

Church Hist. Bk.

HISTORY

OF ALL

THE RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS

IN

THE UNITED STATES:

CONTAINING AUTHENTIC ACCOUNTS OF THE

RISE AND PROGRESS, FAITH AND PRACTICE, LOCALITIES AND STATISTICS,

OF THE DIFFERENT PERSUASIONS:

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THE WORK,

BY FIFTY-THREE EMINENT AUTHORS, BELONGING TO THE RESPECTIVE DENOMINATIONS.

*J. S. Ebaugh
& Forsyth & others*

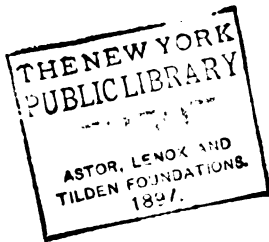
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JOHN H. LIVINGSTON, D. D.

that for near two hundred years after its settlement, there was scarcely a single church of any other denomination within its limits, "to Congregationalists and to Congregational principles it must chiefly be ascribed, that New England is what it is."

Those who desire more particular information of the principles of the Congregationalists, are referred to "Punchard on Congregationalism," the second edition

of which has just been published. It is a full, impartial, and able work. A history of Congregationalism by the same author will, when completed, be a very valuable addition to our stock of historical knowledge. Much information will also be found in Dr. Bacon's "Church Manual," Mr. Mitchell's "Guide," Dr. Hawes' "Tribute to the Pilgrims," and Prof. Upham's "Ratio Disciplinae."

HISTORY

OF

THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH.

BY W. C. BROWNLEE, D. D.,

OF THE PROTESTANT DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN NEW YORK.

In presenting this brief detail, I shall,

- I. *Give a sketch of the history of our church;*
- II. *State its doctrines;*
- III. *Its government;*
- IV. *Its form of worship;*
- V. *Its statistics.*

I. The Dutch Reformed Church is the oldest church in the United States, which adopts the Presbyterian form of church government. Its history begins with the history of New York and New Jersey. It is a branch of the national Church of Holland; and is formed exactly on its primitive, simple, and scriptural model, in every point.

The struggle in Holland for religion and liberty was severe and protracted. But, by wisdom and piety in the cabinet, and by a succession of gallant achievements in the field, against the arms of the bigoted and ferocious Spaniard, the Dutch by divine aid secured their national independence and the enjoyment of the Pro-

testant religion. From this era the Dutch became a great and powerful nation. Commerce, literature and religion flourished to an extraordinary degree. And to our days, Holland has been pre-eminently distinguished for her devotion to religion and literature. Hence her primary schools, her academies, her universities, and parochial churches, and hence the number of her learned men, and her pious and devoted ministers in the national church. In the midst of her extensive commercial enterprises she did not lose sight of the Christian duties she owed to those with whom she traded. Her ships, which visited all lands, were instrumental, in the hands of her pious sons, of carrying the glorious gospel to many countries. The East Indies and the adjacent islands, the West Indian Islands, and our own continent, bear lasting proofs of this in the existing monuments of the fruits of the labors of her missionaries and pious immigrants.

The Dutch West India Company were the first who carried the ministers of the

gospel from Holland to our shores. This was done in answer to the petitions of the pious immigrants who had settled in this province, then called New Amsterdam. And as the members of the Dutch West India Company were citizens of Amsterdam, these petitions were, of course, put into the hands of the ministers of that city, as the fittest persons to select good and suitable pastors for the rising churches abroad. By these ministers was the whole management thereof brought before the Classis of Amsterdam; and they promptly undertook the important charge of providing an able ministry for America. The ministers, thus provided, were ordained and sent as missionaries to these shores, by that classis, with the consent and approbation of the Synod of North Holland, to which that classis belonged. And under their paternal and fostering care, and the labor of the able ministers who came among them, these churches grew and increased in number and strength continually.

This minute detail was necessary to throw light on an important matter, out of which arose consequences, in future of the deepest interest to our church. It reveals the reason why the Dutch American churches were brought into such close connection with the Classis of Amsterdam, and through that classis, with the Synod of North Holland, to the entire exclusion of all the other classes and synods of the national church. And it shows why, in process of time, this connection brought about the entire dependence, and the implicit subordination of these American Dutch churches to that classis and that synod. So much so, that they *claimed* the entire and exclusive right of selecting, ordaining and sending ministers to these churches. They went farther; they claimed the exclusive power of deciding all ecclesiastical controversies and difficulties which might arise in all the Dutch churches in the provinces.

This was, at first, casually, and by a silent understanding, vested in that classis, by the young and weak churches here, and not objected to by the other synods in Holland, or by the older and more experienced ministers. This dependence was not at first anticipated; and what was only

casually allowed, was afterwards claimed by the Classis of Amsterdam with unyielding obstinacy; and it was maintained successfully by a party here, as well as by the members of that classis who had so long held the authority, and who deemed that supervision essential to the well being of the churches here. It is difficult to suppose that such godly ministers as belonged to the Classis of Amsterdam could wish to retain the reins and authority so stiff over a body of ministers, and over so many churches, whose members were so far removed from and beyond their actual cognizance and supervision. Besides, it was a matter of surprise that they should so long submit to the trouble, and take on them the painful responsibility of regulating the affairs and doings of those churches, whom they could not call before them; and of trying cases in the absence of the accused, and without the benefit of witnesses, unless at great expense and ruinous loss of time to all parties. Besides, had even the Classis of Amsterdam moved, at an early period, the North Synod of Holland to constitute an American classis subordinate and connected, like the other classes of that synod, a vast amount of good would have been gained, and an immense amount of evil avoided. Had that been done at an early day, the two parties, with their great contentions, would never have been known, and the painful divisions and controversies would have been spared to the Reformed Dutch churches, and their reproach among the other denominations and their injury utterly prevented. And had the ministers here united to maintain this happy policy, their good-will would have been induced to yield to their vassalage. But, instead of this, those ministers who came from Holland cherished their home attachments, and maintained the unbounded authority of the old Classis of Amsterdam, who had sent them out, and had loaded them with so many favors, to superintend their churches and to decide on their appeals. They used all their influence to preserve that connection with the old classis and its vassalage. They represented the American churches as very weak and destitute, and as utterly incapable of acting independent of their ecclesiastical fathers in

Holland, and even of supplying their own wants.

It must be admitted that there was the greatest cause of gratitude on the part of the colonial young churches. They had never been weaned, and they were supported chiefly by the old country, not only the churches here, but also those in the East Indies, and in the West India Isles. They had kept up a regular and cheering correspondence; and had lavished their generous charities in making their missionaries comfortable. And those noble deeds the Dutch classis had also extended to the German missions, and especially to the German churches in Pennsylvania. For, through the same classis, were ministers sent from Germany to supply the Dutch settlers in Pennsylvania. And what is most praiseworthy, a fund was formed, and put at the disposal of the classis, to defray the expense of the German missionaries for their journey to Holland and their voyage to America. The Dutch churches here, however, paid the expenses of their own ministers, and thus left the whole fund at the disposal of the classis for the benefit of the German churches and missionaries.

All these circumstances combined to keep up here a strong party of ministers, who were natives of Holland, in favor of this dependence on Holland, and also to the continuance of their vassalage to the Classis of Amsterdam.

These composed the Conferentie party, who afterwards carried out their peculiar principles so far; they advocated the unlimited power of the fathers in Amsterdam over these churches; they clothed them with something bordering on infallibility. Some of them ventured even to maintain that they were the only legitimate source of ministerial power and authority, and insinuated that no ordination was valid, except it had been performed by the Classis of Amsterdam, or had, at least, its solemn approbation.

