

John Davenant, a Champion of the 'Via Media' at the Synod of Dort?

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a study of the theology of an Anglican bishop, John Davenant (1572-1641), in the context of the early modern era. In particular, it will focus on his understanding of the extent and intent of the atoning death of Christ. Davenant played an important role in the development of early orthodox Reformed theology, especially on this controversial doctrine. It has been argued that Davenant's position, together with other British delegates, was a "via media" between the Contra-Remonstrants and the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort. The contention is that within the seventeenth-century Reformed tradition, Davenant's understanding of the decree of God, the atonement of Christ and the offer of the gospel were the main factors that developed his own version of hypothetical universalism. The exposition of those doctrines by John Davenant both in his various writings and in his testimony at the Synod of Dort will serve as the object of my investigation. Specifically, some important documents, such as *Consideration touching the Second Article discussed at the conference at Hage* and *The Collegiate Suffrage of the Great Britain* and *Dissertatio De Morte Christi*, are analysed in order to examine Davenant's doctrinal position.

This paper aims to examine the discussion between Davenant and other divines at the Synod closely and analyse his view and his contribution. The conclusion arrived at is that it is difficult to say that John Davenant was a champion of a "via media" at the Synod of Dort. The confessional positions codified in the Canons of Dort should not be understood as one massive argument that excludes all variety. The via media positions included a spectrum of views rather than a single definite view. Some of Davenant's suggestions were not accepted, e.g., his view on ordained sufficiency. Nevertheless, Davenant had an impact on formulating the Canons since all nine articles of the second drafting committee were newly written after the protest of Davenant and his British colleagues.

INTRODUCTION¹

In the early seventeenth century Jacobus Arminius, a professor in theology at the University of Leiden, challenged the accepted Reformed standard in the Netherlands, the Belgic Confession, having concluded that the Reformed view granted "insufficient place in its system to the decisions of the human will" and it made God "the author of sin."² After the death of Arminius, that discussions continued between the followers of Arminius, called Remonstrants, and the defenders of the Belgic Confession, the Contra-Remonstrants. The theological and political tensions between these two parties increased, and the Synod of Dort was eventually convened

¹ The author wishes to thank the members of the Advanced Theological Studies Fellowship at Theologische Universiteit Kampen for their generous support in the summer month of 2016 when much of the research for this article was conducted.

² Subsequently Arminius held to the view, namely, that election 'effectively placed the ultimate determination as to whether someone would be saved in the decision of that individual rather than in the eternal decree of God'. See Strivens, 'Synod of Dort', 5.

on 13th November 1618 at the town of Dordrecht (or Dort) in the Netherlands. Not only Dutch theologians, but also the representatives of Reformed Churches from eight other countries such as Britain and Germany and Switzerland gathered together.

As one of the British delegation, John Davenant held a view of the intent and extent of Christ's atonement, which stood in between the "categorical Arminian universalism" and "particularism"; the latter was perhaps the view of the majority at the Synod.³ On the one hand, the position of Davenant and his colleagues was even regarded as "disguised Arminianism" by some strict Contra-Remonstrants; but, on the other hand, as Walter Rex remarks, the arguments of the British delegation "ought to have silenced forever their Arminian adversaries" without affecting "the harsh underlying realities of the Calvinist theological system."⁴ In spite of the opposition of some delegates, it has been said that some of the contents of the Canons of Dort were "softened" or "moderated" through the endeavour of Davenant together with other British delegates and the Bremen delegation.⁵ Nonetheless, whether such a minority triumphed in moderating the second head of the Canons of Dort is a controversial issue.

Hence, this paper aims to investigate Davenant's role and contribution, specifically during the discussions and debates in order to answer this issue.⁶ It is first necessary to define, in brief, some important backgrounds and terminology. Secondly, we must analyse the position of the British delegation, with reference to the contribution made by Davenant. Then, lastly, the positions of other foreign and Dutch delegates at the Synod will be investigated, in order to gain

³ Muller, 'Dating John Davenant's De Gallicana Controversia Sententia', 10; Edmund Calamy, one of the members in the Westminster Assembly, believed that Davenant vehemently affirmed his hypothetical universalism as a 'middle way' contrary to 'Remonstrants and Supralapsarians' at the Synod of Dort. Such notions as 'hypothetical universalism' and 'middle way' will to be precisely explained later. See Calamy, *An Historical Account of My Own Life*, I:471.

⁴ Rex, *Essays on Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy*, 85–86.

⁵ As Muller remarks, Davenant was 'instrumental' in protecting the 'breadth of definition in the Canons of Dort on the issue of Christ's satisfaction' together with other British delegates and the Bremen delegates. See Muller, 'Dating John Davenant's De Gallicana Controversia Sententia', 10; Moore also believes that the 'final form' of the Canons of Dort were softened by Davenant and other British delegates' labour at the Synod. See Moore, *English Hypothetical Universalism*, 212–13; Crisp states, 'the relevant canon of the Synod of Dort does not exclude Reformed theologians persuaded by the hypothetical universalist doctrine'. See Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism*, 181.

⁶ This paper intends to examine not only the accounts of the British delegation, but also the other foreign delegations, in order to understand the context of the creation of the Canons of Dort better. Milton remarks, 'In the examination of these other foreign delegations, and most particularly in the analysis of the debates surrounding the creation of the Canons of Dort, there is room for a substantial reworking of our understanding, not just of the Synod, but of the doctrinal thought of the Reformed churches'. See Milton, *A Distorting Mirror*, 161.

further insights into the formation of the Canons of Dort and Davenant's specific contribution to that process.

JOHN DAVENANT AND THE SYNOD OF DORT

John Davenant was born in London in 1572. He became a student of Queen's College at Cambridge in 1587, where he became a fellow in 1594.⁷ At that time, Dr William Whitaker, Master of St John's College, testified that Davenant "would, in time, prove an honour to the University."⁸ Subsequently, after obtaining his doctorate degree in 1609, Davenant became Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, and soon after that, in 1614, he was appointed as the President of Queen's College.⁹ In 1618 at Cambridge Davenant and Samuel Ward were selected as British delegates by King James who instructed the British delegation, saying as follows:

And if in debating of the Cause by the Learned men there, any thinge be emergent whereof yow thought not before, yow whall meet and consult thereupon againe, and so resolve among yourselves ioyntly what is fit to be maintained; And this to be done agreeable to Scriptures and the doctrine of the Church of England.¹⁰

As Jonathan Moore remarks, the commission of the British delegates from King James should be appreciated "as part of his foreign policy and his own deep concern to foster unity with the Lutherans, not least to form a pan-Protestant military alliance across Europe".¹¹

According to the diary of Edward Davenant, who was a nephew of Bishop Davenant, Davenant and a group of people from Cambridge came to London on 8th October 1618 in order to travel by ship to the Netherlands.¹² On 13th November 1618, the synod was commenced at the town of Dordrecht in the Netherlands. Before the Remonstrants appeared at the synod on 26 November/6 December 1618, many practical matters were discussed at the synod.¹³ After the Remonstrants appeared there were a series of "procedural wrangles" with the Remonstrants as

⁷ Allport, *Life of Bishop Davenant*, ix.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., x-xi.

¹⁰ In Doc 2/9 Instructions of King James I to the delegates were written. See Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 93.

¹¹ Moore, *James Ussher's Influence on the Synod of Dordt*, 178.

¹² '1618 Octobris 8. On Thursday we set from Cambridge, and before dinner came to the court at Roiston'. See Davenant, 'Oxford Exeter College MS 48', 4^r; they arrived at Dort on October 15, but their lodge was not provided yet. They had to stay at The Hague for a while. See Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 105-7.

