

POCKET MANUAL

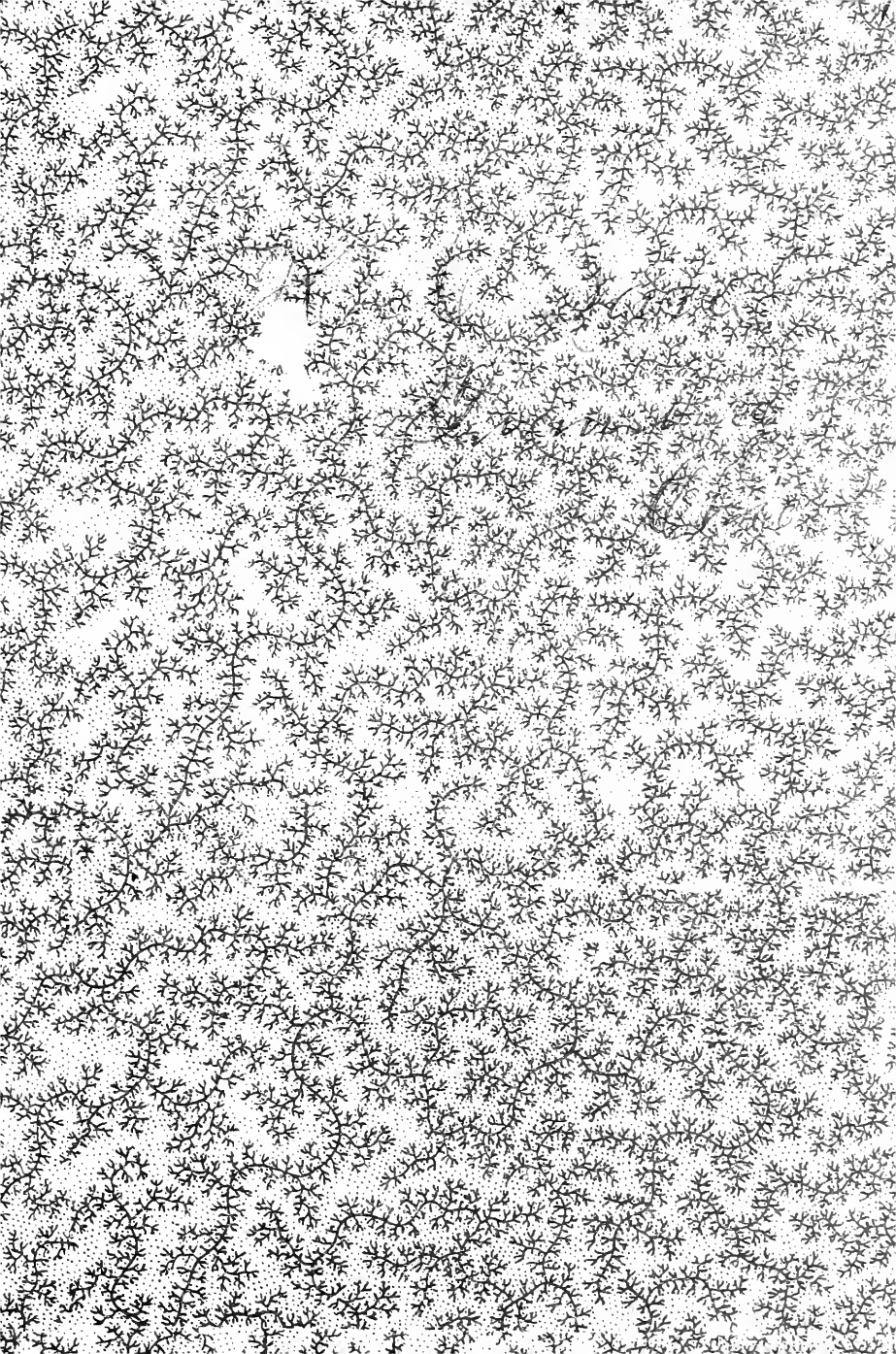
Rev. A. Hastings Ross.

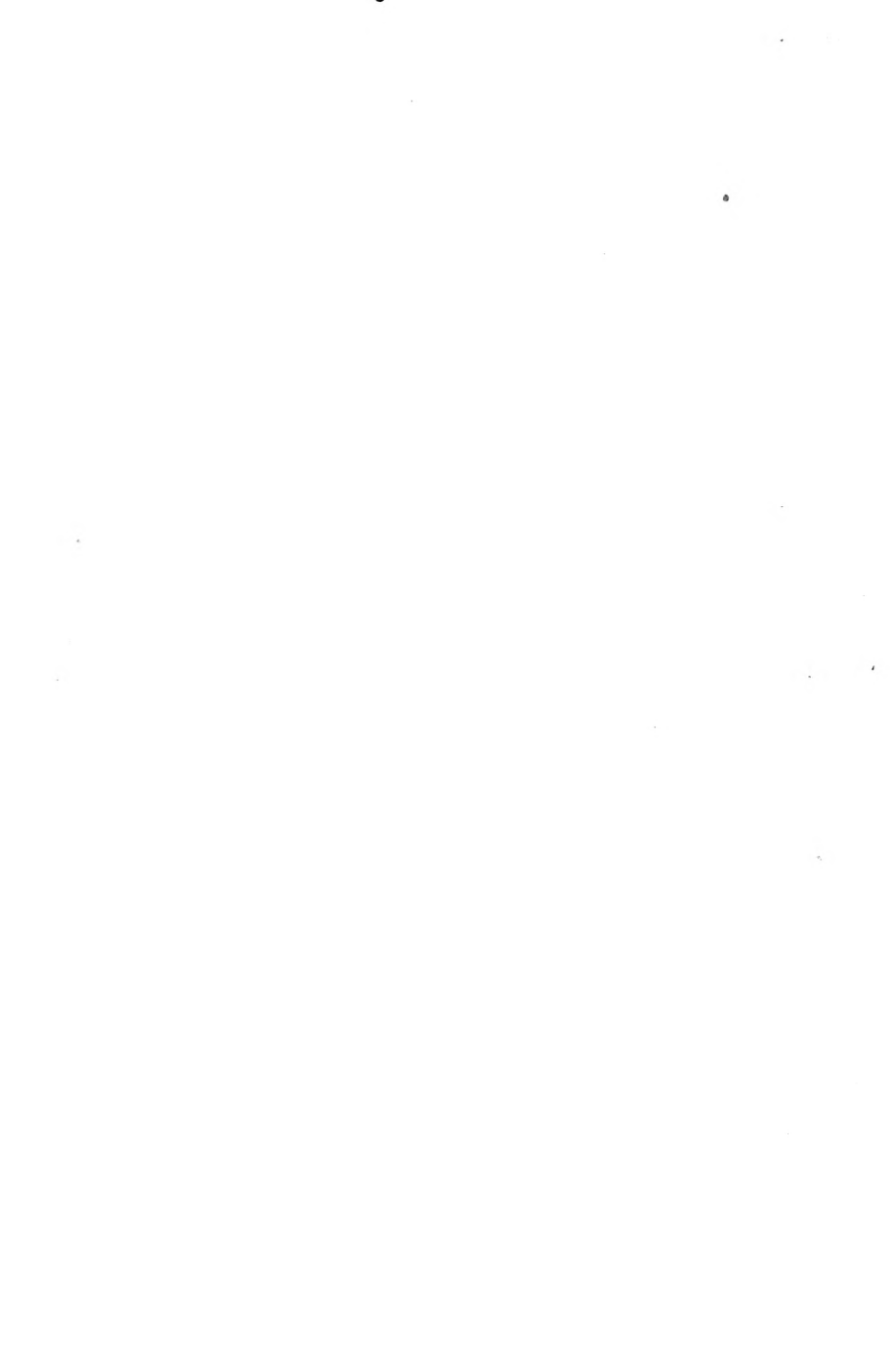


724 13

Ex Libris

FREDERICK L. FAGLEY





John C. ...

24 1911

H. C. San

A

POCKET MANUAL

—OF—

CONGREGATIONALISM.

—BY—

A. HASTINGS ROSS,

Author of The Church-Kingdom, Sermons for Children, The
Church of God : A Catechism.

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

OBERLIN, O.
E. J. GOODRICH.
1889.

COPYRIGHT, 1883,
BY A. HASTINGS ROSS.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

PREFACE.

We present this POCKET MANUAL as an honest attempt to adjust the Congregational Polity to its principles and enlargement. Two things gave it an abnormal development—the union of church and state in New England, and a false theory of the ministry. Repeated attempts have been made to correct the evils resulting from these early errors, but the true remedy has not yet been fully adopted. These attempts could not have arisen under a simple, consistent, and complete development of our principles; for such a development would have given a stable, because adequate, polity.

The theory that ordained men are ministers only while installed pastors, and that removal from office deposes them from the ministry, and makes them laymen again, was incorporated into our earliest usages and Platform. It placed a minister's standing in the local church of which he was pastor, so that he was accountable to that church both as a member and as a minister. A vote to remove him from the pastorate took away his standing as a minister. He had no other, and by the theory could have no other. This theory was so inadequate that it was rejected in about thirty years for the true one, but its usages continued, and some of them still continue. The change in the theory involved a change in ministerial standing, since that standing could no longer be held logically in local churches. There arose, consequently, an unsettled state respecting ministerial standing.

Our peace was disturbed also by another change, the separation of church and state in New England.

The Cambridge Platform, 1648, rested its discipline ultimately on the coercive power of the magistrate, as its last chapter shows; and to that power there were sad but frequent appeals. This very citadel soon crumbled into ruins, but no other defence was erected in its place, except in Connecticut (see my article in the *New Englander*, 1883, 461-491, on "Some Neglected Factors in Congregational Fellowship."); and so confusion arose. We tried to make occasional councils conserve purity where our fathers relied on "the coercive power of the magistrate." The attempt was not a complete success.

We believe that the true remedy for these errors and their evils, is accountable ministerial standing in District Associations, with right of appeal in case of injustice to a council of churches (§§ 80, 85, 50, 51).

The slight change proposed may best be seen in the following

PARALLELISM

Between the early and the new method:

EARLY METHOD.

1. Ministers held their accountable standing, as ministers, in the churches of which they were pastors.

2. This standing was taken away from ministers by local churches, each dealing with its own pastor.

3. In case of grievance recourse was had to a mutual council, each party choosing half its members.

4. If a mutual council was declined, an *ex parte* council was open to the aggrieved party.

5. In case of heresy or disorderly conduct, the magistrate put forth his coercive power to suppress it (*Cambridge Platform*, xvii. 7, 8, 9).

NEW METHOD.

1. Ministers hold their accountable standing, as ministers, in the Associations of which they are members.

2. This standing is taken away from ministers by District Associations, each dealing with its own members.

3. In case of grievance recourse is had to a mutual council, each party choosing half its members.

4. If a mutual council is declined, an *ex parte* council is open to the aggrieved party.

5. Perfect liberty is assured through the separation of church and state, the coercion of belief and practice being impossible.

The early method ended in coercion; indeed it was decided that the civil magistrate need not wait for church action before suppressing, by civil pains and penalties, "heresy," "pernicious opinions," and whatever disturbed "the peaceable administration and exercise of the worship and holy things of God."

The new method ends in liberty, stopping with self-protection. It is the presentation of this new and better way, as we believe, in a simple, consistent, complete, and Congregational system, that constitutes the peculiar claim of this Manual to attention; though we trust it will be found useful also in other respects.

The origin of this Manual, and its issuance at the present time, are explained by the following statement and action, namely:—

The General Association of the Congregational Churches and Ministers of Michigan, in 1881, appointed a committee to prepare a Michigan Manual. This committee reported, in 1883. The Manual was ordered printed and circulated among the churches for examination and criticism; but, on reconsideration, the following vote was passed:

"We have listened with deep interest to the outline of a Manual of Congregationalism as reported by the committee; and we recommend the author, Rev. A. Hastings Ross, to secure the publication of this Manual at his earliest convenience, for the information and aid of Congregational churches, not only in our own State, but throughout the country" (*Minutes*, 1883, 11).