Such were the claims of the Conferentie party: and they were maintained by them, in the face of but a very feeble opposition, until the year 1737.*

* In the violent contentions of those days, this principle was, in no few instances, carried

That feeble opposition came from those who afterwards assumed the name of the Cœtus party. They were willing to yield a just tribute of gratitude, and a definite submission to the church in father-land. But they had deeply felt the inconvenience and serious difficulties, not to say degradations, of being placed in this implicit subordination and entire control, so inconsistent with the Christian liberty of presbytery. They had been deeply affected with the evils growing out of the mortifying necessity of sending all the cases of ecclesiastical controversy, and difficulties in discipline, to Holland, to be adjudicated there, where none of the parties could be on the spot to give testimony, or plead their own cause. And it was no small ground of complaint, that parents must be subjected to the painful separation, for years, from their sons sent to Holland for education for the ministry; not to mention the burden of expense to which they were also subjected, by sending abroad those who were educated here, to be ordained in Holland to the holy ministry. In a word, the Conferentie party maintained the high importance of Holland education, and ventured to uphold the exclusive validity of Holland license, and Holland ordination. The Cœtus party

out into actual practice. But it is due to truth to say, that the case of Dominie "Niewenhyt," has not been correctly stated by Smith, in his "History of New York;" and by Dr. Romeyn, in his "Historical Sketch," published in the Christian's Magazine; and by Dr. Gunn, in his "Life of Dr. Livingston."

Dr. Dewitt has, by his researches in the documents preserved in the Dutch, enabled me to correct their errors. This "Niewenhyt" at Albany, was in fact, Dominie "Niewenhuyzen," of the church of New York. Nicholas Van Rensselaer came over under the auspices of the popish Duke of York, and was suspected, at the time, of coming into this new province to further the cause of Popery. But Dominie N. took this fair and justifiable ground, that "although Van Rensselaer, having the license and ordination from the English bishop of Salisbury, was truly invested with the office of the Christian ministry: yet, nevertheless, this gave him no claim, nor qualification whatever, to settle as a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church." Hence he resisted Van Rensselaer's settlement in the Dutch Church in Albany, although he was summoned to answer for his conduct, before the Erastian governor and council.

advocated the necessity of a home education, a home license, and a home ordination. These, they said, were equally good for them, and equally valid for every purpose, as those in fatherland.

This may be considered the first period of the Dutch Reformed Church in this land. It extends from the first organization of the church, unto the year 1664, when the province was invaded and seized by a British army, and placed under the government of the Duke of York and Albany, who was afterwards James II., and who abdicated the British throne.

During this period, the church of New Amsterdam, now New York, was established; also, the church in Albany, in Flatbush, in New Utrecht, in Flatlands, and Esopus, now Kingston. The collegiate church of New York was organized as early, it is believed, as 1619. This is so stated in a manuscript of the late Dr. Livingston, on traditionary documents. And in another, he stated that a document is still extant, containing the names of members of that church, in 1622.* In the sketch of the history of the Dutch Church by Dr. Romeyn,† it is conjectured that the collegiate church was organized first. But Dr. Livingston, in one of his manuscripts, has said that "in Albany they had ministers as early as any in New York, if not before them." The *authentic* records, now in possession of the collegiate church, commence in the year 1639, and in them we find the acts of the Consistory, and bating some omissions, a list of ministers, elders, and deacons, with the members, together with the baptisms, and marriages, from that period. And these records have been continued down to this day.

The first minister in New York was the Rev. Everardus Bogardus, whose descendants are among us at this day. It would appear that he had been a pastor for a long period; but we can find no correct date of his arrival here, nor the length of the time of his ministry. There is a tradition, among his descendants, that he became blind, and returned to Holland. This may in part be true; for I am in-

debted to my colleague Dr. Dewitt for the fact, that in returning to Holland, in the same ship with Gov. Kiest, he was shipwrecked and lost with the rest. We find the names of only two Dominies between him and the capture of the city in 1664: these were I. and S. Megapolensis. The latter was a practising physician, as well as a minister.

The first place of worship, erected by the colony, in the New Netherlands, has generally been supposed to be that small edifice which stood close down on the water's edge, and within the fort of New Amsterdam, and on the place now called the Battery. But I am indebted to my colleague Dr. Knox, and the distinguished antiquarian Mr. Rapelje, for the fact, that the first church of Christ was reared on a spot near the lower end of Stone Street. That in the fort was the second, and was erected in 1642. This was, in process of time, transferred to the site on which the late Garden Street Church stood. The church erected by Gov. Stuyvesant, on his farm, or as it is styled in Dutch, his Bowery, was probably the next. But no true dates can be discovered, or correct list of his chaplains. The celebrated Henry Solyns was one of them; he also ministered in the Dutch Church in Brooklyn.*

The second period of the Dutch Church extends from the surrender of the province in 1664 to 1693. The condition of the church was now materially changed, as might be anticipated. The English strove to shear it of its glory as *the church* of the province, and the grand branch of the national Church of Holland. But the Dutch, at the surrender in 1664, and more fully in the treaty of peace, concluded in 1676, had taken care to secure their spiritual rights. It was expressly stipulated that the rights of conscience, with regard to worship and discipline, should

* Henry Solyns was a most amiable, learned, and accomplished Dutchman. He retired to Holland early in life, at the earnest request of his aged father, who was anxious to embrace him before he died. A Latin poem by him, addressed to the venerable Cotton Mather, on the appearance of his great work, "*Magnalia Americana*," is still extant in some of the editions of the learned New Englander's work.

* Dr. Gunn's Life of Dr. Livingston, pp. 79, 81.
† In the Christian's Magazine.

be secured to the Dutch inhabitants. It may appear strange that this high privilege should have been granted to the Dutch here, at that time, when a furious persecution was carried on by the brother of James, Charles II., against the Scottish Covenanters, and their nation. But it is to be remembered, that James, Duke of York and Albany, was a decided and even bigoted Roman Catholic. And the Papists were themselves, at that time, under severe laws and penalties, depriving them of liberty of conscience. James had been striving to obtain *toleration* for others, that he might obtain it for those of his own creed. Hence he had taken care to grant the rights of conscience to the Dutch, with a view to open the way for the Roman Catholics. His bigotry wrought this one good result.

Under this sacred grant, the Dutch Church maintained still a high ascendancy. The mass of the population belonged to her; the members were among the most wealthy and influential individuals in the colony; and the distinguished Governor Stuyvesant, and the great officers of the former government, were elders and members in full communion. She was not only the predominant, but, beyond any comparison, the most respectable church in the whole colony. Owing to this influence, and the mild sway of the British, the Dutch Church still kept up her correspondence with the Classis of Amsterdam; she still owned its full power and authority. And that classis and the North Synod still exercised their former care and power over all ecclesiastical matters, here, as formerly.

During this period, we must notice a certain assumption of power by the oldest churches of New York, Albany, and Esopus, now Kingston. As new churches sprung up in the vicinity of each of these, the ministers of these old and powerful establishments claimed and exercised a superintending power over all these country churches. This, by some, has been deemed not quite consistent with the strict course of Presbyterian church power. But it was exactly similar to what occurred in the days of the Scottish Reformer, John Knox. They had in those days their

superintendents,* who visited vacant churches, and formed new churches; and directed preachers on their route of missionary duty. But they never acted as diocesan bishops over other officiating pastors. It was assumed in Scotland and in this province, to meet the extraordinary wants of a people calling loudly for pastors to break the bread of life to them. These wants the old Dominics labored to supply, in the absence of a sufficient number of pastors. And if they considered it an infringement on their prerogatives if any minister ventured to officiate in these churches without their approbation: it was no severer, nor a more improper rule on their part, than the salutary rule now existing with the strictest propriety in each of our classes; namely, that no strange minister, nor itinerant preacher, shall preach in any of our vacant churches, without the approbation and leave of a committee of ministers, appointed as a species of superintendents. Such was the state of the Dutch Church at this period. It was eminently distinguished by its numbers, wealth and piety; and such was its flourishing condition until 1693.

