

# **The British Delegation at the Synod of Dort: Assembling and Assembled; Returning and Returned**

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## **Michael Dewar**

Sacrosancta Synodus Dordrecht  
Wolfgang Meyer (Basel)

The Christian World since the days of the Apostles has never a Synod of more excellent Divines, taking one thing with another, than this [the Westminster Assembly] and the Synod of Dort.

Richard Baxter

I will live and die in the suffrage of that Venerable Synod.

Joseph Hall

There I bid John Calvin goodnight.

John Hales

What the *Arminians* held. . . ? All the best Bishopricks and Deaneries in England.

George Morley

Would to God I had never seen thee.

Matthias Martinus (Bremen)

## **The Dutch Background**

In 1610 the United Provinces, liberated from Spain, found their hitherto united Protestantism divided. A liberal school of Calvinists, disciples of Jacobus Arminius, presented a Remonstrance against the rigid orthodoxy of Gomar. The popular Calvinist Stadholder, Maurice of Orange, favoured the Counter Remonstrants. The Dutch oligarchy, led by Advocate Oldenbarnevelt, were identified with the Remonstrant Arminians.

In 1618 the States General invited representatives of the Anglican and other Reformed, but not Lutheran, Churches in support of the Counter Remonstrants to a National Synod at Dort. James I and VI, unsympathetic to Puritans and Presbyterians in England and Scotland, sent five Episcopalians to represent him. Calvinists, though Erastians, they followed his eirenic and moderating advice.

The British Delegates were regarded as *primi inter pares*, maintaining the Episcopal position in an otherwise Presbyterian Synod; mediating between both parties; and indeed between Calvinists and Lutherans, whom they refused to disallow as not 'Reformed'.

The Synod's findings inevitably went against the Remonstrants. In Netherlands history 'the Canons of Dort shot off the Advocate's head'. In British theology John Hales was not alone in 'bidding Calvin goodnight'. Between Dort and Westminster (1643), another Theocratic assembly called by Erastian means, *Ecclesia Anglicana*, had moved from its earlier Calvinism to an Arminianism less liberal than that of the Remonstrants.

## **1618—King James I: Bohemia and Holland**

When the Thirty Years' War began, Protestantism lacked an obvious 'father figure'. That position, once held by William the Silent, and paradoxically by Elizabeth of England, devolved by default on their successors until the rise of Gustavus Adolphus. But the Stadholder Maurice, though now Sovereign Prince of Orange, was in the United Provinces only the servant of the States General. Oldenbarnevelt, the Advocate of Holland, was their chief executive. These two heirs of *le Taciturne* symbolized the dichotomy of the Dutch Republic. In Great Britain James I suffered no such limits to his sovereignty. Heir to Elizabeth in Church and State, he resisted Presbyterianism in Scotland, and Puritanism in England, as inimical to Monarchy. But a reaction from the Calvinian discipline of his youth had not entirely eliminated his sympathy for Calvinistic doctrine.<sup>1</sup> His contribution to the tragedy of 1618 was to support Maurice of Orange theologically at Dort, rather than his own son-in-law, the Elector Palatine, militarily in Bohemia. In England, they were respectively known as 'Grave' [*Graaf*] Maurice, and 'the Palgrave' (*Pfalzgraf*).

### **'The Dilettante Theologian'**

No Tudor monarchs took their titles of Defender of the Faith and Supreme Earthly Governor of the Church of England more seriously than King James.<sup>2</sup> In Scotland and France Calvinism tended towards rebellion. In the Netherlands it had played a major part in the Spanish War, in which Oldenbarnevelt had secured a twelve years' truce. Thus Dutch Calvinism enjoyed an almost unique quasi-Establishment position.

William the Silent's own brand had been moderate. His Coligny widow, Louise de Teligny, and her son, Frederick Henry, were known supporters of the Arminian Uytenbogaert, who had previously been Maurice's chaplain. The Arminians had the support of the Advocate, and their 'High Mightinesses', the States General. Maurice was a soldier, not a theologian. It was said that he did not know if Predestination were 'blue or green', but he did know that in Dutch 'Spain' (*Spanje*) and 'Orange' (*Oranje*) rhymed.<sup>3</sup> This gave him standing with the militantly patriotic mob against Oldenbarnevelt and the oligarchy. What began as a dispute between the Leyden Professors, Hermensen [Arminius] and Gomar, ended in the division of Dutch Calvinism and a near schism between Church and State. The Synod of Dort was the closest to the Council of Trent that Protestantism was to know.

Uytenbogaert, a disciple of Arminius, had drawn up a Remonstrance against the strictly scholastic Calvinism of Gomar (1610). It seemed to him to exceed the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism, as well as Scripture itself, in its rigidity. Its chief issues were the five 'Knotty Points', which had divided Pelagius from Augustine and would divide the Jesuits from Jansen, and Wesley from Whitefield. It had been presented to the States General through the Advocate who, with Hugo Grotius, was known to be Remonstrant in sympathy. But the majority of the Dutch Reformed clergy, except in Utrecht, were Counter Remonstrant. This alignment between the quasi royalism of the House of Orange and strict Calvinism, and 'Republicanism' and Arminianism, was quite the opposite of the English and Scottish situation. It seriously alarmed the King, who saw the similarity between himself and the egalitarian Puritans and the Stadholder and the 'Erastian' Arminians.<sup>4</sup> His 'No Bishop! No King!' foreshadowed the later Dutch '*Oranje Boven*' ('Up Orange'). But his orthodoxy had been equally outraged by the appointment of another heterodox Professor to a Leyden chair (1611). This was Conrad Vorstius, whose heretical books were burned at Oxford, Cambridge, and St. Paul's Cross. He left the States, through his Ambassador Winwood, in no doubt that the heretic should have followed his heresies to the flames.

