

THE

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

HISTORY AND THEOLOGY OF THE REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH.

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[NOTE.—This is the Fifteenth of the Series of Articles representing the peculiar views of different theological sects or schools.]

THE Puritans of England and the Calvinists of Holland were friends. In the evil days when both civil and religious liberty were contending for existence against the rage of kings and priests, they stood up together, counting not their lives dear unto themselves. They were heroes and martyrs. While the Puritans protested against the combined insolence and bigotry of a narrow-minded despot, Charles I., the Dutch Calvinists defied the cruel craftiness and vindictive power of the Spaniard. Those giants in the Christian church became its benefactors for all subsequent times. Their faith, their principles, and their aims live to-day in the hearts of their descendants, and compose a sacred pledge that the heritage bequeathed them by illustrious ancestors will never be squandered through selfish indolence, nor basely betrayed through lack of constancy.

With the progress of liberty in the world, England and Holland were once closely identified. The marriage of William Henry of Nassau, Stadtholder of Holland, with

Mary, elder daughter of James the Duke of York, in October, 1677, was an event which deserves to be regarded as of an unspeakable historical importance. It united the interests, the sympathies, and the strength of the two then most powerful of all the nations wherein the Protestant faith had taken root. When the Prince of Orange left Holland to become William III. of England, "his flag," says Macauley, "was immediately hoisted. It displayed the arms of Nassau quartered with those of England. The motto, embroidered in letters three feet long, was happily chosen. The House of Orange had long used the elliptical device, 'I will maintain.' The ellipse was now filled up with words of high import: 'The liberties of England and the Protestant religion.'"

At that time the Batavian Republic had attained its highest pitch of glory. It had humbled Spain, resisted France, expelled from its borders the janizaries of the Inquisition, founded its immense universities, achieved victories by sea and land, and was acknowledged as the chief patron of literature, art, commerce, and religious liberty. Its conjunction of political interest, through its great Stadtholder, with England was advantageous to both countries, and in the very highest degree beneficial to the interests of Protestantism. "For the authority of law," says the historian already quoted, "for the security of property, for the peace of our streets, for the happiness of our homes, our gratitude is due, under Him who raises and pulls down nations at his pleasure, to the Long Parliament, to the Convention, and to William of Orange."

The Calvinistic Christians who were thus associated in the Old World in illustrious labors for the Word of God and the rights of men were not divided in the New. Boston and New York, as they were nearly coëval in their foundation, have been distinguished from their infancy for their unfaltering devotion to the great principles which are essential to the right ordering and wholesome growth of the state and of the church. That heroic faith which led to the settlement of Massachusetts and of New York by men educated in the school of freedom, has never since been wanting in the hour

of peril. In seasons of public danger it has flamed out with all its ancient brightness, and lighted the path on which the American Union has marched forward towards the goal of its destiny.

Puritanism, both in Old and in New England, has vindicated its title to the gratitude of mankind by its intelligent and conscientious opposition to Popery, Prelacy, and Prescription. Hardly less can be said of the Calvinists of Holland and of New Amsterdam. The Reformed of the island and of the Continent differed, indeed, in many things; but together they gave proof that they were one in the faith delivered of old time to the saints. Why should not their children be also one in the same bond? Here, in the New World, circumstances quite well known for a long time fostered local jealousies; and perhaps badly-conducted controversies, political and ecclesiastical, have excited mutual distrust among those who have common memories to preserve and common interests to defend. If, however, at any time New England has been too self-assertive, on the other hand the Dutch pride of New York has never been deficient in susceptibility. But while the criminations of criticism are seldom controlled by the moderation of the few, it is a solace to know that Christian love can embrace opposites, and so make one of many. The heart of Christ is the centre of an august unity, and the fellowship of the people of God is cemented by a "blood thicker than water." The more, therefore, the churches of Jesus Christ come to recognize, study, and understand one another, will they be likely to strive together for the furtherance of the gospel.

In this faith the following account of the Protestant Reformed Dutch church has been prepared.

Its title is derived from the facts connected with its origin. In 1529 several princes, together with the representatives of fourteen Imperial cities present at the Diet of Spire, entered a solemn protest against enactments "contrary to God and his word, to their soul's salvation, and their good conscience." This was done April 19th, and a little less than twelve years

after Luther had opened the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century. By this act the Western church was divided into Romish and Protestant. From the date of its occurrence the nations felt within them the breath of a new life, which has ever since strengthened them in zeal and work for the emancipation of all men from the chains of superstition and the yoke of political servitude. The great mass of the people of Holland, together with the inferior and some of the higher clergy, declared in favor of the Protestants, and received for themselves that appellation.

About the middle of the century the Protestants were divided into Lutheran and Reformed; the first following Luther, the latter Farel, Calvin, and others. For awhile Lutheranism made comparatively little progress; but the Reformed faith extended itself rapidly over Switzerland, France, the Palatinate, Bohemia, Holland, Scotland, and more slowly into England. "The Protestant Reformed church" is therefore a purely historical title. As against the Papal hierarchy and all its corruptions the church is Protestant, and as against High or Low Lutheranism it holds the old Pauline, Augustinian, and Calvinistic faith in the sovereignty of grace and the natural helplessness of man as a sinner. The Calvinists universally rejected the doctrine of the sacraments and of free-will as set forth in the original Augsburg Confession of 1530. Holland received the polity and the theology of Calvin, in distinction from the teachings of Luther, Bucer, and Zwingli, on points which separated them from the great Genevan reformers. But while the church of the Netherlands in the main approved the methods and conclusions of Calvin's interpretation of the scriptures, nevertheless for itself it adopted a confession of faith which was drawn up in the hope of reconciling differences and of harmonizing partially discordant elements of a party character. Of this more will be stated hereafter in its proper place.

The Reformed Dutch church is the oldest of the Presbyterian order in this country. It dates from the settlement

of Manhattan Island. So early as 1613 small trading posts had been set up at Manhattan and Fort Orange (Albany). The agricultural occupation of what was called New Netherland commenced in 1623. The pioneers were not men of mere adventure. While they were intent first upon commercial and next upon agricultural advantages, still they brought with them their religious convictions and habits. The West India Company, formed in 1621, agreed, under its charter, to send with the emigrants under its care pious schoolmasters, and comforters of the sick, who were often assistants of pastors.

