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APPENDIX.

THE REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH.

N A M E.

The name of PROTESTANT REFORMED DUTCH is derived from its historical associations and reminiscences. The term *Protestant* was applied in the 16th century, to the Reformers, and those who denied the authority of the Pope and rejected the unscriptural doctrines of the Church of Rome. The name arose in 1529, when six princes of the German Empire formally and solemnly protested against the decrees of the Diet of Spires; and it has since been the distinctive term in universal use, as applied to the blessed Reformation. During the progress of the Reformation, a difference occurred among the Protestants on some points, and particularly in reference to the *real* presence of Christ's humanity in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Those who held to it, with the great Reformer, Luther, were called *Lutherans*, and those who rejected it, *Reformed*. When the Reformation from Popery took rise, it advanced at the same time in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland and England, through the labors of Calvin, Zuinglius, Knox, Cranmer and others. The *Reformed* Churches of France, Switzerland, Holland, Germany and Scotland were in close affinity with each other, not only in holding the doctrines of grace, as embraced in common by all the Churches of the Reformation, but in their views of the Lord's Supper, before referred to, and also of Presbyterian church government and order. The name of our Church derives REFORMED, from the portion of the early Protestant Churches so termed, and DUTCH from the branch of the Reformed Church, formed and organized in Holland.

THE REFORMED CHURCH OF HOLLAND.

At an early period of the Reformation in Germany, the spirit of religious inquiry became excited in the Netherlands. A contest of unexampled severity, for civil and religious liberty, against the colossal power of the Empire and the Papacy ensued. There is no spot in Europe, in which during the 16th century, so many thrilling incidents occurred, as in the struggle in the Netherlands, which ended in the independence of the seven northern provinces, or Holland, and in the subjugation of the ten southern provinces, or Belgium, to the Imperial and Papal sway. In that contest for evangelical truth, deep-rooted faith and piety nerved the arms and stayed the hearts of the Confessors of the Truth, under persecutions and oppressions severe and continued, almost without a parallel. The martyrology of the Netherlands during this struggle, would furnish as rich a page as can be drawn from any other field. The confessors, "scattered and peeled," holding their lives in their hands, amid the violent and excruciating death of thousands for the truth's sake, bore a noble and persevering testimony. They termed their churches, at the time when they were first formed, "*the Churches under the cross.*" In 1563, the ministers and confessors of the truth held a meeting at Antwerp, and formed a Synod of the Churches, and adopted a system of principles and rules which laid the foundation, and in a great measure formed the full texture of church government and order adopted by subsequent Synods. After the emancipation and independence of the seven northern provinces, or Holland, they rapidly and steadily advanced to signal prosperity, commercial, naval and political, so as to rank among the first states of Europe. The Reformed Church of Holland soon became distinguished among the churches of the Reformation, for her well-trained theologians, her devoted pastors, and the combined evangelical purity of faith and experimental and practical godliness which characterized her. Such she *was* in the 17th century. No branch of the Reformed Church was in more intimate correspondence and sympathy with the other branches, than that of Holland. Her bosom was the refuge and the resting-place of the persecuted Huguenots, Waldenses, the Covenanters of Scotland, and the exiled Puritans. Her universities were resorted to from various parts, and many youth were

trained in them who became shining lights in other countries. The works of her divines of that day still retain their high reputation, and are sought after. Such at that time, was the "Reformed Church of Holland," from which the Reformed Dutch Church in America traces its origin.

STANDARDS.

The standards of the Reformed Church in Holland, and carefully preserved in our Church, are—

1. **THE CONFESSION OF FAITH**, commonly called the **BELGIC**. It was written in 1562, by *Guido de Bres*, a native of Belgium, who labored indefatigably during the heat of the time of persecution, and sealed his testimony in martyrdom, at Valenciennes, in 1566. The confession was first submitted to Calvin, Adrian Saravia, and other leading and learned men, and was adopted, after careful scrutiny, by the earlier Synods.