Seven years later a Dutch National Synod was called at Dort (Dordrecht) in the Province of Holland. The new British Ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton, had been sedulously ‘stoking the fires’ against the Remonstrants.<sup>5</sup> The Stadholder had no authority to call the Synod, for which his supporters were pressing. That was the privilege of the States General, who were not as enthusiastic as the Counter Remonstrant clergy. But in June 1618 invitations were sent to all the Dutch Provincial Synods, as well as the other foreign Reformed Churches. These included France, Geneva, the Swiss Cantons, several West German states, Brandenburg and England. They were essentially Calvinist and ‘conformist’ Churches. The Augsburg principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* was naturally as acceptable to Dutch Calvinists, as to all German Lutherans and Roman Catholics, although this was not confirmed until the Peace of Westphalia thirty years later. Louis XIII refused to allow the Huguenot nominees to leave France.<sup>6</sup> The Calvinist Elector of Lutheran Brandenburg diplomatically did the same.<sup>7</sup> In England the Dutch Congregations, previously represented at the Synods of their National Church, were prevented from sending delegates by King James’ influence.<sup>8</sup> He had a horror of Dissent, both at home and abroad, no less than that of Archbishop Laud in the next reign.

### **The English Delegation**

The English Delegation was itself appointed by him and not by the Church. This Erastianism was characteristic of the English, but not of the Scottish, Church. The first four English delegates included a Bishop and two future Bishops. They were Dr. George Carleton (not related to the British Ambassador), Bishop of Llandaff; Dr. Joseph Hall, Dean of Worcester; Dr. John Davenant, Master of Queens’ College, Cambridge, and Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity; and Dr. Samuel Ward, Master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and Archdeacon of Taunton. Jacobean clergy have sometimes been dismissed as time servers, but these men bridged the gap between the Elizabethans and the Laudians with consistency and dignity.<sup>9</sup> Writing of Archdeacon Ward over a generation later. Thomas Fuller’s tribute could have included them all:

he turned with the times as a rock with the tide; and for his uncomplying therewith was imprisoned in St John’s College in Cambridge. In a word he was counted a Puritan before these times, and Popish in these times, and yet being always the same was a true Protestant at all times.<sup>10</sup>

As Elizabethans they were Calvinists to a man. But they were ‘Protestants’, not ‘Puritans’, not cavilling at ceremonies or ‘scrupuling’ at surplices. John Whitgift, Elizabeth’s favourite Archbishop, had set his seal on the Lambeth Articles (1595), which were a High Calvinist extension of the Thirty-nine Articles. James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, wrote the Irish Articles (1615), which passed almost *verbatim* into the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647).<sup>11</sup>

The delegation received their royal mandate at Newmarket in October 1618. They were urged to inure themselves fully into the Latin tongue, to show unity among themselves, to keep to Scripture and Anglican doctrine, to avoid controversial theology in the pulpit, to encourage the Dutch divines to do the same. To act as mediators between the disputants as well as between the Continental Confessions, [Lutheran and Calvinist] to keep in touch with him through his Ambassador, and to use moderation in everything. There is no doubt that the Delegation was faithful to the King’s instructions in every detail. The two Cambridge dons, Davenant and Ward, were granted a further royal audience for two hours at Royston. They took their several ways to the coast, casually managing to miss the Dutch boat sent to fetch

them over. Taking a later boat to Middelburg, they reached the Hague on October 27 in time for the Stadholder's reception.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Synod Assembling**

On November 3 the Synod of Dort began. Like the Westminster Assembly, with which it has been compared by Richard Baxter, it was a theocratic assembly convened by Erastian means.<sup>13</sup> The next six months were a testing time for the varying loyalties of the Anglicans as Christians, Calvinists, and Episcopalians. This essay is not concerned with the intricacies of theology, or of church government, but with the interplay of the Britons against the international background of this semi-Ecumenical Synod. Two other Englishmen played considerable parts at Dort, though not members of the British Delegation. Their position was not analogous to that of the Scottish Commissioners at Westminster, who so greatly influenced the Assembly. The Scots were 'Assessors' only, with no voting powers. But William Ames and John Hales were not members of the Synod at all. The 'ever memorable' John Hales of Eton was chaplain to the British Ambassador. His *Letters from Dort*, written to Sir Dudley Carleton, give as clear a picture of the background of the Synod as Robert Baillie's gossipy *Letters and Journals* of the Westminster Assembly. Hales's natural tolerance, and rational approach, modified his own Calvinism and also, perceptibly, the Counter Remonstrant sympathies of his master.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand 'Amesius' was one of those English Puritans who had found his spiritual home with 'Dutch Divinity'. His position at Dort was anomalous. As the only English Puritan present he was 'employed' by the Counter Remonstrants to keep a watching brief over the deliberations. As an exiled English Calvinist of Dutch Gomarist sympathies, he was *persona non grata* with the English court, even with the Calvinist Archbishop Abbot. Yet he continued Hales's work of reporting to the Ambassador when Hales, like Hall, had gone home. On one occasion he displeased Bishop Carleton by handing him some of his anti-Episcopal writings in a book of Grevinchovius, a Dutch co-religionist.<sup>15</sup> Otherwise he seems to have maintained the English tradition of impartiality.