The first minister of the gospel who arrived in New Amsterdam was Everardus Bogardus. With him was Adam Roelandsen, a school teacher. They organized immediately after their arrival a school, which has been maintained until this day. It is sustained by the collegiate church. The children of persons in connection with the Reformed church are there educated without charge for tuition. It is ably conducted, and in educational capacity ranks with the best schools in the city. The pupils, besides being trained in the ordinary curriculum, are carefully instructed in the Christian faith. Many of its graduates have become preachers of the word, and others have filled eminent positions in civil and social relations.

Religious services in the infancy of the colony were at first held in buildings temporarily appropriated for the purpose. On the arrival of Bogardus a plain church edifice was put up on the East River, at what is now very properly called Old Slip. In that edifice the Dutch emigrants worshipped until 1642, when, at the instance of DeVries, the great navigator, a substantial building was provided within the fort in the battery. In his journal DeVries says that, dining one day with Governor Kieft, he observed to him "that it was a shame that the English when they visited Manhattan saw only a mean barn in which we worshipped. The first thing they built in New England after their houses was a fine church. We should do the same." This becoming

church was dedicated in 1642. It was superseded by the Garden-street (now Exchange-place) church in 1690.

These few dates are enough to define the points of its beginning. The church thus planted on Manhattan Island had contemporaries of its order and faith on Long Island, in New Jersey, along the Hudson river, and at Albany.

The numerical growth of the Reformed Dutch church was until lately slower than that of others. The causes which retarded its growth will appear from an enumeration of a few historical particulars.

Forty years after its settlement in 1664 New Netherland was ceded to the British government. Just prior to this date immigration from Holland had largely increased; immediately afterwards it almost ceased, while many families returned to the fatherland. The Rev. Thomas DeWitt, D.D., who is accounted to be a most trustworthy authority, says: "The population of New Amsterdam at the time of the cession was about fifteen or sixteen hundred, and that of the colony in its whole extent, ten thousand. The natural increase in the families of the Dutch inhabitants, joined to some occasional accessions from Holland and the parts of Germany bordering on it, as well as of Huguenots, led to the spreading of Dutch settlements and the increase of churches during the latter part of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century."¹

For the space of nearly one hundred years after the Dutch colony had become subject to the government of great Britain, preaching in the Dutch language was maintained in all the pulpits of the Reformed church. Next to its attachment to country, there is perhaps hardly another affection of the mind more enduring than the love of one's mother tongue. Everything sanctifies and helps to perpetuate that love. Everything of country, — its laws, customs, and religion; its blood, sufferings, and achievements, all flow into its language. The songs of the nursery, the epics of bards, and the eloquence of orators, render sweet to the thought and dear to

¹ Historical Dis.

the heart the words of one's native tongue. The forefathers of the Dutch Church in this land have been blamed for their obstinate adherence to a language which was strange and uncouth in the ears of the community, and which their children even understood but imperfectly. But nature is slow to abdicate her throne.

Naturam expellas furcâ tamen usque recurret. — Hor.

If, soon after New York had become an English colony, the English language had been even partially introduced into its pulpits, the position of the Dutch church in this country would have been much better than it was down to the close of the last century. As the Dutch and English intermarried, and the young from necessity learned to speak English, the drift of social affairs gradually carried large numbers of Presbyterian Calvinists into the Episcopal church. At that day the good feelings which were cultivated between the Dutch and Episcopal churches rendered the transition from the one to the other by no means difficult. And so it came to pass that in fact the Hollanders, while they maintained their own church as a kind of national monument, nevertheless aided liberally and effectively in establishing Episcopacy. The wealth of old Trinity came from a Dutch lady, and St. Marks, which has long felt that it possessed "all the blood of all the Howards," was founded by the Stuyvesants and other Dutch families of social eminence.

Like causes produced like effects elsewhere. Consequently the early planting and training of the Dutch and Episcopal churches in the province of New York furnish a double and connected history. It does not transcend the limits of prudence to affirm that for a century, at least, the Episcopal church in and around New York received as much succor and sympathy from the Dutch Presbyterians as it did from the English population.

During all this period the Episcopal was popularly styled the *English*, and the Reformed the *Dutch* church, because of the respective languages used therein. Hence, too, the sub-

sequent interpolation of the word "Dutch" into the present style and title of the Protestant Reformed church. Strictly speaking, it is there now by no proper historical nor psychological authority, and is believed by many to be a drag upon the progress of the church almost as heavy as was the retention of a foreign language by it during the century succeeding the cession of the colony.

Another reason for the slow advancement of this church is found in the fact, that the denomination here was so long subject to a foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It could not ordain ministers of the word. Consequently all applications for needed pastors were made to the classis or presbytery of Amsterdam. Interminable delays often occurred, to the great detriment of individual congregations. The evils of dependence were severely felt, and some curious attempts were made to avoid them. Thus, one candidate for the ministry was sent to New Haven, and received ordination there from a Congregational council. Another was regularly ordained by three clergymen of the Dutch church, under cover of authority from Governor Andros, who, though an Episcopalian, was a generous friend and patron of the Dutch Calvinists.

The question of ordination raised up two parties, the *Coetus* and the *Conferentie*, who became fearfully embittered against each other. The providence of God, however, cannot be diverted from its course by the wrath of men. In the end, what is right, good, and expedient overmasters honest and dishonest error alike.

The two parties above-named are thus described by Prof. Demarest, of the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, New Jersey. "The *Coetus* was a body formed in 1747, which possessed no ecclesiastical, but only advisory, powers. From this sprang the party who proposed that this assembly should be changed into a regular classis; that an educational institution (for the ministry), should be established, and that the church boldly undertake to supply herself with a ministry. This was opposed by the *Conferentie*, who zealously advocated a continuation of the state of dependence on Holland."

The objection to the use of the English language in the pulpits of the Reformed church was overcome in 1764, when the Rev. Archibald Laidlie, who had been the pastor of the Scotch church in Flushing, Holland, arrived in New York, and was installed as one of the ministers of the collegiate church in that city. And in 1771, through the agency of the Rev. John H. Livingston, a native of Poughkeepsie, New York, who had been educated at Utrecht, the dissensions of the two parties above named were healed. These two events occurring so nearly together, prepared this church to edify itself and take part in the great work of evangelization.

But its plans, expectations, and purposes were then all arrested by the outbreak of the war for Independence. When peace at length had been declared, it found some of its houses of worship partly demolished, and its principal congregations impoverished by the drain made upon them during the struggle. For then, as in our late civil conflict, the Dutch church, its ministry and people, were ready to sacrifice all for liberty.

Not until the year 1784 were effective measures adopted to combine the energies and unify the purpose of this church. In the convention of ministers and elders held during that year steps were taken to aid Queen's College (which had been chartered in 1770 by George III., and named in honor of his queen); and also to establish a theological professorship in connection therewith.