The third period of our church extends from 1693, to 1737. That jealousy and spirit of exclusiveness, which has characterized one branch of the Reformed churches, now began to put itself forward in a formidable manner, against the equal rights of the Dutch Church and other denominations. This was no less than a too successful attempt, by English influence, to place the Episcopal Church on a civil establishment. These plans of the English people were not concealed. They seemed to be resolved to create a union of church and state, and to give a civil establishment to Episcopacy in all the British provinces. It was attempted, mainly, in Virginia and New York. That sect was to be the exclusive church,—*the Church*. And all the citizens were to be taxed for its support; and all other Christians were

* The English word for Bishops; I mean strictly scriptural bishop, not diocesan bishops, —a human invention, originated by human power in the church.

gravely pronounced to be "dissenters," from "the Church."*

Previous to the times of the bigoted Gov. Fletcher, a delightful courtesy and Christian intercourse prevailed between the Dutch Church and the Episcopalian Church. It is refreshing to us, who live in these times, which may be called the *terrapiin age* of exclusiveness and bigotry, to recall its memory.

It is a fact, that the first rector of Trinity Church, in New York was inducted into office, December, 1697, in the Dutch Church in Garden Street; and it is equally a fact, that the distinguished Dominie Henry Solyns, the pastor of the Dutch Church, and Dominie J. P. Nuccella, of Kingston, did actually officiate on this important occasion! And that Rev. Rector, Mr. Vesey, officiated in the Garden Street Church, alternately with the Dutch, until Trinity Church was finished!

In 1779, this minute is found on the

* Some are still so bigoted as to allow themselves to violate the feelings of their fellow-Christians, by denominating those "dissenters," who do not worship in their church. This might have received some countenance on the part of those who enjoyed the palmy days of a civil establishment here. But, inasmuch as we obtained, by the glorious and successful war of the American revolution, this extraordinary boon, along with our civil liberties—namely, a full and complete deliverance from a civil establishment of the Episcopal Church: we cannot possibly conceive any reason, on the part of any man, who has heard of the said revolution, and the breaking down thereby of that civil establishment—why we should be called dissenters!

But, we only state historical facts when we say, the Episcopalians are the dissenters. They are dissenters from the famous Reformed Churches of France, of Holland, of Germany, of Switzerland, of Scotland; and all their other Presbyterian brethren in Ireland and the United States. They are, moreover, dissenters from the Waldenses, Albigenses, and the ancient British Christians, called Culdees, who sustained the true primitive apostolical churches in England, until the sixth century; and who withstood Popery in Ireland and Scotland, until the year 1172. These were, strictly speaking, Presbyterians. See the History of the Culdees, by Dr. Jamieson, jointly with Sir Walter Scott, quarto, Edinburgh; and the History of the Waldenses, &c., by John Paul Perrin; also by Sir Samuel Moreland; and Sager's *Historie Generale des Eglises Vaudoises*.

records of the Trinity Church: "It being represented that the old Dutch church is now used as an hospital for his majesty's troops, this corporation, impressed with a grateful remembrance of the former kindness of the members of that ancient church, do offer them the use of St. George's Church to that congregation for celebrating divine worship." It was gratefully accepted, and a vote of thanks was kindly offered in return, for the use of that church. I delight to add, that Gov. Burnet, the son of the illustrious historian, and Bishop Burnet, presented an organ to the Dutch Church in Garden Street. It was destroyed during the revolutionary war.

How different were those sweet and palmy days of true Christian fellowship and delicious charity, from our iron times, when bigots call all men "dissenters," who cannot stoop to laud "high churchism," "Puseyism," and "Popery;" and when fanatics gravely profess to leave all other Christians "to God's uncovenanted mercy," who are under the ministry of Christ, not ordained by "a diocesan bishop:" an officer in the church, whom God Almighty never ordained!

This encroachment of intolerance and bigotry was originated, ostensibly, by the folly of Gov. Fletcher. His project was brought forward and urged with the unusual intolerance of the age. He was a man of inordinate warmth and boldness, and withal a bigoted Episcopalian, even to a degree of fanaticism. He knew *no* other church; with him *no* man merited the name of Christian, who was not of his *sect*; and there was no recognised ministry or sacraments but of *his* church. He was a thorough disciple of Laud. There was an air of bigotry in all this scheme. The Episcopalians were a mere handful, compared to the great masses of the population, and they were chiefly in the city of New York, and some were scattered over the adjacent counties, and they consisted chiefly of the officers of government, their dependents, and the military. These were "the church." And the idea of establishing *these* into a church, to be supported by taxes levied on the mass of the people, was so unjust, so unreasonable, and so absurd, that no one but Gov. Fletcher could have entertained it soberly for a sin-

gle moment. Hence the house of assembly resisted him, and declared the project wicked and absurd. Resistance only warms bigotry and rouses fanaticism into ardor. He never lost sight of his project. But he exercised all the arts of Jesuitism to carry his point: some of the members he flattered and cajoled; some he imposed on by fallacious promises; some he threatened and bullied into compliance. At last, the assembly, with extreme reluctance, yielded to his plan, and, in 1693, passed an act establishing the Episcopal Church in the city and county of New York, and in the counties of West Chester, Richmond, and Queen's. And the hand of the astute Jesuit was visible in the drawing of the act, and in the cunning management of the whole affair. The inhabitants of these counties and the city were instructed to choose ten vestrymen and two churchwardens. The Dutch Church and Presbyterians had no elder or deacon to mingle with the above "apostolic number," and these twelve officials of Gov. Fletcher were to have all the appointing power of the ministry who were to officiate. It is very true, the act did not precisely specify that the clergy should be of the Episcopal order, and no other. The half unwilling and long reluctant assembly, left this open. There was even an "explanatory act" got up some time afterwards, declaring that "dissenting ministers might be chosen." But this was quite a harmless enactment, to which the bigoted governor cheerfully lent his signature. For he was certain that all was safe, and that no dissenting minister, that is, no "unordained" clergyman, could be chosen by his devoted and equally bigoted vestrymen. And this was, in fact, the case. No minister of the Dutch or Presbyterian Church was ever chosen to officiate.

Thus, from 1693, to 1776, that is, for eighty-three years, the Dutch, English, and Scotch Churches, and all other non-Episcopalian inhabitants of the city and county of New York, Queen's, Richmond, and West Chester counties, were placed under a galling yoke. Besides supporting their own ministers, they were forced by an unrighteous law to support, by taxes levied on them, the small sect of the Episcopalians! And it was only by the glo-

rious war and deliverance of the revolution, that the people were set free from the union of church and state; and from the establishment of a peculiar sect of religion in these United States.

During this civil establishment, many who sought the "loaves and the fishes," left the communion of the Presbyterian and Dutch Churches, and went into the favored society. For, in every religious society there are many individuals, who are ready to join a dominant party, where they can enjoy the favor of the rulers, and be in the way of appointments to office; and also be freed from the expense pressed on dissenters. But the result, on the whole, was not unfavorable to the *spiritual* interests of the Dutch Church. She lost only, generally speaking, the worldly men, and some turbulent members who loved not the pure and strict discipline of the church. In this period the doctrines of grace were faithfully preached, and divine ordinances administered in purity. The ministry, with some few exceptions, were learned, exemplary, and indefatigable; and the great body of the population, regular and moral, and attached to the church of their Dutch fathers, which had been so long preserved, without interruption, and with little opposition.

The fourth period of the Dutch Reformed Church extends from 1737 to 1771. It opened with a new and important movement. Hitherto the ascendancy of the Holland courts had remained unimpaired in our churches here. For, although many were obviously opposed to this state of things, and the opponents were daily increasing: still their movements were secret, and their opposition spent itself in words. Hence no decided measure had been resorted to, in order to remove this state of dependence and its manifold evils.

