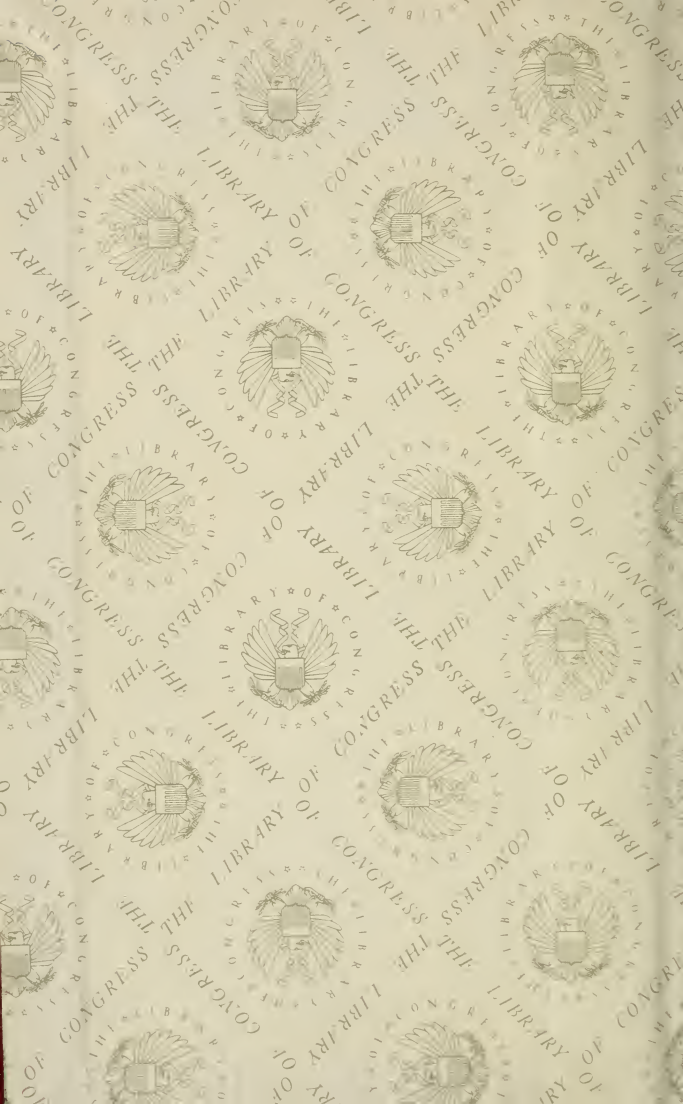


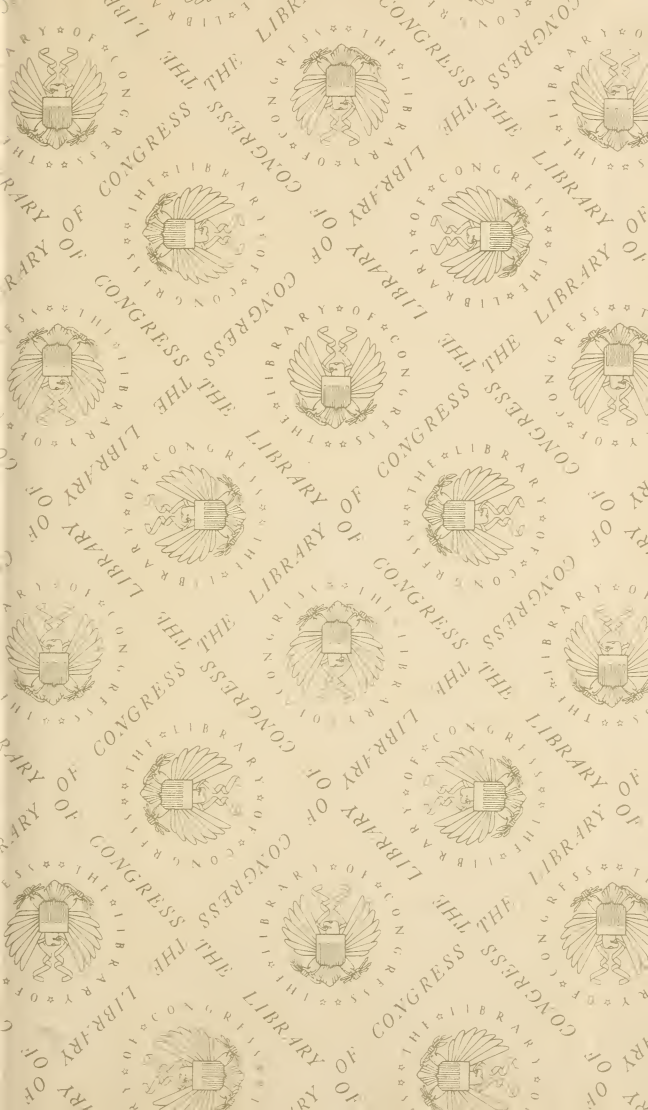
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1834





at Dept of State, May 28, 1835

THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Church in America.

REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH

11

OF

NORTH AMERICA:

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

FORMULARIES FOR THE USE OF THE CHURCHES;

TOGETHER WITH THE

RULES AND ORDERS FOR THE GOVERNMENT

OF THE

GENERAL SYNOD.

— 00000 —

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY L. NICHOLS, 111 BEEKMAN-ST.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, A. D. 1834, by
"The General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church," at
the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States
for the Southern District of New-York.

EXTRACT

from the Minutes of General Synod, June, 1834.

“*Resolved*, That an edition of 2000 copies of the Revised Constitution of the Dutch Church be printed on fine paper, done up in leather binding, with the Rules of Order for the government of the General Synod, and the various forms adopted by this Synod appended.”

“*Resolved*, That the Rev. Dr. Knox, Rev. T. M. Strong, and the Elder, John D. Keese, be a Committee to obtain and accept proposals for printing and binding the same, and to superintend the printing and publication.”

We certify, that this book has been published under our inspection, agreeably to the above order of General Synod.

JOHN KNOX,
THOMAS M. STRONG,
JOHN D. KEESE.

New-York, July, 1834.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR the maintenance of good order in the Church of Christ, it is necessary there should be certain *Offices* and *Assemblies*, and a strict attention to *Doctrines, Sacraments, Usages, and Christian Discipline*; of all which the following ecclesiastical ordinances particularly treat.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Offices in the Church.

The Offices in the Church of Christ are fourfold, viz.

1. The Office of Ministers of the Word.
2. The Office of Teachers of Theology.
3. The Office of Elders.
4. The Office of Deacons.

ARTICLE I.

Of Ministers of the Word.

SEC. 1. No person shall be allowed to exercise the office of a Minister, without being thereinto regularly inducted, according to the word of God, and the order established by the Church.

SEC. 2. Every person contemplating the work of the ministry, before he commences his course of Theological studies, shall furnish satisfactory evidence of his being a member in full communion and in good standing of a Reformed Protestant Church; of his piety, abilities, and literary attainments, and thereupon shall be admitted into the Theological School; and during the prosecution of his studies there, shall be subject to the rules and regulations thereof, and when he shall have completed the prescribed course and term of Theological studies, shall be admitted to an examination according to the regulations of the school, as established by General Synod; and if found qualified, shall receive a professoral certificate to that effect, which shall entitle him to an examination for licensure before the Classis to which he belongs.

SEC. 3. In the examination, strict attention shall be paid to the attainments of the Student, not only

in the original languages of the Sacred Scriptures, in Biblical Literature, in composition, and his method of sermonizing, but he shall be especially examined respecting his knowledge in Theology, his orthodoxy, his piety, and his views in desiring to become a preacher of the Gospel.

SEC. 4. Whoever, upon examination, shall be approved by the Classis, must, before he is licensed, attest his adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel, by subscribing the following formula, viz.—

“WE, the underwritten, testify, that the Heidelbergh Catechism, and the Confession of the Netherland Churches; as also the Canons of the National Synod of Dordrecht, held in the years 1618 and 1619, are fully conformable to the word of God. We promise moreover, that as far as we are able, we will, with all faithfulness, teach and defend, both in public and private, the doctrines established in the standards aforesaid. And, should ever any part of these doctrines appear to us dubious, we will not divulge the same to the people, nor disturb the peace of the church or of any community, until we first communicate our sentiments to the ecclesiastical judicatories under which we stand, and subject ourselves to the counsel and sentence of the same.”

