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ART. I.—REVIEW.

Book on the Soul, First part. Book on the Soul, Second part. By the Rev. T. H. Gallaudet, &c.

THERE is, perhaps, no field for benevolent enterprise, which has been more neglected, or which promises a richer harvest to the cultivator, than the preparation of suitable books for children. It is somewhat surprising that the attention of philanthropists has been so little turned to this subject, and that while so much has been published of late on the importance of education, and of commencing our efforts early, so little has been done in the way of furnishing the means of communicating knowledge to the minds of children. At first view, it seems an easy task to prepare such books as are needful for the instruction of youth; yet when we come to ponder the subject deeply, we cannot but confess, that it is a work of extreme difficulty. We do not speak of the elementary books which are needful to teach the art of reading: these, however useful, communicate no instruction to the mind; they only furnish one means of acquiring knowledge. We refer to books adapted to the minds of children in the several stages of their development, and which are calculated, especially, to train the thoughts, 'to teach the young idea how to shoot;' and by which their

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quisition of every important subject there taught. *Secondly*, That it is the part of modesty, duty, and wisdom, to confine himself to the circle of attainments, prescribed by the academical corporation. *Thirdly*, That the special and appropriate preparations for the ministry, and the active labours of the same, should not be anticipated at this important period.

The details of the foregoing observations may appear to some of our readers to be unimportant and uninteresting, yet nothing should be so considered which bears directly upon the training of the ministry. The noble resolution of the Assembly's Board of Education, to take on their funds every qualified young man who shall apply to them for aid, will call forth at once an army of youthful candidates. Many of them will be placed in our colleges, and be exposed to the temptations which have been mentioned. Those who are specially charged with their supervision will be the last to consider these suggestions unimportant.

ART. VII.—ARTICLES OF THE SYNOD OF DORT.

The Articles of the Synod of Dort, and its rejection of errors, with the history of events which made way for that Synod, &c. Translated from the Latin, by Thomas Scott, rector of Aston and Sandford, Bucks. Utica, William Williams, Genesee street.

THE history of the Synod of Dort, from which Dr. Scott translated this work, was drawn up by the delegates from South Holland, at the request of the Synod; and when the Acts of the Synod were published by authority, this narrative was prefixed. It was probably written by *Festius Hommius*, who was one of the deputies from South Holland; and a man of great worth and learning; who, from the commencement, had as much to do with this controversy as any other person. No Synod has ever met in the Reformed Churches, the proceedings of which were so important and interesting as that of Dort. It was not merely a national Synod, but received delegates from most of the Reformed Churches in Europe. Those who were about to attend from France, were, for some political reasons, prevented from tak-

ing their seats in the Synod: but from Great Britain, from Germany, and Switzerland, theologians of the highest reputation for learning and piety, were sent, who patiently and laboriously assisted in the discussions and transactions of the Synod, until the business was brought to a close.

Seldom has there been a more truly venerable, orthodox, and learned body of divines. The papers which were read before the Synod, on the five points of controversy, contain a body of sound theology, and solid scriptural argument, which has seldom been exceeded.

The doctrinal articles agreed upon, and established by this Synod, are such as are admitted by all consistent, moderate Calvinists: and when we use the word *moderate*, we do not mean, that any one article of this scriptural system of faith, is obscured or denied; but that they are not pushed to such extreme consequences as they have been by some supralapsarian theologians formerly, and by some who pretend to have improved the Calvinistic scheme, in our own times.