We have, however, enlarged the original draft, that it might the better cover the whole field.

The General Association of Michigan, at its meeting in May, 1883, adopted also the following resolution, covering the chief point or claim of this Pocket Manual, namely:—

"*Resolved*, That the General Association of Michigan deem it to be both orderly and expedient for a church or minister, that may be excluded or expelled from membership in any Association or Conference in connection, on grounds or charges claimed

VI.

to be insufficient or false, to call the attention of the body doing the alleged wrong to the point of grievance, and to invite it to join in calling a mutual council to review the case and advise in the matter; and, on its refusal or neglect to do so, to call an *ex parte* council for the same purposes" (*Minutes*, 9).

The general plan of the present work is similar to that of the "Ohio Manual;" and we are greatly indebted to the General Association of Ohio for its kindness in allowing through its Register so large a use of that work. We have taken whole sections and even pages from it, which we here acknowledge without further indication, but which we could never have ventured to do, had not the "Ohio Manual" been the work of our hands. As the many editions of that Manual have nearly ceased, they for whom it was prepared will be glad to give its most valuable parts a wider circulation in this its enlarged form.

We commit this little Manual to the kind consideration of the churches we love so well, invoking upon it the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

A. HASTINGS ROSS.

Port Huron, Mich.,

July 10th, 1883.

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION.

THE POCKET MANUAL was issued in November, 1883. Some of its principles met considerable opposition ; but, as they became better known, the opposition gradually ceased, until, in 1886, the National Council, meeting in Chicago, passed, without a dissenting vote, resolutions (§ 174) recognizing those principles as sound Congregationalism. In conformity therewith, the General Association of Massachusetts, at its meeting in 1888, recommended that the certification of ministerial standing be thereafter left with the District Conferences or Associations of churches.

Thankful for these encouragements, and desirous that the full system of our free and unifying polity may be given with its checks and safeguards, the book has been revised and enlarged. We have introduced, in place of the Creed and Covenant, the " Statement of Doctrine " and the " Confession of Faith," issued by the Commission of the National Council, in December, 1883 ; also a Constitution for the churches in place of the Stand-

VI B.

ing Rules. The By-Laws and Rules of Order of the National Council are corrected to date. We have also added matters of importance.

We invoke upon the Pocket Manual the continued favor of Christ and of his churches.

A. HASTINGS ROSS.

*Port Huron, Michigan,
November, 1888.*

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS:

	PAGE.
§ 1. Name -----	3
2. Origin.-----	4
3. Progress and Numbers.-----	6

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES:

§ 4. Importance of Doctrine-----	11
5. Their Rule, the Bible-----	11
6. Their General Confessions-----	12
7. Their Church Creeds.-----	12
8. Their Doctrinal Guards to the Ministry.	13
9. Their Guards to Church Membership---	13
10. Their Doctrinal Basis of Union.-----	14
11. Their Liberty in Non-Essentials.-----	15
12. Their Statement of Evangelical Doctrines	15
13. Their Treatment of Weak Believers.----	17

CHAPTER III.

ECCLESIASTICAL POSITION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES:

§ 14. Four Theories of the Christian Church.-	21
15. Constitutive Principles of these Theories.	21

VIII.

I.—*The Church Invisible Becomes Visible in Churches.*

	PAGE.
‡ 16. The Invisible Church-----	22
17. Manifestation of the Invisible Church.--	22
18. A Church.-----	23
19. All Theories Diverge in the Attempted Union of Local Churches-----	23

II.—*How Churches are Formed.*

‡ 20. The Material.-----	24
21. Beginning to Organize.-----	24
22. Completing the Organization-----	25
23. Seeking Church Fellowship.-----	26
24. Legal Relations of Churches-----	27
25. Care in Organization-----	28

III.—*The Constitutive Principle of the Primitive, and the Congregational Churches.*

‡ 26. Meaning of the Term.-----	29
27. The Constitutive Principle.-----	30
28. Ecclesiastical Authority, where Deposited	30
29. Ecclesiastical Societies not Scriptural---	31
30. Proof of the Constitutive Principle-----	31
31. <i>a.</i> Election of Officers -----	31
32. <i>b.</i> The Law of Discipline-----	32
33. <i>c.</i> General Management.-----	33
34. <i>d.</i> Their Autonomy, or Independence, Conceded -----	33

IV.—*The Unifying Principle of the Primitive, and the Congregational Churches.*

‡ 35. The Invisible Spiritual Church Indivisi- ble -----	36
36. The Unifying Principle-----	36
37. Development of the Unifying Principle-	37

i.—*Congregational Councils.*

‡ 38. A Congregational Council what.-----	37
39. Letters Missive-----	37
40. Parties Calling Councils-----	38

IX.

	PAGE.
‡ 41. Membership in a Council-----	38
42. Parties Calling a Council cannot be Mem- bers of it-----	39
43. Parties may Decline to sit in Council.---	40
44. Quorum and Adjournment-----	40
45. Objects of Councils.-----	42
46. Scope of Councils-----	42
47. Kinds of Councils.-----	43
‡ 48. A Singular Council.-----	45
49. A Binary Council.-----	45
50. A Mutual Council-----	46
51. An <i>Ex parte</i> Council.-----	48
‡ 52. Councils should be Fairly Chosen.-----	49
53. Lawyers in Councils.-----	50
54. Result of Council-----	51
55. Procedure in Councils-----	52
56. Reports of Delegates-----	52
ii.— <i>Church Associations.</i>	
‡ 57. An Association of Churches-----	53
58. Kinds of Associations.-----	53
a. District-----	53
b. State-----	53
c. National-----	54
d. Ecumenical-----	54
‡ 59. Names of Associations-----	54
60. Membership in Associations.-----	55
61. Objects of Associations.-----	56
62. Authority of Associations what-----	56
63. Responsibility of Associations-----	56
64. Associations not Presbyterial-----	57
65. Standing in Associations-----	60
a. Ministerial.-----	60
b. Church-----	60
66. Co-ordinate Bodies-----	61
67. Relation of Delegates to Associations----	61
68. Reports of Delegates-----	62
iii.— <i>Ministerial Associations.</i>	
‡ 69. Origin-----	63
70. Nature.-----	63

	PAGE.
‡ 71. Use	63
72. Continuance	64
V.— <i>The Christian Ministry.</i>	
‡ 73. The Ministry a Function and not an Official Relation	64
74. The Ministry not a Priesthood	66
75. The Ministry one Order	66
76. Ministers when Church Officers	68
77. Ordination of Ministers	68
78. Installation of Pastors	71
79. Recognition of Pastors	72
80. Ministerial Standing	73
‡ 81. Once held in Local Churches	74
82. This Standing fell with the Pastoral Theory of the Ministry	75
83. Sometimes held in Ministerial Associations	75
84. Never held in Councils	76
85. Properly held in Associations of Churches	77
‡ 86. Ministerial Discipline	78
‡ 87. By an Association	79
88. By a Council	79
‡ 89. Ministerial and Church Credentials	82
90. Contents of Ministerial Credentials	83
VI.— <i>Church Officers.</i>	
1.— <i>The Pastorate.</i>	
‡ 91. The Pastor	84
92. Induction into Office	85
93. Duties	87
ii.— <i>The Diaconate.</i>	
‡ 94. The Diaconate a Lay Office	87
95. Deaconesses	88
96. Duties of Deacons	88
97. Election of Deacons	88
98. Installation of Deacons	88

XI.

iii.—*Other Church Officers.*

	PAGE.
§ 99. A Church may choose other officers, as—	
<i>a.</i> Clerk.	89
<i>b.</i> Treasurer.....	90
<i>c.</i> Church Board.....	90
<i>d.</i> Committees.....	91
<i>e.</i> Superintendent of Sunday School and Teachers.....	91

VII.—*The Christian Sacraments.*

§ 100. Baptism	91
101. The Lord's Supper.....	92
102. By whom Administered.....	92

VIII.—*Church Discipline.*

§ 103. Offenses Disciplinable.....	93
104. The Rule of Discipline.....	93
§ 105. Private Offenses.....	94
106. Public Scandals.....	95
§ 107. Procedure in Trial.....	95
108. Trial by Committee or Jury.....	95
109. Rules of Evidence.....	96
110. Irregularities in Procedure.....	97
111. Confession.....	97
112. Censures—Lifting censure.....	98
113. Censure of Ministers.....	98
114. Witnesses.....	100
115. Legal Protection of Parties in Discipline	100
116. Membership a Covenant.....	101
§ 117. Dropping Members.....	102
118. Certificate of Membership.....	103
119. Letters of Dismission.....	103
120. Letters from Churches.....	103
121. Letters to Churches not Receiv- ing them	104
122. When Letters cannot be given.....	104
123. Force of Church Letters.....	105
§ 124. Sunday Subscriptions.....	105
125. Voting Members.....	106

XII.

IX.—*Church Worship.*

	PAGE.
§ 126. Each Church regulates its own Worship	107

X.—*Denominational Differences.*

§ 127. Fundamental Differences	108
128. Incidental Differences	109
§ 129. The Baptists	110
130. The Presbyterians	110
131. The Episcopal Methodists	111
132. The Episcopalians	112
133. The Greek and the Roman Catholic Churches	113

CHAPTER IV.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIMITIVE, AND THE CON- GREGATIONAL CHURCHES:

§ 134. The Great Commission	117
135. Activity of the Primitive Churches	118
136. Activity of the Congregational Churches	119
137. Co-operative National Societies	120
138. Theological Seminaries	121

CHAPTER V.

CONGREGATIONAL FORMS, AND RULES:

I.—*Admission of Members.*

§ 139. Articles of Faith	125
§ 140. Statement of Doctrine	126
141. Confession of Faith	131
142.	131
II.—143. Constitution of a Church	134

III.—*Church Letters.*

§ 144. Letter of Dismission	152
145. Letter of Introduction	152
146. Complaint against an Offender	153

XIII.

IV.— <i>Letters Missive.</i>	PAGE.
§ 147. To Organize or Recognize a Church.....	154
148. To Ordain or Recognize a Minister.....	154
149. To Dismiss a Pastor.....	155
150. To Discipline a Minister.....	156
V.—§ 151. <i>Order of Procedure in Councils.</i>	157
VI.— <i>Parliamentary Rules.</i>	
§ 152. Rules of Order a Common Law.	159
153. Bringing in Business.....	160
154. Disposing of Business.....	161

Motions and Questions:

§ 155. Amendable..	163
156. Unamendable	163
157. Undebatable.....	164
158. Subsidiary.....	165
159. Incidental.....	167
160. Privileged.....	167
161. Requiring a Two-Thirds Vote..	167

CHAPTER VI.

NATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL BODIES.

§ 162. National Synods.....	171
163. The National Council.....	171
§ 164. Constitution	172
165. By-Laws.....	176
166. Rules of Order.....	181

SUPPLEMENTAL.

§ 167. How to Form a Church Association.....	187
168. Service for Administering Infant Baptism.....	189
169. Procedure in Cases of Common Fame.....	192
170. Citation of the Accused.....	192
171. Can a Corporation Authorize a Member to Cast Its Ballot?.....	194
172. Can an Informal Ballot be made Formal?.....	194
173. Consolidation of an Ecclesiastical Society with its Church.....	195

XIV.