SEC. 5. After subscribing the aforesaid formula,

the candidate shall be entitled to a certificate, or testimonial signed by the President of Classis, before whom the examination is held, containing a license to preach the Gospel.

SEC. 6. A candidate for the ministry is permitted only to preach the word, but he may not, under any pretence whatever, administer the sacraments; nor can he be a delegate to represent a church in any ecclesiastical assembly.

SEC. 7. Every candidate for the ministry is to consider himself under the immediate direction of the Classis which examined him, and subject to the control of the General Synod, and is to visit such congregations, and preach in those places to which the Classis or Synod shall send him: but if no particular directions are given, he may preach at his own discretion in any congregation that shall invite him.

SEC. 8. Upon receiving a call from any particular congregation, a candidate shall be allowed time to consider the propriety of his accepting it. If more than one call is before him at the same time, he may determine which he will prefer; but if there be only one, it is expected he will not finally refuse the same, before having first referred his difficulties to the Classis, and obtained proper advice.

SEC. 9. A candidate who has accepted a call, must offer himself to be examined for his becoming a Minister. In this final examination, besides a repetition of his previous trials in composition and sermonizing, the original languages of the Sacred Scriptures, Biblical Literature, and his knowledge of Theology, as well didactic as polemic; he shall be interrogated respecting the nature and administration of the sacraments, the duties of the ministry, and his knowledge of Ecclesiastical History, and of Church Government.

SEC. 10. Upon giving satisfaction in the examination, the candidate shall subscribe the following formula, viz.—

“WE, the underwritten, Ministers of the word of God, residing within the bounds of the Classis of N. N., do hereby sincerely, and in good conscience before the Lord, declare by this our subscription, that we heartily believe, and are persuaded, that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed Dutch Church, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine made in the National Synod held at Dordrecht in the year 1619, do fully agree with the word of God. We promise therefore, diligently to teach, and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly

or indirectly contradicting the same by our public preaching or writings. We declare moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, and particularly those which are condemned in the above-mentioned Synod ; but that we are disposed to refute and contradict them, and to exert ourselves in keeping the church pure from such errors. And if hereafter any difficulties, or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrine should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiment to the Consistory, Classis, or Synod, that the same may be there examined ; being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the Consistory, Classis, or Synod, under the penalty, in case of refusal, to be *ipso facto* suspended from our office. And farther, if at any time the Consistory, the Classis, or Synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion, and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine, may deem it proper to require of us a farther explanation of our sentiments respecting any particular article of the Confession of Faith, the Catechism, or the explanation of the National Synod, we do hereby promise to be always willing and ready to comply with such

requisition, under the penalty above mentioned ; reserving, however, to ourselves the right of an appeal, whenever we shall conceive ourselves aggrieved by the sentence of the Consistory, the Classis, or Particular Synod ; and until a decision is made upon such appeal, we will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already passed.”

SEC. 11. Upon subscribing the aforesaid formula, a certificate, signed by the President, shall be given to the candidate ; and the Classis before which the examination is held, shall fix a day for his ordination.

SEC. 12. The ordination shall be conducted by the Classis with proper solemnity, a sermon suited to the occasion shall be preached by him who has been appointed for that purpose, and the promises, directions, explanations of duty, with a laying on of hands, shall be agreeably to the form for that end expressly made and adopted.

SEC. 13. The *office of a Minister* is to persevere in prayer and the ministry of the word ; to dispense the sacraments ; to watch over his brethren the Elders and Deacons, as well as over the whole congregation ; and lastly, in conjunction with the Elders, to exercise Christian discipline, and to be careful that all things be done decently and in good order. Every Minister must consider him-

self as wholly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ in the service of the church ; and shall faithfully fulfil the obligations of his call, in preaching, catechizing, and visiting his flock ; and be instant in season and out of season ; and by word and example always promote the spiritual welfare of his people.

SEC. 14. No person shall be ordained to the ministry of the word, without settling in some congregation, unless he be sent as a *Missionary* to churches, or employed to gather congregations, where none have as yet been established.

SEC. 15. A minister of the word, being once lawfully called, in manner before mentioned, is bound to the service of the sanctuary, as long as he liveth. Therefore, he shall not be at liberty to devote himself to a *secular vocation*, except for great and important reasons, concerning which the Classis shall inquire and determine.

SEC. 16. No Minister, relinquishing the service of his own church, or being unattached to any particular congregation, shall be permitted to *preach indiscriminately* from place to place, without the consent and authority of the Classis ; in like manner, no Minister may preach or administer the sacraments in any church other than his own, without the consent of the Consistory of that church.

SEC. 17. Ministers, who by reason of old age, or habitual sickness and infirmities, either of mind or body, are not capable of fulfilling the duties of the ministry, may, upon application, and sufficient proof of such incapacity being made to the Classis, be declared *emeriti*, and be excused from all farther service in the church during such infirmity; reserving, however, to them the title, rank, and character, which before such declaration they enjoyed. In all such cases, before the Classis declares any minister *emeritus*, they shall require a stipulation in writing from the Consistory to which he belongs, under their common seal, and signed by their President, to pay such Minister annually, in half yearly payments, during his exemption from pastoral service, for his support, such sum as the Classis shall deem reasonable, having due regard to the stated salary of such Minister, and the situation and ability of the congregation.

SEC. 18. For the regular obtaining of dismissions, when a Minister has received and accepted a call from another place, it is required that a neighbouring Minister of the same Classis to which the congregation belongs, be invited to be present, and superintend the dismissal of the Minister from his congregation, countersign the instrument of dismissal, and consider it as his

duty to deliver the same, with a report upon the subject, to the Classis ; which report and document shall serve as a basis upon which the final dismissal and certificate of the Classis shall be founded.

SEC. 19. All Ministers of the Gospel are equal in rank and authority ; all are Bishops, or Overseers in the church ; and all are equal Stewards of the mysteries of God. No superiority shall therefore be ever claimed or acknowledged by one Minister over another, nor shall there be any lords over God's heritage in the Reformed Dutch Churches.

SEC. 20. Consistories of vacant congregations shall not invite or permit Ministers of other denominations in this country, whose characters and standing are not known, to preach within their bounds, unless they exhibit satisfactory evidence in writing, of a recent date, of their regular authority for that purpose, and their good standing ; and in all doubtful cases, such Consistories shall consult a Standing Committee of Classis to be appointed for that purpose.

SEC. 21. The judicatories of the church shall receive no Licentiates or Ministers under their care from any body of professing Christians, who maintain doctrines different from those of the

Reformed Dutch Church, without an open and explicit declaration, on their part, that they have renounced such doctrines, as contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and the standards of our church. If an application be made for admission of a Minister from a church with which we are in correspondence, it shall be competent for the Classis, in case there be grounds of presumption against his doctrine and morals, to propose such inquiries as shall enable them to proceed with freedom in his case.

SEC. 22. With respect to foreigners, who claim the privilege of preaching the Gospel, no Consistory shall be permitted to invite any one of them, of whatever denomination, to preach, before he shall lay his credentials before the Classis to which such Consistory is subordinate, and be regularly accepted and authorized by them to exercise his ministry within their bounds; and no Classis shall be permitted to receive and accredit such foreign Minister, unless he produce to them, besides ample and regular certificates of his license or ordination, and of his dismissal and recommendations, of recent date, from the competent church judicatory, letters of recommendation also from some known respectable character, in the country from which he has emigrated, to his correspondent in this country, stating the authenticity of his cre-

dentials, and the good character and standing of the bearer, as a Minister of the Gospel, and that he is an advocate of the doctrines of grace professed by the Reformed Church.

ARTICLE II.

Of Teachers of Theology.

SEC. 1. As it is of the last importance that Professors of Theology should be sound in the faith, possess abilities to teach, and have the confidence of the churches, they shall always, for the greater security, be chosen and appointed by a majority of votes in the General Synod only. To prevent, as far as possible, the unhappy consequences of partiality, haste, or undue influence in obtaining an office of such consequence to the church, a nomination of one or more candidates shall be previously made, upon which the Synod shall fix a day when they will proceed to an election; provided that no appointment of a Professor in Theology shall ever be made on the same day on which he is nominated. An instrument certifying the appointment, and specifying the general duties of the office, shall be signed in the presence of the General Synod, by the President thereof, and by him be given, in the name of the church, to the person elected.