The theologians who composed the Synod of Dort, were not agreed among themselves in every particular. On several points of some importance, the views expressed by the deputies, in the papers read before the Synod, were different; yet this discrepancy, in minor matters, did not in the least interrupt their harmony; and their general articles were so worded as to accord with the sincere belief of every individual; while, if either party had insisted on a perfect conformity in every particular, there could have been no agreement in adopting a creed which they could all subscribe. To give an example of the diversity alluded to, we would mention, *the extent of the atonement*. On this subject, the learned and highly respectable theologians who attended as delegates from the British churches, while they agreed with their brethren from the churches on the continent, on every other point, yet on this explicitly expressed their opinion in favour of a general atonement. Therefore, in drawing up the article on the subject of redemption, care was taken to express the doctrine in terms to which all could subscribe. After speaking of the substitution of Christ, and the vicarious nature of his sacrifice, they say, "This death of the Son of God, is a single and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; of infinite value, and price; abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world"—"Moreover, the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified,

shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Which promise ought to be announced and proposed, promiscuously and indiscriminately, to all nations and men, to whom God in his good pleasure, hath sent the gospel, with the command to repent and believe. But because many who are called by the gospel do not repent nor believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief, this doth not arise from any defect or insufficiency of the sacrifice offered by Christ on the cross, but from their own fault."

The narrative which Dr. Scott has faithfully translated from the Preface to the Acts of the Synod of Dort, goes back to the origin of those troubles and controversies, which at length induced the STATES GENERAL to call a national Synod; and to invite to it learned theologians from all the Reformed Churches in foreign countries.

The conduct of James Arminius was the primary occasion of all the disturbances which for so many years agitated the churches of Holland. And he has the honour—if it may be so considered—of giving his name to a system of doctrines, which has been received with great favour by a large portion of nominal Christians.

Arminius, a man of cultivated mind and various learning, pursued his theological studies at Geneva; but seems early to have taken up strong prejudices against the rigid opinions of Calvin and Beza, respecting the decrees of God, and some other abstruse subjects. His doubts on these points he communicated to Grynæus his preceptor. After completing his studies, he travelled into Italy as far as Rome; and, on his return to Holland, was called to the pastoral office over one of the principal churches of Amsterdam. Here, in a course of lectures on the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, he began to broach some of his new doctrines; but being resolutely opposed by the Presbytery with which he was connected, he ceased to inculcate his erroneous opinions any longer in public, but still privately propagated his favourite tenets among his particular friends, and among the pastors of some of the Dutch Reformed Churches. He appears to have been seized with such an itch for novelty, that it was enough to discredit an opinion with him, if it was commonly received. The errors which he embraced were akin to those of Pelagius; or rather, agreed exactly with the system which had been denominated semi-pelagianism. He paved the way for his errors, by depreciating the cha-

racters of such celebrated men as Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, and Martyr; and he was so confident in his own opinions, that he challenged Francis Junius, the most celebrated professor of theology at Leyden, to a conference on the disputed points.

But when, A. D. 1602,—Junius, to the great grief of all the Belgic Churches, was snatched away by death, Arminius was strongly recommended by Utenbogard to the trustees of the University of Leyden, as a suitable person to fill the vacant chair of theology. This proposal, however, gave much uneasiness to the deputies of the churches; for they greatly feared, that if a man whose orthodoxy was so suspicious, should be placed in a situation so important as that of professor of theology at Leyden, the effects would probably be contentions and schisms in the churches; they, therefore, earnestly entreated the curators, that they would not expose the churches to those perils, but would rather think of appointing some other suitable person. And they also admonished Utenbogard, to desist from recommending a person who did not enjoy the confidence of the churches; but he disregarded their admonitions, and did not cease until he had accomplished his object, and Arminius was invited to the vacant theological chair in the University of Leyden. At first, the classis or presbytery of Amsterdam hesitated to dismiss Arminius, lest a man whom they knew to be so fond of innovation by being advanced to be a professor in an institution in which so many youth were trained for the holy ministry, might be the cause of incalculable evils. But the curators of the University, and Utenbogard the special friend of Arminius, pressed their suit with so much earnestness, that, at length, all obstacles were overcome, and it was agreed that he should be translated to Leyden, on condition that he should consent to hold a conference with Francis Gomar, a learned and orthodox professor of theology in the University, in which he should remove from himself all suspicion of heterodoxy, by an explicit declaration of his opinion, on all the principal heads of doctrine; and, also, that he should solemnly promise that if he held any *peculiar* opinions, he would never attempt to propagate them among the students. To all this, Arminius readily consented, and the conference was held in the presence of the trustees of the University, in which he, in the most solemn manner, renounced the errors of Pelagius, respecting grace, freewill, predestination, original sin, perfection in this life, &c. and declared his agreement with Augustin and the

other fathers who had written against Pelagius. He, at the same time, solemnly promised, that he would never inculcate any doctrine different from that received by the churches; upon which he was admitted to the professorship of theology. And in the course of this same year, he laboured to remove from himself all suspicion of heterodoxy, by holding public disputations in favour of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches.