The Synod was divided into *Interi* (Dutch and Walloons) and *Exteri* (Foreigners). The former consisted of thirty-seven ministers, nineteen lay elders and eighteen representatives of the States. There were also five Divinity Professors, including Episcopius, the chief spokesman of the Remonstrants. The *Exteri* numbered twenty-six. A painting by P. Weyts shows them in session, exactly representing a crude engraving in the official *Acta Synodi Dordrechtii* (1620), and also the Dort Medal. The members can be identified by their names and 'Colleges'. The meeting place was a secular, not a sacred building, but fitted with box-like pews for the delegates. The *Praeses* (Moderator) was John Bogermann, a Frisian from Leeuwarden, supported as 'scribes' by Festus Hommius and Daniel Heinsius; both from Leyden, the storm centre of the controversy. They sat, with their 'assessors', at the top of the hall; a long table for the Remonstrants ran down its length below them. The representatives of the States General were on their right, and the other Netherlanders beyond them. The *Exteri* were on their left, from the British down to the Emdeners. Next to the favoured Anglicans were the empty seats for the French, which only served to emphasize the absence of the eirenic Pierre du Moulin of Charenton, and the 'Huguenot Pope', du Plessis Mornay. Beyond them sat the Palatines. Below the bar of the house the general public, some four or five hundred of either sex were admitted. The Dutch shared with John Selden a passion for polemics, 'coming as the Persians came to see wild asses fight'.<sup>16</sup>

After the Synod had assembled and elected its officers, the first official business was the taking of the Oath. In view of the harsh treatment accorded to the Remonstrants, it was

afterwards suggested that an Oath was taken to condemn them unheard and out of hand. Although this seems to have been the policy of the Counter Remonstrant majority, it was not so stated in the Oath. It was indignantly denied as late as 1651 by Joseph Hall, who was always at great pains to defend the integrity of the Synod.<sup>17</sup> Although the Remonstrants were 'predestined' to defeat, and then their Articles soundly condemned, the British, the Bremeners and the Hessians tried to ensure that they received a fair hearing. But these 'Colleges' were a minority among the *Exteri*, the most rigidly Gomarist being the Palatines and the Genevans. Years later the Independent John Goodwin was controverted by Bishop Hall on this very issue of discrimination against the Remonstrants, although he had not stayed to hear the most virulent attacks against them.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Comments of John Hales**

Before Episcopius and his party arrived, the Synod dealt with the more positive part of its agenda. This included the setting up of a Committee on the lines of the Hampton Court Conference, for the translation of the Bible into Dutch. Other preliminary discussions ranged from the propriety of illustrated and annotated Bibles to the baptism of the children of slaves ('Ethnicks') in the East Indies. But the entry of the Remonstrants was the *pièce de résistance* for which the Counter Remonstrants eagerly waited. Hitherto their only sympathizers had been a small group from Utrecht, who had the dangerous privilege of introducing them when they arrived on December 6, at the twenty-second session. It has not been lost on a modern Scottish historian that Episcopius's name is simply the Latinization of 'Bishop', which did not predispose later Scottish theologians to favour his views!<sup>19</sup> His opening speech was very eloquent and made a good impression on the English. It must be remembered that both parties were Calvinists, the Gomarists being stricter than the Arminians, who reserved the Protestant right of private judgment and of protest.<sup>20</sup> Their appeal to reason struck John Hales very forcibly. A member of Lord Falkland's Great Tew circle, like William Chillingworth, whose *Religion of Protestants* so antagonized the Westminster Divines, he was a man of latitude. His friend Anthony Farindon records that at Dort he 'bid John Calvin good night'.<sup>21</sup> It may be doubted whether John Hales had ever really bid Calvin 'good morning'. His Calvinism was probably no more than the contemporary Englishman's admiration for the fighting creed of the Continental Protestant at a distance. His change of heart is attributed to the 'well pressing' of St. John III, verse 16, by Episcopius. This was the favourite Arminian 'proof text', with its promise of Universal Salvation. But it seems more probable that this exposition was by Matthias Martinius of Bremen, the most liberal minded of all the *Exteri*, not excepting the Anglicans.<sup>22</sup> Consequently John Hales reported, drily, to Sir Dudley that 'Our Synod goes on like a watch, the main wheels on which the whole business turns are least in sight. For all things of moment are acted in private sessions. What is done in public is only for show and entertainment.'<sup>23</sup>

The Remonstrants soon discovered that they had not been invited to a theological conference but summoned to a heresy trial. Kept under strict surveillance, they registered a protest against a 'packed' house. They pertinently compared it with a *Lutheran* Synod sitting in judgment on *Calvinist* doctrine.<sup>24</sup> This shrewd comparison was unanswerable, as the analogy was too close to be acceptable to the Counter Remonstrant majority. A letter from the Huguenot absentee, du Moulin, was read, urging that a Confession be drawn up to satisfy both Lutherans and Calvinists. But the Moderator only gave 'fair words' and marked it 'to be considered'. Sir Dudley wrote to the Calvinist Archbishop Abbot that this

does ill suit with our business of suppressing the Arminians, and therefore it will not be thought fit to make mention thereof in the Synod.<sup>25</sup>

George Abbot was always a shadowy figure at Lambeth, ‘caretaking’ during this Calvinist interlude between the strict Bancroft and the stricter Laud. He was approached by Bishop Carleton on behalf of the English on the vexed question of ‘Universal’ or ‘Limited’ Redemption, on which they were divided. The majority inclined to his own stricter interpretation.<sup>26</sup> Later, having the misfortune to shoot a Hampshire gamekeeper, he remained in merely formal office till his death. His influence on the Delegation was, however, less strong than that of either the King or the Ambassador, although his chaplain, Dr. Thomas Goad, was appointed to succeed Dean Hall.