In 1737, the first movement was made by five prominent ministers, Messrs. G. Dubois, Haeghoort, B. Freeman, Van Santfort, and Curtenius. They did not venture to adopt the bold measure of renouncing the abject dependence on the parent classis. They merely proposed to form an assembly for counsel and free internal intercourse, and any ecclesiastical business, not inconsistent with this dependence on Holland. This they called a *cætus*. A

plan was adopted, and rules formed for its regulation; and it was sent down to the churches for their concurrence. On the 27th of April, 1738, the day appointed by the five ministers to receive the reports from the churches, a convocation of ministers and elders met in New York.*

The several reports of the churches induced the convention to adopt the plan without opposition; and it was sent to the Classis of Amsterdam for their ratification. This they presumed they should promptly obtain. For there was nothing in the projected cœtus which did, in fact, really curtail any of the power of that classis. Yet it was not until ten years after this that they received an answer, by the Rev. Mr. Van Sinderin, from Holland; for it was in the month of May, 1747, that the convention was summoned to receive the answer of the classis, which, though a long delay, gave its entire approbation and concurrence. On the appointed day only six ministers were present. These having received the act of the classis, did nothing more than issue their call of the first meeting of the cœtus, on the second Tuesday of September, 1747, in the city of New York.

On the day appointed the representatives of the churches met in cœtus; and, although the plan had received the full approbation of the mother church, still there was a most decided opposition to it. This opposition was made by Dominie Boel, of the church of New York, and by Mr. Mancius of Kingston, Mr. Freyvenmoet, and Mr. Martselius. Mr. Frelinghuysen could not prevail with his church to accede to the cœtus; but it received his own de-

* The following are the names of these eminent men:—the Rev. G. Dubois, and the elders, Anthony Rutgers, and Abraham Leferts; the Rev. Mr. Freeman, and the elders, Peter Nevius, and Dirk Brinkerhoef; the Rev. Mr. Van Santford, and the Elder Goosen Adriance; the Rev. Mr. Haeghoort, and the Elder Van Dyck; the Rev. Mr. Curtenius, of Hackensack, and his elder, Mr. Zabriskie; the Rev. Theodorus J. Frelinghuysen, of Raritan, (a most distinguished man of God, and greatly blessed in his ministerial labors; he had five sons, ministers; and two daughters, married to ministers.) and the Elder H. Fisher; the Rev. Mr. Ericksen, and the Elder J. Zutveen; the Rev. Mr. Bohm, of Philadelphia, with the elder, Mr. — Synder; the Rev. Mr. Schuyler, of Schoharie, with the elder, Mr. — Spies.

cidèd support. And it was soon ascertained that those who opposed the whole of this narrow and inefficient scheme, were correct; whatever may have been their avowed motives. It affected no good purpose which could not have been done without it. It was a meeting merely for fraternal intercourse and advice. This could have been attained without a formal cœtus. It gave the pastors no powers; they could not meet as bishops, who had each their church; they had no power to ordain ministers; they could try no cases requiring ecclesiastical investigation; they could not even settle ecclesiastical disputes, without the usual consent of the Classis of Amsterdam. Its utter unfitness to promote the interests of the church became apparent to all, except those in the slavish interests of fatherland. Nothing but an independent classis could do this. They must have power to ordain; they must have their own court to try cases. The church was suffering exceedingly, said those who had got a cœtus, but wished a cœtus clothed with the power of a classis. But this met with a renewed, fierce opposition. "Shall *we* throw off the care and paternal supervision of the Classis of Amsterdam? Shall *we* venture to ordain ministers? Shall *we* set up ourselves as judges? Where can *we* get such learned ministers as those from Holland? And can any of *us* judge of their fitness, and learning, and piety?" Such was the feeling and declamation of the Conferentie party.

On the contrary, the Cœtus party appealed to their brethren on the necessity of having youth trained here for the ministry. "We must have academies and a college. The English language is advancing on us: we must have a ministry to preach in English, or our youth will abandon us in a body. And the expense of sending for ministers is becoming oppressive; not to speak of the great expense and privation sustained by us who are parents, in sending our sons to Holland to be educated, so as to be able to preach in Dutch. And you all know," they added, "how many years have sometimes elapsed between the time of a call sent to fatherland, and the coming of a pastor; and sometimes churches have been disappointed entirely. None have

responded to their call. And even, in certain cases, some ministers have come out who were not only unpopular, but absolutely disagreeable. Is it not unendurable, that the churches should have no choice of their pastor! Men, accustomed to a national church and its high-handed measures have come among us, who have, of course, views and habits entirely different from those of our fellow-citizens and Christians in Holland. Need we remind you of the distractions and divisions caused by these obstinate men, who, instead of harmonizing with the people, and winning their confidence, have imprudently opposed them, and rendered their ministry odious and unsuccessful? Besides, is it not humiliating and degrading to these churches, and to us all, that we should be deprived of the power of ordaining ministers? And we must send abroad for ministers, as if none here were fit to minister in holy things! It is an imputation on our sons; it is an imputation on us, in the ministry here; as if *they* were unfit for the holy work, and as if *we* had only *half* of the ministerial office! We declare this bondage to be no longer tolerable, and it ought no longer to be endured."

Such was the bold language now used by the Cœtus party, both ministers and laymen. And as a goodly number had, by the permission of the Classis of Amsterdam, been ordained, by *special favor*, all these, to a man, took a bold stand against this dependence on Holland. They never felt that attachment to the classis, which bound down, in slavish attachment, those whom it had sent out hither. They had no prejudices; they saw the painful grievances under which their fathers smarted; and they felt the power of the arguments and appeals, so urgently pressed by all, to seek an independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction of their own. They spoke out with warmth on the subject. They even ventured to charge the church of their forefathers with injustice to the ministry here, and actual tyranny over them. They withheld what Christ, the King of Zion, never authorized them to withhold from the true ministry. They demanded of her to do them and herself justice, by conveying to them all the

powers of the ministry, which she had received, as it respected doctrine, and sacraments, and discipline.

All these appeals made a most powerful impression on the people. Many churches came over to their measures; and even a few of the European ministers candidly acceded. And they no longer concealed their fixed determination to commence a system of measures to withdraw these American churches from this abject subordination to the Classis of Amsterdam and the Synod of North Holland.

This plan was matured in 1754. In the cœtus of the preceding year a motion had been entertained to amend the plan of the cœtus, by converting it into a regular classis, with all its proper powers. A plan was drafted for this purpose; adopted with great unanimity by those present; and formally transmitted to the churches for their concurrence.

Upon this there commenced a scene of animosity, division, and actual violence, compared to which, all the former wranglings were utterly nothing. It was the beginning of a war waged for *fifteen* years with unmitigated fury! The Conferentie party met and organized themselves into a firm body of opposition in 1755. They were the following:—Dominies Ritzma and Deronde, of the church of New York; Curtenius, Haeghoort, Vanderlinde, Van Sinderin, Schuyler, Rubel, Kock, Kerr, Rysdyck, and Freynmoet. The Cœtus party embraced all the rest, whose names are given in a preceding note, with the exception of the above names. These formed two hostile bodies resolutely pitted against each other, and apparently resolved never to yield. The peace of neighborhoods was disturbed; families were divided; churches torn by factions. Houses of worship were locked up by one faction against the other. Tumults and disgraceful scenes frequently occurred on the holy sabbath, and at the doors of churches. Ministers were occasionally assaulted in the very pulpit; and sometimes the solemn worship of God was disturbed and actually terminated by mob-violence. In these scenes the Conferentie party were usually noted as the most violent and outrageous. But, on both sides, a furious zeal prompted many

to shameful excesses, and a most painful disgrace of the Christian name.