¹³ Those practical matters included 'arrangements for a new translation of the Dutch bible', 'rules for catechetical instruction', 'the question whether the children of heathen parents' need to be baptised, 'the issue of whether theological students should be permitted to preach and baptise', and 'the means by which the press might be more effectively controlled to prevent the appearance of heretical works'. See Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 105.

they complained that it was a "schismatic assembly which was made up of opponents" who were "unable to judge the issues fairly."¹⁴ The British delegation responded to the Remonstrants' complaints, at session 29 (2/12 December).¹⁵ Soon after the Remonstrants were asked to submit their opinion in writing, they submitted "theses on the Five Articles" to the synod.¹⁶ At session 67, Davenant gave an address, responding to the Remonstrants concerning the first point of the Remonstrant Articles. As the Synodi Nationalis records reveal:

Session 67. 25th January, Friday afternoon. The most well-known Doctor John Davenant, publicly drew this question: whether divine election is unique or multiple? But on the other hand, this occasion explains. 1. What kind of authentic decree of predestination it is. 2. What kind of decree the Remonstrants establishes for the decree of election. 3. What kind of distinction they deduce from those.¹⁷

In this session, Davenant dealt with a question, namely, "whether the divine election was of one, or of more kinds?", and opposed such distinctions, made by the Remonstrants, as "limited and unlimited, revocable and irrevocable, peremptory and not peremptory, mutable and immutable [definitam & indefinitam, revocabilem & irrevocabilem; peremptoriam & non

¹⁴ The Remonstrants submitted two papers to express their opinion concerning the procedure of the synod: the first paper was submitted at session 25, saying that they 'denied that the synod could be a lawful judge of the Remonstrants on the basis of two objections: that most of the assembly were their professed enemies, and that many of them were guilty of schism'. See *ibid.*, 147, 162 n.52.

¹⁵ The paper of the British delegation was entitled 'The judgment of the British divines on the protestation and two objections of the Remonstrants [Sententia Theologorum Magnae Britanniae De Protestatione et Exceptionibus duabus Remonstrantium]'. The British delegation rejected the first Remonstrant objection, i.e. 'the Contra-Remonstrants are schismatics', with six reasons, and then they rejected the second objection, i.e. 'the greater part of the synod consists of their adversaries', with four reasons. See *ibid.*, 162–63, 162 n.52.

¹⁶ It was Session 31 when the President Bogerman asked the Remonstrants to submit their position on the First Article. See Brandt, *The History of the Reformation, and Other Ecclesiastical Transactions*, III, 83; Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 147.

¹⁷ The translation is mine. The original was written: 'SESSIONE LXVII. 25. Ianuarij, Die Veneris post meridiem. Clarissimus Vir Doctor Johannes Dauenantius, publice hanc quaestionem tractauit: An election diuina sit vnica, an multiplex? Atque hac occasione explicuit. 1. Quale sit genuinum Praedestinationis Decretum. 2. Qualia Decreta Remonstrantes pro Decretis Electionis statuunt. 3. Quales distinctiones ex ijs deducant'. After the address of Davenant, Samuel Ward answered to the ninth Remonstrant argument. What he attempted to approve, the decree of saving believers is the only election to salvation, because its foundation is Christ. Philosopher Rudolph Goelenius the Elder, by the Principles of Logics, refuted the Sylogism of the Remonstrant about the execution of predestination. Matthias Martinus continued to give his opposition as to how or to what extent Christ is said to be the foundation of election. See *Acta Synodi Nationalis*, 277; Davenant's address at session 67 survives in at least three different versions (in Rotterdam Bibliotheek, Het Utrechts Achief and Exeter College, Oxford). On 20th April 2016, the curator of Rotterdam Bibliotheek confirmed to me that the manuscript no. 46 was still part of their collections (situated in Rare Books Reading Room, which is called Erasmuszaal, at Rotterdam Public Library in the Netherlands). The MS no. 46 contains the writing, entitled 'Dissertatiuncula D. Ioannis Davenantii SS. Theologiae Doctoris et Professoris in Academia Cantabrigiensi. De quaestione An election sive praedestinatio unica sit an multiplex'. See Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 223 n.2; see Davenant, 'Oxford Exeter College MS 48', 85r–88v.

peremptoriam; mutabilem & immutabilem]."¹⁸ In order to reject these distinctions, after giving the definition of election made by the Contra-Remonstrants and confirming it, he outlined the opinion of the Remonstrants and made an attack on those distinctions.¹⁹

At session 74, the second point of the Remonstrant Articles had drawn the attention of the delegates. It is written as follows:

Session 74. 5th February, Tuesday afternoon. Theses are examined by the President, concerning the judgment of the Remonstrants about the proposed second Article: considerations, which are discussions (συζητήσεις), especially regarding the distinction between sufficiency and efficiency of the merit of the death of Christ: and, or to what extent Christ can be said to be dead for all.²⁰

They started to debate about "the distinction of sufficiency, and the virtue of the merits of Christ's death, and whether, and how far Christ may be said to have sufficiently died for all men."²¹ Davenant held to the opinion that "Christ died for all men, and every one in particular," with Martinius of Bremen and Samuel Ward.²² In order to prevent some disorder of the synod, some private meetings were held at Bishop Carleton's lodgings.

On 4/14 January 1619, the Remonstrants were "formally ejected from the synod at session 57".²³ After the ejection of the Remonstrants, there were some doctrinal disagreements among the delegates at the synod. Specifically, the second head of doctrine in the Canons of Dort, which concerned the extent of the atonement, caused a number of disagreements.

DAVENANT'S VIEW ON THE SECOND ARTICLE

Before delving into the discussions over the second article of the Remonstrants, some of the terminology needs to be defined in order to understand Davenant's view better. There were four categories in explaining the extent of the atonement in the seventeenth century. In his *Disputationes Selectae*, Gisbertus Voetius distinguished four views regarding the merit of

¹⁸ Brandt, *The History of the Reformation, and Other Ecclesiastical Transactions*, 3:211; Hales commented that Davenant presented his opinion 'learnedly and fully'. See Hales, *Golden Remains*, 75.

¹⁹ Brandt, *The History of the Reformation, and Other Ecclesiastical Transactions*, 3:211; After Davenant's address, 'the Auditory was commanded to depart'. It was done lest 'others should speake at the same time' and 'some diversity of opinion might rise'. Hence, some private meetings were held at night. See Hales, *Golden Remains*, 75.

²⁰ The translation is mine. 'SESSIONE LXVIV. 5. February, Die Martu post meridiem. Examinatae sunt Theses a Praeside, de sententia Remonstrantium circa secundum Articulum propositae: habitae que sunt συζητήσεις, de distinctione sufficientiae, potissimum & efficaciae meriti mortis Christi: &an, seu, quatenus, Christus dici possit, sufficienter mortuus esse pro omnibus'. See *Acta Synodi Nationalis*, 279.

²¹ Brandt, *The History of the Reformation, and Other Ecclesiastical Transactions*, III, 217.

²² *Ibid.*, 217.

²³ Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 148.

Christ's death: one heterodox position, i.e., universalism, and three orthodox positions, i.e., particularism, hypothetical universalism, and the sufficiency-efficiency position.

The classical 'sufficiency-efficiency' position is that "Christ's death was effectual for the elect alone but sufficient even for the reprobate."²⁴ Hypothetical universalism affirms that "the act of the atonement was virtually sufficient to save all men, but that its redemptive and efficient power applied only to the elect"; that is to say, "Christ's satisfaction was such that if all human beings would believe, all would be saved."²⁵ Particularism affirms that "Christ died only for the elect; his death could have been sufficient for the whole world, but it was not his intention to die for the whole world."²⁶ Universalism can be said in this way, "Christ died for all men, but only believers enjoy the effects of his death."²⁷

Davenant's view on the second Article, i.e., the extent of the atonement, was well reflected in such documents as "Consideration touching the Second Article discussed at the conference at Hage" and the British Collegiate Suffrage.²⁸ I will also refer to Davenant's remarks written in his

²⁴ In the hypothetical universalist group Voetius includes Gerardus Vossius, Crocius (a Bremen delegate) and Saumur theologians, but he did not mention Davenant at all. In the particularist group Voetius includes William Ames and William Twisse. I am grateful for Dr Aza Goudriaan's clarification on this issue. See Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, 2: 251-253; Rouwendal, 'Calvin's Forgotten Classical Position on the Extent of the Atonement', 321; Calvin only mentions the sufficiency-efficiency distinction once in his tract on the doctrine of predestination. That is to say, the extent of the atonement was not his main concerns. I am grateful for Professor Helm's personal comment on this issue. Regarding Calvin's view I agree with Helm's view presented in his article. See Helm, *Calvin, Indefinite Language, and Definite Atonement*, 97-119.

