

THAT body of Christians, whose present official title is "The Reformed Church in America," has, during its history been known by various names. The letters from Holland addressed to the early churches of this body in America called them "The Reformed Dutch Churches in New York and New Jersey." With the expansion of the denomination after the Revolutionary war the title appears as "The Reformed Dutch Churches in North America." At the adoption of the Constitution, in 1792, the name employed incidentally in the minutes of Synod is "The Dutch Reformed Church in North America." But the name on the title page of the first edition of the Constitution, printed in 1793, is "The Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America." The same name was used in the second edition, in 1815. In subsequent editions appears "The Refd. Dutch Ch. of North America."

In the Act of Incorporation, in 1819, the title is "The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church." This then became the official name of the Church. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century the Church with its fellows was subjected to the fusion of the great New World melting pot, into which they were all cast, and became thoroughly Americanized. After 1840 the sentiment developed that the word "Dutch" was no longer appropriate in the title. Nearly a generation of discussion followed, and in 1867 the word "Dutch" was dropped, and the official title became "The Reformed Church in America."

As fossils preserved in rock testify to the process of creation, so these various terms, employed in the name of the church, reveal the progress of the Reformed Church in America from its infancy to its present maturity.

Considering the phrases "in America," "in North America," and "in the United States," as equivalent, five component elements are found in the full title of the Church. Arranging these in chronological sequence the name obtained is, "The Dutch Protestant Reformed Church in New York and New Jersey in America." Each of these words and phrases is the symbol of an important fact by which the history of the Church may be traced.

The word "Dutch" speaks of the people among whom the Church originated. They were the Dutch nation inhabiting the land of Holland.

The word "Protestant" shows that the Church belonged to that grand division of Christians who protested against the Roman form of faith and practice.

The phrase "in New York and New Jersey" reveals the fact that the Church had been carried from the place of its seeding across the western sea, and planted in the Dutch provinces on either side of the Hudson River.

"In America" stands for the wider field of its larger growth. On the American continent it has become one of the trees of the Kingdom of Christ, hard by the River of the Water of Life.