As we have now reached a point in the history of the Reformed church, from which its future progress was steady and solid, it may be well to place in connection here some statistics which will show at a glance its successive stages of advancement.

STATISTICS.

In 1664, when the Dutch was superseded by English authority, there were in all the province of New Netherland but five organized churches and six regular preachers. One hundred and twenty years afterwards, that is, in 1784, a com-

mittee of the convention then in session, used the following language: "It appears that there are under the jurisdiction of this reverend body almost a hundred regularly constituted congregations, of which fifty-three are provided with the ministration of the holy gospel; that many of the vacant congregations are large and able, and that in them all there is an ardent desire for the word of God; that several of the ministers still occupied will, through old age and other causes, apparently not long be able to engage in the work of the Lord; that the number of additions, by reason of the recent lamentable war, are very small; and that, consequently, the lack of ministers is rather increasing than otherwise, there being not more than two licentiates to supply the existing deficiencies; that for the following two years there are no candidates to be expected, while at the same time the suffering congregations daily find their danger and affliction increased, partly by the lack of licentiates, and partly by the floods of error, infidelity, and all kinds of irreligion which are everywhere bursting upon our land."

Such were the condition and needs of the church at that period. Faith, courage, and constancy, however, were not wanting to those who were charged with its care. Obstacles had been overcome, difficulties removed, and a good heart for work remained. What has since been accomplished in extending its bounds, strengthening its institutions, and enlarging its influence can be briefly told. The census of the denomination, as reported in June 1865, is as follows: churches, 427; ministers, 436; candidates, 6; about 60 young men in preparation for the ministry; number of communicants, 54,286; catechumens, 19,864; number in Bible-classes, 15,700; in Sabbath-schools, 40,256; amount raised for benevolent purposes, chiefly for the several boards of the church, \$225,410.44; amount raised for congregational uses, \$545,540.99; infants baptized during the year, 3,064; adults, 540. These churches are associated in thirty-two classes or presbyteries, composing three particular and one General Synod.

The chief growth of the church has been mainly in the states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Latterly it has extended itself into Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa. In the West it has received special and valuable reinforcements of pious Hollanders who, oppressed by the dominancy of error in the state church of their native land, came hither at the bidding of conscience to find a home where they might maintain inviolate the faith they cherish. The leader of this pilgrim band was the Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte, D.D., a man of apostolic zeal and of the ripest scholastic and theological attainments. He and his associates planted a colony at Holland, Ottaway county, Michigan, where they have prospered greatly in their secular and religious undertakings. Minor colonies have been also established in Wisconsin and Illinois. All of them are constantly receiving accessions from the Netherlands.

GOVERNMENT.

If there is any tangible middle ground between high-church Presbyterianism and old-fashioned Congregationalism, the government of the Reformed Dutch church is perhaps in possession of it. We make this affirmation with a desire that it shall be carefully scrutinized. First of all, it is to be remarked that its government in every part is fixed by a constitution to which every member, minister, church, and ecclesiastical body is subject. It defines ecclesiastical rights, modes of procedure, articles of faith, and an order of worship. All communicants are required to pledge their fealty, and all pastors are obliged to subscribe to this constitution. Cases of discipline, from whatever cause they may spring, must be investigated according to its provisions. In this way the constitution guards the rights and protects the consciences of all its subjects. No judicatory, not even the highest, is at liberty to disregard it. None of its features can be changed, except by a vote of two-thirds of all the classes. Hence arbitrary and capricious legislation is impossible, and all judicial matters are controlled by the rigid authority of

law, rather than by the extemporaneous rules suggested by circumstance.

The constitution of this church rests upon the principle that all authority in matters ecclesiastical, is committed by the great Head of the Church Catholic, first to the people, or to that body of believers comprising a single church. It postulates the right divine and indefeasible of any given number of communicants to organize a church, choose their officers, and elect their pastor. The democratic element of power is thus not only recognized, but full scope is given for its normal development. There are three ways permissible for the choice of officers. First, a free ballot; second, a choice between two sets of candidates; and third, an open nomination made by existing officers, to be ratified by the church after three publications. Any one of these three modes may be adopted. Once adopted it can be changed for another by consent of classis. The officers thus chosen are elders and deacons, who together compose the consistory. They serve for a period of two years only; after which they must be re-elected, or can be superseded by others. The elders are spiritual officers and are ordained to be assistants to the pastor in the spiritual care and government of the church. They are bound to see that the pastor preaches no strange doctrine, and that he deports himself becomingly. In case of his transgression they are required to report him to the classis. For a minister cannot be arraigned or tried save only by his peers. The deacons are officers, having charge of the poor. They are also particularly entrusted with the domestic finances of the church. Together the elders and deacons form with their constituents a body corporate, in whom are vested all the legal rights conferred by the state. Consequently our churches have no boards of trustees. Through their designated officers they control their secularities, as well as their spiritualities. Respecting their secular matters they are independent, not being required to give any account of them to any ecclesiastical body whatever.

A classis or presbytery consists of at least three churches,

commonly from twelve to twenty, and is partly a conventional and partly a delegated body. Each church sends its pastor and one elder, chosen by its consistory to the classical meeting, which is held twice every year. The classis has power to license, ordain, settle, and, if necessary, remove pastors. But no single classis can license or ordain to the ministry, unless there be present a deputy of the General Synod, who will report any irregularity, whether of doctrine or of procedure, to that body. Thus a fraternal concert of action is secured, and a classis has never yet been known from mere will-worship to disregard the authority of the constitution and of the General Synod. Hence, perhaps, proceeds that general harmony of faith and practice which has characterized the history of this denomination. Its checks and safeguards are nicely applied at the very points where divergences of doctrine or usage are likely to start. Trials for heresy have been so rare as scarcely to be worthy of mention, and consequently the peace of the church has not been disturbed thereby.

The classes are arranged under three particular synods, those of New York, Albany, and Chicago. They are delegated bodies, and are intended to transact certain kinds of business, judicial and legislative. Experience has not found these bodies to possess much practical utility as they are now constituted. They have not enough responsibility to make them important. Many would be pleased to have them made conventional, so that all the pastors in their bounds, with the delegated eldership, might come together annually for fraternal conference and edification. The drift of opinion is in favor of this change.

