

The Synod of Dort, consisting of delegates from the Belgic churches, and also from various reformed churches on the continent, and from the churches of England and Scotland, was convoked by the States General of Holland, in the year 1618, for the purpose of deciding the question whether the opinions of Arminians, which for a number of years had been occasioning much agitation and dissension, could be reconciled with the confession and catechism of the Belgic churches. Misrepresentations the most scandalous have long been current in Arminian literature in regard to the proceedings of that Synod—a Lody of which the venerable Bishop Hall, one of the English delegates, declared, on being compelled by ill health to withdraw from it, that “there was no place on earth so like heaven as the Synod of Dort, and where he should be more willing to dwell.” Bishop Tomline (of Lincoln, in England) published upwards of half-a-century ago, a work of the low Pelagian cast against Calvinism, in which he adopted from Heylin, a bitter Arminian writer, of whom the late Dr. Samuel Millar, of Princeton, says, “he hardly knew how to speak the truth when Calvinism or Presbyterianism was in question,” very gross misrepresentations, purporting to be abbreviations of the articles of the Synod. Thomas Scott, the commentator, in answering Tomline’s work, had too hastily supposed that these abbreviations were faithful and correct, and thus was led to animadvert on them in no measured terms; using such language as that the Synod were presumptuous dogmatists, and he must speak with reprobation of their sentiments; but finding afterwards that he had been misled, and had unwittingly circulated gross misrepresentations of the Synod and their decisions, he did what he could to counteract the evil, and to vindicate the Synod from atrocious calumny, by publishing a translation of their articles at length with the so-called abbreviations subjoined. While he had denounced the sentiments contained in the *abbreviations*, he expresses his thorough approbation of the articles themselves as Scriptural, and of the holy, guarded, reverential and practical manner in which the Synod had stated the doctrines commonly called Calvinistic. At the close of the eighteen articles on Predestination, he gives the one sentence forming the alleged summary or abbreviation of them, and then adds: “I have long been aware that there is ‘no new thing under the sun,’ (Ecl. i, 9, 10,) and that ‘speaking all manner of evil falsely’ of the disciples of Christ, is no exception to this rule; and that misrepresenting and slandering men called Calvinists has been very general since the term was invented; but I own I never before met with so gross, so bare-faced and inexcusable a misrepresentation as this in all my studies of modern controversy. It can only be equalled by the false testimony borne against Jesus and his apostles, as recorded in Holy Writ. But is that cause likely to be in itself good, and of God, which needs to be supported by so unhallowed weapons?” Heylin, it may be mentioned, was not the original author of these misrepresentations of the Synod’s articles, but he adopted and endorsed them, saying, too, that they were the most favorable summary he had seen of the conclusions of the Synod—more so than that given by the Arminian party in their account of the proceedings! We have stated these things because the old misrepresentations in regard to the articles of the Synod of Dort are still circulated by Arminians, and because one of these so-called abbreviations or summaries say