### **The Departure of Dean Hall**

The sudden departure of the ablest of all the Anglicans has always had an air of mystery about it. He had readily accepted the invitation to ‘entertain’ the waiting Delegation, with a sermon, declined by the more cautious Bishop Carleton. This ‘polite and pathetic’ sermon was well received, although it ended with an appeal to do away with the ‘ill-omened’ names of Remonstrant and Counter Remonstrant, Calvinist and Arminian, and to ‘lay aside all prejudice and party feeling that we may be happily united in the enjoyment of the common truth’.<sup>27</sup> This was entirely in keeping with the King’s counsel to ‘mitigate extremism’ and to ‘promote unity’. But within a fortnight Hales wrote that ‘Mr. Dean of Worcester is very crazy and sickly of late and keeps his chamber, neither hath he been in the Synod some of these last Sessions’.<sup>28</sup> By the New Year he had slipped away to the Hague, ‘giving notice to no man’. Hales ‘wisht him an ill journey, for this discourtesy’, but ‘hoped he had a good one’ [*sic*].<sup>29</sup> In later years Bishop Hall was accused of feigning a diplomatic illness, and evading the controversies that would arise, and of accepting the Arminian conclusions.<sup>30</sup> This was strongly denied in his correspondence with Davenant, by then also a bishop.<sup>31</sup> It was not suggested at the time, when he took a graceful farewell, apparently *in absentia*, and was publicly thanked for his services. He was loaded with gifts, including a generous travel allowance, and the Dort Medal and chain, now the property of his old College.<sup>32</sup> In a lively passage Fuller noted that thirty years later (‘What cannot God and good air do?’) he had ‘gone over the graves of all his colleagues’.<sup>33</sup> At Dort, as in Devon, Joseph Hall had a ready explanation for his sudden change of plan. In the late spring he was writing to Samuel Ward about the King’s health, the Queen’s funeral and his own ‘Hollandish distemper’. Clearly his own and his Sovereigns’ healths were of great interest to him.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Arrival of Dr. Balcanqual**

Unlike the Westminster Fathers, who worked ostentatiously over Christmas, the Dordracanists dispersed for the holidays on December 21. Holland on the eve of its Golden Age was very different from England of the Solemn League and Covenant. In this period, between the departure of Dean Hall and the coming of Dr. Thomas Goad, another royal representative arrived in Holland. Compared with the enigmatic Walter Balcanqual, Joseph Hall seems positively opaque. But this is largely because later generations have misunderstood his position at Dort. Often thought to ‘represent the Church of Scotland’, he was neither a member of it, nor a Presbyterian minister.<sup>37</sup> The Scottish Church, under pressure from King James, more subtle than that of King Charles and Archbishop Laud, was entering its Episcopal phase. But the younger Balcanqual, son of a strictly Presbyterian father, had no mandate from or to the Church of Scotland, either before or after Dort. Some writers have seen him as another Presbyterian in an almost Pan-Presbyterian Synod instead of a solitary Scottish Episcopalian forming a united British College with his English brethren.<sup>38</sup> This confusion may be partly due to his ‘High Calvinism’, which was equally shared by the Bishop of Llandaff and the Archbishop of Canterbury’s chaplain.<sup>39</sup> It was certainly not a

Presbyterian prerogative in the early seventeenth century. All the Westminster Divines were in Episcopal Orders, except for the two Huguenot Pastors of London, representing the Channel Islands in the Diocese of Winchester.<sup>40</sup> Neither was 'High Calvinism' then incompatible with what was later called 'High Anglicanism', as for example, Archbishop John Whitgift, who held to both. It is a mistake to read back modern ecclesiastical alignments into the Tudor and Stuart periods.

The confusion could also be due to a curious disclaimer by Sir Dudley to Archbishop Abbot of any 'Undecency of apparel' on Dr. Balcanqual's part; and a confirmation of the 'general satisfaction' he had given.<sup>41</sup> There is also an interesting note that a special box pew had to be built for him in front of the other Anglicans, throwing it out of symmetry with the rest. Weyts's painting shows a solitary beruffed and high-hatted divine seated in front of the others. But his seat is now symmetrical with the stoves in front of the other Delegates' benches. Any divergence between Balcanqual and the other Episcopalians would have been on grounds of nationality, not doctrine or discipline. The Scottish Episcopalians, like the English, preached in black Geneva gowns. The Scottish Presbyterians wore cloaks of 'Presbyterian true blue'.<sup>42</sup> A graduate of both Edinburgh and Oxford (Pembroke College), he became Dean of Durham and later of Rochester. This was later held against him by the irrepressible Baillie, the Boswell of Westminster:

We have been much mistaken with that man; we esteemed him ever a Dordracanist, and opposed to Canterbury in that cause; but now we see he has made the King in his Manifesto print as much for the Arminians as the heart of Canterbury could wish.<sup>43</sup>

By that time (1638) 'Arminianism' had lost its original Dutch meaning of Liberal Calvinism, and was applied to anyone who leaned towards Episcopacy and Royalism. Similarly 'Puritan' or 'Calvinist' had come to mean anyone who opposed Charles I and Laud, however moderate his Churchmanship.

Balcanqual arrived just before the Christmas holidays, and Goad (replacing Hall) on January 19th. The latter's personality did not make itself felt as much as that of the other Britons. But there is little evidence to support the suggestion that Goad 'turned Arminian' at Dort.<sup>44</sup> He certainly 'divided' for High Calvinism with the Bishop and Balcanqual. His failure to obtain any substantial preferment on his return home may be due to his association with the 'Unwanted Archbishop', George Abbot, whose chaplain he was. During these weeks the suppliant Remonstrants were brow beaten by 'Mr. Bogermannus', who shouted them down with '*satis, sufficit*:' and '*Ite, dimittimini*'.<sup>45</sup> The moderates, Davenant and Ward, who yet stood well with the Counter Remonstrants, were often engaged to confute the arguments of the Remonstrants. Of the other *Exteri* the Palatines, under Scultetus [Schultz], and the Genevans, under Tronchin and Diodati, were the most rigidly Predestinarian. The Bremeners, especially Martinius, and the Hessians, were even more moderate than the Britons, whose doctrine was the moderate Calvinism of the Thirty-nine Articles. But the British College seems to have been recognized as a *tertium quid* in the Reformed *diaspora*, neither wholly of the one or the other. One of the problems from which the Dean's departure saved him was a stormy interview with Diodati, uncle of John Milton's friend and translator of the Italian Bible.<sup>45</sup> A private session was also held in the Bishop's rooms to try to bring together the Universalist Martinius and the High Calvinist Gomar. They almost came to 'apostolick blows and knocks to prove their doctrine orthodox'. On another occasion when Bishop Carleton tried to mediate he was abruptly pulled up by Gomar, who insisted that the Synod was governed by 'reason', not 'authority'.<sup>46</sup> This was interpreted by a Puritan historian to mean