The General Synod meets annually, and is composed of three ministers and three elders from each classis, and when full should have one hundred and ninety-two members. The actual attendance rarely exceeds one hundred and thirty. To this body all the churches, boards, and institutions under its care report. It has supreme legislative and judicial authority, exercised, however, within the meets and bounds of

its constitution. The meetings of this body of late years have been exceedingly harmonious. The policy of the church being fixed, at least for the present, the general synod is intently studious to execute it. The Synod has correspondence with the Old School, New School, United Presbyterian, and German Reformed churches, and exchanges delegates with them. It has manifested a disposition to extend these fraternal and healing courtesies still further, because it believes in the "communion of saints."

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Rutgers (originally Queen's) College, was chartered in 1770. After passing through trials and adversities, it was at length, in 1825, placed upon a good substantial basis. From that date until the present it has gradually increased its resources and extended its usefulness. In 1863 one hundred and forty thousand dollars were added, through the liberality of the church, to its endowment foundation. The president is Rev. William H. Campbell, D.D. The faculty has eight professors. Last year the General Synod sold the property of the college for a nominal sum to its trustees. Connected with it is a grammar-school of about eighty pupils; a scientific school, which confers diplomas, and an agricultural college, endowed by the United States. The prospects of the college are encouraging. Its standard of instruction is very high.

Hope College, in Michigan, has been incorporated by the legislature of that State. It has ample grounds, and a substantial but not capacious edifice. Its endowment is now in progress, and the sum of about seventy thousand dollars is secured. Its president is the Rev. Philip Phelps, Jr., D.D. It is in contemplation to connect at an early day a theological department with this institution.

The Theological Seminary at New Brunswick may be regarded as coëval in its beginning with the college, that is, in 1770; for the college was intended to be a training school for those having in view the sacred ministry, and was

chartered expressly to that end. In 1784 the Rev. Dr. John H. Livingston was appointed Professor in Theology. The Rev. Theodorick Romeyn, of Schenectady, and Rev. Dr. Solomon Froeligh were also authorized to prepare students in divinity, with the understanding that such students should complete their course under Dr. Livingston. In 1810 the seminary was put in operation at New Brunswick, in connection with the college. In 1855 Mrs. Anna Hertzog, of Philadelphia, gave to the Synod thirty thousand dollars, for the erection of a theological hall. It is a large, stately building, on spacious grounds, and affords ample accommodations. There are now four professors in this seminary: Rev. Joseph F. Berg, D.D., Professor of Dogmatics and Polemics; Rev. Samuel M. Woodbridge, D.D., Professor of Church History; Rev. John De Witt, D.D., Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature, and Rev. David D. Demarest, D.D., Professor of Sacred Rhetoric and Pastoral Theology.

During the past year the Rev. N. E. Smith, D.D., of Brooklyn, proposed to give forty thousand dollars for the endowment of one of the professoral chairs, provided the church would raise an additional sum of forty thousand for the endowment of another. These amounts were paid over, in June of 1865, to the treasurer of the General Synod in accepted securities; so that now the four chairs in the seminary are duly supported. Other sums are being raised for the erection of four houses for the professors on the seminary grounds, two of which are now in progress of construction.

Among those who do not know it, the Reformed Dutch church has the reputation of being slow, inert, and even immobile. The facts above stated may mollify this unworthy judgment, and perhaps induce even admiration of the indomitable zeal and perseverance of a comparatively little band, which, during the past forty years, has rebuilt its old churches, erected new ones by hundreds, and endowed its institutions with an almost princely munificence.

BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS.

From its infancy in this country this church evinced a missionary zeal. It aimed to Christianize the Indians, and its people, in the main, treated the sons of the forest with frank and considerate care. Toward the close of the last and with the beginning of the present century, under the auspices of the New York Missionary Society, — the pioneer we believe, in the great missionary movement in this country, — several missionaries were sent from this denomination into the wilds of Canada, and some into the forests of Kentucky, to preach the gospel, and collect the scattered people into houses of worship. Nor were these hard, primeval labors without enduring results. Churches were founded, some of which stand until this day, sources of good to the regions in which they were so long ago planted.

Soon after the formation of the American Board of Missions, this church, in its then comparative weakness, made a satisfactory arrangement to co-operate with that great and blessed institution, — the glory of New England; the surpassing proof of her abiding fidelity to the cross and the command of her Lord. At length, however, the feeling grew into a conviction that duty required the Dutch church to control her own church work. It had no fault to find with the American Board; but it was satisfied of the high moral expediency of bringing responsibility closely home, that so all the church might arouse itself to do more than it was then doing for the cause of foreign evangelization.

Accordingly, in the year 1857, by a vote almost unanimous the General Synod resolved to conduct its foreign missions up to its own measure of ability. The result of this action has proved more beneficial than its friends dared to anticipate as will presently appear.

The General Synod has five separate boards, through which it transacts its current business and carries forward its labors. The members of these boards hold their offices from, and give an annual account of their stewardship to the Synod.

First is the Board of Corporation. It holds all the trust funds of the church, for education, church building, and for purposes of relief. In June 1865, it had educational funds amounting to \$85,000,¹ the interest of which only is used; Widows' fund, \$25,000; Permanent fund, \$98,000;² Building fund, \$12,000 (for professoral houses); Church building fund, \$9,000. It has also a fund for disabled ministers, just begun, amounting to \$438.92.

Second, Board of Foreign Missions. There are three missions under the care of this board, viz. one in India, one at Amoy, China, and one mission with two stations in Japan, employing twenty-eight missionaries, male and female, with many native helpers. The receipts of this board last year were \$82,038.22.

Third, the Board of Domestic Missions received within the same period \$24,315.83, which were expended in aiding seventy-five churches and sixty-four missionaries. The income of this board rises with each successive year.

Fourth, the Board of Education had under its care in 1865 fifty-six young men in preparation for the ministry, and fourteen parochial schools. One hundred and fifty dollars are allowed per year to each beneficiary.

Fifth, the Board of Publication, on Fulton Street, New York, has a lease of a building in which are located all the secretaries of the several boards, the office of the "Christian Intelligencer," and, on the first floor, a book depository and salesroom. It publishes a denominational and Sabbath-school literature, and is in a prosperous condition. It began with no endowment, but has made a capital that has been strengthened by donations amounting to about \$10,000. It publishes a monthly quarto sheet, entitled "The Sower," which is the organ of the several boards.

GENIUS, CULTURE, AND WORSHIP.

If it be possible to characterize the genius of the Dutch

¹ These amounts are given in round numbers.