The more moderate and prudent explored these evils and growing mischiefs, but they could find no remedy. No individual, no body of Christian men, was found to act as mediator. The two parties would listen to no overtures. Humble Christians wept over the revolting scenes, and the impending ruin of their church; hope deserted their fainting hearts; and many of them retired, from such unhallowed scenes, to the bosom of a peaceful and Christian communion in other churches.

The Conferentie party called in the aid of the Holland Church. They addressed a letter to the Classis of Amsterdam, in 1755; a second one in 1756; a third in 1760; a fourth in 1761. In these they uttered their inflammatory complaints, that the American churches were attempting to throw off their submission to their lawful authority, and to form an independent body, with powers equal to those of the mother church! And in reply to these, too many of the ministers of that classis lent their aid to foment fresh troubles, and defeat the efforts of the church to become independent of them.

When this violent schism took place, the two parties of *Cœtus* and *Conferentie*, were nearly equal in point of numbers. But there was a marked difference in their character, and the spirit of their preaching. The *Conferentie* pastors were men of greater learning, but they were cold, and heavy, and spiritless. Their discourses had more of the air of a professor's lecture from the chair, than of a popular and heart-stirring address to a mixed audience. The *Cœtus* party were zealous, ardent, practical in their popular addresses, and indefatigable in their pastoral duties. Hence they soon had the mass of the pious people with them, who applauded them and sustained them in their trials and labors of love, while the unsound and heartless vehemently opposed them. The anecdote told of that devoted and pious *Dominie*, Dr. Meyer, of *Esopus*, now *Kingston*, will illustrate this. He had one sabbath preached the holy doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, its true nature, and its necessity,

and he had closed with a heart-searching examination of the souls of his audience, giving marks of its existence in them, and the evidences of their *not* having the new birth. When he came down from the pulpit, one of the elders refused to give him, as usual, the right hand of fraternal recognition and approbation, as is the delightful custom in our church. "Ah! *Dominie*," cried he, "I cannot give you my hand of approbation; I cannot stand that, flesh and blood cannot endure that doctrine!" "True, very true," said Dr. Meyer,— "therefore is it the more manifestly Christ's holy doctrine; and therefore do I cease not to preach it." Many such scenes occurred in those days of dissension in the churches.

During this period, another painful source of difficulties occurred, which caused to our church the loss of many most valuable families. I allude to the introduction of preaching in English in the churches. The English had been, for a century, the language of the government, its officers, and influential men. It was evident to the great mass of the Dutch youth, that it must, in the issue, be the language of the country. Causes were tried in English—all the pleadings were in English. The youth mingled with increasing multitudes of youth, who spoke nothing but English; and the best education in the city, and in the neighboring colleges, was all conducted in English. Hence the youth of both sexes labored to be master of English. In the progress of years, the great body of the youth could not understand a sermon in Dutch. They demanded English preaching. All the more prudent, and all, who by a wise forecast, saw the utter desertion of the Dutch churches by the youth, in the course of another generation at least, unless English preaching were introduced, united their efforts with the youth, and urged the necessity of having English preaching forthwith, as well as Dutch preaching. This was long and keenly resisted. Those whose spirits had been so long sharpened by the vehement contentions of the home and foreign parties, alluded to by us, carried an unusual warmth, and obstinate pertinacity, into this new conflict. The youth and their

friends did not, perhaps, use the necessary soothing spirit of persuasion. They saw the justness of this requirement so clearly, that they had not the necessary patience to bear with the venerable men who clung to their dear, their own native tongue—the language of dear old Holland—which they so tenderly loved. To take from them their *native tongue* seemed to them as being driven into exile, among men whose tongue was to them barbarous! It was a hard struggle. But the venerable consistory of the church of New York were constrained at last to yield. For they loved their church, they loved their dear children; and they saw many of them already gone to other denominations, where they could understand the speakers. Yet, even this compliance made us lose a goodly number of the old people and younger heads of families. And they were without any reasonable excuse. For they understood the English as well as the Dutch. But they left their fathers' church, because they failed in their effort at victory! And, hence, not a few made this remark, as they retired into the Episcopal Church,—“Well, since we must have English, let us go where we shall get the language in the purest form!”

This was not the first movement in our church to secure English preaching. My colleague, Dr. Dewitt, who is now preparing a full history of the Dutch Reformed Church, has drawn my attention to a fact not generally known. It is this: about the middle of the seventeenth century, a formal request was sent by our church, to Holland, for a Dominie to be a colleague to Dominie Megapolensis, who should also preach to the people in English. In answer to this, was Dominie Drisius (in Dutch, Dries,) sent out. He arrived in 1653. He had been a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church in the city of London. He preached in Dutch, in English, and in French.*

* This excellent and indefatigable pastor officiated frequently on the north side of Staten Island, in French, in a church formed there, in that French settlement. These were Huguenots, who were driven from France, at the revoking of the edict of Nantz, by the inhuman tyrant Louis XIV. These eminent sufferers

But the first man who preached exclusively in English, in the collegiate church, was the Rev. Dr. Laidlie. He was a native of the South of Scotland, a graduate of Edinburgh University. He had been a pastor of the Church of Flushing, in Zealand, in Holland. From that he was called by the consistory, and he arrived and entered on his ministry in 1764.* His first sermon I have read in manuscript. His text was, 2 Cor. v. 11: “Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.” It was preached to an immense audience. And a signal revival of religion soon commenced under his zealous ministration, and the church greatly flourished. I have heard some of the aged people tell this anecdote of him. On a certain occasion, when he had, in a prayer meeting, uttered a fervent and heavenly prayer, the aged people gathered round him, and said—“Ah! Dominie, many an earnest prayer did we offer up in *Dutch*, for your coming among us; and, truly, the Lord has answered us in *English*, and has sent you to us!”

The members of the Cœtus party had, in view of forming an independent ecclesiastical constitution, for some time turned their earnest attention to the establishment of a seminary for the education of the future ministry, at home. And they had communicated this intention to the Classis of Amsterdam. The late Dr. Livingston, being at that time in Holland, pursuing his studies, had entered zealously into the plan of promoting this double project. He

for Christ's cause and crown, afterwards united with their brethren, the Dutch, and formed that church which continues and flourishes there to this day, near Port Richmond. And the numerous prominent men there, still bear the honored name of their noble progenitors, the Huguenots, who suffered the loss of their country, their property, and every thing but their Christian honor and religion! And they are dear unto us for their fathers' sake.

* Dr. Laidlie was an amiable and very accomplished gentleman, a devotedly pious Christian, a popular, evangelical, and zealous preacher; of unusual dignity, and commanding eloquence in the pulpit. This is the character of Dr. Laidlie, as drawn by his, then, young colleague, Dr. Livingston. Dr. L. died in 1778, at Red Hook, in his exile from his church, caused by the British army, which then occupied New York.

had gained the approbation of many of the principal ministers in Holland, to the purpose of forming an ecclesiastical constitution in America, similar to that of fatherland. This consent, it seems, was sought and gained, in order, if possible, to induce the brethren of the conferentie to unite with them in the enterprise; for they would do nothing without that consent. And this consent of the enlightened ministers of Holland prescribed an express condition, which was precisely what the brethren of the cœtus wished for, and anticipated. It was expressly required that the American church should proceed to make an immediate and adequate provision for a theological professorate. For they assured the American brethren that they could not maintain any relation with a church, who neglected to secure a thorough education for the youth, seeking the holy ministry. Yet even this did not conciliate the conferentie. They utterly opposed every plan which would cut off their dependence on Holland, or would go to introduce any ministers but those educated in fatherland, in Dutch!