	PAGE.
174. National Council on Ministerial Stand- ing.....	193
175. Ministerial and Church Standing Guarded.....	200
176. Origin and Value of Councils.....	205
177. Service for Administering the Lord's Supper.....	209
178. Ordination of Deacons.....	212
179. Laying a Corner-Stone.....	216
180. Order and Covenant for Dedication of a Church.....	217
181. Marriage Services.	220
182. Burial Services....	227

POCKET MANUAL
OF
CONGREGATIONALISM.

I.

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS.

“Being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone.”—PAUL.

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS.

1. Name. The Greek word, *ekklesia*, generally translated in the New Testament "church," means primarily a popular or other assembly legally summoned; in the heathen sense, the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those possessed of the right of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs; in the Jewish sense, a congregation, assembly of people on solemn occasions or for worship; in the Christian sense, a congregation of the followers of Christ Jesus, organized for worship and Christian labor. Now the words congregational, congregationalist, and congregationalism, are derived from the word congregation; and they, like the word translated "church," have primary reference to an assembly. When, therefore, they are applied to a form of church government, they indicate that the local congregation of believers occupies the determinative place in

the system, such as the Pope occupies in the Papacy, the Bishop (Episcopos) in the Episcopacy, the Presbyter in Presbyterianism. Strictly, therefore, the congregationalists are all those who confine the right and exercise of ecclesiastical authority under Christ, to each local congregation of believers, called the church of that place. In history, however, the word has a technical and limited signification; and the Congregationalists, in England also called Independents, are a denomination of Christians distinguished from other denominations, also congregationally governed, by marks of doctrine, or of rite, or of both. Thus, the Baptists, the Disciples of Christ, and others, are congregationally governed, but they are known by other names and are distinguished from the Congregationalists in all histories, records, associations, fellowships, statistics and activities. As a denomination, the Congregationalists are as distinct as are the Presbyterians or any other denomination.

2. Origin. The apostolic and primitive churches were confessedly congregational in their form of government (§ 34), but

their independence and rights slowly disappeared before the encroachments of prelatical and hierarchical ideas and practices, until they were lost in the Papacy. The Great Reformation was a partial return to the liberty of the primitive churches. Luther apprehended the congregational idea of the church as early as 1523, but the Synod of Homburg, in 1526, made the earliest formal statement of it. The model prepared was too revolutionary for the princes of Germany to indorse, so it was surrendered for another. Modern Congregationalism first appeared in England under Robert Browne, in or about 1580. It took a more permanent form in the Pilgrim Church organized at Scrooby, England, 1606, which removed to Holland, in 1607 and 1608, and thence to Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. It is the claim of this system of church government, and one now generally conceded (§ 34), that it is a development of the principles revealed in the New Testament, and embodied in the polity of the primitive churches. Hence we may truly say that the Congregationalists have their origin in the planting of churches by the Apostles,

but their revival in the early part of the seventeenth century in England.

3. Progress and Numbers. Arising under centralized and opposing systems, the Congregational theory (§§ 26, 27) of the Christian Church has made rapid progress, and its prevalence is of unspeakable interest, since it bears in its bosom civil as well as religious liberty. It has a strong foothold in England and the United States, chiefly in the Baptist and in the Congregational churches.* The relation of polity

*The Congregational churches in the world (in 1880-1883) are located as follows: Africa, 59; Australia, 180; Austria, 1; Canada, 123; Ceylon, 13; Channel Islands, 12; China, 36; England, 2,298; France, 3; Germany, 2; Ireland, 31; India, 77; Japan, 16; Madagascar, 1,142; Micronesia, 40; Mexico, 1; Newfoundland, 4; New Zealand, 22; North American Indians, 9; Russia, 1; Scotland, 108; Sandwich Islands, 57; Spain, 3; Travancore, 6; Turkey, 94; United States, 3,936; Wales, 876; West Indies, 38; Polynesia, 292 ministers. Total, 9,188 churches, besides those in Polynesia not given.—(*Canadian Cong. Year Book*, 1882-3; *United States Cong. Year Book*, 1883.). Baptist churches in the world: North America,

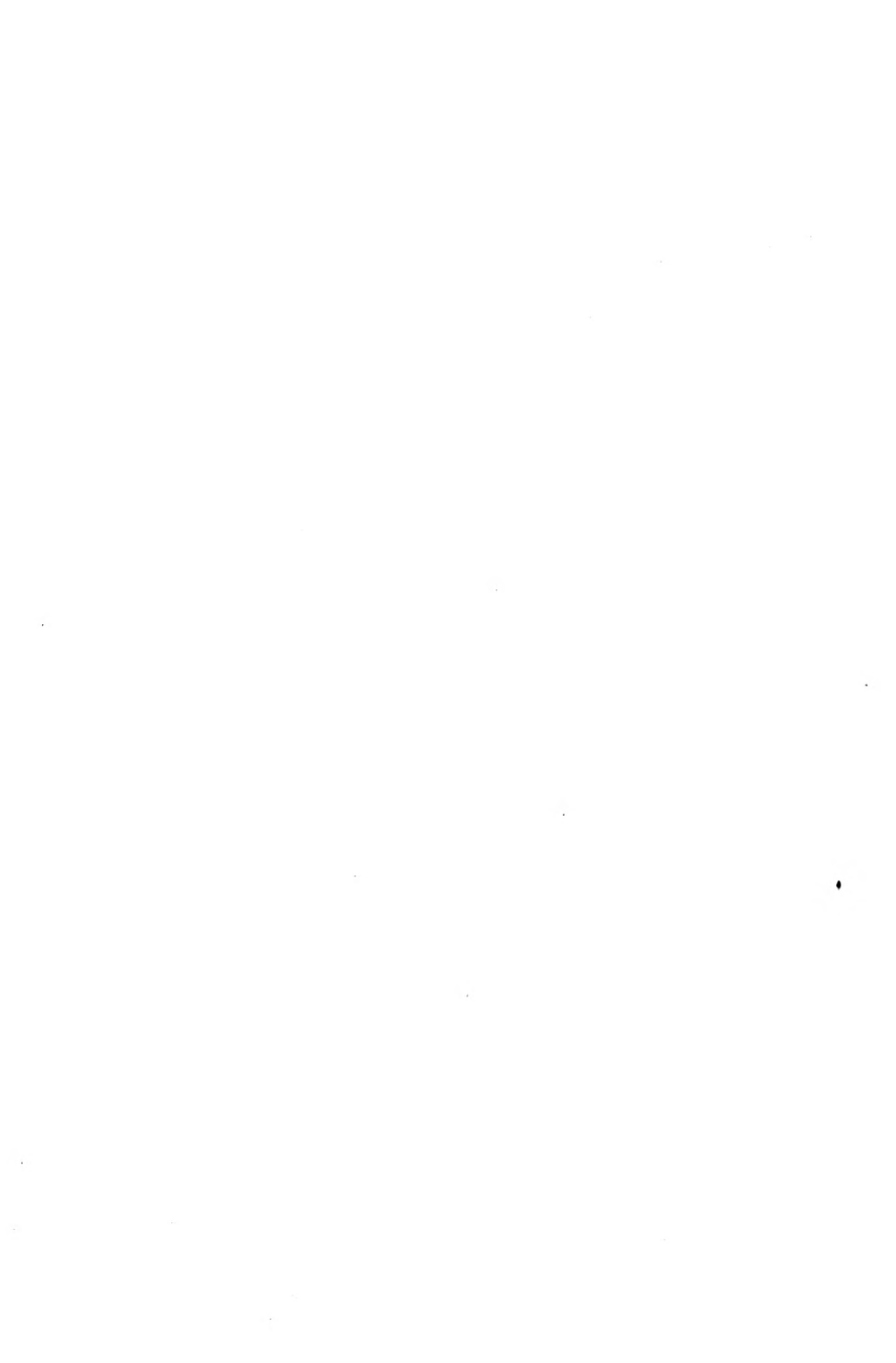
to civil liberty favors the future growth of Congregationalism.

27,213; South America, 8; Europe, 3,034. Asia, 596; Africa, 60; Australia, 143; total churches (1882), 31,054. To these must be added in the United States: Free-Will Baptists, 1,485; Anti-Mission Baptists, 900; Disciples of Christ, 4,768; Seventh-Day Baptists, 87; Six-Principle Baptists, 20; total, 7,260 churches. Grand total, 38,314. (*Minutes Mich. Bapt. Convention, 1882.*)

II.

DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE CON- GREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

“If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”—
JESUS CHRIST.



DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

4. Importance of Doctrine. Doctrine is more than polity; the life than raiment. Although polity reacts on doctrine and may subvert it, as in the case of the Papacy, still the question "What is the doctrinal position of the Congregationalists?" is far more vital than this other, "What is the form of their church government?" Soundness in the faith is of the first importance.

5. Their Rule the Bible. The Congregational Churches "agree in belief that the Holy Scriptures are the sufficient and only infallible rule of religious faith and practice." This clear and full declaration our churches put into the constitution of their triennial National Council; for it only reaffirms their previous doctrinal position taken in confessions, creeds and standard writers. But the Holy Scriptures are variously understood, therefore the Congrega-

tional Churches have set forth their interpretation of them.

6. Their General Confessions. After the custom of other communions, the Congregationalists have, at different times, either adopted or framed elaborate Confessions of Faith; first the Westminster Confession (Presbyterian), in 1648; the Savoy Declaration, in 1658; the Boston Confession, in 1680; and the Burial Hill Declaration, in 1865. The three former are elaborate and almost identical; the latter is brief. Our churches regard these and such like confessions as declaratory only; denying to Assembly, Synod, Council, Conference, or any other body, civil or ecclesiastical, the authority to impose any confession upon the churches of Christ. Hence these confessions are and must remain declaratory only. No member, deacon, pastor, or church is required to subscribe to them, though they are rightly made tests of church (§§ 10, 23) and associational (§§ 10, 63) fellowship.

7. Their Church Creeds. Each Congregational Church, at its organization, adopts such articles of faith for its creed as

it deems most scriptural, embracing little more than the fundamental doctrines. All are evangelical. Assent to its creed is required of every candidate for membership.

8. Their Doctrinal Guards to the Ministry. The Congregational churches guard the ministry from doctrinal error by examination of all candidates for the sacred calling, and of all ordained ministers on recognizing or installing them in a new pastorate. This examination respects their mental, moral, and spiritual qualifications, their doctrinal belief, and their ecclesiastical and church standing (§ 79).

9. Their Guards to Church Membership. The Congregationalists hold that only converted persons should be in full membership in Christ's visible churches; that all such persons are entitled to the communion of saints; that no church or churches can rightly exclude from membership, by doctrinal or other tests, any one whom the Lord accepts as his; and that, therefore, the terms of admission should be made to correspond, as nearly as possible, with the scriptural conditions of admittance into the kingdom of heaven (§§ 13, 20).

Baptized children are not in full church membership; but they "must credibly show and profess their own repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, before they come to the Lord's table, or are recognized as members in full communion" (Boston Platform Pt. II., vii, 4).

10. Their Doctrinal Basis of Union.

The Congregational churches make the common evangelical doctrines the basis of their Christian fellowship and union. This has ever been substantially their position. The Congregational churches in the United States, in organizing a triennial National Council at Oberlin, in 1871, adopted the following statement as the doctrinal basis of union, namely: "They agree in belief that the Holy Scriptures are the sufficient and only infallible rule of religious faith and practice; their interpretation thereof being in substantial accordance with the great doctrines of the Christian faith, commonly called evangelical, held in our churches from the early times, and sufficiently set forth by former General Councils" (§ 164). Any church holding these

doctrines we admit to our fellowship and union.

The General Associations of the several States, with few exceptions, and generally the District Associations within these States, have doctrinal bases, as tests, which contain little more than the consensus of belief in all Christendom (§ 12). The bodies which have no express doctrinal basis have an implied one covered by such terms as "Evangelical," etc. Conformity in belief to these creeds is required of churches and ministers joining said bodies.