² To which must be added \$80,000 since paid.

church it can be done in two words — *tenacity* and *liberality*. There is probably no other communion in this country more tenacious than it of its historical traditions, faith, customs, and usages. The Netherlanders on the North Sea are not more resolute in propping up their dykes than are the people of the Dutch church in preserving what is Dutch by providential favor and appointment. Assail their ancestral memories, their cherished faith, or their time-long usages of worship, and they instantly take the alarm. If you propose to innovate upon what time has sanctified, you encounter resistance, and each stalwart defender is ready to quote Roderick Dhu in face of the rash adventurer :

“ Come one, come all — this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.”

Sometimes this tenacity is very amusing. The writer knows a gentleman who had been brought up in a church whose pulpit was at the entrance, between the doors. He became an elder, and in process of time a new house of worship was erected. The congregation wanted the pulpit at the end of the church opposite the doors. The elder remonstrated : he was shocked at the thought of such an innovation upon the woodwork of the sanctuary. He offered a hundred dollars additional to his previous subscription ; but the congregation had been so long annoyed by a pulpit between the doors, that they could not consent to please the worthy elder ; and so the good man for conscience sake withdrew, and rode seven miles every Sabbath, to another church where the pulpit was *not* between the doors ! The

“ Justum ac tenacem propositi virum ”

of Horace sometimes defies the roaring floods and angry lightnings to very little purpose. Constancy is a great virtue when it is not stupid obstinacy.

Sometimes this tenacity is hurtful. It proved so when the Dutch language was retained in the pulpit at a time when a generation was clamoring for the gospel in English. That tenacity then almost destroyed the church. It drove the

flower of the most useful and influential of a rising community and of a growing city into an alien denomination, against whose prelatial assumptions all their national glories called upon them to utter a protest. By very many it is believed now that the word "Dutch" in the style and title of the church is a sad misnomer and a pernicious anomaly. As a name, it misleads and confuses. It needs explanation to be comprehended. It is no part of the historic title of the church. It repels not only strangers, but some of its own children. It is a bitter coating to a pill of sugar. For there is no church containing more popular and attractive elements in its spirit and forms; none more thoroughly American and national in all its principles and sympathies. Yet, by reason of this misleading title, not a few believe it foreign in nationality and speech. Nevertheless, the day is not yet dawning wherein there shall come relief from this hard and heavy burden. It will, however, come, for events, feelings, and convictions all proclaim its approaching advent.

The tenacity thus spoken of has, however, its great and sacred merits. In an age which delights to meddle with change; which worships novelties; which has no gratitude for the past and no confidence in the present; which puts increasing premiums upon credulity, and throws away pearls with a reckless hand to grasp after the "Dead Sea's withered fruit," — it is pleasing alike to the pious and to the philosophic mind to find a church which, while it is ready to prove all things, is not ready to give up that which is good. The stern and tenacious conservatism of the Dutch church, like the Eddystone lighthouse, shines with benignant beams over the troubled waters that rave around its base.

With its tenacity is associated the utmost Christian liberality of spirit. Not only does it recognize all who hold the doctrines of life, but it refuses to allow non-essentials to hinder practical and genuine fellowship. All its history proves the truth of this affirmation, and its present condition illustrates it.

In its membership and ministry it is composite. Dutch,

Scotch, Huguenot, New Englander, German, and Italian are numbered among its communicants, its officers, and pastors. Only one condition is imposed; and that is, "receive the faith, and you are welcome." This hospitality is sincere as it is frank. Accordingly neither the pulpit nor the pews of the Protestant Reformed church have been shut against any seeking admission with the image and superscription of the Master upon them. Many of our congregations are comprised in the main of New England people; and among those whom the church delights to honor are pastors educated at Andover or Union or Auburn or Princeton.

Possessing this liberality, this church has never hesitated to unite with co-operative societies in works of benevolence. It has furnished presidents for all the chief national societies, and willingly contributed to their treasuries. If this liberality can be accounted a merit, it is also a duty which the Dutch Presbyterians and the New England Congregationalists may yet preach and practise in the future, as they have in the past.

Of the culture of the church this much may be said, without any appearance of boasting: that it is now and ever has been of a grade requiring high scholarship, classical and theological, in its ministry. Had there been a willingness to lower the standard of preparation recruits might have been rapidly obtained to fill up the ranks of its pastors and teachers, and so congregations, too, might have been gathered at an accelerated rate. But the church wants no novices in its pulpits. It requires long and thorough training on the part of its rising ministry, and is now thinking of prolonging the prescribed course of study for theological students. It prefers to build slowly, if so it can build what will stand.

So great and multiform have been the practical daily labors imposed upon them, that the ministry of this church, as a rule, have not found time to become writers of works of extensive erudition. A standard treatise on pastoral theology has been produced by the late James Spencer Cannon. In

the department of ecclesiastical history Rev. Dr. Thomas DeWitt, Dr. Demarest, Dr. Taylor, and Dr. Messler have written much worthy of attention. Concerning points in dogmatic and polemical theology Dr. Berg, Dr. Gordon, Dr. John T. Demarest, Dr. John DeWitt, Rev. H. E. Ganse, Dr. E. P. Rogers, Rev. J. DeBaun, Rev. Joseph Collier, Rev. John A. Todd, Rev. Mr. Quau, and some others, together with the late Professors Van Vrauken and McClellan, may be here referred to. Some excellent biographies have been produced by Drs. Gunn, Chambers, Williamson, and others. In general literature we would name Bethune, Matthews, Wortman, Van Santvoord, and Phelps, without undertaking to make the list complete.

Dr. Bethune's Lectures on the Heidelberg Catechism approach the only *system* of divinity which the church has received in form from any of her pastors or professors. In ecclesiastical archaeology the Rev. A. P. Van Giesen, a young but rising man, has written some articles of merit, indicating what he may do should he lay out his strength upon this interesting department of study.

Among her laymen who have rendered service to the state and church the names of Frelinghuysen, Tayler Lewis, J. Romeyn Brodhead, Ex-Governor Vroom, Scuyler Colfax, William B. Crosby, Jonathan Sturges, Robert H. Pruyn, and many others are held in high esteem. Every year brings into prominence in her various councils men of great natural and cultivated force. We cannot speak of them here.

The order of worship in the courts of the Lord is prescribed. It requires the reading of the law, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the singing of such psalms or hymns as have been approved and allowed by the Synod, *and no others*. Considering that the songs of Zion are in the highest degree formative of principles, as well as expressive of emotion, this church does not regard with favor nor with toleration the use of any compilations made on private account. She prefers the psalms and hymns which have been tested in the heroic ages of the church to any of softer sentimentality or of more sensational pungency.