But after Arminius had been established in his office a year or two, he began, both in public and private, to attack the commonly received doctrines of the Reformed Churches, with the same arguments which were used to impugn them, by the Jesuits and Socinians; and it has been ascertained, that he circulated among the students compositions of his own in manuscript, in which he treated contemptuously the characters of Calvin, Beza, Zanehius, and Ursinus; while he extolled the writings of certain authors who were suspected of being inimical to orthodoxy. And he now openly avowed, that he had many animadversions to make on the commonly received doctrines; and his scholars, when they left the University, petulantly insulted the Reformed Churches, by disputing, contradicting, and reviling their doctrine.

When these things were understood, the deputies of both north and south Holland, to whom the care of the churches had been committed, went to Arminius and told him what rumours were every where circulated about him and his doctrines; and entreated him, if he had discovered any thing defective or erroneous in the system received by the churches, that he would sincerely and ingenuously open his mind to his brethren, that there might be an opportunity of removing his difficulties, by a friendly conference, or by carrying the whole affair before a lawful Synod. To which he answered, that he had never given any just cause for these rumours; nor did he deem it expedient to enter into any conference with them, in their official capacity, although he had no objection to confer with them as private pastors, on condition, that if there should be found some difference of opinion between them, no report of their conversations should be made to the Synod. But this the deputies declined, as now calculated to remove the uneasiness which existed in the churches; and so they departed without accomplishing their object; but they learned from the other professors of the University, that since the coming of Arminius, various questions were agitated

with great earnestness among the students, which had not been before.

Being a member of the church of Leyden, he was admonished by two highly distinguished men, who were elders in that church, that he should hold a friendly conference with his colleagues, before the consistory of the church of Leyden, concerning those things which he disapproved in the received doctrine. To which he replied, that he could not consent to that, without permission from the trustees of the University; neither could he see what advantage would accrue from such a conference.

When the time arrived for the annual meeting of the Synods of north and south Holland, a statement of *grievances* was laid before the Synod of south Holland, by the classis of Dordrecht, the purport of which was, "that rumours are heard that certain controversies, concerning the doctrines of the Reformed Churches, have arisen in the University and Church of Leyden, therefore, this classis has judged it necessary to bring the matter before the Synod, that the requisite steps to settle these controversies may be seasonably taken." Arminius was much displeased with this proceeding, and strove with all his power to obtain a recal of the complaint; but failing in this, by the aid of the curators of the University, he obtained a testimonial from his colleagues, in which it was declared, "That more things were disputed among the students than was agreeable to them; but that among the professors of sacred theology themselves, as far as it appeared to them, there was no dissension in fundamentals." The Synod, after mature deliberation, were of opinion, that this spreading evil must be seasonably counteracted; and that the remedy ought not to be procrastinated, under the uncertain hope of a national Synod. They, therefore, directed the deputies to petition the curators, that a mandate might be given to the professors of sacred theology, to declare openly their opinions, on the points disputed among the students, that the churches might be satisfied as to the agreement or disagreement with one another. The Synod also commanded all the pastors, for the sake of testifying their consent in doctrine, to subscribe the Confession and Catechism of the churches, which in many classes had fallen into disuse; and by some had been refused.

The deputies having diligently examined into the state of affairs in the University, exhibited to the curators nine ques-

tions, concerning which they had understood that there were controversies, and requested that the professors of theology might be requested to explain fully, their opinions on these points. But the curators declined a compliance with this request, upon the pretext that there existed a hope that a national Synod would soon be called, and that it was expedient, that the consideration of these points should be reserved for them. And all those pastors who had adopted the opinions of Arminius refused to subscribe the Confession of Faith and Catechism.