SEC. 2. No person shall be appointed to the office of a Professor, who is not a Minister in good standing, and every Professor of Theology shall continue in his office during life, unless in case of such misbehaviour as shall be deemed a violation of the obligations entered into at his appointment ; or unless he voluntarily deserts or resigns his profession ; or from age or infirmities becomes incapable of fulfilling the duties thereof ; of all which the General Synod alone shall judge ; and to that Synod a Professor of Theology shall always be amenable for his doctrine, mode of teaching, and moral conduct.

SEC. 3. No Professor of Theology shall be permitted to officiate until he shall have subscribed the following formula, viz.—

“WE, the underwritten, Professors of Sacred Theology in the Reformed Dutch Church, by this our subscription, uprightly, and in good conscience before God, declare, that we heartily believe, and are persuaded, that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed Dutch Churches, together with the explanation of some points of the said doctrine, made in the National Synod, held at Dordrecht, in the year 1619, do fully agree with the word of God. We promise, therefore, that we will

diligently teach, and faithfully defend the aforesaid doctrine ; and that we will not inculcate or write, either publicly or privately, directly or indirectly, any thing against the same. As also, that we reject not only all the errors which militate against this doctrine, and particularly those which are condemned in the above-mentioned Synod ; but that we are disposed to refute the same, openly to oppose them, and to exert ourselves in keeping the church pure from such errors. Should it nevertheless hereafter happen, that any objections against the doctrine might arise in our minds, or we entertain different sentiments, we promise that we will not, either publicly or privately, propose, teach, or defend the same, by preaching or writing, until we have first fully revealed such sentiments to the General Synod, to whom we are responsible ; that our opinions may in the said General Synod receive a thorough examination, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the General Synod, under the penalty, in case of refusal, to be censured by the said Synod. And whenever the General Synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion, and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrines, may deem it proper to demand from us a more particular explanation of our sentiments respecting any article of the aforesaid

Confession, Catechism, or Explanation of the National Synod, we promise hereby to be always willing and ready to comply with such demand, under the penalty before mentioned ; reserving to ourselves the right of rehearing, or a new trial, if we shall conceive ourselves aggrieved in the sentence of the General Synod ; during the dependence of which new trial, we promise to acquiesce in the judgment already passed, as well as finally to submit, without disturbing the peace of the churches, to the ultimate decision of the said General Synod.”

SEC. 4. No Professor, while in office, shall have the Pastoral charge of any congregation, or be a member of any Ecclesiastical Assembly or Judiciary ; but, as a Minister of the Gospel, may preach, and administer, or assist in administering the sacraments in any congregation with the consent of the Minister or Consistory.

SEC. 5. A Professor shall be at liberty to resign his office, by sending in his resignation to the President of General Synod, on the first day of any regular meeting, and giving six months previous notice to the said President of his intention to do so.

ARTICLE III.

Of the Offices of Elders and Deacons.

SEC. 1. The *office of Elders* (besides what is common to them with the Ministers of the Word, expressed in Chapter I. Article 1. Section 13,) is, to take heed that the Ministers, together with their fellow-Elders and Deacons, faithfully discharge their respective duties ; and also, especially before or after the Lord's supper, as time and circumstances permit, and as shall be most for the edification of the congregation, to assist in performing visitations, in order particularly to instruct and comfort the members in full communion, as well as to exhort others to the regular profession of the Christian religion.

SEC. 2. The *office peculiar to the Deacons* is, diligently to collect the alms and other moneys appropriated for the use of the poor, and with the advice of the Consistory, cheerfully and faithfully to distribute the same to strangers, as well as to those of their own household, according to the measure of their respective necessities ; to visit and comfort the distressed, and to be careful that the alms be not misused ; of the distribution of which, they shall render an account in Consistory, at such time as the said Consistory shall deter-

mine, and in the presence of so many of the congregation as may choose to attend. Should more be collected than the necessities of the poor may require, such surplus may, with the consent of the Consistory, be devoted to other purposes, connected with the wants of the church.

SEC. 3. In all cases the Elders and Deacons shall be chosen from the male members of the church, in full communion, and in forming new churches, they shall be chosen by the male communicants; at whose election a neighbouring Minister of the Reformed Dutch Church shall preside; and notice of the time and place of such election shall be published at least two Sabbaths, in the church or usual place of worship, previous to the election.

SEC. 4. The manner of choosing Elders and Deacons in churches already organized, shall be as follows: A double number may be nominated by the Consistory, out of which the members of the church in full communion, may choose those who shall serve.—Or, all the said members may unite in nominating and choosing the whole number without the interference of the Consistory.—Or, the Consistory, for the time being, as representing all the members, may choose the whole, and refer the persons thus chosen, by publishing them in the church, for the approbation of the

people. This last method has been found most convenient, especially in large churches, and has long been generally adopted. But where that, or either of the other modes has for many years been followed in any church, there shall be no variation or change, but by previous application to the Classis, and express leave first obtained for altering such custom.

SEC. 5. The Elders and Deacons shall be chosen to serve two years, except when chosen to fill a vacancy or vacancies occasioned by death, removal out of the congregation, resignation, or dismissal from office, by the sentence of the Consistory; in either of which cases, the person or persons chosen to fill such vacancy or vacancies, shall serve for the residue of the term only.

SEC. 6. In order to avoid the inconvenience of an entire change at one time, the first Elders and Deacons of new congregations shall, at the first meeting of the Consistory after their ordination, be put into two classes, and the classes be marked Numbers 1 and 2, and the names to be put into each class shall be determined by ballot, and the term of service in Consistory of those in the first class shall expire at the end of the first year, so that one half of the whole number of Elders and Deacons may be elected annually. The same course shall be pursued by all the Consistories

when they shall deem it requisite to enlarge the number of their Elders and Deacons, so far as relates to the additional number of members chosen by them. But this does not forbid the liberty of immediately choosing the same persons again, if from any circumstances it may be judged expedient to continue them in Consistory by a re-election.

CHAPTER II.

Of Ecclesiastical Assemblies.

ARTICLE I.

Of Ecclesiastical Assemblies in general.

SEC. 1. The Ecclesiastical Assemblies which shall be maintained, are,

1. Consistorial.
2. Classical.
3. Synodical.

SEC. 2. In these assemblies *ecclesiastical matters* only shall be transacted, and that in an ecclesiastical manner. A greater assembly shall take cognizance of those things alone which could not be determined in a less, or that appertain to the churches or congregations in general, which compose such an assembly.

SEC. 3. The *transactions* of all Ecclesiastical Assemblies shall begin and conclude with prayer.

SEC. 4. Those who are delegated to attend the assemblies shall bring with them *credentials*, signed by those who send them; and such only shall be entitled to a vote.

SEC. 5. In all assemblies there shall be a President and Secretary. The business of the *Secretary* shall be to keep a faithful record of all the proceedings. The office of the *President* is to state and explain the business which is to be transacted; to preserve order; and in general to maintain that decorum and dignity becoming a judicatory of the Church of Christ.

SEC. 6. A Classis has the same *jurisdiction* over a Consistory, which a Particular Synod has over a Classis, and a General Synod over a Particular.

SEC. 7. Any individual conceiving himself to be personally aggrieved or injured by the decision of a lower Judicatory, may appeal therefrom to the judgment of an higher Judicatory; and any lower Judicatory, as a Consistory or Classis, esteeming itself aggrieved by the judgment or censure of a higher, enjoys the same privilege; but in such case the appeal must be made by the Judicatory as such when regularly convened, and not by any

individuals belonging to it. Every individual appealing, is bound to give his appeal, with the reasons thereof, in writing, to the Judicatory appealed from, or to the President thereof, at the most in ten days after notice of his intention; which notice is to be given at the time when he conceives himself aggrieved; and on default his appeal falls. The appeal of a Consistory or Classis may be made after the session of the Judicatory at which the decision appealed from was given, but it must be made known and the reasons of it stated in writing to the President, a reasonable length of time before the next meeting of the higher Judicatory to which the appeal is made. If the appellant give notice and satisfactory reasons to the President of the Judicatory to which the appeal is made that he cannot attend at their next stated meeting, his appeal shall lie over to their next following stated meeting; but if no such notice and reason be given, and he does not appear to prosecute his appeal, it shall be considered as relinquished. It shall be the duty of the several lower ecclesiastical assemblies, from whose acts, proceedings, or decisions any appeal is made, to transmit a certified copy of the act, proceeding, or decision so appealed from, signed by the President, and countersigned by the Clerk, together with the appeal and reasons accompany-

ing the same to the assembly appealed to at the next regular meeting thereof.