11. Their Liberty in Non-Essentials.

It is patent to every one that among the evangelical denominations there is a wide diversity, both in doctrinal belief and in rites, ceremonies, rituals, governments, and customs. Now, the Congregationalists, while holding firmly the essential truths of the Gospel, say of these other matters: "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind."

12. Their Statement of Evangelical Doctrines. The doctrines held to be essential are happily expressed in the Burial Hill Declaration, adopted by the Congregational

churches of the United States, in National Council, at Boston, in 1865, and are as follows:

“Thus recognizing the unity of the church of Christ in all the world, and knowing that we are but one branch of Christ’s people, while adhering to our peculiar faith and order, we extend to all believers the hand of Christian fellowship, upon the basis of those great fundamental truths in which all Christians should agree. With them we confess our faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the only living and true God; in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, who is exalted to be our Redeemer and King; and in the Holy Comforter, who is present in the church to regenerate and sanctify the soul.

“With the whole church we confess the common sinfulness and ruin of our race, and acknowledge that it is only through the work accomplished by the life and expiatory death of Christ, that believers in him are justified before God, receive the remission of sins, and, through the presence and grace of the Holy Comforter, are delivered from the power of sin and perfected in holiness.

"We believe, also, in the organized and visible church; in the ministry of the Word; in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; in the resurrection of the body; and in the final judgment, the issues of which are eternal life and everlasting punishment.

"We receive these truths on the testimony of God, given through prophets and apostles, and in the life, the miracles, the death, the resurrection of his Son, our Divine Redeemer—a testimony preserved for the church in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which were composed by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

13. Their Treatment of Weak Believers. The same National Council declare, however, that "those who desire to profess their faith in Christ and to follow him, may be admitted into the church, though weak in the faith, because weak Christians, if sincere, have the substance of that penitent faith and holiness which is required in church members, and such have most need of the ordinances for their confirmation and growth in grace. Such charity

and tenderness are to be used, that the weakest Christian, if sincere, may not be excluded or discouraged" (Boston Platform, Pt. II., vii, 2).

III

ECCLESIASTICAL POSITION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

“With freedom did Christ set us free:
stand fast therefore, and be not entangled
again in a yoke of bondage.”—PAUL

ECCLESIASTICAL POSITION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

14. Four Theories of the Christian Church. The doctrine of the Christian Church, treats of the nature and development of the church. It is the only grand doctrine respecting which there is a radical difference of view among the evangelical denominations. On this all Christians are divided into four exclusive hosts: the Papal, the Episcopal, the Presbyterial, and the Congregational. Other theories are only compounds of these. We give the theory or doctrine maintained by the Congregational churches.

15. Constitutive Principles of these Theories. Each one of these four theories is dominated by a single principle which constitutes the polity what it is, and which is therefore called its constitutive principle. The principle about which the Papacy is built is Infallible Primacy (§ 133);

that about which the Episcopacy is built is Apostolic Succession (§ 132); while that of Presbyterianism is Authoritative Representation (§ 130); and that of Congregationalism is the Autonomy or Independence of each local church (§§ 26, 27, 34).

I.—The Church Invisible Becomes Visible in Churches.

16. The Invisible Church. The Congregational churches believe in the one invisible Catholic Church founded on the Rock Christ Jesus, composed of all regenerate souls on earth and in heaven; the general assembly and church of the first born (Heb. xii, 23); the church universal, militant, and triumphant.

17. Manifestation of the Invisible Church. This church universal continually manifests itself on earth in local congregations of believers, called churches in the New Testament; as "the churches of the Gentiles," "the churches of Christ," "the churches of God," "the churches of Galatia," "the churches of Judea," etc.; beside these

general expressions, about thirty local churches are mentioned by name. Each and every local assembly of believers, though meeting in a private house, is called a church by the inspired writers. The word "church" is never used in the New Testament to designate a visible body of believers larger than a single congregation.

18. A Church. "Those believers who dwell together in one place become a church by their recognition of each other, and their mutual agreement to observe Christ's ordinances in one society. Their covenant with Christ to be his disciples and obedient subjects becomes, by that mutual recognition and agreement, their covenant with each other to be fellow-disciples and helpers of each other's faith in a distinct church" (Boston Plat., Pt. II., i. 4).

19. All Theories diverge in the Attempted Union of Local Churches. There is essential harmony of opinion respecting the invisible church; but respecting the manifestations of that church in separate congregations, radically divergent views are held and embodied in contending systems of church government. The

point of divergence in view and practice is not so much the nature of the church universal as the nature and relations of the particular churches.

Let us now develop the theory or doctrine of the Christian Church held by the Congregationalists and embodied in the system known as Congregationalism.

II.—How Churches are Formed.

20. The Material. If there be two or three believers (Matt. xviii, 20) in a community or neighborhood where there is no church at all, or no church which they can conscientiously join or with which they can worship, or where there is need of forming a new church to meet religious wants, such believers constitute the material out of which a church may be organized. They may be already members of a church or of churches or only converts not yet admitted to church privileges.

21. Beginning to Organize a Church. If such believers feel it to be their duty to organize themselves into a church, they can do so in this way:—

a. They should first meet together for prayer and consultation and agreement that their action may be considerate and harmonious.

b. Those holding membership in other churches should obtain letters of dismission and recommendation for the purpose of constituting a new church (§§ 119, 120).

c. Those not members, if any, should give testimony of their repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and testify to their desire to walk in church fellowship and privileges (§ 13).

d. They should then all enter into covenant, written or verbal, to live and worship and labor together in church relations (§ 141). They thereby become a church of Christ, if built upon Him, according to His word (§ 18).

22. Completing the Organization. Churches are permanent bodies; and they, therefore, need articles of faith (§ 139) and standing rules (§ 143), to guide them. They need also some form of admission to membership (§§ 140-142). Hence they should adopt these, in order to complete their organization, and as the condition of church

fellowship (§ 23), and the test of pulpit and Sunday school teaching (§ 139). A church is not fully organized until it can show what it believes, and how its affairs are to be managed. As the articles of faith and the standing rules constitute both the condition of fellowship and the ground of peace and prosperity, great care should be had in framing and adopting them. When adopted, a local church is not to stand alone in its completeness.

23. Seeking Church Fellowship. A church so organized should not stand alone. There are others like it, with which it is in spiritual union. Christ, its Head, prayed that the spiritual union of His churches might be manifested (John xvii, 20-23). A church must, therefore, seek church fellowship (§ 35). This it may do in two ways (§ 37):—

a. It may call a council of churches (§§ 38, 40) to examine the grounds or reasons of its formation, its articles of faith, and standing rules (§§ 7, 14, 143), and to approve of the same, if sound and correct; and to give it the right hand of recognition and fellowship. This is the old way; of

great value, if there be doubt about the expediency of organizing a church, but needing to be supplemented by the later and more permanent way, namely:—

b. The church should join the association of churches (§ 57) nearest by. This it may do by presenting a copy of its articles of faith and standing rules to the association, and asking admission into membership. If approved by the association, it is admitted by vote under the constitution of the body (§ 60). If the church by changing its articles of faith and its rules, or by its disorderly conduct violates the cardinal conditions on which it was received, it can be suspended or expelled from membership in the association (§ 62). For fellowship is reciprocal (§ 64); its rights and responsibilities are co-ordinate. Hence those desiring its privileges must piously observe the conditions of its existence. See § 176.

24. Legal Relations of Churches. Since churches need meeting houses and other property, they fall into legal relations and conditions which they must observe. The incorporation of churches as such without an ecclesiastical society (§ 29) in con-

current action with them, is authorized in nearly all the States*. This is the primitive method, restored after centuries of union of church and state; and it is to be preferred as simple, adequate, and alone in harmony with the principles of pure, free, and independent churches. Trustees should be chosen by the church itself (§ 143.vii), into whose control, under the laws of the State wherein the church is situated, the church property is confided. (§ 171).

25. Care in Organization. Too great care cannot be had in organizing churches, lest strife and death be organized into them. Every step should be sure and legal, and every act should be recorded. To begin well is to end well. No haste should be allowed to invalidate proceedings, and the legal conditions of incorporation should be

* Having occasion, in 1879, to examine the laws respecting religious corporations in the United States, we found that of the thirty-six States whose laws were examined, twenty-eight by general statutes, and four more by special acts, authorized the incorporation of churches as churches without societies. Only five defined the qualifications of voters in religious corporations.

strictly observed. As these are different in different States, no rule can here be given*.

III.—The Constitutive Principle of the Primitive, and the Congregational Churches.

26. Meaning of the Term. The constitutive principle of any thing is that which makes it what it is, determines its characteristics, distinguishes it from everything else, and answers all questions about its nature and development. Thus the constitutive principle of Congregationalism is that which gives the system individuality, distinguishes it from other polities, pervades all its institutions, and gives the answer to every query regarding the peculiar constitution, outward and inward, of all Congregational

* Each State Association could wisely publish in its Minutes either the law itself or a digest of it, as the General Association of Michigan printed a digest of the general statutes of that State respecting religious corporations (*Minutes* for 1880, pp. 41-65), and issued a reprint for the use of church clerks and trustees.

bodies. It is the principle by which all development is shaped and limited.

27. The Constitutive Principle. This principle is the autonomy or complete independence under Christ of each local congregation of believers (§ 15). A church is subject to its Head, and to His revealed law; but in its legitimate sphere as a church it is subject to no other head, law, or authority. It is independent, autonomous; no conference, synod, presbytery, council, or magistrate having the power to review, annul, or coerce its action. Each has the right to manage its own affairs.

28. Ecclesiastical Authority—where Deposited. Christ bestowed upon His churches the requisite authority to manage their own affairs, and deposited this authority in the members. Thus by majority vote each church has power to elect its own officers (§ 31), to carry on its discipline (§ 104); indeed, to transact whatever business belongs to an independent body (§§ 30-34). The authority is not divided between the officers and the members; but it resides wholly in the members, who can act, when necessary, without pastor or deacons.

The pastor or presiding officer has, the fore, no power of veto over church action.

29. Ecclesiastical Societies not Scriptural. There is no scriptural warrant for an ecclesiastical society separate from and in concurrent action with the church (§ 24). The church itself should hold property, and manage all its pecuniary affairs. "This is the New Testament plan, so far as it hints any plan at all" (Dexter). The church can do this through a board of trustees (§ 143,vii). An ecclesiastical society originated in the union of church and state, and, though having some advantages, endangers, as our history proves, the purity and freedom of the churches. (§ 173).

30. Proof of the Constitutive Principle. Here extreme brevity is necessary, and we refer to our standard writers for a fuller presentation of the argument.

31. a. Election of Officers. In the selection of the apostle Matthias, the whole church took an equal part with the eleven (Acts i, 15-26). The seven alms-distributors, whose office developed into that of deacon (§ 94), were chosen by the members, and set apart to their work by the apostles

(Acts vi, 1-6). The primitive churches elected their own delegates (Acts xv, 2; 2 Cor. viii, 19). The manner of appointing *elders, bishops, pastors*—names of the same officers (§ 75)—is not indicated in the New Testament; though ecclesiastical history shows that the people had a voice in their selection. Whenever the New Testament indicates the manner of an election, the membership had the duty of choosing officers laid upon them by the apostles.

32. b. The Law of Discipline. The law was given by Christ (Matt. xviii, 15-20), and it limits appeal to the local church of which the guilty party is a member (§ 105). So clear is this limitation that Dean Alford is constrained to say: "Nothing can be further from the spirit of our Lord's command than proceedings in what are oddly enough called 'ecclesiastical courts.'" This was the view taken by the apostles; for Paul directs the Corinthian Church to discipline a member (1 Cor. v, 13), which it did by majority vote (2 Cor. ii, 6). John did not excommunicate Diotrephes, who prated against him with malicious words, and cast the apostle's friends out of the church (3 John

9, 10). In harmony with His own law, He who walked "in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," "the seven churches," laid upon each church individually the duty of discipline.