²⁵ Fornerod, *A Reappraisal of the Genevan Delegation at the Synod of Dordt*, 211-12; Muller, 'Dating John Davenant's De Gallicana Controversia Sententia', 10; Professor Helm suggests that it would be better if we call Davenant's position as 'a counterfactual universalist'. He explains, 'Because he holds that if every person were to be or were to have been the object of what he calls the "special determination" of God (which Davenant knows they are not) then they would have been or would be regenerated' and 'would have the grace of perseverance, and so on'. 'Christ has died for them, and his death is sufficient for all. But, until the gospel takes hold, we don't know who the objects of this special determination are. So it may be that we are to think of the universal love of God as seen in the death of Christ for everyone as the revealed will of God, the "special determination" as the secret will'. See Helm, 'John Davenant and "Hypothetical Universalism"'.
²⁶ Rouwendal, 'Calvin's Forgotten Classical Position on the Extent of the Atonement', 323.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Hereafter, I will call this as 'Touching the Second Article'. The original manuscript of this paper has been housed by the Bodleian. Having compared it with other Davenant's handwritings, I think that it was handwritten by John Davenant. See Davenant et al., 'MS Rawlinson C849', fols 278^r-281^v; this paper might have been written 'some time after 9/19 March 1619' and attached to the letter of Samuel Ward letter to John Young which was delivered on for the approval of the king. Milton detects the date of this paper, giving a reference to the notebook of Ward. It must have been written, says he, 'when the British Suffrage on that article was read out in session 120'. See Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 210 n.80; 218 n.110; 220 n.119; Davenant, *Doctour Davenant Touching the Second Article*, 218; the editor of the Golden Remains (1673) included this paper. See Hales, *Golden Remains*, 186-90; although the former document, 'Doctour Davenant toucing the Second Article', was penned by Davenant himself according to Golden Remains' editor, I agree with Anthony Milton and Donald Sinnema, who argue that it was probably

Dissertatio De Morte Christi in order to explain his position as stated during the synod because Davenant's resolution submitted to King James may have been his earlier note for his dissertation.²⁹ If this is the case, it is legitimate to use his *De Morte Christi* as an important reference to clarify his position at the synod.³⁰

According to these documents, Davenant and his colleagues disagreed with some statements of the Remonstrants, namely, that a means of deliverance attained by Christ through His death is not only for believers but also for unbelievers though the latter group would not receive it.³¹ Concerning this position *Touching the Second Article* states;

Notwithstanding this tenent of extending Christs death to all, and the universalitye of the promise, we do firmly hold the main poynts controverted not only in the other 4 articles, but in this 2^d article also, in our two first propositions touching Gods and Christs speciall intention to redeeme effectualye, and to merit effectuall Grace only to the elect.³²

On the other hand, the rigid opinion of some of the Contra-Remonstrants was criticised. For instance, the rigid opinion of such Contra-Remonstrants as Johannes Piscator at the Synod of Dort, e.g., God's decree, is the "chief cause of unbelief," was unbearable.³³ It was rejected by Davenant and other delegates as well as by the Remonstrants themselves.³⁴ It is strongly argued

written by the whole British delegation including Davenant. In fact, there is no indication that Davenant was the only author of that document. I appreciate Professor Donald Sinnema's clarification. Milton also affirms that this document was 'ostensibly written by the whole delegation, and its attribution to Davenant may simply derive from the fact that the copy used by Hales' editor was in Davenant's handwriting'. See Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 218 n.110.

²⁹ On 11/21 December 1618 in his letter George Hakewill asked John Prideaux to send him 'Dr Davenants resolution in that point presented the kinge which I remember at my beeing in Oxford'. See Hakewill, *George Hakewill to John Prideaux*, 102; George Hakewill was one of the Calvinist divines in Oxford, who 'were dedicated to anti-papal causes' alongside Robert Abbot, Richard Crakanthorp and John Prideaux. See Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 33.

³⁰ Milton speculates, 'it is also possible that it was an earlier version of some of the points that were mustered in defence of the delegation's moderate stance on the atonement [i.e. the document, 'Touching the Second Article']. Or it may have been early notes for what later became Davenant's treatise *De Morte Christi*'. See Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*, 102 n.369.

³¹ Davenant et al., 'MS Rawlinson C849', fol 180r; 'Experientiam hoc posse docere, non omnes & singulos reipsa a servitute [peccati] liberari; sed non docet [or docere] liberationem, aut saltem jus & modum (or "medium" as Brandius hath it, Pag. 195) eo pertingendi omnibus non esse impetratum'. It can be translated, 'Experience is able to teach this, not all and individual to be free from slavery of sin; but not to teach setting free, or at least the law and the medium are extended to all not to be procured'. See Davenant, *Touching the Second Article*, 220–21.

³² Davenant et al., 'MS Rawlinson C849', fol 180v; Davenant, *Touching the Second Article*, 221.

³³ In his dissertation Sinnema lists some statements of Piscator thus: 'Reprobation is the chief cause of unbelief; The necessity of sinning is imposed (iniicitur) on the reprobate by God's decree; The reprobate were destined and created for damnation and for the causes of damnation, so that they might live wickedly'. See Sinnema, 'The Issue of Reprobation at the Synod of Dort', 94–95.

³⁴ Davenant et al., 'MS Rawlinson C849', fol 281r; the authors of this document explicitly mention 'the rigid Opinion of Piscator' which was presented by 'the Remonstrants in a large Tract'. It was read in the Synod. The British delegates argue that 'no Divine can justifie' the rigid opinion. See Davenant, *Touching the Second*

in this paper, *Touching the Second Article*, that this extreme view would be disclaimed by "the most Learned Bishops, and others in England."³⁵ This rigid opinion on the Second Article would cause the Lutheran Churches not to join with the Reformed, which was a crucial concern of King James;

We verily think that the strictness of the Contra-Remonstrants in this 2^d article is one chiefe reason which keepeth the Lutheran Churches from joyning with us. And we think that if way were given in this Synode herein, they would be the more easily brought to hold the doctrine of Predestination according to the opinion of St. Augustine and the Church of England.³⁶

However, it should be noted that Davenant does not negate the doctrine of predestination in his view regarding the extent of Christ's atonement. In the third chapter of his *De Morte Christi*, when he mentions God's predestination, Davenant remarks "it is not any kind of ordination to salvation, through whatever means, which places man in the number of the elect or predestinated, but an ordination *through such means* [*per talia media*] as God both knew and decreed would infallibly produce the effect of salvation in the elect person".³⁷

Davenant goes on to present his argument in two ways: first, he adds a crucial restriction in his general statement, i.e., that the death of Christ was decreed by God as a "common remedy" for mankind, and it would benefit every individual under the "Evangelical condition," namely, if

Article, 221; some part of the remark of Piscator goes like this: 'That God moves the tongues of men to blaspheme' and 'That men are not able to do more good than they actually perform'. In *Acta et Scripta*, it is said, 'Consequens est a Deo moveri hominum linguas ad loquendum, quidquid loquuntur, sive Deum laudent, sive blasphemant'. And 'hominem non plus boni posse facere, quam facit, nec plus mali omittit, quam omittit, imo deum Decrevisse apud se quantum boni & mali ab unoquoque praestari velit'. Milton comments that the wording of Piscator is, in this document, 'not precisely as cited in the original' in *Acta et Scripta*, 'but for a similarly worded passage'. See Balcanquall, *Notes of Walter Balcanquahall on the Later Sessions (Extracts)*, 324, 324 nn.5–6; Fornerod remarks, 'As early as February 1619, Diodati considered the extreme wording of certain theologians on the issue of reprobation would be worthy of condemnation by the Synod'. Although Diodati 'shared the feelings of the British and some of the other foreign delegates', the Compagnie des pasteurs 'remained fearful that Beza's doctrine on predestination might be damaged' by association with an official condemnation of Piscator. See Fornerod, *A Reappraisal of the Genevan Delegation at the Synod of Dordt*, 207; as Sinnema comments, 'Piscator's extreme views were not representative of the main-line Reformed thinking of this day. Yet Piscator's Reformed contemporaries did not question his basic orthodoxy; only a few took exception to certain crude ways of speaking'. See Sinnema, 'The Issue of Reprobation at the Synod of Dort', 95; it should be noted that, though Davenant disagreed with Piscator's view on predestination, it did not mean that he despised Piscator's theology. For instance, he personally possessed Piscator's commentary on the New Testament (*Novuum Test.*, 2 vols.) and donated them to Queens' College Old Library in 1626. I am grateful for Dr Tim Eggington's help on this issue. See *Queens Donors' Book - Nomina Eorvm Qvi Bib: Liothecam Hanc Suis Donarijs Locuplecarunt Hoc Libro Signature*, 10–12.

³⁵ Davenant et al., 'MS Rawlinson C849', fol 281'; Davenant, *Touching the Second Article*, 221.

³⁶ Davenant et al., 'MS Rawlinson C849', fol 281'; Davenant, *Touching the Second Article*, 221.