that he had no precedence at Dort except as ‘baron of the English Parliament’.<sup>47</sup> But the Synod seems to have felt that some apology was called for from ‘that old tuffe man’ who had ‘silenced’ the Bishop. But none was forthcoming, though he avoided him for some days. In spite of their undoubtedly privileged position, the Britons behaved with a singular lack of arrogance in a gathering overwhelmingly ‘foreign’ and also ‘Dissenting’ by their own insular standards. Apart from this one brush between the Bishop and Gomar, the Dutch seem to have accused them only of citing the least heretical writings of the Remonstrants.<sup>48</sup> Unlike Diodati, who preached weekly in Italian to a congregation of eight, they do not appear to have lapsed from their Latinity either.<sup>49</sup>

In an intolerant age, when official Anglicanism at home was second to none in its fury against Recusants and Sectaries, the British Delegation abroad was marked by a sincere endeavour to find peaceful solutions rather than polemics. Refusing to condemn the Pope as ‘*the Antichrist*’ but possibly as ‘*an Antichrist*’,<sup>50</sup> they also refused to deny the name of ‘Reformed’ to the Lutherans.<sup>51</sup> Though the Calvinists had been so styled for some forty years, this did not become formalized until the Treaty of Westphalia (1648).<sup>52</sup> For the matter of ‘Universal’ or ‘Limited’ Redemption Davenant and Ward were in favour of the former, while the other three followed Abbot’s advice.<sup>53</sup> When the *Confessio Belgica*, ‘*le drapeau de l’Eglise Réformée Néerlandaise toute entière*’ came up for debate, the British made a dignified disclaimer for themselves against the ‘Dutch conceit’ of ‘a parity of Ministers’.<sup>54</sup> Dr. Carleton saw no incongruity in sitting as a bishop among Presbyterians, but he did not regard it as in his mandate to vote for Presbyterian Church Government. He even claimed that the Dutch regarded Episcopacy as a possible antidote to their own ‘unhappy divisions’.<sup>55</sup>

With the Remonstrants long since [January 21<sup>st</sup>] silenced by Bogermann’s ‘powdering speech’, forbidden either to leave the country or to enter the Synod, the last four months were occupied with endless disputations. After Easter the Canons of Dort, drawn up against the Remonstrants’ Five Points, took their place beside the *Confessio Belgica* and the Heidelberg Catechism as *palladia* of Dutch Calvinist orthodoxy. They set the standard for High Calvinism, at home and abroad, for many generations, finding their place in the *Harmony of Protestant Confessions*. While joining in the condemnation of the Remonstrants’ ‘error’ the British and the Hessians led the other *Exteri* in refusing to condemn their persons as nationals of another country.<sup>56</sup> The five Britons found their way home, after spending a short holiday in the Dutch cities, which entertained them well, except for Leyden, the city of Arminius.<sup>58</sup> Like Joseph Hall they had all received medals and chains, as well as a more generous table and travel allowance than the other foreigners—£200 (for travel) and £10 (for daily expenses). To the honour of their Church and King they were not present at the public execution of Oldenbarnevelt, hitherto held in ‘close imprisonment’ in the castle of Loevestein. The simultaneous triumph of a reactionary clericalism and a militant patriotism evoked from Diodati the grim joke that ‘the Canons of Dort had shot off the Advocate’s head’.<sup>59</sup> A year after this judicial murder of this elder statesman by ‘Grave’ Maurice, his stepmother, the Dowager Princess of Orange, died at Fontainebleau; though she was buried with her husband at Delft. With Louise de Teligny died the last hope of Uytenbogaert. Episcopius, Grotius, and the rest found refuge in France, and ironically, in the Spanish Netherlands, Eventually returning to the United Provinces, they have remained in their homeland as a Remonstrant ‘Brotherhood’. This is now affiliated to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, where they rub shoulders with their *Hervormde* and their more rigidly orthodox *Gereformeerde* neighbours.

## The Fates of the British Delegates

In England the recently widowed, but not inconsolable, King saw his ‘theologues’ from an upper window and facetiously welcomed them as his ‘good mourners’. Presenting their reports and the compliments of the Synod, they dispersed to their various duties and preferments. The Bishop was promoted to Chichester, Davenant became Bishop of Salisbury, and Balcanqual Master of the Savoy.<sup>60</sup> Eventually Ward was appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and even Goad became Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation. In the final distribution of honours Hall, who had spent least time at Dort, was appointed to two Bishoprics. But on none of the British College did the Puritan storm blow more fiercely than on the author of *Roma Irreconciliabilis* or *No Peace with Rome*. An anachronistic survival of the Elizabethan age, Hall was an enigma to the *novi homines* of both Laudianism and the newer Puritanism. Charged with ‘Arminianism’ (1628) he wrote pathetically to Bishop Davenant:

My Lord, you know I had a place with you (although unworthy) in that famous Synod of Dort, where (however sickness bereaved me of the hours of a conclusive subscription) yet your Lordship heard me with equal vehemency to the rest, crying down the unreasonableness of that way. I am still the same man and shall live and die in the suffrage of that Reverend Synod, and do confidently avow that those other opposed doctrines cannot stand with the doctrine of the Church of England.<sup>61</sup>

This passage is often reproduced in a garbled version.<sup>62</sup> It was one of the charges brought against Archbishop Laud that his chaplain, a Mr. Tomline, had caused this passage to be suppressed in a later edition of Bishop Hall’s *The Reconciler*.<sup>63</sup> Davenant replied:

as for the aspersion of Arminianism, I can testify that in our joint employment at the Synod of Dort you were as far from it as myself. And I know that no man can embrace it in the Doctrine of Predestination and Grace, but he must first desert the Articles agreed upon by the Church of England.