Extemporaneous prayer is universally used. But there is an order of prayer in the Liturgy of the church which may be followed if choice or circumstance so determine. The forms for the administration of the sacraments are obligatory, and are read so often as the ordinances are administered. At the Lord's table the communicants recite the so-called Apostles' Creed aloud, with the officiating clergyman, though this is not universal.

CUSTOMS.

There are a few customs which are peculiar to this church. The elders and deacons are seated on the right and left hand of the pulpit. One pew for each class of officers is reserved for them. Thus they are near the pastor if needed for advice; can overlook the whole congregation, and observe what is noteworthy; and at the close of the service the consistory usually pauses to speak a kind or hopeful word to the preacher, whether he be the pastor or a stranger. Thus the affectionate relations which bind the Dutch clergy and their people to one another are fostered, and the right hand of fellowship is offered and received so often as they meet in the sanctuary. It is not a custom without meaning or value.

Every pastor is bound by the stipulations of his call and the terms of his personal subscription to preach once a month on the Heidelberg Catechism, that so the full order of scriptural doctrine may be gone over once in four years. This wholesome rule a few years since was in danger of being ignored, but it is now coming again to be very generally observed. Each pastor, with his elder, is required to answer his classis whether he has or has not complied with this rule, and his answer is sent up to the General Synod.

Members are admitted on confession of faith only when they have given proof of an experimental change of heart. Confirmation is not practised, neither are youth admitted to free communion on being able to recite the catechism. Candidates for admission are examined by the pastor and elders, and care is taken to receive none hastily to the fellowship of

the Lord's table. The Lord's supper is administered in many churches every two, in more every three, months. A preparatory service is held, at which each member of the consistory is called to answer "whether he knows of any communicant who has walked disorderly?" In this way a constant episcopal care of all the membership of each church is enforced. It leaves no apology for neglect of the exercise of proper discipline.

The observance of fast or holi-days is not a custom of this church. Good Friday is sometimes used as a day of public religious service. Christmas is celebrated by Sabbath-school gatherings. Easter is occasionally noted, not as a time to be honored, but as associated with an event of the utmost significance. Ash Wednesday is wholly discarded. In 1814, the General Synod adopted a report, of which the following is an extract: "Your committee observe that those customs and usages which are deemed essential and constitutional are preserved pure and entire by the different classes; and we observe likewise that those which are considered non-essential are dispensed with, or retained and altered according to the taste or circumstances of different ministers or congregations." There has been no later nor more definite legislation on this subject.

Under the head of customs a few observations should be made respecting the Liturgy of the Protestant Reformed church. Respecting it, this denomination holds a middle ground. It is opposed equally to the rigid and inflexible formalism of a purely ritualistic service on one hand, and to the illimitable license of purely individual choice on the other. Hence it makes the use of a part of its Liturgy obligatory, and leaves other parts to the intelligent option of its ministry. What is obligatory preserves a faithful statement of the cardinal doctrines of salvation, to be recited so often as the sacraments are administered or public officers are installed. At the present time two opposite tendencies exist: some are disposed to disparage the liturgical element in worship, and others wish to give it more distinctness and

impression. The latter tendency is believed to be much the stronger.

This church holds views of the Sabbath which cannot be more briefly defined than by styling them *Puritanic*. The Lord's day is devoutly recognized, not as being time sacred in itself, but as being consecrated to holy uses. Accordingly all sports, festivities, social visitings, and profane recreations it regards as sinful *per se*, and a violation of the spirit of the fourth commandment. Therefore it enjoins upon all its members the solemn duty of honoring the Lord's day, by abstinence from all forms of secular labor or pleasure, and by a diligent use of all its hours for religious improvement. While it has become fashionable among some in New England to speak evil of the Puritanic Sabbath, it is held almost without question in the Dutch church that the strictest spiritual observance of the day is demanded alike by the Bible and the good of men. "Times change, and we change with them." The Puritans at Leyden complained that their Dutch friends polluted the Sabbath by their sports, and now the Dutch people in this country are fearing not a little that New England, in its revolt from Puritanism, will suffer the Sabbath of its early glory to fall under the shadow of a disastrous eclipse. There are some old paths, along which the once illustrious of the earth travelled to glory and to God, which need to be searched out and repossessed in this age of frantic unrest. They who know them will not distrust their safeness, albeit enemies oppose. If even a heathen man was wise enough to say,

"Non est ad astra mollis a terris via,"

surely they who have entered the strait gate have learned that the narrow way of life needs to be pursued with a rugged constancy of faith, like unto that which was exemplified in the all-victorious Author of our salvation.

THEOLOGY.

In undertaking to give some account of the distinctive points in the theology of the Reformed Dutch church, the

writer feels a little doubt of his ability to present any such statement as will command the universal assent of the church in which he is a minister. For while the church is unquestionably a unit in all the great central matters of faith, yet it is to be remembered that many of its pastors and members received their early or professional training in other communions, and of course there learned to emphasize words and definitions and phrases according to the particular spheres of thought, speculation, or controversy in which they moved. Hence it has come to pass that the pulpits of this denomination do not all alike give forth identical sounds. There is liberty within certain limits, and therefore diversity of utterance. This must not be understood as implying that there is any laxity of clerical conscience, or any approach to latitudinarianism. The reverse of each may be confidently affirmed of those who have been put in trust with the gospel among us. Diversities of view respecting certain forms of theological statement are quite as common also among those educated in the bosom of the church as they are among its adopted children. These admitted, and even cherished, diversities, confined as they are within the horizon of established formularies, are believed to be consistent with a rigid and almost boastful Calvinistic orthodoxy. They prove, too, that law and liberty, order and freedom, creed and conscience, may not only co-exist, but are indeed correlatives. Buoys and lighthouses do not convert the mariner into an unthinking machine, nor bind his limbs with fatalistic chains. So neither do creeds, confessions, nor formularies deprive their enlightened subjects of the free use of their faculties in pursuing the science of interpretation. The moment a church insists that a technical word means precisely so much, and no more, or that theology, as a human science, is as perfect as the supernatural life of Christianity, it becomes despotic, and aims at the exercise of an impossible authority. Religion rests upon and involves the infinite; and as all piety is a feeling after God, and is an intense aspiration toward the hidden sublimities of an invisible world, therefore faith must

ever transcend knowledge. Consequently the terms of theological science are susceptible of meanings proportioned to the measure of faith. So long as there are degrees of faith there will be, and of necessity must be, corresponding degrees of perception, apprehension, and love for the ultimate truths of revelation. It is absurd to require all minds to discover an identical quantity of signification in common words or events; how then can it be expected that in the sphere where, without divine illumination, we can see nothing, or where that illumination is of unequal amount, there shall be an absolute community of perception?