33. c. General Management. Each local church is presented in the New Testament as acting independently of the control or supervision of others. In their intercourse with one another, they acted freely. There is not one trace in the New Testament of the subordination of one church to another, or to any number of churches.

34. d. Their Autonomy or Independence Conceded. Of the leading church historians we quote the following, no one of whom was a Congregationalist: "Every church was essentially independent of every other" (Waddington, *Eccl. Hist.*, 43). "The apostles founded Christian Churches, all based on the same principles, all sharing common privileges, * * but all quite independent of each other" (Archbishop Whately, *Kingdom of Heaven*, Essay II., §§ 20, 136, 137). "Every town congregation of ancient Christianity was a church. The constitution of that church was a congrega-

tional constitution. In St. Paul's Epistles, in the writings of Clement Romanus, of Ignatius, and of Polycarp, the congregation is the highest organ of the Spirit as well as the power of the church" (Baron von Bunsen, *Hippolytus and his Age*, III, 220). "Neither in the New Testament, nor in any ancient document whatever, do we find any thing recorded from which it might be inferred that any of the minor churches were at all dependent on, or looked up for direction to, those of greater magnitude or consequence; on the contrary, several things occur therein which put it out of all doubt that every one of them enjoyed the same rights, and was considered as being on a footing of the most perfect equality with the rest" (Mosheim, *Hist. I.*, 196). "The primitive churches were independent bodies, competent to appoint their own officers, and to administer their own government, without reference or subordination to any central authority or foreign power. No fact connected with the history of the primitive churches is more fully established or more generally conceded" (Coleman, *Primitive Christianity*, 95). "Each church was an

absolutely independent community" (Milman, *Latin Christ.* I., 21). The last edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica says that the "constitution" of the primitive churches was "thoroughly democratic" (vol. V., 699). "The theory upon which the public worship of the primitive churches proceeded was that each community was complete in itself, and that in every act of worship every element of the community was present." "Every such community seems to have had a complete organization, and there is no trace of the dependence of any one community upon any other." "At the beginning of the [fourth] century * * * the primitive type still survived; the government of the churches was in the main a democracy; at the end of the century the primitive type had almost disappeared; the clergy were a separate and governing class." "In the first ages of its history, while on the one hand it was a great and living faith, so on the other hand it was a vast and organized brotherhood. And being a brotherhood, it was a democracy" (Hatch's Bampton Lectures (1880) on *Org. Early Christ. Chhs.*, 141, 213, 216).

What is thus conceded by these and other writers, pre-eminent as scholars, and adherents of other systems, we may consider as proved beyond reasonable doubt by the facts of history. If, then, the churches become apostolic again, they will be democratic, independent, congregational. They will become again "organized brotherhoods," each a democracy complete in itself.

IV.—The Unifying Principle of the Primitive, and the Congregational Churches.

35. The Invisible Spiritual Church Indivisible. "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." There is but one kingdom of heaven. This kingdom is indivisible. Separation from it is apostasy from Christ. All true believers are one in Christ Jesus. Hence Christ's prayer (John xvii, 23) was for visible unity.

36. The Unifying Principle. This principle is the free and equal fellowship under Christ, of all true churches; *free*, as becomes independent bodies; *equal*, as it is not the numbers but the individuality of the several

churches that constitutes the ground of fellowship (§ 60); *under Christ*, so that no one can rightly surrender its independence for union; *true churches*, as there can be no union with societies not founded on the Rock of Ages (§§ 10, 20). This principle made the primitive churches one, and it has virtue in it to make all Christ's churches again one in visible fellowship and co-operation (§58, d).

37. Development of the Unifying Principle. This principle, without impairing the liberty of the churches, has been developed into two systems of unity, which we give in detail.

i.—Congregational Councils.

38. A Congregational Council what. A council is an assembly of such churches by pastor and delegate (and of such individuals) as may be invited by letters missive, to advise on a matter or matters specified in the call, or germane thereto.

39. Letters Missive. The letters calling the council are designated Letters Missive. They should be the same in form for

each church or individual invited on any council, should state precisely the object respecting which advice or light is sought, and should give a list of all churches and individuals called to sit in council. If, after the issuing of the letters missive, any alteration or addition, whether of matter or of members, be desired, such alteration or addition can be effected only by the issuance to all that have been invited of a supplementary letter missive specifying the desired changes.

40. Parties calling Councils. The parties calling a council are persons wishing to organize a church (§§ 20-25); a church or churches; an association of churches or of ministers (§ 50); an aggrieved member or members of a church or association of churches or of ministers (§ 51): any party or parties in the fellowship of the Congregational churches needing advice. The privilege is as wide as the need, of which the churches invited in any given case must determine for themselves. Past usage cannot bind here, but only be a guide.

41. Membership in a Council. Mem-

bership in a council has been fixed by the letter missive (§ 39). A council cannot add to or take from its own membership. It cannot invite to honorary membership in itself. The party or parties calling it have determined its membership, and no one can change it. This is fundamental to the nature of councils, and no emergency can justify a violation of the rule. The party or parties calling the council cannot by committee or otherwise change its membership, except by a supplemental letter (§ 39). To declare a minority (§ 44) that may respond to the call to be a council, or to be the council invited, is subversive of councils.

42. No party or parties calling a Council can be members of it. The reason is, that they ask for impartial advice from disinterested persons, while they are by necessity interested parties. Their interest varies with the occasion, but no party will call a council without some interest in the result. Hence the rule is essential to the impartial nature of the result. In case an association of churches or of ministers join in calling a council, no

church, minister or laymen, in such association, or within its bounds, can be permitted to sit in said council, since all directly or indirectly are parties to the calling of the council, or are interested in the council.

43. Any party invited to sit in Council may decline. As the party or parties calling are free to choose whom they will under certain limitations (§§ 42, 52), so the party invited, having cause, may decline to accept the invitation, and send the reasons for its action. If any church or individual be invited with whom fellowship cannot be had, the invitation should be declined. No church or person accepting the invitation can challenge or exclude another, since the rights of all are equal; nor can the council itself exclude a member or challenge his vote, since none were compelled to accept the call, and the nature of councils forbids the challenge.

44. Quorum and Adjournment. *a.* A quorum in a council of churches is a majority of all who have right of membership in it (§§ 39, 42). A minority, if composed of only one person, certainly if composed of two, can adjourn the council to a fixed

time and place. To this end it can and should effect a temporary organization and enrolment; but it can legally transact no other business, except to keep a record of its doings.

A party or parties cannot by vote or otherwise transmute an assembled minority into a majority or into a legal council, by declaring it to be the council called (§ 41). The letter missive cannot in this way be subverted, without destroying councils as guards of purity and peace.

In the case of a **Singular** council (§ 48), or of a **Binary** council (§ 49), there being no controversy or doubt involved, a minority sometimes acts as a council by general consent. But even here, as in cases of ordination, important interests are involved, which require the guard of a legal quorum. As a violation of a rule becomes a precedent to be quoted, security demands, at whatever cost in time and money, that there be no recognition of minorities assuming to act as legal councils.

b. If a council be called to meet at a fixed time and place, or if it, on assembling, adjourn to a fixed time and place, it must

meet at the time and place specified, or else its legal existence is destroyed. An adjournment without day also destroys its existence. In none of these cases can a council legally act afterwards. Neither the officers of a council nor the parties calling it, have power to postpone an adjourned meeting; but the officers may be empowered by a special vote to postpone or call the council at their discretion. A council lapsed in one of these ways can be assembled again by new letters missive, which make it a new council.

45. Objects of Councils. A council may be called for various objects: to advise respecting the organization or dissolution of a church; the ordination, recognition or installation, dismissal, or discipline of a minister; wrongs of aggrieved members of churches and associations; church troubles, and any other matter of common concern to the churches. Only installed pastors require a council for dismissal.

46. Scope of Councils. A council is limited in its action by the letters missive (§ 39). It cannot examine into things not

directly or indirectly covered by the said letters. While called for one purpose, it cannot do what is not involved in that purpose. If called to dismiss a pastor, it can make all inquiries necessary to a right result respecting that pastor's character and conduct, since his dismissal must be either with or without papers of commendation; but great care should be exercised lest the scope of councils be enlarged beyond their legitimate boundaries.

47. Kinds of Councils. It is of the greatest importance both to the understanding of the subject and to the peace of the churches, that there be a consistent and complete classification of councils. And when classified they should be appropriately named. The classification and names must rest on the same principle throughout, and not partly on one principle and partly on another principle, as unfortunately is now the case. Thus, the Boston Platform and Dr. Dexter make three kinds of councils, "Advisory," "Mutual," and "*Ex parte*." But as all councils are advisory, and since the principle of classification is not the same in all the kinds, con-

fusion in thought, and trouble in practice have occurred, and are inevitable.

If we seek the principle of classification in the result of councils, then all are reduced to Advisory; if, in the objects, then the list is too long, and the names of two classes, Mutual and *Ex parte*, must be given up, which will not be done; if we call them Ordinary and Extraordinary, then the subdivisions lie open to the above difficulties. We see no better way than to classify and name them on the principle of the parties calling them, since two of them have been so named of old, and no change of name in them can be hoped for. We must find co-ordinate names for all the kinds of councils.

To avoid confusion by unity of principle and completeness of comprehension, we have ventured to present the following classification of councils. Since the names Mutual and *Ex parte* are not likely ever to be given up, the other names must be made co-ordinate with them. This consistent arrangement will give four kinds of councils, namely: Singular, Binary Mutual, and *Ex parte*. These names, if barbarous,

are nevertheless the best we can find, to two of which we have become accustomed, while all are co-ordinate, and include all councils.

48. *a.* Singular Council. This kind of council is called by a single party standing alone in the transaction. The party calling it has no other party in view, but acts singly. A company of believers desiring to form themselves into a church, a church already formed, or any other single party, acts in calling a council as one person; and the council so called is a Singular Council. No matter what the object or the result of the council, the fact that but one party is concerned in calling it, distinguishes it from all other councils, and so appropriately names it.

49. *b.* A Binary Council. This name expresses a duality of parties in friendly agreement and concurrent action. They are not in any controversy or difficulty between themselves. Councils of ordination, installation or recognition, and often of dismissal, are examples. A council called by a minister and a friendly church, to inquire into any matter, as the minister's standing,

or the action of a third party with which the minister may have had a controversy, or by which he may have been expelled, is not a Mutual, but a Binary Council, because called by parties in agreement. Good order requires that such councils should never be called Mutual; for they are not Mutual, as defined by our usage and standards.

50. c. A Mutual Council. The term Mutual implies also two parties, but parties in "difficulty or controversy" between themselves (*Boston Platform*, pp, 47, 48, 52, 53). The parties agree so far as to join in calling the council, but disagree as to matters respecting which advice is sought. "Occasions, calling for the formation of Mutual Councils, are always understood to imply the existence of two parties, which sustain to each other such a relation, as to render it expedient to deviate from the common practice." Those occasions are "cases of controversy" (Upham's *Ratio Disciplinæ*, §§ 159, 158). The parties stand in some things over against each other, not in mutual admiration and love, but in mutual antagonism or controversy. "Case of con-

troversy in general between a church and its pastor; cases of controversy between a church and a private member, or members" (Upham, *Ibid.*), call for Mutual Councils. To which may be added, cases of controversy or grievance between a minister or a church and an association (§ 40). Such councils are the only ones strictly mutual, since those called by two parties for other cases (§ 49) are radically distinguished from these by the absence of controversy.