³⁷ Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 1:380; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 54.

they should believe in Christ.³⁸ However, it is wrong to say that every individual is elected by God because He has not decreed to grant faith to everyone, through which those who believe in Christ might be saved. Here we can observe the universality of the death of Christ as well as its particularity in Davenant's thought. Secondly, Davenant closely connects God's sufficient ordination of means with His decree of special providence. He affirms that there is a difference between the elect and the non-elect, and then he thus expounds the reason:

Because there is no sufficient ordination of means to procure the salvation of man, were he predestinated, unless it should be added, that there is an infallible order of special providence appointing and directing the ordained means to a most certain attainment of the end, which nothing can prevent.³⁹

If one is elected, God's sufficient ordination of means should be connected with the "order of special providence [*ordo specialis providentiae*]," which directs the appointed means to achieve his or her salvation. Since the Gospel is preached to every individual, the elect would be saved through the infallible order of God's special providence. It should be noted that this infallible order of special providence of God, which appoints and directs the ordained means, is the most certain and "cannot be frustrated."⁴⁰ Here, the phrase, 'God's ordained means cannot be frustrated', [*infrustrabilem*] should be highlighted because it is a very important word in differentiating Davenant's thought from that of John Cameron, who was a tutor of Moise Amyraut.⁴¹ Predestination, as Davenant remarks, is not a "bare ordination" of certain people into eternal life by sufficient means which make their salvation "possible", rather it is God's gracious providence in which he decrees the means of making the salvation of the elect "infallible and infrustrable".⁴² In repudiating John Cameron's opinion on the divine decrees, Davenant denies

³⁸ Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 55; Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 2:381.

³⁹ Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 2:381; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 55; 'Quia nulla quantumvis sufficiens ordinatio mediorum ad salutem hominis procurandam illum esse praedestinatum, nisi illud accesserit, ut sit infallibilis quidem ordo specialis providentiae statuens & dirigens media ordinata ac certissimam & infrustrabilem sinis consecutionem'. See Davenant, *Dissertatio de Morte Christi*, 73.

⁴⁰ In the quotation above, Allport translates 'ac certissimam & infrustrabilem sinis consecutionem' as 'to a most certain attainment of the end, which nothing can prevent'. See Davenant, *Dissertatio de Morte Christi*, 73.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; Djaballah, *Controversy on Universal Grace*, 197.

⁴² This point is crucial to make a distinction between Davenant's thought from Arminius' thought. Davenant stresses, unlike Arminius, that predestination does not just make salvation possible nor can God's will be frustrated. See Davenant, *Animadversions*, 36–37; Muller, *A Tale of Two Wills?*, 109; Muller affirms that 'Arminius violated the fundamental doctrinal truth that the "will of God cannot be resisted" and ... had argued an "antecedent will" that could be resisted by human beings, indeed, that the end or goal proposed by God to himself in this antecedent decree might be frustrated: Deum posse frustrari particulari fine quem sibi proposuit'. He goes on to argue that 'Arminian doctrine did not conjoin the universal accomplishment

Cameron's notion of the frustration of God's intention. In his judgment to the French controversy Davenant remarks as follows:

I think that no Divine of the Reformed Church of sound judgment, will deny a general intention or appointment concerning the salvation of all men individually by the death of Christ, on this condition - If they should believe. For this intention or appointment of God is general, and is plainly revealed in the Holy Scripture, although the absolute and not to be frustrated intention of God, concerning the gift of faith and eternal life to some persons, is special, and is limited to the elect alone.⁴³

DAVENANT AMONG OTHER DELEGATES AT THE SYNOD

In fact, the terminology "via media" is not a satisfactory way to denote Davenant's position. This will be proved while I am trying to place Davenant's view among the views of the other delegates'. Some have sketched the position of the British delegation as "the British versus the other delegates."⁴⁴ However, as many other modern scholars argue, the proceedings of the Synod of Dort should not be pictured as monolithic.⁴⁵ So there needs to be an investigation comparing Davenant's position with other delegates and establishing whether his view just survived independently or actually made an impact in the formation of the Canons of Dort.

First of all, concerning the theological position of the foreign delegations, it is important to note that their opinions were not just opposite to the British delegation's view.

O: accepting, X: refusing, -: not mentioning

Foreign delegations	Universal Offer of the Gospel	Sufficiency-Efficiency Distinction	Accomplishment-Application Distinction	Interpretation of 'all' as the whole world	Intrinsic Universal Value of the death	Unity between the Death & Intercession
British	O	-	O	O	-	-
Davenant (British)	O	O	O	O	Ordained Sufficiency	O
Palatine	-	O	-	X	O	O
Hesse	-	O	-	-	-	-
Helvetian	-	O	O	-	-	O
Nassau	-	O	-	O	-	O

(impetratio) of redemption in and through Christ to any necessary application (applicatio) of Christ's work. Christ's work merely serves to render salvation possible'. See Muller, *Davenant and Du Moulin*, 144, 147, 149.

⁴³ Davenant, *On the Controversy among the French Divines of the Reformed Church*, II:568–69.

⁴⁴ Hales, *Golden Remains*; Brandt, *The History of the Reformation, and Other Ecclesiastical Transactions*; White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic*; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*.

⁴⁵ Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism'; Strehle, 'The Extent of the Atonement and the Synod of Dort'; Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*; Sinnema, *The French Reformed Churches, Arminianism, and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619)*.

Foreign delegations	Universal Offer of the Gospel	Sufficiency-Efficiency Distinction	Accomplishment-Application Distinction	Interpretation of 'all' as the whole world	Intrinsic Universal Value of the death	Unity between the Death & Intercession
Genevan	X	X	Acceptable with Condition	X	O	-
Martinius (Bremen)	O	O	O	O	-	-
Isselburg (Bremen)	-	-	-	-	O	-
Crocius (Bremen)	-	O	-	-	-	-
Emden	-	X	X	X	-	-

Figure 1. Theological Position of the Foreign Delegations over the Second Article⁴⁶

There are some delegates who accepted the sufficiency-efficiency distinction, and others who rejected that distinction. Two foreign delegations, in particular, i.e., the Genevan and Emden delegations, took the strict positions against the Remonstrant view on the extent of the atonement.⁴⁷ For example, the Genevan delegation held that all universal references in Scriptures indicate the elect. Although they accepted the distinction between the accomplishment and application of the death of Christ, they argued that both of the concepts refer to the elect alone.⁴⁸ The Emden delegation was even stronger in refuting the accomplishment-application distinction

⁴⁶ I made this chart on the basis of Godfrey’s summary of the foreign delegations’ views on the second article. See Godfrey, ‘Tensions within International Calvinism’, 188–204; the *Acta Synodi Nationalis* records the Judgments of Palatine (609-616), Hesse (617-625), Helvetica (625-627), Nassau (628-634), Geneva (635-639), Martinius (639-644), Iselburg (644-655), Crocius (656-658), and Emden (658-671). See *Acta Synodi Nationalis, In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, Autoritate Illvstr. Et Praepotentvm DD. Ordinvm Generalivm Foederati Belgij Prouinciarum, Dordrecht Habita Anno M. DC. XVIII. & M. DC. XIX. Accedunt Plenissima, de Quinque Articulis, Tam Exterorum Quam Prouincialium Theologorum Iudicia, Accessit in Calce Index Cvm Rervm Tum Verborum Locorumque Communium in Hoc Opere Contentorum Locupletissimus.* (Leiden, 1620), 685.

⁴⁷ In his letter to Robert Naunton, Dudley Carleton mentioned that the Genevans were displeased at the denouncement of the Remonstrants regarding their presence at the synod. As it was written, ‘Geneva hath much stomaked that they were so long forgotten’. See Carleton, *Sir Dudley Carleton to Sir Robert Naunton, 29 September/ 9 October 1618*, 47; The Genevan delegates, Diodati and Tronchin, had to hold to the strict position because they were ‘charged with making known “le sentiment” of the Church of Geneva’ and with the promise ‘not to demean the Genevan church and to preserve the memory of Calvin and Beza’. Of course, the Remonstrants had already known the theological position of the Compagnie des pasteurs of Geveva. When the ‘presence of the theologi exteri’ of the synod was decided, the Remonstrants ‘had no expectations regarding “ceux de Geneve”’. In other words, they did not want the Genevan delegates to be invited by the synod of Dort. In fact, the Genevans were not happy with the fact that the Remonstrants had obstructed their invitation to Dort. However, it should be noticed that, as Fornerod points out, the Genevan delegation endeavoured to make peace with other delegations at the synod. See Fornerod, *A Reappraisal of the Genevan Delegation at the Synod of Dordt*, 185, 189–90, 194.