2. **THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM**. This Catechism was composed through the order of the Elector Palatine in Germany, by Ursinus and Olevianus, at Heidelberg (Germany), whence it derives its name. It was first published in 1563, simultaneously in the German, Dutch and Latin languages and was soon after adopted as a standard, or formulary of faith, by the Reformed Church of Holland.

3. **THE CANONS OF THE SYNOD OF DORT**. This celebrated Synod met at Dort in 1618 and 1619, and was composed of delegates from the different provinces of Holland, and from the foreign churches. The Canons contain a judicious and succinct statement and vindication of the leading and distinguishing doctrines of Calvinism, as the Synod was assembled in reference to the Arminian controversy which had arisen.

These standards, in harmony with each other, contain the system usually styled the doctrines of the Reformation, and agree, in all essential doctrines and points, with the Thirty-nine Articles of the

Church of England, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Confessions of the reformed churches of Germany, France, and Switzerland.

REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA.

The Reformed Dutch Church was planted in America by emigrants from Holland, but the English language became gradually introduced, and rooted out the Dutch language. For about forty years, except in some solitary cases, the Dutch language has been entirely disused in the American pulpit.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND ORDER.

The government of our Church is Presbyterian, such as pervades the different branches of the Reformed Church in Switzerland, Germany, Scotland, as well as Holland. The constitution of the Church recognizes, "the offices of the Church of Christ to be four-fold: 1. Ministers of the Word. 2. Teachers of Theology. 3. Elders. 4. Deacons:" and it expressly declares that all ministers of the Gospel are equal in rank and authority; all are bishops and overseers in the Church, and all are equal stewards of the mysteries of God, and that no superiority shall therefore be ever claimed or acknowledged by one minister over another, neither shall there be any 'lords over God's heritage.'

JUDICATORIES.

The JUDICATORIES of our Church are—

1. The *Consistory*, composed of the minister, elders and deacons of a church.
2. The *Classis*, consisting of the ministers, and a delegate from each church within a certain district of country.

3. The *Particular Synod* (of which we have two), which embraces a given number of Classes; and,

4. The *General Synod*, which is the supreme judicatory of the Church, to which cases may go up by appeal, reference, &c., from the subordinate judicatories.

Persons are admitted to the communion of the Church, upon examination by the Consistory, after having given satisfactory evidence of their conversion to God, by repentance of their sins, and belief upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the Baptism of children, parents acknowledge "the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and which is taught in our Church to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation," and engage to see them, when come to years of discretion, instructed and brought up in, or help, or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of their power. Provision is accordingly made for the instruction of the children and youth of our Church.

THE LITURGY.

The use of the prayers in the LITURGY of our Church, is optional; the forms for the administration of the Lord's Supper, and Baptism are obligatory.

In closing it may be remarked that our Church has been distinguished by a steady and united adherence to her Standards and order, and at the same time dwelling in kind and friendly relation with other evangelical denominations. She has enjoyed peace within her own bosom, while agitating questions have troubled and even rent other churches. She has borne a full proportionate share in contributions to Christian benevolent institutions, as the Bible Society, the Tract Society, and others. Careful attention has always been paid to the education of a well instructed and disciplined ministry, and her great aim and effort have been to preserve and promote sound evangelical truth, in

connection with vital and practical godliness. She is desirous and anxious, in a sense of privilege and responsibility, to employ greater efforts for increasing the degree and extent of her influence, not only strengthening weak and forming new churches within, and on her own borders, but also by entering other fields, and bearing her part in supplying their pressing wants with the light and power of gospel truth, mindful of the great duty to "preach the gospel to every creature," even to the ends of the earth.

The pacific character which our Church maintains, her freedom from the ultraisms of the day, her evangelical principles, the peculiar features of her government and order, and the attitude in which she has been found by the side of other evangelical denominations, all tend to commend her to the favorable regard of all the friends of evangelical truth, who desire the "peace and prosperity" of the Church of Christ.