-Remonstrant article, which set forth the doctrine of a limited atonement, he said

he would rather have his arm chopped from his shoulder than subscribe any such thing. "The North Hollanders lack words to express their horror of the propositions of the Remonstrants. That Christ died for all men, they call false and heretical, dishonoring to God and fatal to the souls of men. As for the casting out of the Remonstrants I wish I were able to say without scandal or offence what a strange proceeding it was, and how much the Synod was thought to be in the wrong. After the votes of not more than a third part of the Synod had been collected, the Remonstrants were called in and dismissed with such a sharp and thundering speech as would scarce be credited. Your honor's censure and condemnation of this sentence is just."

Among the members who were largely responsible for the violence and tyranny of the proceedings against the Remonstrants, may be mentioned, next to Bogerman himself, Festus Hommius, one of the secretaries; and Sybrandt Lubbert, Professor in the University of Franeker. The latter had perhaps lost something of his discretion and judgment by reason of age. He raged and stormed in so violent a way at the Remonstrants, that both the moderator and the chairman of the lay commissioners, Dr. Martin Gregory, were obliged to call him to order, and require him either to take seat or to speak with greater decorum. Balcanqual said that "it would be impossible to take severer vengeance upon him than by simply repeating his own intemperate expressions; no one would have endured such language from a man in his senses; but Sybrandt and Gomar were naturally mad, and nobody should blame them any more than he would a stone for falling down." Finally, his violence and garrulity lost him all hold on the respect of the Synod. When he got up to speak, the members would begin to laugh, and say, "There's old Sybrandt again on his legs."

Festus Hommius, pastor at Leyden, was equally zealous against the Remonstrants, but more discreet—a shrewd, prompt, active man, familiar with all the routine of business, much like Dr. Burgess at the Westminster Assembly. Many of the members indulged in violent language against the Remonstrants. A prominent lay commissioner remarked that "he wished they

were all where pepper grows ;” probably meaning some warm place.

A few days after the opening of the Synod, a great comet brandished its fiery tresses in the air, drawing out its train to the length of fifty-four degrees : a text for the superstitious, and long remembered as the harbinger of those furies of fire, famine, and slaughter which soon after began to desolate Central Europe.

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