⁴⁸ Godfrey, ‘Tensions within International Calvinism’, 194.

in order to protect the orthodox position regarding the doctrine of the work of Christ against the Remonstrants.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, as we can see in the chart, at least five foreign delegations, i.e., Palatine, Hesse, Helvetian, Nassau and Bremen, held to the sufficiency-efficiency distinction.⁵⁰ Regarding the view on the universal concept of the death of Christ, the Nassau delegation and one of the Bremen delegates, Martinus, asserted that the universal references in Scriptures should be regarded as indicating not only the elect but also the non-elect according to the Reformed tradition.⁵¹ This shows that it was not Davenant alone who held to the universal aspect of the atoning death of Christ.⁵²

Dutch delegations	Universal Offer of the Gospel	Sufficiency-Efficiency Distinction	Accomplishment-Application Distinction	Intrinsic Universal Value of the death	Unity between the Death & Intercession	Other emphasis
Dutch Professors	O	-	O	O	-	-
Lubbertus	-	X	-	O	-	-
Gelderland	X	-	O	O	-	-
South Holland	-	O	O	-	X	-
North Holland	-	O	X	O	-	-
Zealand	-	-	O	O	-	-
Utrecht	-	-	-	O	-	Assurance
Friesland	-	-	X	O	-	-
Overijssel	-	X	-	-	-	-
Groningen	-	-	X	-	-	Justification
Drenthe	-	O	X	-	-	Absolute Necessity of Atonement
Gallo-Belgic	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 2. Theological Positions of the Dutch delegations over the Second Article⁵³

⁴⁹ As Godfrey points out that the Emden delegates held that ‘any separation of the two was blasphemous because it made Christ an “incomplete Savior”.’ See *ibid.*, 202.

⁵⁰ According to Balcanquahall’s letter in session 112 the Palatine, Hesse, and Helvetian delegates claimed that ‘Christ his death was only sufficient for all men, not efficient or impetrative’, but they restrained ‘all the general propositions which are in Scripture to that purpose only ad mundum Electorum’. Those delegations concluded that ‘Christ was no wayes expiatio pro peccatis singulorum’, that is to say, Christ’s atoning death was not for every single individual. See Hales, *Golden Remains*, 131.

⁵¹ The Nassau delegates cited the statements of ‘Augustine, Origen, Prosper, Anselm, Thomas and Lyra’ in order to stress ‘the strict Reformed understanding of universality in Scripture’. See Godfrey, ‘Tensions within International Calvinism’, 193.

⁵³ Godfrey, ‘Tensions within International Calvinism’, 204–21; The Acta Synodi Nationalis records the judgments of the Dutch delegates in this order: Belgic Professors (155-160), Gelderland (161-174), South

The Dutch delegations generally stood in a strictly orthodox position. Surprisingly, such Dutch professors as Polyander, Gomarus, Thysius, and Wallaeus held to a more moderate view than other Dutch delegates.⁵⁴ Davenant, in his *De Morte Christi*, cites one of the statements from the judgment of Dutch professors [*Professorum Belgicorum Iudicium*] thus:

The most learned Belgic Professors, in their judgment exhibited at the Synod of Dort, confess the same thing... 'We confess,' say they, 'that the merit and value of the death of Christ is not only sufficient to expiate all, even the greatest sins of men, but also those of the whole posterity of Adam, although there should be many more to be saved, provided they embraced it with a true faith'.⁵⁵

The judgment of the Gelderland delegation was a little stricter than that of the professors. For example, their view on the offer of the gospel might have offended some delegates: as they remark, "Hence it is said wrongly that the grace of the Gospel is universal, that is, that the benefits prepared by the death of Christ are offered to all and everyone to whom it is preached."⁵⁶

At least seven delegations affirmed the intrinsic universal value of the death of Christ. Davenant, however, does not want to hold just to the intrinsic value of Christ's death. For instance, in his *De Morte Christi*, he disagrees with the judgment of the Utrecht delegates.⁵⁷ He

Holland (174-181), North Holland (182-189), Zeeland (190-195), Utrecht (195-206), Friesland (207-222), Overijssel (222-229), Groningen (229-236), Drenthe (237-247), and Gallo-Belgic (247-249). See *Acta Synodi Nationalis*, II: 155-249.

⁵³ Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism', 204–21; The *Acta Synodi Nationalis* records the judgments of the Dutch delegates in this order: Belgic Professors (155-160), Gelderland (161-174), South Holland (174-181), North Holland (182-189), Zeeland (190-195), Utrecht (195-206), Friesland (207-222), Overijssel (222-229), Groningen (229-236), Drenthe (237-247), and Gallo-Belgic (247-249). See *Acta Synodi Nationalis*, II: 155-249.

⁵⁴ Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism', 204.

⁵⁵ 'Doctissimi Professores Belgici, in iudicio suo exhibito Synodo Dordrechtanae hoc ipsum fatentur, Atc. Synod. Dordr. p. 88. Fatemur, inquit, Meritum & valorem mortis Christi [tantum, tantiq; pretij esse, tum propter eius perfectionem tum propter personae ipsius infinitam dignitatem, ut] non tantum sufficere [or sufficiat] ad omnia hominum peccata, etiam maxima, expianda, sed etiam ad omnes Adami posteros, quamvis multo plures essent servandos, modo id vera fide amplecterentur'. See Davenant, *Dissertationes Duæ*; In order to support their argument regarding the universality of the death of Christ, the Dutch professors cite some Biblical texts such as Acts 20:28, Heb. 9:14, 1 Pet. 1:18, 1 John 1:7, John 3:16, Rom. 3:22, and 1 Cor. 6:11. See *Acta Synodi Nationalis*, II: 155.

⁵⁶ Godfrey remarks that the Gelderland delegates 'were not without pastoral concern, nor insensitive to the problem of preaching and communicating the Gospel'. Nonetheless, he guesses that 'even the strict English delegates and many others were offended by the extremism which limited not only the benefits that proceed from the death of Christ, but also the Gospel, and even the preaching of the Gospel to efficacious result'. See Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism', 210.

⁵⁷ Davenant cites the statement of the Utrecht delegates as follows: 'when Christ is said to have died for all, this may be understood of the sufficiency of his merit, or the greatness of the price. Since the death of the Son of God is the only perfect and sufficient ransom for expiating and blotting out all the sins of the whole world: the immense merit of righteousness, the universal medicine of death, the eternal fountain of life. ... This sufficiency of the ransom as to the reprobate has a double end, one in itself, the other accidentally. The end in itself is, that God testifies that he delights not in the perdition of the wicked, since he gave his only begotten

comments on the fact that he refutes what is seen as the sufficiency of the death of Christ, which the Utrecht delegates affirmed because he regards this concept of the sufficiency as "the mere sufficiency of the thing offered"; he considers that there should be added, "the ordained sufficiency from the act of offering."⁵⁸ He also disagrees with the judgment of the Palatine on this issue as he comments that they tried to "pretend" to hold to the sufficiency of the death of Christ.⁵⁹ In his dissertation, Davenant argues that the intrinsic sufficiency of the death of Christ "without the intention and act of offering accomplished as to the persons" cannot be a true meaning of "Christ died sufficiently for all."⁶⁰ Moreover, he also says that the distinction of the School men, i.e., Christ died for all sufficiently, but for the elect efficiently, cannot be true if the term "sufficiently" rules out the non-elect.⁶¹

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The accidental end is, that by this sufficiency of the ransom they might be rendered inexcusable. For these perish, not through the fault of Christ, but of themselves, when through their own unbelief, they refuse the benefits of Christ offered in the Gospel'. See Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 407–8; 'Veteravici in suo iudicio dordrechtanae synodo exhibito sic scribunt, Quando Christus dicitur pro omnibus mortuus, hoc intellegi potest de meriti sufficientia, seu pretii magnitudine. Mors quippe filii Dei est unicum perfectum & sufficiens λύτρον expiandis & delendis omnibus totius mundi peccatis: meritum immensum justitiae, medicina catholica mortis, fons perennis vita, &c. Paulo post, Haec sufficientia λύτρον, quantum adreprobos, geminum habet sinem, unum per se. alterum per accidens. Finis per se, ut Deus testatum faciat se non delectari perditione hominum utpote qui Filium suum unigenitum dederit, ut omnis qui credit in eum non pereat sed habet vitam aeternam. Finis per accidens ut lia sufficientia λύτρον reddantur inexcusabiles. Hi enim non Christi, sed sua culpa pereunt, quando per infidelitatem suam beneficia Christi in Evangelio oblata repudiant'. See Davenant, *Dissertationes Duæ*, 40; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 76.