Several schemes were proposed. One was, that a local union should be formed on the part of the cœtus with the flourishing College of Princeton. This seemed to be the first and favorite scheme of Dr. Livingston, while he was in Holland, in consequence of a consultation he had with the venerable Dr. Witherspoon, at that time on a visit to Holland, previously to his coming to Princeton. This was opposed by the cœtus, and also by the Classis of Amsterdam. Another plan was, to have a theological professorship in King's College, now Columbia College, in New York.* This was objected to by both parties. The cœtus, speaking the sentiment of the great body of the people, said, "No, we shall be independent of Holland, and of every other body here. We must have a college and a theological school of our own." And with a noble and pious resolution, they gained their grand object. A college was founded

* Those who have looked into the charter of this venerable college, among others my colleague, Dr. Knox, one of the trustees, are of opinion that the Dutch are entitled to a professorate in this college.

called "Queen's College," after the queen of King George III., a High-Dutch princess, who, it was understood, would kindly patronize it. The charter of this college was dated in 1770; and it was "instituted for the education of the youth in the learned languages, the liberal and useful arts and sciences, and especially in divinity."

This noble step in the advancement of the church, which ought to have been hailed by every friend of the Dutch Church, was the signal for a fresh outburst of the war of opposition on the part of the brethren of the conferentie; and to such an extent was this unnatural war carried on in the bosom of the church, that it began to excite alarm for the very existence of the Dutch Church. Reflecting and pious men now apprehended that she must soon sink into insignificance, and by degrees be absorbed by the surrounding denominations, and cease to exist as a distinct church in this land!

The churches of New York and of Albany were the two who kept aloof from this distressing party warfare, and were styled *neutrals*. Two of the dominies of New York, namely, Messrs. De Ronde and Ritzema, were strong partisans. The former was the most ardent in opposing English preaching; the latter, in stoutly defending the principles of the conferentie. He and the learned Dominie Leydt, of New Brunswick, were perhaps the ablest writers on this long and vexed question. The latter was a masterly writer in defence of the cœtus.

The fifth period in the history of our church, extending from 1771, to 1784, opened with the best prospects. It was like the bright rising of the sun, after a long, dreary, and most melancholy winter. It brought peace, harmony, and prosperity to the churches, in the healing of the division between the cœtus and conferentie.

The fervent prayers of God's people had never ceased to ascend to heaven for this object, even in our darkest days; and divine Providence wrought a great deliverance. The happy instruments were the late Dr. Livingston and those eminent men in New York with whom he corresponded, particularly Abraham Lott, by whom he was regularly advised of the

state of affairs going on here. This great and good man of God felt deeply for the church, and was resolved to lose no opportunity of engaging the whole influence of his friends in Holland, to put an end to these most unnatural and painful scenes. He was convinced that the brethren of the conferentie would yield readily to what the Classis of Amsterdam would enjoin on them. Hence his first object was to induce the North Synod to appoint that classis the standing committee, with full powers to transact the affairs of the American church. He waited on that synod at its meeting at Edam, in 1769, and, through the influence of prominent members, he gained his point without any opposition.

Having thus got the whole power into the hands of that classis, his next object was to prevail with the classis to accede to the plan proposed by the cœtus. He placed before them the arguments employed for years by those brethren here, and urged on them the necessity of giving the church here the power to ordain as well as educate her own ministry. He succeeded completely. For such were the candor, the piety, and the liberal views of the Holland ministers, when the whole matters in controversy were fairly and fully set before them, that they no longer resisted the most righteous claims. And by the kindness of God, who watches over his church and moves the hearts of all men, a liberal plan was arranged: general principles were adopted to remove the existing difficulties; to conciliate the contending parties; to take measures to provide a well-educated ministry; and secure the necessary and unshackled right to license and ordain their own ministers.

Having finished his studies, and having taken the degree of Doctor in Divinity after a rigid examination, Dr. Livingston returned home in 1770, and accepted the call presented to him from the Collegiate Church. He lost no time in gradually winning over influential and good men to the plan of conciliation, which he had brought with him. In 1771 he induced the consistory of his church to call a convention. There was not a more likely mode of succeeding. That consistory and church had unbounded influence with all the pastors and churches. The fraternal

call was promptly responded to, and in October, 1771, the convention met in New York. It was a full meeting, and it displayed a kind temper and evangelical spirit. Ministers and elders there met in cordiality, who had not met nor spoken to each other for years! This disappointed the enemy, and filled with joy the hearts of God's children. The Holy Spirit seemed to pervade the assembly, and shed peace and love in the hearts of all, in answer to the fervent prayers offered up.*

The first business was to appoint a large committee of the most distinguished persons to mature a plan of union and church government. The committee was a most judicious one; it consisted of six ministers and as many elders. Dr. Livingston and Dr. Westerlo, with the Elders I. Roosevelt and N. Ganesvoort, were appointed to represent the two great churches that had been neutrals in the violent contest, namely, those of New York and Albany; the Rev. Dr. Hardenberg, Mr. Ver Breyck, and the Elders H. Fischer and P. Zabriskie, to represent the Cœtus party; and the Rev. Messrs. Rysdyck and De Ronde, with the Elders J. Van Santen and R. Snedecker, to represent the Conferentie party.

As soon as this committee met, Dr. Livingston laid before them the plan which he had brought with him from Holland, and which he had hitherto shown to no one. The scheme embraced three import-

* The following were the members of this famous convention:

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	PLACES.
J. N. Livingston,	J. Roosevelt,	New York,
L. De Ronde,	J. Van Santen,	"
Archibald Laidlie,	C. Selring,	"
	E. Bvank,	"
E. Westerlo,	N. Ganesvoort,	Albany,
John Leydt,	Hendrick Fischer,	New Brunswick,
Jo. C. Rubell,	Enelbert Lott,	King's Co., L. I.
U. Van Sinderin,	J. Rasplie,	"
W. Kappets,	G. De Murrav,	Hackensack,
J. R. Hardenberg,	C. Vander Moulén,	Raritan,
Isaac Rvadvck,	R. Snedecker,	Poughkeepsie,
M. Schoonmaker,	John Sickles,	Gravesend,
S. Ver. Breyck,	R. Van Houten,	Toppan,
	Jacobus Elting,	Kingston,
	Adrian Wynkoop,	"
John Schunema,		Kaatkill,
William Jackson,	Abraham Sickles,	Bergen,
Hermanus Meyer,		Pompton,
Dirck Romeyn,	L. Pawlin,	Marbletown,
J. M. Van Harlingen,	J. Van Aradalen,	Millston,
J. H. Goetschius,	Peter Zabriskie,	Hackensack,
	D. Herring,	"
Garrit Leydecker,	Michael Moor,	Eng. Neighborhood,
David Morinus,	G. Tingens,	Ackquanconk,
Cornelius Dubois,	A. Zinkens,	Freshold,
	Adolphus Meyer,	Haerlem,
B. Vanderlinden,	Stephen Zabriskie,	Paramus.

ant objects: First, The internal arrangements, church government, and all the usual powers of classis. Second, The measures best calculated to heal all animosities and divisions. Third, The conducting of a correspondence with the parent church of Holland. It met with the kindest reception in the committee. After a few additions and amendments were proposed, it was adopted, and brought forward to the convention. Here it was again fully discussed with the best feelings. The members on each side seemed to vie with the other in applauding it; and finally it was adopted without one dissenting vote! It now only needed the final approbation of the Classis of Amsterdam. Accordingly, it was transmitted to them. And the convention adjourned, to meet in October, 1772, to receive their final answer. That answer came, conveying to their dear American brethren the fullest and most perfect approbation of the union, and all the measures adopted, and concluded with their fervent prayers for the prosperity of the American church. The convention heard the letter with emotions of joy and gratitude, and it was with the greatest cordiality signed by every member of the meeting, while they praised God for the happy consummation!