So the two old Dordracanists corresponded, but they were already in a minority among the new Anglicans, and the new Puritans disowned them. Of the two survivors of Dort only Ward was summoned by the Long Parliament to the Westminster Assembly, and he refused to go. Of Hall, Fuller could later write: ‘Bishop of Exeter, then Bishop of Norwich, then Bishop of no place, surviving to see his sacred function buried before his eyes.’<sup>64</sup>

The new ‘Arminianism’ would emerge after the Westminster Assembly and the Commonwealth as Caroline ‘High Churchmanship’, although that term was not in use till the turn of the century. When asked ‘What the Arminians held’ Bishop George Morley of Winchester ‘pleasantly answered that they held all the best Bishoprics and Deaneries in England’.<sup>65</sup> But as long as they lived Bishop Hall and Dr. Mayer of Basel would compare Dort with ‘the heavenly city’, and with ‘a most holy place’.<sup>66</sup> But Martinius of Bremen, with a longer stay there than Hall, used to say of Dort: ‘would to God I had never seen thee’.<sup>67</sup> Something of this disillusionment entered England in the doggerel:

|                                  |                           |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Dordrecht</i> synodus, nodus, | Dort’s Knotty Synod,      |
| <i>Chorus aeger, integer,</i>    | Choir in ill condition,   |
| <i>Conventus ventus,</i>         | Windbag assembly,         |
| <i>Sessio stramen, Amen</i>      | Heap of straw in session. |

But against this dismal picture of Dutch ‘boorishness’ and intransigence may be set the British Delegation’s eulogy by Davenant’s nephew. Thomas Fuller, witty and wise, was himself a moderate Churchman in an immoderate age:

*In Carletono praelecebat episcopalis gravitas, in Davenantio subactum iudicium, in Wardo multa lectio, in Hallo expedita concinatio*<sup>68</sup>

Carleton was preeminent in his episcopal dignity, Davenant for his breadth of judgment, Ward for his abundant power of discrimination, Hall for his fluent elegance of style.

Technically *multa lectio* could mean ‘wide reading’ but the normal meaning of *lectio* is ‘a reading’, whether aloud or otherwise, rather than ‘reading’ in the literary sense.

Perhaps an *alumnus* of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and of Blundell’s School, Tiverton, may be allowed to credit with ‘*abundant power of discrimination*’ the Master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, which accepted Peter Blundell’s offer of the Exhibition which Emmanuel had refused.

Joseph Hall seems to have had a genuine aversion to damp climates and difficult situations. Appointed by Lord Chief Justice Popham as the first Headmaster of Blundell’s School, Tiverton, he had withdrawn, accepting the living of Halstead in Suffolk instead. He excused himself by saying ‘God pulls me by the sleeve and tells me it is His Will I should rather go to the east than to the west’. He ingenuously added

I never meant other than to pass through this western school to it; but I saw that God who found me ready to go the further way about, now called me the nearest and directest way to that sacred end.<sup>70</sup>

This may seem an example of ‘*the fluent elegance of style*’ with which ‘Worthy Mr. Fuller’ credited him; but it has not prevented the Devon school from claiming this future Bishop of Exeter as its first Headmaster.

### **Between Dort and Westminster**

In the next generation, and with the coming of Arminianism to England, *Ecclesia Anglicana* was no longer regarded as the natural *mediatrix* among Protestants: while the term ‘the best Reformed Churches’ seemed deliberately phrased to exclude her.<sup>71</sup> Had she imperceptibly, no less than the Ever Memorable John Hales, taken leave of Geneva theologically as well as ecclesiastically? Certainly the wheel had turned full circle since Thomas Cranmer and John Calvin bid each other ‘good morning’ in 1552.<sup>72</sup>

But the British Delegation at Dort still speaks to the Churches after nearly four centuries in yet another example of Joseph Hall’s *expedita concinatio*. It derives from his ‘polite and pathetic’ pre-Synod sermon.

We are Christians. We are one body: let us be of one mind. By the awful name of God, by the gentle bosom of our common Mother, by your souls, and by the sacred bowels of Jesus Christ—our Saviour’s brethren—I intreat you to be at peace. So lay aside all prejudices and party feeling, that we may be happily united in the enjoyment of the common truth.<sup>73</sup>

But like James Ussher, Robert Leighton, and Richard Baxter, these men were bound to be misunderstood. For such transgressors of contemporary ecclesiastical fashions the way must always be hard.<sup>74</sup>

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Endnotes:

- 1) J. L. Von Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.* (Murdoch), (1845), iv p. 229.  
W. Barlow, *The Summe and Substance of the Conference at Hampton Court* (1604), pp. 80, 83.
- 2) W. Goeters coined the phrase *Dilletante-Theolog* in his *Die Verberectung des Pietismus* (Leipzig, 1911).
- 3) J. R. Motley, *John of Barnevelt* (1875), i, p. 395 (note).
- 4) P. Heylin, *History of the Presbyterians* (1672), p. 397. The Remonstrants must be regarded as Erastians, since they accepted the authority of the States, while their opponents accepted the theocracy of the clerical Synod.
- 5) J. Hales, *Letters from Dort* (Golden Remains), (1673), p. 304.
- 6) G. Brandt, *The History of the Reformation in and about the Low Countries* (1723), iii, p. 6 (v. Note C, p. 27).
- 7) E.G. Léonard, *Histoire Générale du Protestantisme*, Vol. II (Paris, 1961), p. 219.
- 8) H. H. Kuyper, *de Post Acta* (Amsterdam, 1909), pp. 208-213. They were Emden (1571), Dort I (1578) and Middleburg (1581).
- 9) T. F. Kinloch, *The Life and Works of Joseph Hall* (1951), p. 142.  
H. R. Trevor Roper 'King James I and his Bishops' (History Today, Sept. 1955, pp. 571-581).
- 10) T. Fuller *Worthies of England* (1662), i, p. 299.
- 11) Cf. Philip Schaff, *A History of the Creeds of Christendom* (1877), p. 761.
- 12) T. Fuller, *Church History of Britain* (1868), iii, pp. 308-309.
- 13) Orme, *Life of Richard Baxter* (1830), p. 69.
- 14) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 178; cf. B. Brooks, *Lives of the Puritans* (1813), II, pp. 403-408.
- 15) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- 16) *The Assembly Man* (Harleian Miscellany, p. 99).
- 17) Daniel Neal, *History of the Puritans* (1733), ii, pp. 113-114; cf. Note B.
- 18) John Goodwin, *Redemption Redeemed* (1651), p. 395.

- 19) A. L. Drummond, *The Kirk and the Continent* (1956), p. 119.
- 20) H. D. Foster, *Liberal Calvinism, the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort* (Harvard Theological Review, 1923).
- 21) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, Introduction. G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 20.
- 22) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
- 23) *Ibid.*, Introduction.
- 24) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 70.
- 25) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
- 26) *Ibid.*, pp. 182-184.
- 27) *Acta Synodi Dordrechtii* (1620), p. 47.
- 28) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- 29) *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- 30) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
- 31) *Vide infra* footnote 61.
- 32) *Vide infra* The Dort Medal.
- 33) T. Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 312.
- 34) J. Jones, *Memoirs of Bishop J. Hall* (1826), p. 67.
- 35) *Loc. cit.*
- 36) G. Goodman, *The Court of King James I* (1822), ii, pp. 194-196.
- 37) G. D. Henderson, *Scotland and the Synod of Dort* (Nederland Archief voor Kerk-geschiedenis, XX, iv, p. 6).
- 38) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, p. 72; cf. F. Calder, *Memoirs of Episcopius* (1835), p. 365.
- 39) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-181.
- 40) M. W. Dewar, *The Synod of Dort, the Westminster Assembly & The French Reformed Church* (Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London, 1967); D. Neal *op. cit.*, ii, p. 61.
- 41) J. Hales *op. cit.*, p. 178.
- 42) S. Butler, *Hudibras*, line 191; cf. A. P. Stanley, *Lectures on the Church of Scotland* (1872), p. 144.
- 43) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

- 44) *Vide Dictionary of National Biography.*
- 45) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 70; *cf.* also P Geyl, *The Netherlands in the 17th Century* (1961), i, p. 70.
- 46) J. Hales, *op. cit.*, pp. 112, 117: *non auctoritate sed ratione.*
- 47) D. Neal, *History of the Puritans* (1736), iii, p. 96.
- 48) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
- 49) *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- 50) *Ibid.*, p. 284.
- 51) *Ibid.*, p. 282.
- 52) *Treaty of Westphalia* Article VI (i), '*Qui Vocantur Reformati*'.
- 53) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
- 54) G. Carleton, *Examination of the Later Appeal* (1626), pp. 111-112.
- 55) G. Carleton, *Examination of the Appeal* (1626), p. 29.
- 56) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
- 57) *Ibid.*, pp. 300-307.
- 58) T. Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 314.
- 59) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 371.
- 60) T. Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
- 61) J. Hall, *The Reconciler* (1629), pp. 74-75. (For Davenant's Reply *vide* pp. 84-85).
- 62) E.g. D.Neal, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
- 63) W. Laud, *The History of his Tryall and Troubles*, p. 353: ('they say some passages against Arminianism were left out of two letters, one of Bishop Davenant's and the other of Bishop Hall's, sent to be printed').
- 64) T. Fuller, *Worthies of England* (1662), p. 13.
- 65) *Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon* (Oxford, 1761), I, p. 50.
- 66) G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, pp. 204, 230.
- 67) *Ibid.*, p. 283.
- 68) D. Neal, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
- 69) T. Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

- 70) J. Jones, *Memoirs of Bishop J. Hall* (1826), p. 67.
- 71) *The Solemn League and Covenant, The Confession of Faith, etc.* (Edinburgh, 1874), i. p. 226.
- 72) *Letters Relative to the English Reformation, Letters* xiv, cccxxxvii (Parker Society, 1847); cf. P. Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans* (1988), p. 24; cf. D. MacCullouch, *Arminius and Arminianism* (History Today, Oct. 1989), pp. 31-33.
- 73) T. Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 299.
- 74) This paper was first published in *Irish Biblical Studies*, Vol. 13, pp. 62-86, as part of a *Festschrift* to Professor J. M. Barkley of Queen's University and Union Theological College, Belfast, on his eightieth birthday.

## GLOSSARY

### 1. GERHARDT BRANDT'S HISTORY (1677-1704, 4 VOLS.)

The son of a Remonstrant Minister, who was the biographer of Arminius, Gerhardt Brandt's (d. 1685) *History* is still regarded as a standard work. Translated into French (1726) and English (Chamberlayne 1720-23), there is also a two-volume English Abridgement (1725), and a summary in Volume I (1778) of John Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*.

### 2. 'The instructions given from the King to our English Devines'

Our will and pleasure is that from this time forward upon all occasions you inure yourselves to the practise of the Latin tongue that when there is cause you may deliver your mindes with the more readiness and facility.