SEC. 8. No member of an ecclesiastical assembly shall be allowed to protest against any of its acts; any member who dissents from any such acts, shall have a right to require the names of all the members present, who vote for or against the same, to be entered in the minutes, and published therewith for the information of all concerned.

SEC. 9. In order to prevent vexation and delay in the judicial proceedings of any ecclesiastical assembly by means of successive appeals in the progress of any trial or investigation, the party who may consider himself aggrieved by any decision, upon any incidental question which may arise before a final sentence is pronounced, may state his objections to such decision, and require to have the same noted in the minutes of the proceedings, to the end that he may avail himself thereof on an appeal from the final sentence, without arresting the progress of such investigation or trial. And in such cases every decision objected to, as well as the objections, shall be distinctly stated in the minutes of such assembly, and sent up with the appeal to the appellate judicatory for review.

SEC. 10. Individuals who have voted in a lower court upon a case which is carried up by appeal,

shall not be at liberty to vote upon the trial of the appeal in the higher courts.

SEC. 11. In any decision or adjudication of an ecclesiastical court which the minority, or any member of the minority may regard as injuriously affecting the interests of truth, or of vital godliness, they may present the same to the Classis, Particular or General Synod, by way of complaint, for their examination and supervision.

SEC. 12. This complaint, if entertained, brings the whole proceedings in the case under the review of the superior judicatory.

SEC. 13. No person shall be admitted to a seat in any of our ecclesiastical assemblies as an advisory member.

ARTICLE II.

Of Consistories.

SEC. 1. The Elders and Deacons, together with the Minister or Ministers, if any, shall form a Consistory, and the Minister shall preside at all consistorial meetings; but in the absence of a Minister, the Consistory may appoint one of the Elders to be their president *pro tem.*, and it shall be competent for the several Consistories to prescribe the mode and time of calling their meetings.

If there be a plurality of Ministers, they shall pre-
side in rotation.

SEC. 2. The Elders, with the Ministers of the word, constitute what in the original Article of Church Government is properly called the Consistory. But as the Deacons have always in America, where the congregations were at first very small, (See Synod Dord. Art. 38.) been joined with the Elders; and wherever charters have been obtained are particularly named, as forming with them one Consistory, it is necessary to define their joint as well as respective powers. From the form of their ordination, it is evident, that to the Elders, together with the Ministers of the word, is committed the spiritual government of the church; while to the Deacons belong the obtaining charitable assistance, and the distribution of the same, in the most effectual manner for the relief and comfort of the poor. When joined together in one board, the Elders and Deacons have all an equal voice in whatever relates to the temporalities of the church, to the calling of a Minister, or the choice of their own successors; in all which they are considered as the general and joint representatives of the people: but in admitting members to full communion; in exercising discipline upon those who have erred from the faith, or offended

in morals; and in choosing delegates to attend the Classis, the Elders, with the Ministers, have alone a voice.

SEC. 3. No Consistory shall be constituted in any place without the previous advice and concurrence of Classis.

SEC. 4. Elders and Deacons shall be chosen annually, and the result of such election shall be published in the church, or usual place of worship of the congregation, three successive Sabbaths previous to their ordination, to the end that all lawful objections to such ordination may be offered to, and duly considered and adjudicated by the Consistory. A majority of the Consistory, regularly convened, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business, and in like manner a majority of Ministers and Elders, and also a majority of Deacons so convened, shall be a quorum respectively. It shall be competent for the Consistory, when an election shall have been omitted at the usual time, to appoint another time for that purpose, on an early day, giving the like notice as herein above prescribed, and in like manner for filling vacancies which may occur.

SEC. 5. The particular spiritual government of the congregation is committed to the Ministers and Elders. It is therefore their duty at all times to be vigi-

lant, to preserve discipline, and to promote the peace and spiritual interest of the congregation. Particularly before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, a faithful and solemn inquiry is to be made, by the President, whether to the knowledge of those present, any member in full communion has departed from the faith, or in walk or conversation has behaved unworthy the Christian profession? that such as are guilty may be properly rebuked, admonished, or suspended from the privilege of approaching the Lord's Table, and all offences may be removed out of the church of Christ.

SEC. 6. None can be received as members in full communion, unless they first shall have made a confession of their faith before the Minister, if any, and the Elders, or have produced a certificate of their being members in full communion of some Reformed Church; all such shall be published to the congregation, and be registered as regular members in the church.

SEC. 7. In every congregation, a distinct and fair register shall be preserved by the Minister of every baptism and marriage there celebrated, and of all who are received as members in full communion. It shall be the duty of the several Consistories to make a statistical report to the Classis at

their meeting, immediately preceding the annual meetings of the Particular and General Synod, according to such formula as General Synod shall prescribe, and accompany the same with such remarks on the spiritual state of the congregation as they may deem proper.

SEC. 8. Every Consistory shall keep regular minutes of their meetings and proceedings, and shall lay such minutes, so far as the same relate to ecclesiastical proceedings, at least once a year, before the Classis with which they are connected, for their information.

SEC. 9. It shall be incumbent upon members of the church, in removing from the bounds of one church to another, to obtain a certificate of membership and dismissal.

SEC. 10. Consistories possess the right of calling Ministers for their own congregations, except where otherwise provided for by charter. But in exercising this right, they are bound to use their utmost endeavours, either by consulting with the great Consistory, or with the congregation at large, to know what person would be most acceptable to the people.

SEC. 11. A neighbouring minister (if there be none belonging to the Consistory) must be invited to superintend the proceedings, whenever a Con-

sistory is desirous of making a call. The instrument is to be signed by the members of the Consistory, or by the President, in the name of the Consistory; and if the church be incorporated, it is proper to affix the seal of the corporation. When the call is completed, it must be laid by the Consistory before the Classis, and be approved by the same, before it can be presented to the person called; and if the call be accepted, for the purpose of receiving the approbation of the people, the name of such Minister shall be published in the church three Sabbaths successively, that opportunity may be given for stating lawful objections, if any there be.

SEC. 12. For the purpose of uniformity, the form of a call shall be as follows:—

“To N. N.

“*Grace, mercy, and peace, from GOD our FATHER,
and JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

“WHEREAS the Church of Jesus Christ at ———, is at present destitute of the stated preaching of the word, and the regular administration of the ordinances, and is desirous of obtaining the means of grace, which God hath appointed for the salvation of sinners, through Jesus Christ his Son: AND WHEREAS the said Church is well satisfied of

the piety, gifts, and ministerial qualifications of you N. N., and hath good hope that your labours in the Gospel will be attended with a blessing : Therefore we [*the style and title of the said Church*] have resolved to call, and we hereby solemnly, and in the fear of the Lord, do call you the said N. N. to be our pastor and teacher, to preach the word in truth and faithfulness, to administer the holy sacraments agreeably to the institution of Christ, to maintain Christian discipline, to edify the congregation, and especially the youth, by catechetical instructions ; and, as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, to fulfil the whole work of the Gospel ministry, agreeably to the word of God, and the excellent rules and constitution of our Reformed Dutch Church, established in the last National Synod, held at Dordrecht, and ratified and explained by the ecclesiastical judicatory under which we stand, and to which you, upon accepting this call, must with us remain subordinate.