⁵⁸ Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 408; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 76.

⁵⁹ As Davenant puts it, 'they are deceived who confine the death of Christ to the elect alone, so as to conclude that he was willing to die for them only, and yet pretend (Palatini Synod. Dord. P. 88) "That there is no question or contention concerning the sufficiency of the ransom of Christ for each and every man; but all the controversy is respecting the efficacy of this ransom"'. See Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 415; 'falli eos qui arctant morte Christi ad solos electos, ita ut pro illis solis mori voluisse statuant, & tamen obtendant, De sufficientia λύτρον Christi pro omnibus & singulis nullam esse quaestionem aut contentionem; controversiam vero omnem esse de λύτρον hujus efficacia'. See Davenant, *Dissertationes Duæ*, 43; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 82.

⁶⁰ Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 408; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 77; MacLeod remarks, 'It is hard to distinguish this "general sufficiency" from the "mere" sufficiency with which Davenant had professed himself dissatisfied'. He goes on to say that 'Davenant is always more confident discussing the absolute decree to save the elect than he is when discussing the hypothetical decree to save everyone'. See MacLeod, *Definite Atonement and the Divine Decree*, 426.

⁶¹ 'At quomodo prior hic terminus sufficienter, ad electos & non-electos promiscue referetur, si nudam sufficientiam rei designet, exclusa ordinatione ejusdem rei ad personas quae oritur ex animo & actu offerentis?' See Davenant, *Dissertationes Duæ*, 41; Davenant remarks, 'But how can this first term sufficiently be referred promiscuously to the elect and the non-elect, if it marks out a mere sufficiency of the thing, excluding the ordination of the same thing to individuals, which arises from the intention and act of offering?' See Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 409; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 78.

DAVENANT'S IMPACT IN THE FORMATION OF CANONS OF DORT

Having examined the position of Davenant and his British colleagues on the extent of the atonement, and placed Davenant's view among other foreign and Dutch delegates' opinions, the formation of the Canons of Dort will be investigated.

Concerning this issue, two opinions have arisen from more recent scholarship. On the one hand, some theologians affirm that the second head of the Canons favours the opinion of the majority.⁶² They argue that some of Davenant's suggestions were not accepted, e.g., his views on ordained sufficiency and the connection between the sufficiency of Christ's death and the offer of the Gospel. On the other hand, others argue that the minority opinion triumphed in softening the Canons.⁶³ Robert Godfrey recognises that the majority of the synod led the emphasis on the sovereignty of God in the Canons.⁶⁴ However, he suggests that the opinions of the minority were clearly exhibited in the second head. While this is true, it should be demonstrated by a careful investigation, specifically as to how much Davenant's thought was reflected in the Canons.

Article 3. This death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins and is of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.⁶⁵

This third article reflects Davenant's concerns about the sufficiency of Christ's death. What Davenant called "mere sufficiency" was expressed in the third and fourth articles, i.e., "the infinite worth and value" of the death of Christ.⁶⁶ His characteristic notion of the ordained

⁶² Although the explicit refutation on a universal intent of God was absent, Stephen Strehle argues that some statements 'explicitly contend that the work of Christ is a product of God's everlasting love for the elect and is specifically ordained to save them'. Strehle points out the ninth article and the first and eight errors of the Remonstrants mentioned in the second head of the Canons. He adds, 'although it is true that neither side of the debate is explicitly offended, the majority opinion is still tacitly espoused through certain slanted statements'. See Strehle, 'The Extent of the Atonement and the Synod of Dort', 19–20; Lee Gatiss considers that the final form of the Canons regarding sufficiency 'can be adequately explained as reflecting the majority view of the Synod, without supposing a British counterweight was necessary to balance Genevan dislike of the concept'. See Gatiss, *The Synod of Dort and Definite Atonement*, 157.

⁶³ Robert Godfrey argues that regarding the second head 'a considerable minority' championed at the synod 'by wresting important concessions from their colleagues'. See Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism', 268; Peter White states that the endeavours of the British delegation to influence the second head of the Canons 'were not wholly unsuccessful'. According to White's view, the second head of the final Canons were dictated that 'God actually applies the salvation accomplished in Christ only to the elect' (the eighth and ninth articles) while acknowledging the infinite value of the death of Christ (the third article) and the evangelical promise, i.e., that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life (the fifth article). See White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic*, 191–92.

⁶⁴ Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism', 262–63.

⁶⁵ 'Haec mors Filii Dei est unica et perfectissima pro peccatis victim et satisfaction, infinitei valoris et pretii, abunde sufficiens ad totius mundi peccata expianda'. Gatiss' translation is almost identical to Schaff's in this article (apart from the translation of 'peccatis' - Schaff: sin, Gatiss: sins). See Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 3:561, 586.

⁶⁶ Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism', 263.

sufficiency was not expressed in the second head. Godfrey argues that it was "a clear compromise" between strict and moderate groups because neither approval nor a rejection of ordained sufficiency was mentioned.⁶⁷ However, although the writer endorses Godfrey's logic, this article more likely reflects the opinions of the majority because Davenant disagreed with those delegates who took the mere sufficiency position.⁶⁸ The word "ordained" or "ordination," in Davenant's notion, seems to mean the concrete and the particular way in which the benefit of the death of Christ is realised in a believer through the universal call of the Gospel and the person's response in conversion and faith. It is true that, when God determines a goal or destination, he also ordains the means by which the goal is accomplished and the way by which the destination is obtained. However, as Davenant teaches a "hypothetical" universalism based on a certain condition, it is not clear on which part the realisation of the intermediate condition depends. If this is a condition on the side of God, Davenant's position will not make any difference from the strict view of the majority because, in that case, God's decree to save or not to save certain person implies the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the condition of repentance and faith. If he believes that the condition should be fulfilled by human response to the universal offer of the divine grace, Davenant's view will run into the Remonstrant position.⁶⁹

Article 5. Moreover, the promise of the gospel is that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise ought to be declared and published promiscuously and without distinction, to all nations and people to whom God, according to his good pleasure, sends the gospel, together with the command to repent and believe.⁷⁰

The fifth article shows Davenant's concerns about the offer of the Gospel. Nevertheless, it should be admitted that the precise connection between the sufficiency of the death of Christ and the universal offer of the Gospel was not settled.⁷¹ The fifth article does not record "an

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ In his dissertation Davenant criticises the opinion of the Palatine, perceiving that they 'pretend' to believe the sufficiency of Christ's death. See Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 415; Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, 82; Strivens argues that the argument of the British delegates 'went considerably beyond the general statement which the Synod did endorse', because the third article does not assert 'the conditional salvation of all as an express purpose of Christ's death'. See Strivens, 'Synod of Dort', 10.

⁶⁹ I am grateful for Dr Dolf te Velde's advice on this issue.

⁷⁰ Gatiss, *For Us and for Our Salvation*, 81; 'Caeterum promissio Evangelii est, ut quisquis credit in Christum crucifixum, non pereat, sed habeat vitam aeternam. Quae promissio omnibus populis et hominibus, ad quod Deus pro suo beneplacito mittit Evangelium, promiscue et indiscriminatim annunciari et proponi debet cum resipiscentiae et fidei mandato'. See Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 3:561.

⁷¹ As Gatiss remarks, 'the connective caeterum, "moreover" is deliberately not as strong as ergo, "therefore"'. See Gatiss, *For Us and for Our Salvation*, 81; the usage of the conjunctive particle, 'moreover' instead of 'therefore', implies that the article does not 'connect theoretical sufficiency with universal proclamation'. See Gatiss, *The Synod of Dort and Definite Atonement*, 157; the translations of both Schaff and Gatiss started with

unconditional new covenant for the elect alongside a conditional gospel covenant for all" which Davenant must have wished to include.⁷²

Article 6. But although many who are called by the gospel do not repent nor believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief, this is not because of any defect in the sacrifice offered by Christ upon the cross, or indeed any insufficiency in it, but is their own particular fault.⁷³

Lee Gatiss affirms that this sixth article highlights the position, namely, if anyone is not saved, it is through men themselves alone, and the hardness of their hearts that they are not saved.⁷⁴ He goes on to emphasise that though this was a part of Davenant's hypothetical universalism, it was also other delegations' concerns which caused this view, i.e., the cause of the ruin of the non-elect, to be included "without needing to posit contingency or conditionality in God's eternal will" in the second head of the Canons.⁷⁵ Provided this analysis of the affirmative part of the second head of the Canons, the writer argues that it was not Davenant, but the majority who triumphed in formulating the second head of the Canons of Dort.