In the selection of the members of a Mutual Council, each party chooses one-half, with no right or privilege of challenge in either party. Still, fair minded churches and men should ever be scrupulously selected (§ 52). If the right of challenge were to be allowed, a strong church could use the right to crush out any attempt at redress of grievances made by a weak member unjustly dealt with.

And the parties need not call the council through the mediation of a church, as is sometimes held. Magistrates as well as churches called councils in the early days. As late as 1716, Increase Mather, in "A Disquisition concerning Ecclesiastical Coun-

cils," says: "There have been great disputes on the question, *Who has Power to Convoke a Synod?* Whether it belongs to magistrates or to pastors. I shall not insist upon that enquiry, only say, that if we keep to Scripture, churches have this power belonging to them" (12 *Cong. Quarterly*, 246). It cannot, therefore, be affirmed that by usage none but churches can issue the call for councils. Since a minister in connection stands, as a minister, in relation of fellowship with the churches, he may, in case of injury by an association, appeal to the churches for inquiry and advice, asking the body doing the wrong to join with him in calling a council for that end. There is no violation of principle in so doing. As formerly a pastor could join with his church in calling a council, so, in the wider view of the ministerial function, a minister may join with an association in calling a council of churches.

51. d. An Ex parte Council. The qualifying term here implies two parties, but parties in controversy so intense that one party will not consent to join with the other in calling a Mutual Council. If a

party be unjustly dealt with, either by a church or by an association or conference in connection, the aggrieved may in a courteous manner call the attention of the party doing the wrong to the grievance, and ask it to join in calling a Mutual Council; and, in case the request be refused or unduly neglected, the aggrieved party may call a council to review the case and give advice. Such a council is rightly called an *Ex Parte* Council.

The first thing for an *Ex parte* Council to do after organization is to offer itself as a Mutual Council to the party doing the alleged wrong. If its offer be refused, it may proceed to action and issue its result.

52. Councils should be fairly chosen.

It is of the utmost importance that impartial churches and men be chosen on all councils. In Mutual Councils "each party is supposed to look after his own interests; and the courts will not scrutinize very closely the materials of a Mutual Council; actual partiality must be proved. But in *Ex parte* Councils the court have set aside results that they would willingly have enforced on the suggestion of a possible

unfairness" (Buck, *Mass. Eccl. Law*, 219). Nothing could be more abhorrent to Christian honor and the principles of our polity than for a party to choose a council from ascertained bias or partiality. A council so selected in whole or in major part is unworthy of recognition, and its result should have no legal or ecclesiastical weight.

53. Lawyers in Councils. It is held by some denominations that it is not consistent with the nature of the church (1 Cor. vi. 1-11), or conducive to its peace, for lawyers as such to be admitted to conduct a case before the local church or before a court or council of churches. Yet men so trained, if church members, may assist as Christian counsellors any party needing help in the conduct of his case. But, if such counsellors are members of the body before which the case is brought, they justly lose both voice and vote in making up the result.* The winsome spirit of Christian

*As this is a matter of growing importance we give the usages and rules of other denominations:

The Baptist churches (§ 129): "It would not be proper for any member on trial be-

love, and not the rivalries of the court house, should control all trials before churches and councils.

54. Result of Council. The formal utterance of a council is called the Result. This Result, in respect to matters of fact and jurisdiction, provided the council be fairly

fore the church, to bring a person who is not a member to appear as his advocate and plead his cause.”—Hiscox’s *Directory*.

The Methodist Episcopal Church (§ 131): “The accused shall have the right to call to his assistance, as counsel, any member in good and regular standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church.”—*Discipline* (1872) § 347.

The Presbyterian Church (§ 130): “No professional counsel shall be permitted to appear and plead in cases of process in any of our ecclesiastical courts. But if any accused person feels unable to represent and plead his own cause to advantage, he may request any minister or elder, belonging to the judicatory before which he appears, to prepare and exhibit his cause as he may judge proper. But the minister or elder so engaged, shall not be allowed * * to sit in judgment as a member of the judicatory.”—*Discipline*, XXI. This rule is rigidly enforced.—*Digest* (1873), 513, 514.

called and impartially conducted (§ 52), is final. The civil courts will not go behind it, and the party or parties accepting the Result are protected (*Jones v. Watson*, U. S. Sup. Ct. 13 Wallace, 679, seq.; Buck's *Mass. Eccl. Law*, 204-246). But the Result, in respect to the party or parties calling the council, is advisory; that is, either party or both parties may accept or reject the Result, in whole or in part, according to their good pleasure. This advisory nature of the Result ensures the independence of the churches.

55. Procedure in Councils. All the proceedings of a council should be calm, deliberate, impartial, and orderly, as befits a gathering of the churches of Christ. To secure these ends some order of procedure in business should be observed (§ 151), and the ordinary parliamentary rules should be followed (§§ 152-161).

56. Reports of Delegates. As a council is constructively the invited churches in consultation (§ 38), the delegates are but the representatives of said churches, and as such they are bound to report their doings in council to their respective churches.

This is necessary in order to the full understanding of those common affairs which lie at the foundation of all church fellowship. Hence the duty should never be neglected (§ 68).

ii.—Church Associations.

57. An Association of Churches. Congregational churches within specified districts meet in stated gatherings by pastors and delegates, with such ministers as may be allowed membership in them (§ 80), under constitutions defining membership, objects, functions, and limitations; and such bodies are Associations of churches.

58. Kinds of Associations. They are divided into four kinds:

a. District Associations. These embrace the Congregational churches within a small district, usually smaller than a State. They hold their meetings, generally, twice a year.

b. State Associations. These include the churches of larger districts, as whole States, though sometimes including churches in other States. They meet annually.

c. National Associations. These include the churches of whole nations or countries; like "The Congregational Union of England and Wales," formed in 1833; and "The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States," organized in 1871, and meeting every third year thereafter (§§ 163-165); "The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec," formed in 1853, out of the Congregational Union of Canada East and West; "The Congregational Union and Mission of Victoria" (Australia), organized in 1860.

d. An Ecumenical Union. Before the Congregational churches shall fully express the unity (§§ 35, 36) for which Christ, their Head, prayed (John xvii, 20-23), they must widen their fellowship into an Ecumenical Union or Association, meeting either occasionally or statedly, as decennially. This is needed also to bind the churches which we are planting in heathen lands into such sympathy and fellowship with the home churches, that they shall be saved to the doctrine and polity in which they have been planted (See 16 *Cong. Quarterly*, 291-303).

59. Names of Associations. They are

variously named. In this country the prevailing name is "Association," both for district and for State bodies. "Conference" is often used, but as it is liable to confound our churches with those of another polity, it is being discarded for "Association." In Great Britain and her Provinces, "Associations" are used as names of district bodies; and "Unions," of the larger bodies.

60. Membership in Associations. At the convention called for the purpose of organizing the Association, the churches adopt a constitution, defining the membership; each church, in virtue of its essential equality with others, being entitled to the same number of delegates; for it is the individuality of the church that is represented, and not its size. Thus equality among the churches as among the members is preserved. Any other principle of representation is dangerous, giving to metropolitan churches undue influence (*New Englander*, 1878, 514-520). Unless restricted by the constitution, each church may elect as delegate whom it will of its members, but it cannot go beyond that membership for a representative.

61. Objects of Associations. Associations of churches are organized for a broader, a more inclusive and systematic, fellowship than occasional councils afford (§ 38); for co-operation in the business of evangelizing the world (§§ 137, 138); and for the manifestation of their unity (§§ 36, 58, d), that the world may believe. These things are enjoined, and can be exemplified better in free churches than in any other (§ 127).

62. Authority of Associations—what. The constitutions of these bodies usually provide against the exercise of ecclesiastical authority over churches, ministers, or individuals. Yet, they have the common right of self-protection, to enforce the provisions of their constitutions against unsound or disorderly members (§ 64).

63. Responsibility of Associations. While Associations have no authority except that of self-protection, they are themselves accountable under the law of Christian fellowship. If they apostatize from the faith or walk disorderly, the law of fellowship which excludes a violater of that fellowship from a local church or from an

Association, excludes an Association, when a violater of it, from fellowship with other similar or larger bodies. An Association may be excluded for cause from State and National fellowship, otherwise their constitutions and doctrinal bases are null (§§ 23, 64, 65, 85).

64. Associations not Presbyterial.

No one who understands the facts will call this right which Associations of churches, like all other bodies, have to protect themselves from unwelcome intruders, Presbyterial. It has no elements of the Presbytery in it, except that of self-protection (§ 62). The Presbytery is composed of presbyters and elders from the Sessions of the churches composing it. The membership of those churches exhaust their rights and liberties in choosing their respective elders for the Sessions; while from each Session commissioners are chosen to Presbytery and Synod by the Session itself. Then, too, the records of a church are subject to Presbytery for approval, and its pulpit is in the hands of the Presbytery. A Presbyterian church is not free, therefore, to manage its own affairs with no power except in heaven to

call it to account for what it does; but it is subject to the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly (§ 130).

There is nothing of this right and power in an Association of churches to regulate the internal affairs of a church in connection. That church is independent of all external control. Its discipline and records and pulpit are its own, to do, and to keep, and to fill as it may elect. All this we hold as Scriptural (§ 34) and sacred. But, when it asks for the fellowship of other churches in councils or in Associations, it seeks to enter into reciprocal relations (§ 23). It has no right to force itself on their fellowship. It must show its claim to their recognition in Christian beliefs and Christian practices, its Creed and Rules; and they have the right to inspect the same and vote whether or not the applying church can be fellowshipped. And if, after admission into fellowship, that church lapses in faith or practice or both, it has broken the conditions of fellowship, its "covenant," as the courts call it, and the Association has the right to ascertain the fact and to cut it off from fellowship (§ 63). This does not

trench on its internal management, but simply adjusts its external relations to that internal management, by cutting it off from the privileges of a covenant which it has broken. Nor is this a new thing. Our churches have always practiced it. They provided for it in the Cambridge Platform by councils (ch. xv., 2) and "the coercive power of the magistrate" (ch. xvii., 8, 9), and they used the latter power freely in ecclesiastical matters (see my article in *New Englander*, 1883, 461-491). The right of self-protection in fellowship was used in the Unitarian apostasy during the first third of the present century. There is nothing peculiar in allowing it to Associations of churches (§ 57), guarded by right of appeal to councils mutually chosen (§ 50). The denial of this right is the negation of fellowship, and ends in church isolation. If some heretical church or churches should send delegates to our District, State, or National Associations, would not the doctrinal bases and conditions of membership exclude them? This right we have always asserted and exercised, without trenching on the liberty of local

churches. Hence we do not make an Association a Presbytery, or any thing like it, by giving it the natural right of self-protection.

65. Standing in Associations. *a.* Ministerial Standing (§ 80) is of the utmost importance to the welfare of the churches; but there is not at present a clear apprehension of what it is, or where it should be held, and hence no uniform practice. It ought to be held in Associations of churches, for reasons given in another place (§§ 81-85).

b. Churches have standing also in Associations. They are admitted by vote on approval of Articles of Faith and Standing Rules (§ 23, b) and can be expelled by vote for cause (§§ 63, 64). Churches, like ministers, not in connection, hold no accountable relations to Congregational fellowship. As fellowship is reciprocal in rights, privileges, and duties (§§ 23, 64), its privileges cannot be shared without its corresponding duties. Hence associated churches cannot be held responsible in any degree for the faith and practice of unassociated

churches. Standing in some Association is requisite to true church fellowship.

66. Co-ordinate Bodies. Bodies in which standing (§ 65) is held, whether of churches, or of ministers, or of both, are co-ordinate in respect to that standing. Such standing is transferable from one body to another on request. And the action of any such co-ordinate body is entitled to the confidence and respect of all. Hence a church or minister excluded or expelled from one such body should not be received into another, without proof of repentance and amendment on the part of the said church or minister. If wrong has been done in the exclusion or expulsion, appeal should be had to a mutual council chosen by the parties involved (§ 50).