“ In fulfilling the ordinary duties of your ministry, it is expressly stipulated, that besides preaching upon such texts of Scripture as you may judge proper to select for our instruction, you also explain a portion of the Heidelbergh Catechism on the Lord’s days, agreeably to the established order of the Reformed Dutch Church ; and that you far-

ther conform in rendering all that public service which is usual, and has been in constant practice in our congregation. The particular service which will be required of you is, [*here insert a detail of such particulars, if any there be, which the situation of the congregation may render necessary; especially in case of combinations, when the service required in the respective congregations must be ascertained; or when the Dutch and English languages are both requisite, the proportion of each may be mentioned, or left discretionary as may be judged proper.*]

“To encourage you in the discharge of the duties of your important office, we promise you in the name of this Church all proper attention, love, and obedience in the Lord; and to free you from worldly cares and avocations while you are dispensing spiritual blessings to us, we [*the Elders and Deacons, &c. the style and title of the Church*] do promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you the sum of ———, in ——— payments, yearly and every year as long as you continue the Minister of this Church, together with [*such particulars as may refer to a parsonage or other emoluments.*] For the performance of all which, we hereby bind ourselves, and our successors, firmly by these presents. The Lord incline your heart to a cheerful accept-

ance of this call, and send you to us in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace!

“Done in Consistory, and subscribed with our names, this —— day of ——, in the year ——.”

Attested by N. N. Moderator of the call.

SEC. 13. Since it is deemed of the highest importance that there should be regular instruction on the great articles of the Christian faith, in order to preserve the truth, and to promote the prosperity of the church, every Minister shall, in the ordinary morning or afternoon service on the Lord's day, explain the system of the Christian doctrine comprehended in the Heidelbergh Catechism adopted by the reformed churches, so that, if practicable, the explanation may be annually completed, but shall never be extended beyond the term of four years. The several Classes shall, at their stated meetings, preceding the annual meeting of General Synod, make strict inquiry whether the preceding part of this section has been fully complied with by every Minister, and if any Minister shall be found deficient, without sufficient reason, the Classis shall inflict such censure as they in their wisdom may judge the omission to merit; and the several Classes shall make a full and faithful report of the result of their

inquiries and doings on this behalf to the Particular Synod.

SEC. 14. When any Minister shall be duly convicted of any offence which implicates the purity of his clerical character, and shall, in consequence of such conviction, be suspended from his office, and the conviction and suspension shall be sustained on a final appeal, his pastoral connexion with the congregation in which he was settled shall, if the Consistory so elect, be *ispo facto* dissolved.

SEC. 15. Consistories which have hitherto combined with one or more neighbouring Consistories, in making calls and having a Minister to serve in common, may not at pleasure break such combination; but whenever their situation and circumstances render them capable of severally calling a Minister, a representation thereof must be made to the Classis, and leave be first requested and obtained, before their former connexions can be dissolved.

SEC. 16. When matters of peculiar importance occur, particularly in calling a Minister, building of churches, or whatever relates immediately to the peace and welfare of the whole congregation, it is usual (and it is strongly recommended upon such occasions always) for the Consistory to call

together all those who have ever served as Elders or Deacons, that by their advice and counsel they may assist the members of the Consistory. These, when assembled, constitute what is called the *great Consistory*. From the object, or design of their assembling, the respective powers of each are easily ascertained. Those who are out of office have only an advisory or counselling voice; and, as they are not actual members of the board or corporation, cannot have a decisive vote. After obtaining the advice, it rests with the members of the Consistory to follow the counsel given them, or not, as they shall judge proper. But, unless very urgent reasons should appear to the contrary, it will be prudent and expedient in all cases to comply with the advice of those, who from their numbers and influence in the congregation, may be supposed to speak the language of the people, and to know what will be most for edification and peace.

ARTICLE III.

Of the Classis.

SEC. 1. A Classis consists of all the Ministers, and an Elder delegated from each Consistory within the bounds prescribed by Particular Synod. Collegiate Churches shall be entitled to an Elder

for each ordinary worshipping assembly. To constitute a Classis, at least three Ministers and three Elders are required.

SEC. 2. Classis shall have the power of approving or disapproving calls; ordaining, suspending, and deposing Ministers, or dismissing them when called elsewhere. They shall have the power of forming new congregations, and determining the boundaries of congregations when such boundaries are contested; of continuing combinations of two or more congregations, the dissolution and change of the same; and a general supervising power in cases of appeal over the acts and proceedings of the Consistories within their bounds, which relate to the spiritual concerns of their particular churches, and the conduct of any of the officers thereof.

SEC. 3. The peculiar prerogative of Classes, that of examining students of theology for their becoming candidates for the ministry, and of candidates for their becoming Ministers, is very important, and must always be attended to with great prudence, zeal, and fidelity. Every student of theology, when he shall have become prepared for examination for licensure, shall present himself for such examination to the Classis within whose bounds he resided when he entered upon his preparatory studies, and a candidate who has

received a call, must be examined by the Classis under whose jurisdiction the church that has made the call is placed.

SEC. 4. At every examination of a student or candidate by a Classis, it shall be the duty of two of the Deputati Synodi to be present, and no examination shall in any case proceed without the attendance of one Deputatus from another Classis, who shall see that the examination is performed with strictness, propriety, and justice, and duly report the same to the next Particular Synod. That the Deputati may obtain proper and timely notice, it shall be the duty of the President of the Classis, upon application being made to him for an examination, (which application shall be made at least four weeks before the contemplated meeting of Classis,) to send immediate information to the Deputati, and communicate the time and place when and where the same is to be held, in such manner that the Deputati shall be notified at least three weeks before such examination.

SEC. 5. Every Classis shall keep a book, in which the forms of subscriptions for candidates and Ministers of the Gospel are fairly written, which those who are examined and approved, shall respectively subscribe in the presence of the Classis. It shall also be the duty of every Classis, annually to report to the Synod all persons who

have been examined and licensed, as well as those who have been ordained; and also, all removals of Ministers from one place to another, or by death, which may have happened within the jurisdiction of such Classis, since the last session of Synod.

SEC. 6. Whenever the examination of a candidate for the ministry, the approbation of a call, or any other special business shall render an extraordinary meeting of the Classis necessary, it shall be the duty of the President of the Classis, upon application being made to him for that purpose, to call by circular letters the members together. And, whenever two Ministers and two Elders belonging to the Classis shall, upon *any occasion*, request in writing, under their hands, an extraordinary meeting, the President of the Classis may not refuse calling the same; provided that the expenses attending all extraordinary meetings of the Classis shall be always supported by the person or congregation at whose request, or for whose benefit, such session is held.

SEC. 7. The meetings of the Classis shall be semi-annual, at such times as they may respectively determine; and at every ordinary session, a sermon shall be preached.

SEC. 8. The Classis shall at their meeting next preceding that of the Particular Synod, appoint

delegates to attend the said Synod, and nominate delegates to the General Synod ; and, at the same meeting, shall put to the Ministers and Elders respectively the following inquiries, and enter in detail the several answers given by each Minister and Elder, on the minutes, for the information of the higher judicatories :—

1st. Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your congregation in their purity agreeably to the word of God, the Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms of our church ?

2d. Is the Heidelbergh Catechism regularly explained, agreeably to the constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church ?

3d. Are the catechising of the children and the instruction of the youth faithfully attended to ?

4th. Is family visitation faithfully performed ?

5th. Is the 5th Sec. 2d Art. 2d Chap. in the constitution of our church carefully obeyed ?

6th. Is the temporal contract between Ministers and people fulfilled in your congregation ?

SEC. 9. It shall be the duty of the several Classes to require from the respective Consistories a statistical table filled up according to such formula as General Synod shall prescribe, accompanied with such remarks on the spiritual state of the congregation as they may deem proper.

SEC. 10. For the regular obtaining of dismissions of Ministers, it is required that a neighbouring Minister of the same Classis to which the congregation belongs, be invited to be present, and superintend the dismissal of the Minister from his congregation, countersign the instrument of dismissal, and consider it as his duty to deliver the same, with a report upon the subject, to the Classis ; which report and document shall serve as a basis upon which the final dismissal and certificate of the Classis shall be founded.

ARTICLE IV.

Of the Particular Synod.

SEC. 1. Every Particular Synod shall comprehend a certain number of Classes, to be designated by the General Synod, and shall consist of a delegation of two Ministers and two Elders, from every Classis within its bounds, and seven Ministers and seven Elders, when regularly convened, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

SEC. 2. To the Particular Synod belongs exclusively the power to form new Classes, to transfer a congregation from one Classis to another ; to exercise a general supervising power in case of appeal over the acts and proceedings of the Classes within its bounds, and have cognizance of such matters

as appertain to the spiritual welfare of all the churches within its jurisdiction.