You shall in all points to be debated & disputed resolve among yourselves beforehand what is ye true state of ye question & joyntly & uniformly agree therupon.

And if in debating of the cause by the learned men there, any thing be emergent whereof you thought not before, you shall meete & consult therupon againe, & so resolve among yourselves joyntly what is fit to be maintained. And this is to be don agreeable to the scriptures & the doctrine of the church of England.

Your advise shall be to those churches that their ministers do not deliver in the pulpit to the people these things for ordinary doctrines which are the highest points of schooles, & not fit for vulgar capacity, but disputable on bothe sides.

That they conform themselves to ye publick Confessions of the neighbour reformed churches, with whom to hould good correspondence shall be no dishonour to them.

That if there be maine opposition betweene any who are overmuch addicted to their owne opinions, your endeavour shall be that certaine positions be moderatly layed down, which may tend to ye mitigation of that on both sides.

(Exeter College, Oxford, MS. 48, folios 1.)

### 3. THE SYNODICAL OATH

'I promise before God, whom I believe and worship, as here present, and as the Searcher of the Reins and Heart, that during the whole course of the Transactions of this Synod, in which there will be made an Enquiry into, and Judgment and Decision of, not only the well known Five Points, and all the difficulties resulting from thence, but likewise of all other sorts of Doctrines, I will not make use of

any kind of human Writings, but only of the Word of God, as a sure and infallible Rule of Faith. Neither will I have any other thing in view throughout this whole Discussion, but the Honour of God, the Peace of the church, and above all the Preservation of the Purity of doctrine, so help me, my Saviour Jesus Christ, whom I ardently beseech to assist me in this my design by His Holy Spirit.’

(G. Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 62.)

#### 4. THE DORT MEDAL

‘The Dort Medal is gold, with a thick ring attached to it. It is somewhat larger and much thicker than a crown piece. On one side it has a mountain, with a circular temple (like the Tivoli Temple) on the top, over which is the word in Hebrew characters *Jehovah*, with a “glory” under it. At the four corners, in the shape of a St. Andrew’s cross, are the four winds proceeding in visible blasts from four faces. The legend around the edge is *Erunt ut Mons Sion* CMC XIX. On the reverse is a representation of the Synod. A long hall, with open arched roof, with beams stretching across it. There are three rows of benches or pews, filled with figures on each side. A table and canopied raised seat at the further end. Down the centre runs a long table with figures seated. At the nearer end there is a quadruple row of pews, divided by a bar or door, and outside this bar, figures of men standing, and a dog. All, or nearly all, the figures are wearing high hats. Legend *RELIGIONE ASSERTA*. On the two sides of the doorway, on the cancelli, are the figures 16 and 19.’

(From G. Lewis, *Life of Joseph Hall*, 1886, p. 213.)

The medal and the painting, by Weyts, are identical in detail. The medal, from Emmanuel College, is on permanent loan to Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

#### 5. THE ALLEGED ‘ARMINIANISM’ OF THOMAS GOAD

The Dictionary of National Biography’s statement that Goad ‘went over to the Arminians’ seems to be based on J. S. Brewer’s extension of a footnote in his (1845) edition of Fuller’s *Church History* (Vol. V, p. 475). It reads: ‘Like Hales of Eton . . . Dr Goad shortly after abandoned the High Calvinist party and went over to the other side. These effects may be attributed not only to a more careful discussion on the subject, but also to . . . Episcopius . . . See a treatise by Dr Goad . . . entitled “A Disputation, partly Theological, partly Metaphysical, concerning the Necessity and Contingency of Events in the World in respect of God’s Eternal Decrees written above twenty years since”, and published in 1661.’ It was reprinted in ‘a collection of tracts concerning predestination and providence and the other points depending on them’ at Cambridge in 1719. Goad’s is a short piece, but it must be the source for Brewer’s and the Dictionary’s allegation of ‘Arminianism’.

This ‘Disputation’ is described by its eighteenth century editor as ‘the only remain that I know of that learned Divine, whose name is prefixed to it. This our Reverend Author was one of the most eminent [sic] Divines at the synod of Dort, when the subject matter of the ensuing Disputation, and matters of the like nature, amongst the controverted points, were in dispute . . . whether our Author was then of that judgment, which he declares in this Disputation, I am not certain. However, of his after thoughts which commonly are the best, we have reason to bless the God of Truth for the discovery’ (p. 359).

Since the ‘Disputation’ was not rediscovered till a century after Dort, and was not written till some twenty years before its publication in 1661, it need not prove that Goad ‘turned Arminian at Dort’; though possibly in the generation *after* it, when the whole picture of English Church life was changing. It can hardly be advanced as evidence for his lack of preferment under either James I, or Charles I. Fuller, in fact, cites his return to Abbot’s Chaplaincy as a preferment.

#### 6. SIGNATORIES OF THE BRITISH COLLEGE, MAY 1619

Ex Magna Britannia

Georgius Episcopus Landavensis.

Johannes Davenantius, Presbyter; Doctor ac Sacrae Theologiae publicus Professor in Academia Cantabrigiensi et Collegii Reginalis ibidem Praeses.

Samuel Wardus, Presbyter, SS Theologiae Doctor, Archidiaconus Fauntonnensis [sic] et Collegia Sidneyani in Academia Cantabrigiensi Praefectus.

Thomas Goadus, Presbyter, SS Theologiae Doctor, Cathedralis Ecclesiae Paulinae Londoniensis Praeceptor, *Vice* Joseph Hall (*Aegrotat*).

Gualterus Balcanquallus, Scoto-Britannus, Presbyter, S Theologiae

(P. Schaff, *History of the Creeds of Christendom*, iii, (1931, 6<sup>th</sup> edition), p. 378.