The churches were now more alarmed than ever, when they perceived that their pastors, relying on the favour of certain persons of influence, despised the authority of the Synod. They therefore applied to the States General for a national Synod, and were informed that such a measure had been judged expedient by all the States; but that some of them had annexed particular conditions to their resolution relative to the objects which should be presented for the consideration of a national Synod.

The Belgic churches rejoiced greatly, that at length there was a prospect of a national Synod; although they felt some solicitude about the clause in the letters of the States, which provided, that the Confession and Catechism should be brought under revision; for they feared, that this would render those more daring who were endeavouring to make innovations in the doctrines of the Church.

It was also resolved by the States General, that a certain number of distinguished theologians should be selected from the provinces, to whom should be committed the whole business of determining respecting the time, place, and circumstances of the meeting of the national Synod. These men, fifteen in number, resolved by a concurrent vote, that the time of the meeting should be as early as possible, in the next following year, A. D. 1608; and that Utrecht would be the most suitable place; and as to the manner of conducting the business, they agreed, 1. That the grievances should be brought up from the provincial Synods. 2. That from each of the several Synods, four pastors and two elders, should be deputed; in the place of which last, distinguished men not holding any ecclesiastical office might be delegated. 3. That the Synod, thus constituted, should have the power not only of deliberating but of determining, on all matters which might regularly come before them. 4. That the rule of judgment should be

the written Word of God only. 5. That the churches without the limits of the United Provinces, who were united with the Belgic churches by holding the same Confession and Catechism, should also be united to send deputies. 6. That the States General should be requested to send deputies of their own body to preside in the Synod. 7. And finally, that all professors of sacred theology, should be invited to take a seat in the Synod.

In these points they were all agreed, but Arminius and Utenbogard, endeavoured to have other articles introduced, which did not meet the approbation of the majority. The points on which they insisted were, 1. That by the decision of the Synod should be understood, not only the votes of those present, but also of their constituents. 2. That it should be permitted to the deputies to retire, upon any emergency, for the purpose of consulting their friends. 3. That a revision of the Belgic Confession and Catechism was altogether necessary; and that this should be inserted in the letters of convocation. The other pastors were of opinion, that that should be considered the definite judgment of the Synod, which should be determined by a majority of the members; that the deputies might be allowed to withdraw to consult their friends, when they judged it necessary; but that this should not be made a pretext for interrupting the regular course of business; and that, as to the Confession and Catechism, the Synod should possess full power to bring them under revision, if they should judge this to be necessary; and that any of the deputies should have liberty to offer any animadversions on these formularies, which they might think proper; but that to insert a clause of this kind in the letters of convocation, would be likely to give offence to the churches. This dissension in the convention served to throw new obstacles in the way of a national Synod, for they who had hitherto resisted its convocation, seized with avidity on the occasion to hinder its being called.

In this convention, of which both Arminius and Utenbogard were members, they were most earnestly entreated to make a full and free manifestation of their opinions; but they declined doing this, on the ground that the convention had not been called for such a purpose; and that they were only responsible to the States General for the course which they pursued in that body.

The next year the Synod of south Holland, met at Delph, inquired, whether the order to send up remarks on the Con-

fession of Faith and Catechism had been complied with, when it appeared that nothing of this kind had been done; upon which the former injunction was renewed, in more peremptory terms.