SEC. 3. Every Synod shall be at liberty to solicit and hold *correspondence* with its neighbouring Synod, or Synods, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to general edification.

SEC. 4. Every Synod shall appoint a Deputatus primarius and secundus, from each Classis within its bounds, whose duty it shall be to superintend the examination of students in theology, and candidates for the ministry, to add a solemnity to the important work, and see that no undue liberty, superficial proceedings, or unnecessary rigour, be practised. And it shall also be their duty, as Commissioners of Synod, to advise, exhort, and endeavour to persuade the Classis in all that respects the strict fulfilment of the important duty of examinations; but they are not invested with any authority to arrest the proceedings of any Classis who may act contrary to their advice; neither may they vote upon any question respecting any candidate that may be examined; but they are to keep regular minutes of the proceedings at their different examinations where they are present, and impartially report to the Synod whatever they may judge improper or wrong.

SEC. 5. A copy of the minutes of every session of the several Classes held since the last session of

Synod, shall, at the opening of the Synod, be produced and laid on the table for the inspection of the members : the Particular Synod, from the several reports of the Classes on the state of religion, shall prepare a Synodical report, to be presented to the General Synod, accompanied with the statistical tables of said Classes.

SEC. 6. The Particular Synod shall meet annually, at such time and place as they may determine, and special meetings may be held for the transaction of any extraordinary business, upon the written request of four Ministers to the President of the Synod ; and in such case it shall be the duty of such President to give notice to the members of Synod of such meeting three weeks previous thereto, stating the particular object for which the Synod is to be convened.

ARTICLE V.

The General Synod.

SEC. 1. The General Synod shall consist of three Ministers and three Elders from each of the Classes, to be nominated by the Classes to the Particular Synod to which they belong, who shall have power to appoint the persons so nominated delegates to the General Synod ; but, for good cause, may appoint other persons than those so nominated ; or, in case no nomination is made, may appoint the

delegates for the Classis or Classes who shall have omitted to nominate.

SEC. 2. The General Synod shall meet annually, at such time and place as they may determine, and twelve Ministers and twelve Elders, when regularly convened, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

SEC. 3. The General Synod shall have original cognizance of all matters relating to the Theological School, the appointment of Professors, and their course of instruction, the appointment of Superintendents of the said school, and the regulations thereof; and shall possess the power of regulating and maintaining a friendly correspondence with the highest Judicatories or Assemblies of other religious denominations, for the purpose of promoting union and concert in general measures which may be calculated to maintain sound doctrine, prevent conflicting regulations relative to persons under church censure by the judicatories of either denomination, and to produce concert and harmony in their respective proceedings to promote the cause of religion and piety.

To the General Synod belongs the power to constitute Particular Synods, and to make any changes in the same, to exercise a general superintendence over the spiritual interests and concerns of the whole church, and an appellate super-

vising power over the acts, proceedings, and decisions of the lower assemblies, relating to Christian discipline or the interests of religion, and the general welfare and government of the church.

SEC. 4. If circumstances should require a meeting of the General Synod previous to the next ordinary meeting, the president shall, on a joint application of six or more Ministers requesting the same, call an extraordinary meeting at the place where the next ordinary meeting is appointed to be held, notice of which meeting shall be given to the members of Synod at least three weeks previous to the time of such meeting, stating the particular business for which it is called, not however excluding the transaction of such other business as the Synod may deem proper.

CHAPTER III.

Of Customs and Usages.

ARTICLE I.

SEC. 1. The sacrament of baptism shall always be administered in the church, or some other place of public worship, at the time of public worship, and the form adopted for baptism hitherto in use, shall in every case be retained. In cases, however, of the sickness of the parents, and especially

of the infant, it is lawful to administer this sacrament in private. But no private baptism shall be administered without the presence of at least one Elder, who shall accompany the Minister for that purpose, and the same form and solemnity shall be always used as in public baptism.

SEC. 2. Every church shall observe such a mode in the administration of the Lord's supper as shall be judged most conducive to edification, provided however, after the sermon and usual public prayers are ended, the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper shall be read, and a prayer suited to the occasion shall be offered, before the members participate of the ordinance.

SEC. 3. The sacrament of the Lord's supper shall be administered at least twice a year, and it is recommended that the same be administered once every three months.

SEC. 4. For the purpose of uniformity in the order of worship, the following is to be observed by all the churches :—

1st. After a space for private devotion, the Minister shall introduce the public worship in the morning by invoking the Divine presence and blessing.

2d. Salutation.

3d. Reading the ten commandments, or some other portion of Scripture, or both.

- 4th. Singing.
- 5th. Prayer.
- 6th. Singing.
- 7th. Sermon.
- 8th. Prayer.
- 9th. Collection of Alms.
- 10th. Singing.
- 11th. Pronouncing the Apostolic Benediction.

The order of the afternoon and evening services shall be the same as the morning, excepting the reading of the ten commandments. The last service on the Lord's day shall conclude with the Christian Doxology.

SEC. 5. No Psalms or Hymns may be publicly sung in the Reformed Dutch Churches, but such as are approved and recommended by the General Synod.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Discipline.

ARTICLE I.

Of Discipline in General.

SEC. 1. Discipline is the exercise of the authority and the application of the system of laws, which the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed in his church.

Its objects are the removal of offences ; the vindication of the honour of Christ ; the promotion of purity and general edification of the church ; and also the benefit of the offender.

SEC. 2. All Christian discipline is spiritual, and nothing shall be admitted as matter of accusation, or considered an offence, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture, or the regulations of the church founded on Scripture.

SEC. 3. All baptized persons are members of the church, are under its care, and subject to its government and discipline.

ARTICLE II.

Of Private Offences.

SEC. 1. Private offences are those that are known to an individual only, or at most to a very few.

SEC. 2. Such offences are not to be immediately presented before a church judicatory, but the offender shall be dealt with according to the mode pointed out by our Lord, in Matt. xviii. The same course shall be adopted in cases of personal or private injuries ; but if, on due forbearance, these tender and Christian proceedings are unavailing, the whole matter shall be represented to the judicatory to which the offender is amenable.

SEC. 3. Informers who have not taken these previous steps, shall be considered as guilty of an offence against the peace and order of the church, and be censured accordingly.

ARTICLE III.

Public Offences.

SEC. 1. Public offences are those that require the cognizance of a church judicatory, as when they are so notorious and scandalous, that no private measures would obviate their injurious effects, or when, though originally known to one, or a few, the private measures taken have been ineffectual.

SEC. 2. When any person is charged with a crime, not by an individual, but by general rumour, the previous steps prescribed by our Lord in case of private offences are not necessary, but the proper judicatory is bound to take immediate cognizance of the matter.

SEC. 3. To constitute a general rumour, or *fama clamosa*, it is necessary—

1st. That it specify some particular sin or sins.

2d. That it should have obtained general circulation.

3d. That it be not transient.

4th. That it be accompanied with strong public presumption of its truth.

SEC. 4. In admitting accusations against a Minister or Elder, the rule prescribed in 1 Tim. v. 19, shall always be observed, and accusers must come forward openly to support the charge.

SEC. 5. If Ministers of the word have committed any public gross sin, which would render their appearance in the pulpit under such circumstances highly offensive, it shall be the duty of the Consistory, in order to prevent scandal, to shut the door against such criminal, and refer him to be tried by the Classis as soon as possible. The proceedings of the Consistory in such cases are at their peril, and are not to be considered as a trial, but only a prudent interference and binding over the person accused, to the judgment of his peers. In case of like offences by the Elders and Deacons, they shall, upon trial and conviction, immediately be removed from their office by the Consistory.

SEC. 6. The following are to be considered as the *principal offences* that deserve the punishment of suspension, or removal from office, viz. False Doctrine or Heresy, Public Schisms, open Blasphemy, Simony, faithless Desertion of Office, or intruding upon that of another, Perjury, Adultery, Fornication, Theft, Acts of Violence, Brawlings, Drunkenness, and scandalous Traffic; in short, all such sins and gross offences as render the per-

petrators infamous before the world; and which in a private member of the church would be considered as deserving excommunication.

SEC. 7. If any member of the church shall be duly convicted of an infamous crime by any civil court, he shall, *ipso facto*, be debarred from the exercise of the peculiar functions of any ecclesiastical office with which he may be invested, and excluded from the privileges of the church, until he shall have established his innocence, or manifested by repentance to the ecclesiastical judicatory to which he is amenable.