Nonetheless, Davenant had an impact on formulating the Canons. In the process of drafting the Canons, Davenant and his British colleagues caused a stir at the synod. On 22nd March, the president Bogerman dictated his own draft of the rejected errors of the first head and all of the second head.⁷⁶ This attempt was not accepted by other foreign delegates (including the

'moreover' in the fifth article of the second head: 'Moreover, the promise of the gospel is that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life'. See Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 3:586; Godfrey also notes, 'The compromise rested in the fact that while there was a clear declaration of the necessity to preach the Gospel to all, there was no theological connection drawn between universal preaching and the death of Christ'. See Godfrey, 'Tensions within International Calvinism', 263–64.

⁷² Gatiss, *The Synod of Dort and Definite Atonement*, 157; Davenant, *On the Controversy among the French Divines*, 398–99.

⁷³ 'Quod autem multi per Evangelium vocati non resipiscunt, nec in Christum credunt, sed infidelitate pereunt, non fit hoc hostiae CHRISTI in cruce oblatae defectu, vel insufficientia, sed propria ipsorum culpa'. Shaff translates the last phrase 'sed propria ipsorum culpa' to 'but is wholly to be imputed to themselves' whereas Gatiss translates it to 'but is their own particular fault'. See Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 3:562, 586; Gatiss, *For Us and for Our Salvation*, 82.

⁷⁴ Davenant, *On the Controversy among the French Divines*, 401; Gatiss, *For Us and for Our Salvation*, 157.

⁷⁵ Gatiss, *The Synod of Dort and Definite Atonement*, 157; however, it should be articulated that Davenant protected this point not just 'by means of his twofold-intention theory', but as an integral part of his whole theology, because this truth had been defended throughout his writings. I believe that Gatiss also recognises my argument, but just in case somebody else might misunderstand his statement, I mentions this point. See Davenant, *Dissertationes Duæ*; For instance, in his *Animadversions* Davenant states: 'Those who are passed-by in the eternall decree of God, are not by any force of the decree left without the benefit which the Scriptures promise upon condition of repentance, no more than those whom God hath eternally elected, are, by virtue of that decree, freed from the punishment which supposing their impenitency must light upon them'. See Davenant, *Animadversions*, 24.

⁷⁶ Sinnema, *The Drafting of the Canons of Dordt*, 296; Bogerman's own draft of the second head of the Canons remains in Groot's book in Latin. See Groot, *Stukken met betrekking tot de opstelling over Dordtsche Canones*, 170–74.

British).⁷⁷ Soon, a committee to draft the Canons was made.⁷⁸

While the committee was working on drafting the Canons, there were "difficult negotiations with the British delegates John Davenant and Samuel Ward" over the wording of the second head.⁷⁹ On 3/13 April 1619, in his letter to Bènèdict Turretini, Diodati expressed his complaint as follows:

We are working hard to draft our new canons, or synodal decrees. For two weeks, we have been working seven to eight hours a day with extraordinary trouble and exasperation. We have never before experienced such stubbornness, reluctance and inconsistency concerning the doctrines themselves. Two English doctors, Davenant and Ward, are treating us in this way. They appear to agree with the essentials, but they insist on adding or removing details that are in no way important and which they, along with [the representatives] from Bremen, are the only ones to reject. But we will not give in, and they refuse to sign unless we do.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ The writing of his own draft of the Canons as the President 'created quite a stir, especially among some of the foreign delegates, who thought Bogerman wanted to draw up canons alone and just have the Synod give its approval'. The British delegation discussed with other delegates and 'lobbied for a committee to draft the Canons'. This informal activity caused -especially- Sibrandus Lubbertus to blame the British as he said, 'foreign delegates had no business in this matter of the Dutch churches'. Davenant wanted to respond to Lubbertus, but was 'restrained by Bogerman'. See Sinnema, *The Drafting of the Canons of Dordt*, 297–98; 'Sinnema, The drafting of the Canons of Dordt, 298; 'I think, my Lord, that if the Synod had wanted but two men which are of it, we had wanted a great deal of contention, which I perceive will not forsake the Synod, so long as they are in it; I mean Sibrandus & Gomarus, they keep their fits of madness by course; the last fit before this came to Gomarus his turn, and this day Sibrandus flew out, but with such Raving and fierceness of countenance, such unheard bitterness against our College, as I desire no other revenge on him than the very speaking of the words, which while they were in his mouth were checked by both Presidents Politick and Ecclesiastical; Dr. Davenant who is a very moderate man, would have answered him much against my will, & no man could blame him, for Sibrandus his words against our College, if they had come from a wise man his lips, had been above strength of patience; I was glad the President gave not way to Dr. Davenant's speech, which notwithstanding I am sure would have been full of discretion; and for Sibrandus I blame him and Gomarus no more for these extasies, than I do a stone for going downward, since it is both their natural constitution'. See Hales, *Golden Remains*, 140–41.

⁷⁸ A drafting committee consisted of three Dutch delegates (Johannes Polyander, Antonius Walaëus, and Jacobus Trigland) and three foreign delegates (Bishop George Carleton for the British, Jean Diodati for the French, Abraham Scultetus for the Germans). President Bogerman and accessors Hermannus Faulkelius and Jacobus Rolandus started to work with those six delegates for formulating the Canons. See Sinnema, *The Drafting of the Canons of Dordt*, 298.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 299 n.32.

⁸⁰ In the letter of Jean Diodati to Bènèdict Turretini on 3/13 April 1619 he wrote, 'Nous sommes après à bastir nos canons ou decrets synodaux. Il y a quinze jours que nous y travaillons 7 et 8 heures du jour avec un ennui et fascherie nonpareille, se trouvant en ce dernier acte ce qu' on avoit jamais experimenté jusques à present, asçavoir beaucoup d' opiniastreté, de scrupulosité et de bigiarrerie en fait de doctrine mesmes. Deux docteurs anglois, Davenantius et Wardus, nous font cete moleste. Ils montrent en apparence consentement ès choses fondamentales, cependant veulent à force inserer ou laisser des points du tout dangereux et où eux seuls, avec Brema, dissentent des autres. Mais on ne veut plus ceder et eux refusant de signer autrement'. See Fornerod, *Registres de la Compagnie*, 348.

Then, on 10/20 April 1619, Diodati went on to write, "The synod is lasting far longer than anyone expected. The English have created so many difficulties during the drafting of the canons that we have wasted nearly three weeks. Two of them are so deplorably fastidious and speculative that it is difficult to find a central point where it is really necessary to pause and deliberate. I have never had such a tiresome piece of work. We have worked at that together eight hours a day for three weeks".⁸¹ We can see how much the Genevan delegate was frustrated during the drafting of the second head of the Canons. However, Diodati regarded the negotiations as wasting of time, for Davenant and Ward they were so important and their endeavours were not in vain.

When President Bogerman dictated his own draft of the second head of the Canons, there were only five articles.⁸² After the committee modified Bogerman's draft, there were still five articles in the affirmations of the second head.⁸³ However, after submitting the suggested amendments from 29th March 1619, specifically through the endeavours of Davenant and Ward, the committee "drafted nine all new articles" on 8th April.⁸⁴

When President Bogerman dictated his own draft of the second head of the Canons on 23rd March, there were only five articles. When Bogerman wrote about the sufficiency of the death of Christ, he expressed, "Servator noster Jezus Christus... *pro peccatis nostris* in cruce perpassus est" (italics added).⁸⁵ After the committee modified Bogerman's draft, there were still five articles in the positive side of the second head though the wording, regarding the universality of the death of Christ, became slightly different, i.e., "Acerbissima mors Servatoris nostri J. Christi... per quam ille maledictio in cruce factus est, ... *pro peccatis mundi* satisfactio, in sese infiniti valoris ac pretii" (italics added).⁸⁶

⁸¹ In the letter of Jean Diodati to Bènedict Turretini, 10/20 April 1619, it is written, 'Le synode se prolonge outre toute l' attente de tous. Les Anglois ont mis tant de difficultés en la confection des canons qu'il nous a falu perdre presque trois semaines de temps. Il y en a deux qui sont si scrupuleux et speculatifs que c'est pitié et a on de la peine beaucoup à trouver le point du centre dans lequel il faille s'arrester par necessité. Je ne fu jamais en travail plus ennuyeux. Nous y avons travaillé en commun 8 heures le jour dès 3 semaines en ça'. See *ibid.*, 351.