67. Relation of Delegates to Associations. It is the church which has membership and standing in the Association, and not its delegates (§ 57). Hence the church is enrolled as present in its delegate or delegates, and such enrollment gives no membership or standing in the body to delegates, whether ministers or laymen, except as the representatives of the church

sending them for that single meeting. If each church be entitled to be represented by its pastor and one delegate, that pastor by such representation acquires no other or different connection with the Association than his fellow delegate acquires. He ceases at the close of each meeting to hold any personal connection with the Association; precisely as his fellow delegate does. He can, therefore, no more claim to acquire ministerial standing (§ 80) in the body by such representation than his delegate can. Ministerial standing is something entirely different (§§ 80-85).

68. Reports of Delegates. As delegates are selected to represent the churches in the meetings of the Associations, they should, as in the case of councils (§ 56) report, on their return, to the churches sending them. This is needful in order to keep the churches informed and interested. Besides, the churches, since all members cannot attend, express their fellowship through these delegates, and the delegates should bring back and express to the members the salutations and greetings of the whole fraternity. This important duty should not be neglected.

iii.—Ministerial Associations.

69. Origin of Ministerial Associations.

They had their origin in professional needs and Christian fellowship, which were not satisfied in occasional councils. Hence ministers met together, after the just jealousy of independent churches had subsided enough to permit them, and formed Associations.

70. Nature of Ministerial Associations. Their nature is a little mixed. Some are mere professional clubs; but from early times, as the Cambridge Platform broke down in its theory of the ministry (§ 73), some sort of ministerial standing (§ 80) has been held in them, which has been recognized by the civil courts (see the discussion in the *New Englander*, 1883, 461-491). Hence some Associations expressly recognize the fact, and give or withdraw such standing as the case may require. Ministerial standing ought, however, to be held in Associations of churches (§§ 80-85).

71. Use of Ministerial Associations.

They have been great professional helps; but their chief use has been as stepping-

stones for the churches over the gulf between isolation and stated fellowship. Our churches were afraid of ministerial rule through stated fellowship. The ministers, through their Associations, notwithstanding occasional slips, proved that stated fellowship, even when confined to the clergy, does not logically or necessarily lead to centralization of power, or the use of coercion. When this had been shown, church fellowship in Associations arose with rapidity.

72. Continuance of Ministerial Associations. As church fellowship has grown into favor, the Ministerial Associations have declined, and some have been merged in church Associations. They are few out of New England. There appears a tendency to substitute for them Congregational Clubs, composed of ministers and laymen.

V.—The Christian Ministry.

73. The Ministry a Function, not an Official Relation. The early New England churches held that the ministry is an official relation (§ 92). Ordination was the

inauguration into office of a pastor of a particular church, and removal from that office was deposition from the ministry. That single act of removal made the minister a layman again (*Cambridge Platform*, ix. 2, 6, 7; x. 6). Dr. Dexter declares this to be "the necessary verdict of the principles of Congregationalism in regard to this matter" (*Congregationalism*, Revised 4th ed., 150). This view, however, did not stand for a generation; and yet it was not formally rejected until the Boston Council, 1865, declared that the ministry includes all who, having been ordained to the ministry of the Word, have not forfeited the rights and privileges conferred by ordination, and been deposed (*Boston Platform*, 65, 66). By the Cambridge Platform only about one-fourth of our ministers are ministers at all.

The ministry is a function of the Christian Church, to which men are called of God and set apart by the churches, to preach the Gospel as missionaries, evangelists, and pastors, and to administer the sacraments. This theory of the ministry is held by all denominations.

This theory of the ministry does not give

power or authority to ministers in or over churches. An ordained man must be called to the pastorate (§§ 76, 91), in order to become an officer in any church. Until so chosen he can exercise only the influence of a private member. He may, indeed, hold ministerial standing (§§ 80, 85) in an Association of churches; but such Association has no authority in or over churches (§ 62). Hence no danger arises to the liberty of the churches from this theory of the ministry.

74. The Ministry not a Priesthood. Christ, having offered himself once for all, abolished all sacrifices; and hence he gave to his ministers neither the functions nor the prerogatives of priests. Those ordained to the work of the ministry are consequently separated from the brethren only by official and ministerial, not by priestly, marks.

75. The Ministry one Order. The ministry are called, in the New Testament, elders, bishops, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and, perhaps, angels; but these are only different titles of the same order, and all in this order are essentially equal. They

are brethren, of equal dignity, rank, and authority. A bishop, in New Testament usage, is only an elder, a pastor, having in rank, grade, order, authority, or position, no pre-eminence whatever over his brethren.

That the Apostles left no successors is clear from their special qualifications and functions. They were called not merely to the proclamation of the Gospel, but to the ordering of the churches, and the giving of a supreme rule of faith and practice in their writings. To accomplish these things they had special qualifications:

a. They were all personally instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts i. 21, 22). Paul was no exception (1 Cor. ix. 1; Gal. i. 11, 12).

b. They were all personally selected by Christ (Lk. vi. 13; Acts i. 23-25; Acts ix. 15).

c. They were individually inspired of God (John xiv. 26; xvi. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13; xiv. 37; Gal. i. 11, 12; John xx. 23).

d. They performed special miracles as proofs of their apostleship (Acts ii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 12).

e. They had universal authority over

churches (Acts xvi. 4; 1 Cor. v. 3-6; 2 Cor. x. 8; xiii. 10).

As these qualifications and chief functions ceased with the apostles, they have no successors.

76. Ministers when Church Officers.

A minister is not an officer in any church by virtue of his ordination and membership, but only by virtue of his election to an office in that church (§§ 73, 91). When chosen by it to officiate in the ministry of the Word, he becomes, as pastor, its highest officer; but he retains this position only so long as he fills its pastorate. The pastor should become a member of the church in which he labors. A minister has the right to vote only in the church of which he is a member.

77. a. Ordination of Ministers. Some believers are called to the work of the ministry by the Holy Ghost, but they are ordinarily set apart to it by the laying on of hands in ordination. This ordination confers no peculiar gifts and graces, and is not, therefore, necessary to the existence of the ministry, but only to the well ordering of the churches.

b. Licentiates are not ministers, but laymen approbated to preach the Gospel as candidates for ordination to the ministry. This approbation is given by Associations either of churches or of ministers.

c. It must, however, be firmly held that each church has the power to ordain, as it has the power to choose, its own minister. This power belongs to it in virtue of its autonomy, or complete independence, in the management of its own affairs. Take this right and power away, and no church can be in itself complete; for it must depend on some ecclesiastical power out of itself to ordain its pastors. If that power should refuse to ordain, the church could have no ministry. The power to ordain its pastors is, therefore, one of the inalienable rights of independent churches.

But inasmuch as a church of Christ stands in relations to other churches (§ 23) as parts of one kingdom (§ 35), a due regard for the fellowship of the churches requires, that, in every pastoral ordination, a church should call to its assistance sister churches. The ordained are put into the ministry (§ 73); their character and conduct affect all the

churches in connection (§ 80); the churches in connection have, therefore, a right to be protected from the ordination of bad men. Hence the circumstances must be extraordinary and extremely rare when a church is warranted in ordaining a man without the advice of sister churches.

d. That advice may be had in two ways: (1.) By a council of churches, or (2.) By an Association of churches. The former has been the usual method, but the latter is equally legitimate. The church can call a council of churches or use the Association of churches for ordaining its pastor. In either case, it is the church that ordains; and in either case, the church by letter asks the other churches to assist or act in its stead in the ordination. If it ask the Association to examine and advise, the church itself should abstain from all voice and vote in giving the advice, since it is an interested party (§ 52), the same as in calling councils (§ 42).

e. The ordination of a missionary or of an evangelist without pastoral charge, rests on a somewhat different basis. Such a minister (§ 73) is not a pastor or church

officer (§§ 76, 91). The integrity or independence of no church is impaired, if an Association of churches, without request from a particular church, proceed to ordain him. No church is constrained to call him to be its pastor. No church is thereby prevented from ordaining its own pastor. No church, even should it call a council for the ordination of such a minister, would hold itself responsible for him. There is no reason then, why an Association of churches should not ordain him, without the intervention of a local church.

78. Installation of Pastors. When a minister has been called to the pastorate of a church, a council is sometimes convoked to install him as pastor. This council inquires into his call and acceptance, his credentials and membership, examines him in respect to beliefs and experiences, and, if advising his installation, installs him on behalf of the church. Under the Cambridge Platform this was a re-ordination, having a legal as well as an ecclesiastical element. From some cause or causes, installations are falling into disuse, so that only about

one-third of the ministers in pastoral work are installed.

In view of these facts, one State (Michigan) is trying a modified form of installation which leaves the legal element out, and retains only the ecclesiastical element, somewhat after the English and Canadian custom. The inspection of the contract between pastor and people by a council, and all that is involved in it respecting the dissolution of the pastoral relation, arose, it is claimed, from the union of church and state in New England, which inspection should be left behind, since the ecclesiastical element contains all that is now needed.

79. Recognition of Pastors. We quote from the *Minutes* of the General Association of Michigan for 1882:

"a. Whenever a minister accepts a call to the pastoral charge of any church, whether for a definite or indefinite term, a council of neighboring churches of our order should be called by such church and pastor, at their earliest convenience, for his *recognition* as pastor of said church—it being understood that the action of said council shall have no bearing whatever

upon the legal or ecclesiastical tenure, as to the fact, name, salary, or time of the pastorate thus recognized.

“*b.* The duties of this Council shall be:

(1.) The examination of the pastor’s qualifications for his position, especially in ministerial standing, in doctrinal views, and in religious experience.

(2.) The approval or disapproval of these by formal vote.

(3.) The recognition, if the vote is one of approval, in public services, as sermon, prayer, and right-hand of fellowship.

“*c.* When such pastorate is about to terminate, for any cause except death, the pastor and church, or either of them in case the other refuses, *may* call a council of neighboring churches to inquire into and advise upon all ecclesiastical matters specified in the letters missive concerning it; but it shall be regarded as entirely orderly for the church and pastor to dissolve the pastoral relation between them without the calling of a council (p 45).

80. Ministerial Standing. A man ordained to the ministry holds such a relation to the churches (§ 73), that his conduct

affects them for good or for evil, but especially those with which he is most intimately connected. He stands among them as a minister, recognized as such, with the rights, privileges, honors and duties of a minister. This relationship is one of accountability, of obligation (§§ 23, 64, 65). Hence arises ministerial standing, some responsible connection with a body which can hold him to account for his conduct as a minister. His ordination does not open to him the whole range of our churches, through which he can roam at will with no one to molest or make afraid. He must now, as formerly, be held accountable. Hence he must hold membership in some body, as at the first, which can bring him to account, and which shall itself be held accountable for him. Such membership gives him ministerial standing.

81. Ministerial Standing once held in Local Churches. Under the Cambridge Platform, since no ordained man was a minister except while he was a pastor (§ 73), a man's ministerial standing was in the local church which called and settled him as pastor. The church by vote could take

ministerial standing away from him, and remand him to the unofficial membership again, as a mere layman (§ 73). It is true that a council was provided for when convenient, but its action when called was only advisory. The power of deposition was in the local church. If the pastor felt aggrieved with the action, he could ask the church to join in calling a mutual council (§ 50), and, that failing, he could call an *ex parte* council (§ 51); but neither of these could do more than advise his restoration to the ministry by a call from his old or from some other church. His ministerial standing was wholly in the hands of laymen.

82. This Standing fell with the Pastoral Theory. It gave way as inadequate and false before the facts; it fell when the true theory came in. The change in theory involved a corresponding transfer of ministerial standing to some other body than the local church. This fact was not clearly apprehended at first, and even now confusion is found to exist respecting it (see the article in *New Englander*, 1883, 477 seq).