It was at this meeting made known to the Synod, that every where in the churches dissensions had increased; and that most of the pupils of Arminius coming from the University of Leyden, when they came before the classis, concealed their true opinions, but as soon as they were introduced to the ministry, moved new disputations, and contended earnestly for their opinions; and openly avowed that they had various objections to make to the received doctrine. And now disputations between pastors in different parts of the country became common; and these contentions were not confined to the pastors, but agitated the people also. The prospect of a national Synod being now distant, for reasons already mentioned, the Synod applied to the States General to permit the two Synods of north and south Holland to unite, and to take cognizance of these matters. But Arminius, dreading to have his cause brought before an Ecclesiastical court, applied to the States General to permit the supreme civil court of the nation, to hear it; and accordingly, both he and his learned colleague Gomar, who also was his antagonist in this controversy, were required to appear before this court; and the persons composing the Ecclesiastical convention, already mentioned, were invited to be present. The deputies of the churches were greatly dissatisfied with this arrangement, and again earnestly entreated that a Synod might be called; as being the proper tribunal before which a cause of this nature should be tried. The *States* answered, that although they had committed the cognizance of the affair to the supreme court, the final decision should be reserved for a provincial or national Synod.

After much altercation between Arminius and Gomar, as to the proper method of proceeding, the conference took place; but the writings which were communicated on both sides, the *States General* ordered to be sealed up, and not made known to any mortal, until the meeting of a national Synod. The churches were therefore more disturbed after this conference had taken place than before; for they were generally of opinion that this concealment was in favour of Arminius, that his true sentiments might not be generally known. In compliance with the urgent entreaties of the deputies of the churches, the States General promised, that a provincial Synod

of north and south Holland should be called in the next October, A. D. 1603, which should be convened for the trial of this cause; but when the time arrived, the convocation of the promised Synod was postponed for two months, and Arminius being exceedingly pressed to bring forth his animadversions on the Confession of Faith, took an opportunity of delivering an oration against the doctrines of the Belgic churches, in the presence of a convention of the States General, in which he inveighed against these doctrines, "as repugnant to the nature of God, his wisdom, justice, and goodness; as inconsistent with the nature of man and his free-will;—with the work of creation—with the nature of life and death eternal—and with the nature of sin;—that they took away the divine grace—were inimical to the glory of God, and pernicious to the salvation of men—took away all pious solicitude—lessened the desire of doing good—extinguished the ardour of prayer—removed salutary fear—made way for desperation—subverted the gospel—hindered the ministry of the word, and finally, subverted, not only the foundation of Christianity, but of all religion."

Gomar having heard this discourse, thought it incumbent on him to answer it, lest the minds of the States General should become prejudiced against the truth. He undertook, therefore, to exhibit the real opinions of Arminius, and to show how egregiously he erred, on several important points; and pointed out the disingenuous methods by which he disseminated his tenets; artfully concealing them in public, and assiduously propagating them in private; showed how industriously he had laboured to enervate the arguments adduced in favour of the truth by orthodox theologians, and how completely he had followed in the steps of the Jesuits and other errorists. He also exposed his insidious policy in seeking pretexts for delaying an impartial examination of his opinions, in order that he might have the opportunity of drawing over a greater number of pastors to his opinions, and of occupying the churches with his adherents. In the close of his discourse, he again earnestly entreated the STATES GENERAL to provide a remedy for the continually increasing evils of the church, by calling as soon as possible the promised national Synod. In which petition, he was joined by the deputies of the churches; but through the influence of Utenbogard and others, the thing was still further deferred. Another thing which increased the solicitude of the churches, was,

that Peter Bertius, the regent of the theological college had evidently declined from orthodoxy to the opinions of Arminius, and pursued the same disingenuous course, in relation to the concealment of his true sentiments.

In consequence of the unhappy state of things, described above, the pastors who were attached to the party of Arminius, became every day more bold, in avowing and disseminating their erroneous tenets; and some of them began to inculcate opinions, which evidently appertained to the systems of Pelagius and Socinus. The deputies, therefore, did not cease to press upon the government the necessity of calling speedily a provincial Synod; but Utenbogard and his associates, to prevent this, and create a still further delay, proposed a conference between Gomar and Arminius before the convention of the States General; each being permitted to call to his aid and counsel four pastors of his own party.