The most distinguished promoters of the union, and the independence of our church, were these: Dr. Laidlie, and Dr. Livingston of New York; Dr. Westerlo, of Albany; Dr. Romeyn, of Schenectady; Dr. Hardenberg, (afterwards the first president of Queen's College,) and Mr. Leydt, of New Brunswick; Mr. Breyck, of Tappan, and Mr. Rysdyck, of Poughkeepsie. This distinguished man had all along been a keen conferentie partisan. But as soon as he heard the wise and fraternal plan of union, he cordially gave it his support, and brought his friends and people over to the same course.

The establishment of a college now occupied the earnest attention of the united and peaceful church, and particularly to secure a theological professor. But from the date of their charter to the close of the war of the revolution, little was done for the furtherance of an object so dear to the church. This was on account of the poverty of the country, and deplorable cala-

mities of the war. Besides, many were inclined to keep the theological professorate distinct from the college. And others being afraid to stir up old animosities, as the college was the child of the Cœtus party, and always opposed by the other party, sustained them in this timorous policy. Hence the convention in 1774, in urging on the measure for the professorate, kept the new college out of view. In like manner the convention, as such, that met in 1784, took no decided steps to organize the college. But letters having been received from Holland, in reply to their petition for a suitable professor, with strong recommendations from the classis, and from the faculty of Utrecht, in favor of Dr. Livingston, he was unanimously elected to the professorate, and entered immediately on the duties thereof.

In this distinguished convention, considerable progress was made in ecclesiastical organization. At the adoption of the articles of union in 1771, the convention of which Dr. Livingston was president, had before them the entire model of the government of the Church of Holland. Yet for some particular reasons, they simply denominated their conventions "the particular and the general assembly." But the convention of 1784, resolved to distinguish these assemblies by the names usually given to such judicatories. At first "the particular assembly," was called "a classis," and "the general assembly," a "particular synod."

At the commencement of the war of the revolution, there were about eighty churches in New York state: these were divided into three particular assemblies, or classes; in New Jersey there were forty churches: these were formed into two classes. These met twice in the year. The particular synod was a delegated body, consisting of two pastors and two elders, from each classis, and met once a year. And it was now also for the first time resolved to have a third assembly, to be called "the general synod." This court was held in 1792. It consisted, at first, of *all* the ministers of the church, with an elder from each congregation, and it met each third year. Some years afterwards, when the churches had multiplied greatly, it was made a delegated body, each classis nominating three bishops and three elders as

their representatives ; the nomination to be confirmed by each of two particular synods to which the classes belonged. And this court met, and still meets annually.*

In 1784, the trustees, with a laudable zeal, made an attempt to resuscitate the college, called Queen's College, at New Brunswick. It went into operation under the superintendance of the venerable Dr. Hardenberg, its first president, who was as eminent a ripe scholar as a profound theologian. But for want of funds, caused by the general distress pervading this young nation, just come out of the war of the revolution ; and also for want of an adequate faculty to co-operate with its distinguished president, and its able professor of the languages, Dr. Taylor ; it gradually declined, and had at last to be suspended for a season.

In 1807, the efforts of these devoted and persevering friends of literature were more successful. The old building was an unsightly and inconvenient one for such an institution. They proceeded, with the greatest industry and perseverance, to collect funds for a suitable building. In 1809 they laid the foundation of the present beautiful edifice, on a commanding eminence, overlooking the city of New Brunswick. The original cost of this stately erection was thirty thousand dollars.

One thing was yet necessary to the success of the college, and that was attained in 1807. The trustees entered into a covenant with the general synod of the Dutch Church ; uniting their mutual interests and funds, giving the college the whole influence and patronage of the church, and placing the theological professorate in connection with the college ; but yet, in such a manner, that the college is not made by any means, a sectarian institution. In conformity with this covenant, Dr. Livingston, the synod's theological professor, was elected professor in the college, and officiated as the active president ; the governor of the state being then, ex officio, the nominal president. But in 1816, a suspension of the college exercises was caused by the exhaustion of its literary funds. This suspension continued unto 1825. Then was it revived with great spirit, and

* Dr. Gunn's Life of Dr. Livingston, p. 274.

with a full faculty.* And it continues in successful operation to this day,—a bright star among the other bright stars in the constellation of literature in our happy republic ! The theological seminary has three professorships richly endowed ; and filled, at present, by three able divines. The college is under the care of the Hon. A. Bruyn Hasbrouck, LL. D., the president, a most distinguished scholar and learned civilian ; assisted by a full complement of able professors and tutors.† Since its late organization, the college at New Brunswick, hitherto known as Queen's College, has been named Rutgers's College, after the name of its munificent patron, the late Col. Rutgers, who was a gallant revolutionary officer, and an eminent man of God, in the church.

Thus far has the Dutch Reformed Church struggled successfully through all her difficulties and distressing calamities. What a pleasing contrast there is between her present flourishing condition and that of 1789 ! Then, was she distracted and rent by two violent contending parties ; and her courts and sanctuaries were the arena of unnatural and unchristian broils, and a hissing, and a by-word among the enemies of religion ; while all good men deplored her impending fate ! She was, moreover, without an academy, or a college of her own ; and subjected to a dependence on a foreign nation for her supply of ministers. Now, "peace reigns within her walls ; and prosperity within her palaces." For our God hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary, to hear the groanings of his people. He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute. The Lord hath builded up our Zion, and he hath appeared in his glory among her children ! She has, now, her academy

* With unusual pleasure does the writer of this look back on that organization. To him the trustees were pleased to assign the chair of the languages. And he had such men as these as his colleagues : Professor Adrian, Prof. Woodhull, Prof. Dr. John Dewitt ; and the venerable and beloved president Dr. Milledoler was at the head of the institution, including our college and the theological seminary. Adrian and Dewitt followed Woodhull, to their rest in heaven. Two of us survive, but in different spheres of duty and service.

† See the statistics appended to this.

and schools; her college, and her theological seminary; blessed with accomplished, pious, and efficient teachers. She has her foreign and domestic missionary societies: her Sabbath School Union, and her Education Society; and her twelve scholarships, and her Van Benschooten endowment:* to bring forward the pious sons of the church into the holy ministry.

During the last forty years she has been steadily "lengthening her cords, and strengthening her stakes." Very many new churches have been planted by her Home Missionary Board; particularly in the northern and the western parts of the state of New York, and in the city of New York, where the first and venerable Collegiate Church, which once stood alone, now beholds two great classes, with their numerous and flourishing churches under their care, and prospering, by the grace of God, under an able, devoted, and pious ministry. She is now directing her earnest and successful labors, in planting Dutch Reformed churches in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. At the same time she watches, with the deepest interest, the progress of her foreign missionaries in the far East; and rejoices in their successful efforts in bringing the heathen tribes to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the hope of glory.

Our fathers brought this vine from Holland; and they planted it here, in the name of the Most High. They cultivated it with their hands, and watered it with their tears! Under the dew of heaven has she spread her fair and fruitful branches over the land. We sit under her shadow with great delight, and eat the pleasant fruits thereof! The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Blessed be the name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever! And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen.

II. THE DOCTRINES OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH.

The doctrines of our church are those

* The Van Benschooten Fund was bequeathed by the pious and venerable Dominie Van Benschooten. It amounts to twenty thousand dollars, and it is designed to carry pious youth through a complete scientific course, as well as the theological studies.

which, in common with all the branches of the Reformed Churches, we have received from the reformers. These blessed doctrines were taught the church by the prophets and apostles, by the command of our Lord, the only king and head of the church. They are contained in the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and in them alone. For, in concert with the church of God, in all ages, we reject traditions and expositions of the fathers, except only as they strictly and rigidly agree with the Holy Bible, the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. These doctrines we hold as they were taught by Luther and Calvin, so far as they taught as Paul and the other inspired writers taught.