ARTICLE IV.

Of Process and Trial.

SEC. 1. Offences may be brought before a judicatory by individual accusation or common fame. In the former case, the process must be in the name of the accuser or accusers. In the latter, no person need be named as the accuser.

SEC. 2. In exhibiting charges, the times, place, and circumstances shall be accurately stated in writing, that the accused may be enabled the better to defend himself.

SEC. 3. Great caution is to be exercised in receiving accusations where there is good reason

to believe that they are preferred through passion or improper and unchristian motive ; or where the accuser is under censure, or not of good character, or has the prospect of temporal advantage.

SEC. 4. All citations shall be issued and signed by the President or Clerk, who shall also furnish citations for such witnesses as may be required on either side.

SEC. 5. A copy of the accusation shall be furnished to the accused, at the time when the citation is served ; which citation shall designate the time when, and place where, the accused shall put in his answer. Not less than ten days shall be allowed to intervene between the time appointed for receiving the answer of the accused and the trial of the case, unless by consent of all parties interested.

SEC. 6. When the accused refuses to obey the citation, he shall be cited a second time, which second citation shall always be accompanied by a notice, that if he still refuse to appear, at the time and place appointed, he shall not only be liable to censure for contumacy, but that the judicatory will proceed to the trial and decision of his case as if he were present.

SEC. 7. The trial shall be impartial. The witnesses, after being sworn, or solemnly affirmed,

shall be examined in the presence of the accused, and he shall be permitted to cross-examine them.

SEC. 8. To establish an accusation against any member of the church, the testimony of more than one witness is required. The evidence shall be faithfully minuted, and with the sentence, or decision, be entered on the records, and the parties shall be allowed copies of the same at their own expense, if desired.

SEC. 9. No complaints in cases of scandal shall be admitted, unless brought forward within the space of one year and four months after the crime shall be alleged to have been committed ; excepting when it shall appear that unavoidable impediments prevented the bringing an accusation sooner.

SEC. 10. No professional counsel shall be permitted to appear and plead in cases of process in any of the ecclesiastical courts. But if any accused person feel unable to represent and plead his own cause to advantage, he may request, or the President may appoint any Minister or Elder, belonging to the judicatory before which he appears, to prepare and conduct his cause as he may judge proper. But the Minister or Elder so engaged, shall not be allowed, after pleading the cause of the accused, to sit in judgment as a member of the judicatory.

SEC. 11. Such as obstinately reject the admonitions of the Consistory, or have been found guilty of the commission of a public or otherwise gross offence, shall be suspended from the Lord's supper, which act of suspension may be published at the discretion of the Consistory; and being suspended and repeatedly admonished without discovering marks of repentance, the church shall then proceed to the last remedy, namely, *Excommunication*, agreeably to the adopted form, and conformably to the word of God. But no person shall be excommunicated without the previous advice of the Classis.

SEC. 12. *Before the church proceeds to excommunication*, the obstinacy of the offender shall be publicly notified to the congregation, declaring his offences, together with the particular care and attention bestowed on him, by admonition, suspension from the Lord's table, and by repeated remonstrances. The congregation shall also be exhorted farther to admonish the delinquent, and to pray for him. This procedure shall be comprised in three several steps. In the *first* instance, the name of the offender shall not be mentioned, that he may in some measure be spared. In the *second*, with the advice of Classis, his name shall be expressed. In the *third*, the congregation shall be

informed, that unless he repenteth, he will be excluded from the communion of the church ; so that if he remain obstinate, his excommunication may take place with their tacit approbation. The interval between these notifications shall be at the discretion of the Consistory.

SEC. 13. When an excommunicated person becomes *penitent*, and is desirous of being again reconciled to the church, such desire shall be publicly declared to the congregation, either before the administration of the Lord's supper, or at some other seasonable opportunity ; that if no objections are offered, he may, on declaring his repentance, be publicly readmitted to a participation of the Lord's supper, agreeably to the form appointed for that purpose.

SEC. 14. The General Synod shall have power to make all such rules and regulations as may be necessary for carrying the foregoing articles into execution, except where provision is thereby made for that purpose.

SEC. 15. No alteration shall ever be made to the foregoing articles, but by previous recommendation from the General Synod to the respective Classes, and the consent of a majority of the same to such proposed alteration, together with the final determination and resolution of the General Synod for the time being.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

Form of a Professoral Appointment.

To the Rev.

The General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church in North America, reposing confidence in your piety, learning, and talents, have elected you a Professor in their Theological College at New-Brunswick. The branches in which you are to instruct the youth committed to your charge are,

with such modifications as the Synod may hereafter direct.

To free you from worldly cares and avocations, while discharging the duties of your office, we promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you the sum of in payments, yearly and every year, so long as you continue Professor in our Seminary as aforesaid. For the assumption of the powers, and the execution of the duties of your office in the Theological Department of the College, this is your Commission,

the said _____ be, and hereby is allowed and authorized as a candidate for the sacred ministry within their bounds, and wherever the Providence of God may call him to preach the Gospel of our blessed Lord and Saviour. And the said Classis recommend him to the esteem and attention of all those to whom these presents may come, as well qualified to preach a crucified Saviour.

The Classis do fervently pray, that the great Head of the Church may farther qualify him for the work of the ministry, and make him eminently useful in that part of his vineyard where he may be called.

Done in Classis, in the _____ on this
day of _____, 18

President.

Clerk.

No. III.

Form of Testimonials of Ordination.

IN the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, to all whom it may concern, we send greeting :

BE it known, that _____ was admitted
by the Classis of _____ to an examination

on the different branches of Theology, as prescribed in the constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church in America, preparatory to ordination, and the Classis being well satisfied with his gifts, piety, and qualifications to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, did, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, resolve that the said be ordained to the Gospel ministry, and in conformity to said resolution did, on the day of set him apart solemnly to the work of the sacred ministry according to the rites and forms of the Reformed Dutch Church, and receive him into ministerial communion. And the said Classis do recommend him to the esteem and attention of all those to whom these presents shall come, as qualified to preach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Classis do fervently pray that the great Head of the Church may abundantly qualify him for the work of the ministry, and make him eminently useful in that part of the vineyard where he may be called to labour.

Done in Classis at on this
day of 18

President.

Clerk.

No. IV.

Form of a Certificate of the Dismission of a Minister from his Congregation.

THIS certifies, that the undersigned, by request, was present at a meeting of the Consistory of the Church of _____ on the _____ day of _____ A. D. _____ and superintended the proceedings thereof, when it was resolved that an application be made to the Classis of _____ for a dissolution of the pastoral connexion between the Rev. _____ and said Church; and that the Rev. _____ declared his concurrence in such application.

 No. V.
Form of Certificate of Dismission of Church Members.

THIS certifies, that _____ is a member in full communion of the Reformed Dutch Church of _____ in good and regular standing; as such _____ is, at _____ own request dismissed, for the purpose of connecting _____ with the _____ Church

of to whose Christian fellowship and confidence is hereby affectionately commended ; and when received by them, peculiar relation to this Church shall cease.

By order of Consistory,

President.

Given at

18

☞ This Certificate is valid only for one year from its date, except where there has been no opportunity of presenting it.

Form of the Register of Baptisms.

REGISTER FOR BAPTISMS.

<i>Date of Baptism.</i>	<i>Names of the Baptized.</i>	<i>Names of the Parents.</i>	<i>Time of Birth.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
<p>N. B. In recording the name of the Mother, give her family or maiden name.</p>				

No. VII.

Form of Consistorial Report.

ANNUAL REPORT of the Church of

Dated

18

Pastor.

	Number of Families.	<i>Census.</i>
	Total of the Congregation.	
	Members in communion per last report.	<i>Communicants.</i>
	On Confession.	
	On Certificate.	
	Dismissed.	
	Suspended.	
	Died.	
	Total now in Communion.	
	Adults.	<i>Baptisms.</i>
	Infants.	
	Number of Catechumens.	<i>Cat. and Bib. Class.</i>
	Number in Biblical Instruction.	
	Number of Schools.	<i>Sub. Schools.</i>
	Total Number of Scholars.	
	Average Attendance.	
		<i>Remarks.</i>

Received

No. VIII.