It is, we judge, to be taken for a fact that every evangelical denomination, while it insists upon terms of subscription, and imposes a creed which is to be received *ex animo*, without hesitation or mental reservation, recognizes nevertheless the existence of certain psychological and spiritual laws which it does not desire to invalidate. These laws give vitality to doctrines and impart sanctity to creeds. Any effort made to weaken their action is followed by formalism and spiritual decay. Romanism is the product of such efforts in the past, while Protestantism is the defender, as it is the child, of the law of life and of liberty.

These observations naturally precede the statements we have now to make, delineative of the theology of the Protestant Reformed church.

It springs from, and is logically shaped and controlled by, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht, ratified in 1618 and 1619. A brief synopsis of the doctrinal substance of these formularies will present a sufficiently succinct description of the distinctive features of the theology which rules in the Reformed Dutch church.

The Confession and Catechism are both remarkable in this, that they are experimental, rather than scientific, in their form and spirit. Flowing, as they did, out of the very heart of piety, environed with persecution, they expressed convictions and principles attested by the Holy Ghost and

sanctioned by the plain letter of the divine word. This is accounted to be their excellence, and the reason why they have so long been endeared to the affections of all who receive them.

While the great conflict was raging in the Netherlands between the Protestants and their persecutors an active theological controversy was also going on there and elsewhere, which finally divided the Protestants into Lutheran and Reformed. The Calvinists rejected the doctrines of the sacraments and of free-will as set forth in the original Augsburg Confession of 1530. The German princes and churches for the most part adhered to the Lutheran, while the churches of France, Switzerland, Holland, the Palatinate, Scotland, and England received the doctrines which carried the Reformation over to the original apostolic faith.

The split between the Protestants took definite form at the Diet of Augsburg. The *Confessio Tetrapolitana*, drawn by Martin Bucer, differed from the Lutheran views chiefly respecting the sacraments; but the difference was irreconcilable. The *Ratio Fidei* of Zwingli, sent to the same diet, took ground in favor of that particular phase of belief still known as Zwinglian, and which harmonized neither with the Lutheran nor the Calvinistic views of sin and of the sacraments.

In 1559 Guido de Bres, of Antwerp, drew up, in the French tongue, what has ever since been styled, from the place of its composition, the Belgic Confession. It was the fullest and the most conciliatory of all the formularies of doctrine hitherto presented for the approval of the Reformed. Other symbols preceding it had a controversial cast, and were devoted to the exposition of much-disputed points in theology. The Belgic Confession avoided a controversial cast of expression, and set forth a harmonious, scriptural, positive, and complete system of faith, including all the essentials of Christian doctrine, and omitting from its scope what should be left for determination to the enlightened judgments of individual minds. Immediately after it had

been prepared, this Confession was sent for examination to very many divines of foreign countries, and received from them an almost spontaneous approval.

Up to this time the doctrines of the Reformed had already made much progress in the northern provinces of the Netherlands, and churches had been organized there after the Genevan model. A synod was first held at Emden, a seaport town in East Friesland, at which it is believed that the Belgic Confession was subscribed by the members present. It was formally adopted by the Synod of Antwerp in 1566, and afterwards by that of Wessel in 1568. We do not propose to follow here the fortunes of this confession in Europe. It appeared in an age prolific of symbols, and over all its coëvals it has maintained an acknowledged supremacy of merit. The Augsburg Confession was made in 1530; the *Tetrapolitana* (of Strasburgh, Constance, Meninga, and Lindau), in the same year; that of Basil was published in 1532; the first Helvetic, in 1536; that of Saxony, by Melancthon, in 1551; the Wirtemberg, in 1552; the French, 1559; the English Confession of the London divines, in 1562; the latter Helvetic, 1566; the Belgic, 1566; and the Bohemian or Waldensian, in 1573. These dates are significant of great earnestness and zeal, universally prevalent in behalf of the faith once delivered to the saints. As all these confessions acknowledged the Bible to be the supreme rule of faith and practice, so it is instructive to find, on comparing them, that they harmonize so well with each other respecting the cardinal facts of the Christian system.

The Belgic Confession, as well as the Heidelberg Catechism, was brought to this country in 1609. Since the organization of the Reformed Dutch church on these shores it has been preserved here with pious care, and by strict ecclesiastical authority. While other confessions, such as the Savoy and Westminster, are held in high honor, subscription is required only to the Belgic on the part of the ministers of the Reformed church. But both the Confession and the Catechism are received and interpreted in accordance with the

Canons of the Synod of Dort, which are held to possess a certain regulative authority over the other formularies with which they are associated. The reason of this will presently appear.

The Heidelberg Catechism was composed in 1562, by Zachary Ursinus, a professor in the University of Heidelberg, and Casparus Olevianus, the favorite preacher of Frederick III. the Elector. Each shared in the preparation of the work. It soon won its way to the confidence of all the Reformed churches. It was translated into well-nigh all civilized tongues. A Greek translation was made, published, and sent at the expense of the States General of the Netherlands to the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Belgian government had it translated into Spanish. "The Swiss churches reconstructed the catechism of Zurich, after its clearer definitions. The Reformed churches of Hungary ordered it to be taught and explained in their churches, schools, and universities. It received high commendation from the pious and learned of England; while almost universally on the Continent it was acknowledged as a symbolic book of the Reformed churches. It was rendered into Hebrew, Greek, Dutch, Spanish, French, English, Italian, Bohemian, Polish, Hungarian, Arabic, and Malay, as well as German and Latin. It has passed through not less than five hundred thousand editions in Germany alone."¹ The most exact and complete edition of this catechism which has appeared in this country is that brought out by the German Reformed church, in 1863, and which contains a full historical introduction of great value.

The Synod of Wessel (1568), which adopted the Belgic Confession, also adopted the Heidelberg Catechism; and thus these two famous symbolic compositions were received by the churches of the Netherlands together. They were both held as subordinate to the word of God. From the first, declaration was made that "orthodoxy" implied obedience of faith to the inspired writings, and that symbolic

¹ Dr. Bethune.

works were of value only so far as they conformed to the mind of the Spirit. "If," says Vander Kemp, "we believe the doctrines of the catechism, it is not on account of the catechism, but of God's own word, out of which and according to which the catechism was composed. If we prize this little book, we love the word of God more: we commend it because it recommends and explains clearly the word of God to us."

For many years these standards very well expressed the general *consensus* of faith prevalent in the schools, universities, and churches of Holland. Hardly a discordant note broke the spiritual harmony of the ministry and membership of the Reformed churches there.