⁸² When Bogerman wrote about the sufficiency of the death of Christ, he expressed, 'Servator noster Jezus Christus... *pro peccatis nostris* in cruce perpassus est [Our Saviour Jesus Christ... suffered for our sins on the cross]'. See Groot, *Stukken met betrekking tot de opstelling over Dordtsche Canones*, 170–71.

⁸³ The wording regarding the universality of the death of Christ became slightly different, as it was written 'Acerbissima mors Servatoris nostri J. Christi... per quam ille maledictio in cruce factus est, ... *pro peccatis mundi* satisfactio, in sese infiniti valoris ac pretii [The most harsh death of our Saviour Jesus Christ... was made on the cross through that punishment... for the sins of the world satisfactedly in the sense of infinite values]'. See *ibid.*, 187.

⁸⁴ Sinnema, *The Drafting of the Canons of Dordt*, 301.

⁸⁵ It can be translated: our Saviour Jesus Christ... suffered for our sins on the cross. See Groot, *Stukken met betrekking tot de opstelling over Dordtsche Canones*, 170–71.

⁸⁶ The translation is: the most harsh death of our Saviour Jesus Christ... was made on the cross through that

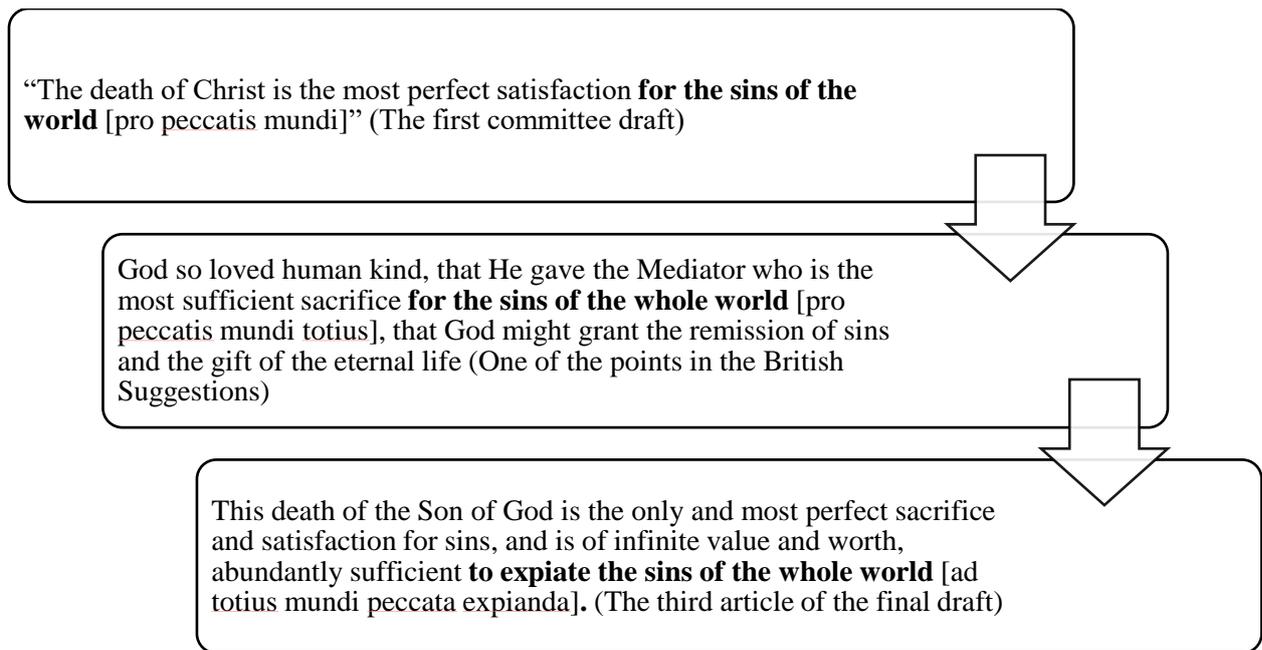


Figure 3. An example of the contribution of the British delegates in the drafting of the Canons

However, after submitting the suggested amendments from 29th March 1619, specifically through the endeavours of Davenant and Ward, the committee "drafted nine all new articles" on 8th April.⁸⁷ According to the British suggestions to the second head, for example, the phrase "the whole world" was emphasised. At the beginning of the suggested amendments, it is written, "mundi adde totius, uti habet Scriptura 1 John 2:2 et Censur Anglican art. 31 et palatina in Hassian Confess. p. 203".⁸⁸ Moreover, it was written that three more points should be added between the first article and the second. One of the suggested article is as follows: "rerum sic Deus dilexit humani genus est vt quemvis hominem tam frie vivitae eredantem in Mediatorum qui hanc sufficientissimam hostiam pro peccatis *mundi totius* deo obtilet remissione peccatorum et vita aeterima donari deriverit (italics added)."⁸⁹ Consequently, the third article of the second head of the final Canons explicitly records the phrase "totius mundi".⁹⁰ Although that phrase,

punishment... for the sins of the world satisfactorily in the sense of infinite values. See *ibid.*, 187.

⁸⁷ This suggestion seems to be accepted according to the second committee draft. The suggestions of other delegations, of course, must have been consulted. The forthcoming book, *The Genesis of the Canons of Dort* (edited by Donald Sinnema and Anthony Milton) will deal with this issue precisely. See Sinnema, *The Drafting of the Canons of Dort*, 301.

⁸⁸ Ward, 'Samuel Ward Papers', L2, fols. 25^r.

⁸⁹ It can be translated as follows: God so loved human kind, that He gave the Mediator who is the most sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, that God might grant the remission of sins and the gift of the eternal life. See *ibid.*

⁹⁰ 'Haec mors Filii Dei est unica et perfectissima pro peccatis victim et satisfaction, infinitei valoris et pretii, abunde sufficiens ad *totius mundi* peccata expianda' (italics added). See Schaff, 'The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes', III, 561, 586.

totius mundi, was not precisely defined, it must have been enough for Davenant and Ward to see that the Canons records that specific phrase.⁹¹ As Lee Gatiss admits, if Davenant and his colleagues had not pressed the synod on those points mentioned above, "the Canons may perhaps not have been so carefully stated," though I think we need to recognise that Davenant's thought was not fully accepted in the second head of the Canons.⁹²

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I have traced John Davenant's contribution to the discussions and debates over the second article of the Remonstrants at the synod of Dort. I have tried to reconstruct Davenant's theological position regarding the extent of the atonement in the midst of debates with the Contra-Remonstrants, and in relation to the formation of the second head of the Canons of Dort. All this was necessary if we are to place him correctly among the diverse and complex discussions over the Remonstrant cause at the synod, especially regarding one of its most controversial doctrines.

Was Davenant a champion of the "via media" position at the synod? My answer is 'no.' Using this terminology, the "via media" is not sufficient. As we have observed, some of the foreign and Dutch delegates also played a mediating role, which enabled the strict views to be modified whenever it was necessary. The "via media" position included a spectrum of views rather than a single definite view. It seems that some teaching of Davenant's hypothetical universalism, e.g., ordained sufficiency, was regarded stronger than the classical view that the redemptive value of the death of Christ is, in theory, sufficient for all human beings, even the non-elect.

But, did Davenant give any impact at all in formulating the Canons? Yes. Throughout the discussions over the second Remonstrant article and the formation of the second head of the Canons, Davenant and his British colleagues played their part in softening what it says about the extent of Christ's atoning death. By including various emphases and nuances, and also by excluding some more extreme Calvinist teachings, the Canons could serve as broadly Reformed confessional document. Moreover, since all nine articles of the second drafting committee were newly written after the protest of Davenant and Ward, it cannot be denied that he had an impact

⁹¹ Nevertheless, White indicates that Davenant's endeavouring to include the words, 'that the promise of Christ should be applied to all who believe' in the third article, turned out to be a failure. See White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic*, 192.

⁹² Gatiss, *The Synod of Dort and Definite Atonement*, 157; White argues, Furthermore, that the distinction between the appropriation and the application of the death of Christ was not accepted despite of Ward's correspondences with the President Bogerman, because 'the Rejection Errorum condemned the distinction as Pelagian'. See White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic*, 192.

upon the formation of the second head of the Canons. It implies that the advice and judgments of the foreign delegations from Switzerland, Germany, and England were not only requested but also valued and taken into account during the drafting of the Canons of Dort.

Hence, it would be difficult to say that John Davenant was a champion of the 'via media,' but it should be said that his voice had an impact on the proceedings and final results. He had to stand firm due to the King's commission and also his personal theological conviction, namely, that of hypothetical universalism.

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