Form of Certificate of Marriage.

To all whom it may concern.—This certifies,
 that the Bonds of Marriage between
 and were by me confirmed, according
 to the usages of the Reformed Dutch Church in
 North America, on the day of
 in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hun-
 dred and

Given at this day of
 A. D. 18

} *Minister of the Ref.*
 } *Dutch Church in*

Form of a Classical Report.

	CHURCHES.	PASTORS.			
<p>Remarks on the spiritual state of the congregations.</p> <p>The name of the Stated Clerk of the Classis to be underscored, or the letters S. C. appended to his name.</p>			Census.		
		Number of Families.			
		Total of the Congregation.			
		In Communion per last Report.		Rec	Communicants.
		On Confession.			
		On Certificate.			
		Dismissed.			
		Suspended.			
		Died.			
		Total in Communion.			
		Infants.		Bapt. Bib. Classes	
		Adults.			
		Number of Catechumens.		Cat. and	
		Number in Biblical Instruction.		Sub. Schools	
		Number of Schools.			
	Total number of Scholars.				
	Average number of Scholars.				
	Post-office Address.				

No. X.

Form of the Citation of a Person accused.

By order of the * you, Mr. A. B.
 † are hereby summoned ‡ to appear
 before said and answer to the charge
 herewith presented at on the day
 of at o'clock,

Signed,

*Pres.**Clerk.*

Done in at this
day of 18

* Consistory of the Reformed Dutch Church at
 or, the Classis of

† Member of, or Elder, or Deacon in said Congregation;
 or Minister at under the inspection of said Classis.

‡ If the process be raised at the instance of a party
 complaining, add, after "summoned," at the instance of
 C. D.

No. XI.

Form of the Citation of Witnesses.

By order of the * you, Mr. A. B.
 † are hereby summoned ‡ to appear
 before the said at on the
 day of and at o'clock
 in the to give your testimony in the case
 of C. D. presently under process for censure by
 said

Signed,

*Pres.
Clerk.*

* Consistory of the Reformed Dutch Church at
 or, the Classis of

† Member of, or Elder, or Deacon in said congregation;
 or Minister at under the inspection of said Classis,
 and if the witness belongs to a different judicatory, the blank
 is to be filled up accordingly.

‡ If the process be raised at the instance of a party com-
 plaining, add, after the word "summoned," at the instance
 of C. D.

RULES

For the Government of General Synod in their Proceedings.

1st. AT every stated meeting of the Synod, a sermon shall be preached by the last President, either before his opening the session with prayer, or at some time afterward, which the Synod shall deem most convenient. If the last President and the Adessor be absent, the oldest minister present shall take his place, and perform the above duties.

2d. The President and an Adessor shall be elected by ballot. Two Clerks shall be elected by the same ballot, and in the same manner.

3d. The duties of the President shall be to take the chair at the hour to which the Synod stands adjourned ; to open and conclude with prayer ; to direct the Clerk, immediately after a quorum has appeared, and prayer been performed, to call the roll ; to censure absentees, when their absence shall be judged not to have been necessary ; to propound the subjects for deliberation ; to confine speakers to the point, and to save them from unnecessary interruption ; to state and put the ques-

tion, when the members are prepared to vote ; to prevent members from leaving the Synod without permission ; to decide questions of order, subject, however, to an appeal to the House by any two members ; to give the casting vote in all equal divisions ; and in general to maintain that order and dignity becoming the Judicatory of the Church of Christ.

4th. After calling the roll, the minutes of the last sitting shall be read, and considered as open to correction. The business on the minutes of the last meeting or sitting, shall, without powerful reasons, be taken up and concluded first in the order in which it stands, before any new business be introduced.

5th. A motion made must be seconded, and afterward repeated or read aloud from the chair, before it is debated ; and every motion, except a motion for adjournment, shall be reduced to writing, if any member require it.

6th. An amendment may be made on any motion, and shall be decided before the original motion ; but when a question is under debate, no motion shall be received, unless to amend it, to postpone it, to commit it, for the previous question, or to adjourn. If a question contains several parts, any member may have it divided, and a

question taken on each part. When the previous question is called for, and which shall be in this form—" Shall the main question be now put ?"—until this be decided, all amendments and further debate on the main question shall be inadmissible.

7th. A question shall not be called up or reconsidered at the same session of the Synod at which it has been decided, unless by consent of two-thirds of the members present.

8th. No member shall be allowed to protest against any of the acts of the Synod: any member who dissents from any such acts, shall have a right to require the names of all the members present, who vote for or against the same, to be entered in the minutes, and published therewith for the information of all concerned.

9th. Every speaker shall rise, and address himself to the President only, closely attending to the subject in debate, avoiding all personal reflections, and no member, without the special permission of the Synod, shall speak more than twice on the same subject. When two or more members rise to speak at the same time, the President shall determine who of them shall be heard first.

10th. No member shall leave the Synod to return home, or for other business, without their consent; nor shall members, without express per-

mission, engage in private conversation, go from or change their seats, during the transaction of business; interrupt another when he is speaking, except he be out of order, or to correct mistakes and misrepresentations; and if any member act indecently or disorderly, contrary to these rules, the President shall reprove or otherwise censure him, as the Synod shall judge proper; the member still having the privilege, if he think himself denied of any right, or unjustly blamed by the President, of respectfully and modestly requiring the decision of the House in the case.

11th. All the sittings of the General Synod shall be concluded by regular adjournment and prayer.

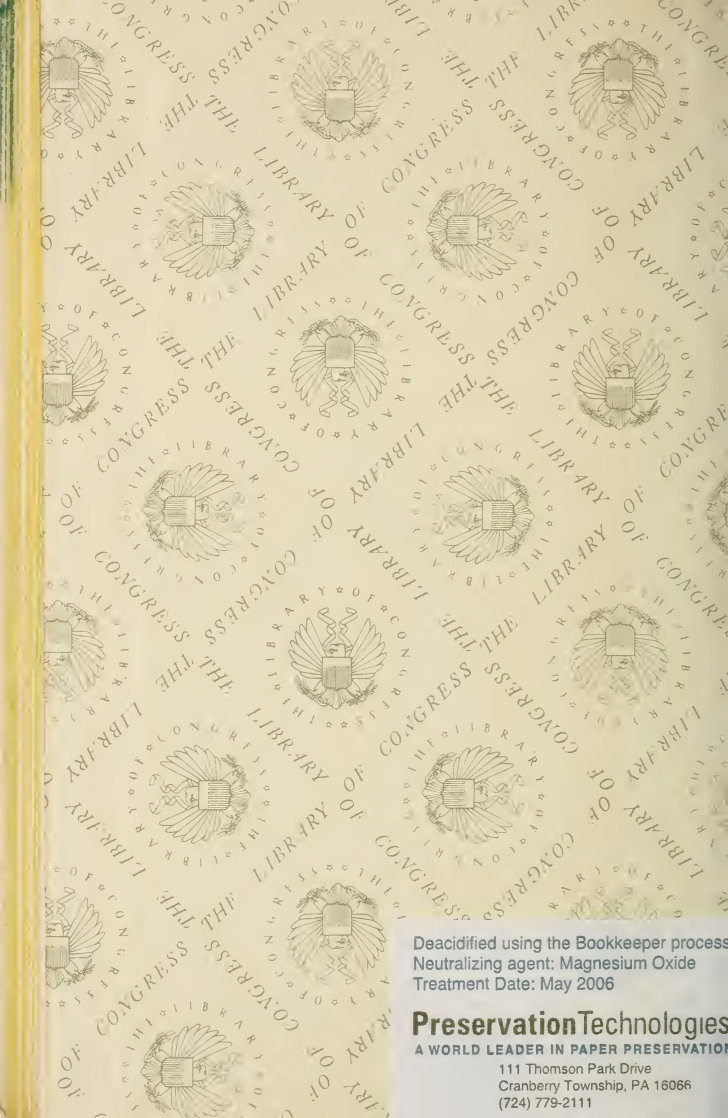
12th. At the close of every session of General Synod, the roll shall be called, and the names of those who are absent without permission shall be recorded.

Resolved, That these articles be read at the opening of every General Synod.

Lee

Robert L

MAR 27 1951



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