At length, in 1602, Jacobus Arminius, a pastor in Amsterdam, was elected to a vacant chair in the University of Leyden. His orthodoxy had been more than suspected. The consistory had made complaint of his departure from the received faith, but he protested that he heartily accepted the confession and catechism. Still, he failed to satisfy the custodians of the church, and his appointment as professor was opposed on the grounds of his infidelity to the standards of doctrine to which he had made subscription.

In every age errorists have evinced a sad lack of candor. They have practised concealments and dissimulations altogether inconsistent with an honest devotion to real or supposed truth. Arminius exemplified in his methods all the sinuosities of a mind intent upon mischief. While professing to be a conformist, he was secretly engaged in trying to bring in strange and unscriptural doctrines.

Gomarus, another professor at Leyden, at length exposed the character of the errors which Arminius had been propagating. This was the origin of the famous controversy which finally divided the evangelical church into Calvinists and Arminians. It was bitter in its beginnings, and is rugged still to-day. Arminianism, bald and positive, is not the gospel Paul preached, for it exalts man, and induces him to boast of powers he does not possess, and of merits he can never acquire.

This controversy agitated the church and the republic of Holland for a period of sixteen years, and produced irregularities creditable to neither party. Finally, to quiet the public mind, and to restore peace in the church, the great Synod of Dordrecht was assembled in 1618. We call it great, because, in truth, it was ecumenical in composition, character, interest, and authority. Since the Nicene, there had never been a more important council called for the settlement of doctrines precious to the entire household of faith than was that of Dort. Besides the deputies — professoral, cleric, and laic — from the states of the Netherlands, there were also present representatives from the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches of England, from the Palatinate, Hessa, Switzerland, Wetteraw, the republics of Geneva, Bremen, and Emden, and from the French churches. It was a convocation of the Reformed of all Protestant lands. As such, it defined the five points of doctrine which mark the broad line of separation between Calvinism and Arminianism.

Two centuries after this synod had finished its labors, the Rev. Thomas Scott, author of the commentary which bears his name, in a preface to the history of the synod, which he translated for use in England, makes this very weighty and significant declaration :

“The author desired to make it manifest that the deviations from the creeds of the Reformed churches in those points which are more properly called Calvinistic, is seldom, for any length of time, kept separate from deviations in those doctrines which are more generally allowed to be essential to vital Christianity. It must indeed appear, from the history with which this work begins, that the progress is easy, and almost unavoidable, from the controversial opposition to personal election, to the explaining away of original sin, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification by faith alone, and even of the atonement and deity of Christ; and that the opponents of the Synod of Dort, and the Remonstrants in general, were far more favorable to Pelagians, nay, to Socinians, than Calvinists, and were almost univer-

sally unsound in what are commonly called orthodox doctrines, and many of them far from conscientious in their conduct.”

Thus this learned and pious divine, once an opponent of Calvinism, came, through strict investigation of its spirit and fruits, to bear testimony that the rejection of the doctrine respecting the operation of the sovereign and electing grace of God in the salvation of sinners is the starting-point of nearly all the heresies which afflict the church.

The Canons of the Synod of Dort are included under five heads. The first treats of divine predestination ; the second, of the death of Christ, and the redemption of men thereby ; the third and fourth, of the corruption of man and his conversion to God ; and the fifth, of the final perseverance of the saints. Under the head of predestination these canons advocate neither fatalism on the one hand, nor Antinomianism on the other. They represent the whole plan of redemption in all its parts, relations, and ends to be of God, and made operative in the creature by sovereign grace manifested through the inspired word, the incarnate Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost.

Respecting the atonement, they teach that the death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin ; is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world. And whereas many who are called by the gospel do not repent nor believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief, this is not owing to any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice offered by Christ upon the cross, but is wholly to be imputed to themselves.

Concerning sin they affirm that man is corrupt and depraved by nature, wholly incapable of holiness, and inclined to all evil ; and that he can be regenerated and converted only by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in connection with the word of God.

And, finally, that they who have once been made alive, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and elected through sanctification of the Spirit unto eternal glory, can never lose

the life which they have received from above (*ἀνωθεν*), but will be preserved in a persevering faith which shall overcome sin, death, and the grave.

The Reformed Dutch church in this country has held and taught these doctrines from its earliest beginnings until now, without any opposition from within its own borders, except in a small schism which is believed to have been produced by the morbid sorrow of disappointed ambition, rather than by any serious objection to the doctrines themselves. Certainly there has been a most signal unanimity of consent to the authority of these canons, and all the pulpits of the denomination inculcate the Calvinistic theology. There have been within the last century only two cases of discipline among its ministry arising from false or pernicious doctrines.

Of the manner in which these doctrines are presented, a few observations should here be made.

While predestination and personal election are held as the ground of all hope, still, because of the mystery which invests their infinite relations, they are rarely pushed forward as the sum and substance of the gospel. They are assigned their place, and used for the comfort and encouragement of the people of God; but the *duties* of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have precedence of all other themes.

The pulpits of the Reformed church are remarkably free from metaphysical or scholastic speculations. Its ministry are not encouraged in any attempts to impose a philosophy upon the word of God. Their sermons are Christological and experimental, and therefore void of perilous theories. The people themselves are so well instructed from the scriptures, that as a rule they have no relish for theological novelties. Hence it is that we find no theories of the atonement in our churches which may be properly styled commercial, or governmental, or Chalmerian.

“*Sufficienter pro omnibus, efficaciter pro electis,*”

is the discriminating formula which forbids disputes concerning a general or limited atonement. All agree that its value

and nature are infinite, and all consent that the application of its merits is through the eternal and elective grace of God. On this old and hallowed platform of the Reformation period the Dutch church in this country erected its banner in the beginning, and there that banner still stands, its staff unbroken and its colors unsullied. It is not ashamed to preach what Paul, and after him Augustine and Anselm and Calvin and Beza, and all the great champions of the Christian faith, have taught, when speaking according to the oracles of God.

The church numerically is not large ; but to assert that its position is therefore weak, and its influence inconsiderable, would require either great ignorance or hardihood. It is not petrified into a motionless orthodoxy, nor wrapped like a mummy in the folds of sterile traditions. Its zeal, its activity, its keen observation and keener appreciation of the drifts of opinion and of the tendency of events forbid any inference so unworthy.

Cherishing its denominational life, it is without sectarian bitterness ; and while it labors to cultivate its own vineyard, it rejoices in the welfare, prosperity, and honor of all kindred churches who hold with it the precious truths of the everlasting gospel.