We receive as our creed the Confession of Faith, as revised in the national synod of the Council of Dort, in the years 1618 and 1619, consisting of thirty-seven articles; with the Heidelberg Catechism; the compend of the Christian religion; the canons of the Council of Dort, on the famous five points:—I. Predestination. II. Definite atonement of Christ. III. & IV. Man's entire corruption and helplessness, and his conversion by God's grace alone. V. Perseverance of the saints in grace.

These doctrines have been received as their creed by all the churches of God, whose honored representatives were members of the Council of Dort, namely: 1. England and Scotland; 2. The Electoral Palatinate; 3. Hesse; 4. Switzerland; 5. The French Churches; 6. South Holland; 7. North Holland; 8. Zealand; 9. Province of Utrecht; 10. Friesland; 11. Groningen; 12. Omland; 13. Drent; 14. The Republic and Church of Bremen; 15. The Republic and Church of Emden; 16. Gelderland; 17. Zutphen; 18. Wetteraw; 19. The Republic and Church of Geneva; 20. Transylvania; and 21. The German Reformed Church.

These doctrines, usually called Calvinistic, or rather the doctrines of the Reformed Church, are the same precisely as those expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Protestant Episcopal Church, with some few exceptions; such, for instance, as that in relation to church government, which is characterized by diocesan bishops. With us, and all other

churches, each pastor who presides over a church, is strictly, according to the word of God, a Christian bishop. For, by the testimony of Paul, (Acts xx. 5, 17, and 28,) every presbyter or teaching elder, is a bishop.

We refer the reader for further particulars in reference to the Reformed Churches and our church, as one of them, to our Confession of Faith, catechism, and canons, in the book of our church. This, we repeat, is the canonical book also of the German Reformed Church, the French Church, and the Swiss Church. These are usually bound up with our psalms and hymns, and are in every body's hands who chooses to examine them.

In regard to our "liturgy," we have to state that it contains, as every one sees, prayers carefully adapted to persons in various circumstances, public and private. But these are designed, now, simply as models, not as regular forms. When the early reformers, by the grace of God, led "the church" out of the long captivity of modern Babylon, they found their people extremely ignorant. Hence they needed helps. They were children, and crippled in their walk. They needed crutches to lean on in their early helplessness. But now, we consider our ministers, elders, deacons, and members of our church, as no longer little and lisping children, and cripples needing crutches. These crutches we throw away, and we walk without them! This we do because the spirit of God is really given to all who ask of him help in prayer. But we have no desire to interfere with those of our reformed brethren who deem themselves, as yet, incapable of doing without these helps for the weak ones of the flock.

The only part of our liturgy which is enjoined to be read, is this: the Form of Baptism, in order to preserve the uniformity of vows: together with the short prayer, before the vows taken by the parents; and also the formula of the holy communion of the Lord's Supper. This the minister reads, while all the members, carefully and devoutly follow him, with the form open before them, in their seats. This is the amount, and the proper use of our liturgy.

III. ITS CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

Our form of government is that which has been adopted by all the churches of the Reformation in Holland, France, Switzerland, Germany, Scotland, with the exception of England,—which is governed by diocesan bishops,—and of the famous Puritans of Old and New England, whose form is that of independency. We refer to our form in our Book of the Church. Our primary court is that of *the consistory*, the same as that called a *session* in the Presbyterian Church. This consists of the three distinct offices: ministers or bishops, elders, and deacons. The deacons in our church have no right to preach. We adhere strictly to the scriptural institution of that office, as detailed in Acts vi. They have the care of the poor; and take charge of the alms and the proper distribution of them. Our church discountsenances the office of trustees, especially of a board of trustees, whose members are not even required to be members of the church in full communion. The most general, I may say the universal, practice of ecclesiastical arrangement with us, is this: the pastors and elders meet as a spiritual court, to transact spiritual concerns, such as the admission of members, exercising discipline, &c. The deacons meet stately, to make provision for the poor and make distributions. And the consistory, composed of the pastor, elders, and deacons, meets for the transaction of all temporal business relating to their own church. On important occasions, such as that of calling a minister, the grand consistory is called together. This is composed of all those individuals who have been at any time elders and deacons in the church.

The next court in our church is *the classis*, corresponding precisely to *the presbytery* in our sister churches. This is composed of a minister and an elder from each distinct church, under the care of the classis.

The next court is *the particular synod*. Of these we have two, namely, the Synod of New York and the Synod of Albany, or the Southern and Northern Synods. These consist of two ministers and two elders from each classis within its bounds.

The highest court, from which there is no appeal, is *the general synod*. This also is a representative body. It is composed of three ministers and three elders from each classis throughout the entire church. At its first organization, this court met triennially; now it meets annually, for the despatch of all business belonging to the church.

In one peculiar feature do we differ from our Presbyterian brethren in the United States and Scotland. In the different branches of these most eminently distinguished churches, their elders are chosen *for life*. With us they are chosen to serve for two years in succession. And if they do their duty they are again eligible, after having been out of their office one year. If they have not fulfilled their office to edification, they may be left off the ticket; and no offence is given or taken. This, we believe, has most essentially contributed to preserve the peace, and promote the edification of the church, and to stir up good men to increased faithfulness to God and the church.

IV. THE FORM OF WORSHIP.

This is nearly the same as that of all those who adopt the Presbyterian form of worship. With us, the ancient and time-honored custom and mode is this: the minister and people, who are members, upon entering the church bow down, and in secret worship the King of Zion. In the morning, the pastor begins the solemnity of the day by reading the ten commandments; and in the other services of the day, by reading a chapter of the holy scriptures. The assembly then sing; then there is the solemn benediction; then a brief address, called the *exordium remotum*, containing an outline of the subject to be discussed;* then prayer; then singing; then the sermon; then a prayer; then a collection of alms for the poor; then singing, and the benediction.

Our psalmody is that which has been carefully prepared by a committee of our General Synod. It consists of the psalms of Watts, greatly improved and enlarged,

* This has, by a late regulation, been left discretionary, and by many it is dispensed with.

and two books of hymns. It is a rule of our church that each pastor shall lecture on a section of our Heidelberg Catechism, in the afternoon of the sabbath, so as to go through the whole in a definite time. These lectures exhibit an entire system of pure and holy doctrine to the people, in a regular course. And to this admirable system do we humbly and prayerfully ascribe the uniformity and strictness of adherence to pure doctrine in our churches. The design is to secure doctrinal preaching, and that of the entire system, to our people, in a regular course, from year to year.

V. THE STATISTICS.

The annual report for 1843, presents this summary of the church: There are twenty classes; two particular synods, that of New York, and that of Albany, under one general synod, the highest court of appeal, which meets annually. There are two hundred and sixty-seven churches, and two hundred and fifty-nine ministers, and twenty-three theological students, at present.

The number of families, as reported, is 21,569; the ascertained number of individuals in the congregations, 96,302: total in communion, 29,322. The increase of members on confession of their faith, from June, 1842, to June, 1843, 3202, by certificate, 1021: total increase in the year, 4223. Baptized in the year: infants, 2211, adults, 682. Number of catechumens, 5664; number in biblical instruction, 3988; the number of sabbath schools, 269; the number of pupils in these, 15,534.

Our college and theological seminary are located at New Brunswick, N. J. These institutions have been richly endowed by the liberality of our church. The two institutions are so far connected, that the theological professors render certain important services in the college. The venerable Dr. Milledoler lately retired from these institutions, after having rendered for a series of years most valuable services, as professor of didactic and polemic theology, and as president of the college, which last laborious office he performed gratuitously, with the utmost fidelity and great success, for nearly sixteen years. Since that, the Hon. A. Bruyn Hasbrouck, a