When the parties met, Gomar and his friends made two requisitions: 1. That the conference should be carried on entirely in writing. 2. And that these writings should be afterwards delivered to a national Synod for their judgment. The States General, however, determined that the conference should be in the first place *viva voce*; and that afterwards, the arguments on both sides should be committed to writing and reserved for the consideration of a provincial Synod. Here again, a difficulty arose respecting the order in which the points in dispute should be taken up. Arminius insisted, that the subject of predestination should first be examined; but Gomar thought, that it was more proper first to consider the subject of justification; and this opinion was agreeable to the States General. This subject was then first brought under discussion; next, that of predestination; thirdly, they disputed respecting grace and free-will; and finally, concerning the perseverance of true believers. Arminius, however, declared that he never had opposed the doctrine of perseverance; nor was he now willing to oppose it; since there were testimonies of Scripture in favour of it, which he was not yet able to answer.

Having gone over these points, they were asked whether there were any other subjects of disagreement between them; to which Gomar replied, that there were, and mentioned the doctrine of original sin; of Providence; the authority of the sacred Scriptures; assurance of salvation; the perfection of man in this life, and some others. But the health of Armi-

nus not admitting of a longer continuance of the conference, it was broken off; but Gomar and his friends were assured, that they should have an opportunity of fully discussing these points in a provincial Synod, which was still promised, but still delayed. It was enjoined on the parties respectively that they should commit their arguments to writing within fourteen days, that they might be submitted to the provincial Synod. Gomar had his ready within the time prescribed; but Arminius excused himself on account of declining health; and his disorders of body so increased upon him, that he departed this life, October 19, 1609. As he, in his lifetime, had been the chief occasion of the disturbances in the Church, it was hoped, that at his death they would have ceased; but this hope was not realized; for so many pastors had embraced his opinions, that the evil could not be so easily exterminated. These men at length formed themselves into a body distinct from the other pastors, and prepared and presented to the States General a supplication, which they called *a remonstrance*; whence, afterwards, the whole party were denominated *Remonstrants*. In this paper, they greatly misrepresented the doctrines of the Reformed Churches, concerning predestination and the perseverance of the saints; and so disguised their own errors, by wrapping them up in ambiguous words, that the dangerous tendency of them was, in a great measure, concealed. The particular object of this paper was, to solicit from the government protection against the ecclesiastical censures to which they had exposed themselves.

These proceedings, amounting to open schism, greatly affected the Belgic churches; and when they endeavoured to obtain a copy of the remonstrance, they were unable to accomplish it. And what greatly aggravated their affliction was, the prospect of having Conrad Vorstius, a man strongly suspected of Socinianism, introduced into the chair of theology at Leyden, as successor to Arminius.

In the remonstrance above mentioned, the points in dispute were reduced to five, and the Arminians endeavoured to obtain an order from the government, that no candidate for the ministry should be urged, on his examination, to go further than was expressed in these five articles.

These articles were as follows:—

1. "That God, from all eternity, determined to bestow salvation on those, who, as he foresaw, would persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus, and to inflict everlasting

punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist to the end of life his divine succours.

2. "That Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that, however, none but those who believe in him can be partakers of that divine benefit.

3. "That true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, or from the force and operation of free-will; since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable of thinking or doing any thing good; and that, therefore, it is necessary to his conversion and salvation, that he be *regenerated* and renewed by the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

4. "That this divine grace or energy of the Holy Ghost, which heals the disorders of a corrupt nature, begins, advances, and brings to perfection every thing that can be called good in man; and that, consequently, all good works are to be attributed to God alone, and to the operation of his grace; that, nevertheless, this grace does not force the man to act against his inclination, but may be *resisted* and rendered ineffectual by the perverse will of the impenitent sinner.

5. "That they who are united to Christ by faith, are furnished with abundant strength, and with succours sufficient to enable them to triumph over the seductions of Satan, and the allurements of sin and temptation; but that the question, whether such may fall from their faith, and forfeit, finally, the state of grace, has not yet been resolved with sufficient perspicuity."

Afterwards, however, the Arminians adopted the opinion positively, that the saints might fall from a state of grace. It is easy to see, that in these five articles, as here expressed, the poison of error which lurks underneath a heap of ambiguous words, does not appear in its true character.

It was now determined to hold another conference at the Hague, on the five points; and six distinguished theologians were chosen by each party, who met March 11, 1611. The remonstrants refused to enter into a conference with the other six pastors, as with the deputies of the classes of Holland, lest they should seem to be the adversaries of the churches. When this obstacle was removed, it was agreed that each party should express, in writing, the arguments in favour of his own opinion, and afterwards discuss the points *viva voce*. But before they entered on the conference, the pastors of the

churches produced an answer to the remonstrance, a copy of which they had at length obtained.

Much time was spent in this conference, and when the discussion was brought to a close, the parties were required to express their opinion, how these dissensions could be most effectually healed. The remonstrants answered, that, in their judgment, the only method to promote peace, was to grant mutual toleration, and liberty to each party to teach and inculcate its own opinions. The answer of the pastors was, that the proper remedy was the calling of a national Synod. On this subject, the States General divided, and went to different sides.

After much controversy and many petitions and solemn warnings from various quarters, it was determined, that VORSTIUS should remove from Leyden, where he had taken up his residence, and that SIMON EPISCOPIUS, a leader among the Arminians, should be the successor of Arminius. Before this, GOMAR had resigned his office, and POLYANDER, an able and orthodox theologian, was put in his place.

A. D. 1613. Another attempt was made to promote peace and restore order to the agitated churches. Three men were selected by each party, who should confer together on the best method of bringing about a better state of things. This new effort was made, at the earnest suggestion of the Count of Nassau, who took a deep interest in the concerns of the afflicted and agitated church. He applied to Utenbogard and to Festus Hommius, begging them to consider and inquire whether some practicable method of restoring peace to the church might not be discovered. And as all attempts to change the opinions of the parties by conference or disputation had proved abortive, whether some plan of mutual toleration could not be devised. The remonstrants had continually pleaded for toleration; but it was such a toleration as would virtually nullify the Confession and Catechism of the Belgic churches. The deputies of the churches, therefore, had uniformly resisted their demand; especially, on the ground, that many of the Arminians entertained opinions of a Pelagian or Socinian kind, which were utterly subversive of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel.

Festus, in answer to the applications from the Count of Nassau, declared, that if the remonstrants held nothing more objectionable than what was contained in the five articles published in their remonstrance, that, in his opinion, a plan

of reconciliation and mutual toleration might be agreed upon; but he alleged, that there were other points of difference, and more important than these, which had not been brought forward. And he expressed the opinion, that the only method of establishing such a plan that would be at all satisfactory to the churches, would be by a national or provincial Synod.

When the illustrious the States had heard that such a plan of conference was in contemplation, they highly approved it, and directed that it should immediately be carried into effect. The persons selected on the part of remonstrants were, Utenbogard, Borrius, and Grevenchovius. On the part of the orthodox, Beccius, Bogardus, and Festus Hommius. In this conference, the remonstrants still insisted on unlimited toleration as the only effectual plan of peace; the other pastors considered it necessary to obtain from them a declaration, that they received the fundamental doctrines of the Confession; and they still urged the calling of a national or provincial Synod, as the most regular and only probable plan of quieting the disturbed churches. This conference, therefore, ended as all former ones had done, without any other effect than to increase the uneasiness of the churches, and to render them more suspicious of the designs of the remonstrants. But the Arminians being in favour with the ruling powers of the State, by various artifices, succeeded in obtaining a decree for such a toleration as they had always demanded. As the churches considered this decree as repugnant to the fundamental principles of the Belgic constitution, many of them resisted it, and chose rather to incur the displeasure of the States General, than give their consent to an arbitrary decree on the subject of religion, when the matters contained in it had never been submitted to the judgment of a lawful Synod.

A state of miserable confusion and even persecution now ensued. Many of the orthodox pastors were suspended, and others driven from their charges, because they could not conscientiously receive the remonstrants into the communion of the church.

By these commotions on account of religion, the very pillars of the state were shaken, and things were manifestly approaching a crisis, when James I. King of England, addressed a friendly, but admonitory epistle, to the States General, in which he earnestly recommended the calling of a national Synod, to restore tranquillity and the genuine doctrines of the reformation. This occurred early A. D. 1617.

The same thing was urged, with great earnestness, by MAURICE, the illustrious Prince of Orange, and Governor of confederated Belgium. When the remonstrants saw that their opinions were in danger of being subjected to the judgment of a national Synod, they had recourse to several expedients to prevent it; but proving unsuccessful in these attempts, they began to manifest and encourage, in many places, a spirit of revolt and sedition. But these disturbances only served to show in a more convincing manner, the necessity of calling, with as little delay as possible, a national Synod. Accordingly, a decree was made by the States General, that a national Synod should convene on the first of the next November, and letters were addressed to each of the States of each of the provinces. The method prescribed for the constitution of the national Synod was, that a provincial Synod should meet in each of the provinces, from which six persons should be delegated, and the letters of convocation required that their deputies should be learned and pious men, and greatly loving peace; three or four of the six were required to be pastors; the others, persons well qualified to sit in the general Synod, and examine and remove the existing controversies.

Special and equitable regulations were prescribed for appointing deputies from those classes in which part held with the remonstrants, and a part were opposed to them.

In addition to the letters of convocation addressed to the United Provinces, the States General addressed letters also to James I. King of England; to the Reformed Churches of France; to the Elector Palatine; to the Elector of Brandenburg; to the Landgrave of Hesse; to the four reformed Republics of Helvetia; to the Counts of Correspondentia and Wedevarica; and to the Republics of Geneva, Bremen, and Emben, requesting them to send of their own theologians, excelling in learning, piety, and prudence, to aid the deputies of the Belgic churches to settle the controversies which had arisen, and to restore peace to the same.

All these preparatory steps having been taken, the Synod, according to appointment, convened at Dort, or Dordrecht, on the 13th day of November, A. D. 1618.

Deputies from all the provinces of Holland, and from all the foreign reformed churches which had been invited, attended; except that the theologians of the reformed churches of France were prohibited by the King from attending.

Papers containing elaborate discussions of the five points of controversy, were also sent to the Synod by theologians of eminence, who could not attend, which were read, and inserted in the acts of the Synod.

The theologians who composed the Synod, were among the most learned, pious, and moderate, who ever met in any ecclesiastical council. And that the divine blessing might be obtained on the labours of this venerable body, a day of fasting and prayer was appointed by the government in all the Belgic churches, to deprecate the wrath of God, and to implore his gracious assistance. The Synod being met, and the divine aid and blessing being solemnly invoked, every member bound himself by a sacred oath, THAT HE WOULD TAKE THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ALONE AS THE RULE OF JUDGMENT; AND ENGAGE IN THE EXAMINATION AND DECISION OF THE CAUSE WITH A GOOD AND UPRIGHT CONSCIENCE.

The result of the deliberations of this venerable Synod, may be seen in the translation of the decision to which they came on the five disputed points, as given by Doctor Scott, in the little volume from which we have abridged the above history; and we believe that a knowledge of the facts here stated, may be useful to the American churches at the present time.

But to those who are capable of reading them, we would strongly recommend the perusal of the whole of the acts of this very important Synod, and of all the theological discussions which were read before it; all of which have been printed, and furnish as able a defence of the doctrines of grace, as can be found in any language. And as to the small diversities of opinion which appeared among the theologians of this Synod, they only serve to prove, that while they were firm and zealous in defending the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, they knew how to exercise a tolerant and liberal spirit towards those who differed from them in matters of minor importance.

Dr. Scott, in speaking of the solemn obligation under which the members came to judge of all matters according to the Holy Scriptures alone, gives this testimony: "In fact, I must give it as my opinion at least, that they did fulfil their solemn engagement; and must confess, THAT FEWER THINGS APPEAR TO ME UNSCRIPTURAL IN THESE ARTICLES, THAN IN ALMOST ANY HUMAN COMPOSITION I HAVE READ ON THE SUBJECT."