83. Ministerial Standing in Associa-

tions of Ministers. This is a dangerous place for ministerial standing, since to hold it there puts a gulf between the ministry and the laity. The standing of ministers is thereby put wholly into their own hands, and wholly beyond the control of the churches. This arrangement would give clerical rule, or compel the churches to go outside the Associations for their ministers. The past has seen the evils of such a separation between the people and their spiritual teachers, and men have wisely opposed the holding of ministerial standing in Ministerial Associations. It is neither safe to put such accountable standing in the hands of the clergy, nor possible to let it lie around loose. It will have an abiding place, and it should be provided with a normal and safe home in our polity, which cannot be in Ministerial Associations.

84. Ministerial Standing cannot be held in Councils. This arises from the nature of councils. They are temporary meetings of the churches, selected for a specified purpose, and ceasing to exist on adjournment (§ 44). A council may ordain or depose from the ministry, but ministerial

standing cannot be held in it; for when it gives its result, it ceases to exist. A council may be called to inquire into the standing of a minister, or to withdraw fellowship from him; but in either case, the council inquires into facts and advises accordingly. Such inquiry is radically different from the permanent standing in the ministry needed.

85. Ministerial Standing is properly held in Associations of Churches. In such bodies, outside of New England, ministerial standing is now generally held. That standing was transferred, in 1832, from the Newark Association to the Newark Conference, New Jersey, on the ground that it more properly belonged to the custody of the churches than to the clergy. Instead of being in the hands of laymen, as in early times in New England, or in the hands of the ministry, as in ministerial Associations, ministerial standing should be held in bodies where both the churches and the ministers are represented, as in church Associations. Here all interests will be best conserved, and the evils of either extreme be avoided. Those who fear the holding of this standing in ministerial bodies can

hardly object to holding it in church Associations. (§ 174).

A minister joins an Association of churches, as a church does, on credentials (§§ 89, 90), by the formal vote of the body. This constitutes him a member of the said Association, responsible to it for his ministerial conduct and faith, and it makes the Association also accountable for him: that is, the Association may dismiss him to a co-ordinate body (§ 66), with credentials, or, in case of unministerial conduct, can arraign, try, and expel him (§§ 62, 63). Any member thus expelled loses his standing (§ 80) in the Congregational ministry. He is a minister still, but our denomination is not responsible for him (§§ 23, 64, 65), and his deeds cannot be charged to our fellowship. In case he has been unjustly dealt with, redress may be had as already indicated (§§ 50, 51).

86. Ministerial Discipline. The apostles were not all true men, and the ministry now by its social position attracts a few unworthy men into its ranks. It is a sad but nevertheless imperative duty, as occasion requires, to bring such men to discip-

line. This may be done in one of two ways, namely :

87. a. By Associations. If a minister hold his standing (§ 80) in an Association, either of ministers or of churches and ministers, and if he do things worthy of discipline, it is the duty of the Association to deal with him according to his deserts. In the strong language of the Supreme Court of Vermont: "If it be suspected that a wolf in sheep's clothing has invaded their ranks, it is not only for the *interest* of all the members of the Association to know the fact, but it is their *imperative duty* to make inquiry and *ascertain* the fact;" "and, on conviction, to administer proper punishment" (51 *Vt.* 501; 31 *Am. Repts.* 704). That punishment may be either suspension or expulsion from membership, according to his deserts. Lest the Association do him injustice, and that without redress, the aggrieved should have the right of appeal to a council as before stated (§§ 50, 51). This covers the cases of all in connection; but some are not in connection. (§ 175).

88. b. By Councils. The following resolution, passed by the National Council of

1880, covers all cases, whether in connection or not, namely:

“*Resolved*, That the body of churches in any locality have the inalienable right of extending ministerial fellowship to, or withholding fellowship from, any person within their bounds, no matter what his relations may be in church membership or ecclesiastical affiliations, the proceedings to be commenced by any church, and to be conducted with due regard to equity.” (*Minutes*, 17).

This resolution asserts for “the body of churches in any locality” “the inalienable right of extending ministerial fellowship to, or withholding fellowship from, any person within their bounds.” They may elect to do this through an Association (§§ 57, 87), and when they choose so to assert their right, no council called from beyond their locality, of whomsoever composed, can be introduced to inquire into the matter, unless that Association be a party to its calling (§§ 50, 51). To ignore this action of the churches of the vicinity, or to assume to sit in judgment upon it in any way, is a subversion of their “inalienable right.”

If the resolution be confined to councils alone, it lies open to two practical objections: (1.) that what is everybody's business is nobody's; and (2.) that no one church will be likely to call a sister church's pastor to account. While a church might possibly be found which would begin a process of discipline against a minister having no connection with us, but troubling our heritage, it is not probable that one could be found which would call a minister to account whose ministerial standing is held in an Association, since the Association could do it to better advantage.

But what if the Association will not do it? Then the law of fellowship requires that the Association itself be called to account by other Associations, as tolerating heresy or immorality (§ 63); besides, any church may carry out its constitutive principle (§ 27), and withdraw its fellowship from any church, or from the Association with which it stands connected; or it may call a council in the matter, according to the above rule. It is not in subjection, but is free to act as the sense of fealty to Christ Jesus may indicate.

89. Ministerial and Church Credentials. *a.* Ministerial credentials are papers which define a minister's standing in some ecclesiastical body or connection, and are therefore of the greatest value to all seeking fellowship among us. They consist of ordination papers; the action of dismissing councils, or of councils of discipline, or of inquiry; and papers of dismissal and commendation from co-ordinate bodies (§ 66) in which ministerial standing is held. So important is such standing that the National Council, in 1877, passed the following:

*"Resolved, That * * * we earnestly recommend to the churches, before employing any minister, the careful ascertainment of the fact of his regular standing in some recognized ecclesiastical connection"* (*Minutes*, 24).

This has been reaffirmed by subsequent action of the Council.

b. A church wishing to join an Association presents its Creed and Standing Rules to that Association (§§ 23, 64) on which it may be admitted to membership. If, afterwards, it desires to transfer its connection

to some other co-ordinate body (§ 66), it should ask and receive a certificate of membership and recommendation to that body, on which it may be received into membership therein. Such papers may be called credentials of church standing.

90. Contents of Ministerial Credentials. When a minister brings credentials to us from communions in which the church membership of ministers, as well as their ministerial standing, is held in a Presbytery, Conference, Synod, or similar body, his credentials contain both his church membership and his ministerial standing, and are not discharged of their full contents until he has been received on them into a local church, and into an Association. They cover both relations, and should be so regarded by our bodies. Hence a minister transferring his connection from such body to our fellowship, should present his ministerial credentials first (§ 89) to the Association he desires to join, as covering his standing as a minister, and then to the local church he serves, as a certificate of church membership (§ 119), on which each body may receive him.

VI.—Church Officers.

The chief officers of a Christian church are the Pastor, and the Deacons.

i.—The Pastorate.

91. The Pastor. We have already treated of the ministry (§§ 73-90), including missionaries, evangelists, pastors. When a church by formal vote calls a man either for a definite or for an indefinite time, to be its teacher in spiritual things, he by entering upon the duties of the office, becomes the pastor of that church (§ 76).

In each apostolic church there was a presbytery or board of elders (Acts xiv. 23; xx. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 14), which divided the duties of the pastorate, and conducted in large measure the discipline of the church (1 Tim. v. 17). Still the ultimate power of control lay in the whole church assembly (1 Cor. v. 13; 2 Cor. ii. 6). The Boston Platform says: "In the primitive churches, a plural eldership" was "the rule, and not the exception. In our American churches, at the beginning, it was thought needful that every church should have at least three

elders, of whom two were to labor in word and doctrine, and the other was to be associated with them in all their work as bishops or overseers of the flock. While no church is rightly subjected to any presbytery exterior to itself, each church should have its own presbytery" (pp. 24, 25).

The Church Board (§99, *c*) can with great advantage be made such a presbytery, and there may be added in cases of discipline the jury system (§ 108), by which changes the good order and purity of our churches will be conserved. The laying of the burdens of the whole primitive church presbytery, and of the whole plural eldership of early New England, on the shoulders of one man as pastor, has well nigh incurred the guilt of the Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 4). It is more, in this stirring age, than one frail man can bear without damage to the churches. The Apostolic way is better, to which we should return as soon as possible.

92. Induction into Office. In former days, under the Cambridge Platform, some form of service seemed needful to inaugurate the chosen candidate in office, either ordination, or installation which was reor-

dination; since to be out of the pastorate was to be out of the ministry altogether (§ 73). Hence came the custom of treating none but installed ministers as pastors, and others in active service as "acting pastors," "stated supplies," sometimes as "hirelings." This distinction places the essence of the pastorate in the induction into office and not in the calling unto office, whereas the Cambridge Platform itself puts it in the election to and acceptance of office and not in the induction or ordination (ch. ix. 2).

It was natural, when the pastoral theory of the ministry gave way (§ 73), that installation, which was re-ordination, should be neglected as no longer needful to the relation of pastor and people, especially in cases of inconvenience or dislike of the legal element involved in it (§ 78). This neglect of the installing council and service has gone on until only about one-third of those in the pastoral work are installed, and there is need of adjusting terms to the facts. As the essence of the pastorate lies in the election to the office and the consequent entrance upon its duties, and not in any formal induction into office, all who

have complied with the essential part should be held to be pastors, and should be so named.

Yet, while not essential, the induction of a pastor into his office by installation, or, better, by recognition (§ 79), is both a seemly and a useful service, and ought therefore to be had in all cases.

93. Duties of a Pastor. He, as pastor, preaches the Word; administers the sacraments (§ 102); presides at church meetings, when not relating to himself; cares like a shepherd for his flock; but he has not the power of veto or control in church action (§ 28).

ii.—The Diaconate.

94. The Diaconate a Lay Office and Honorable. Though the diaconate is a lay office, it is shown to be an honorable one by the qualifications prescribed for those filling it (1 Tim. iii. 8-10); by the laying on of hands (Acts vi. 6), and by the words of Paul: "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. iii. 13).

95. Deaconesses. The election of faithful women to the office of deacon is commended by the implied injunction of Paul (1 Tim. iii, 11), by the example of the primitive churches (Rom. xvi. 1), and also of the early churches of New England (*Cambridge Platform*, chap. vii. 7).

96. Duties of the Diaconate. To have special care for the poor and sick of the church; to distribute the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper; to counsel and assist the pastor; and to exercise a subordinate oversight over the spiritual interests of the church, are the chief duties of this office.

97. Election of Deacons. Deacons were formerly elected for life; but lately some churches elect them for a term of years, making the office rotary; while a few provide against the re-election of a deacon until one year has elapsed from the time he ceased to hold the office. The church can vacate the office of a deacon, as it does that of a pastor, whenever its welfare demands it, yet this power should be used with great forbearance and discretion.

98. Installation of Deacons. Deacons were originally installed by the laying on

of hands (Acts vi. 6). Such an induction tends to give dignity to the office; and the qualifications and responsibilities of the diaconate demand at least a formal and public assent to the full creed of the church (§ 139) by deacons and deaconesses before entering upon the office (§ 178).

iii.—Other Church Officers.

99. A church may choose other officers. Such officers are a scribe or clerk, treasurer, Church Board, superintendent, and teachers in its Sunday school, committees of inquiry, etc. "In such appointments, the church institutes no new order of officers, but only distributes among its members certain duties belonging to the brotherhood" (*Boston Platform*, 26).

a. Church Clerk. It is of the utmost importance that the proceedings of all business meetings of the church be accurately kept and recorded in a church record book. This book should be of large size and strongly bound. The records should be neatly engrossed in it, and approved by the church, that they may have legal value. The most

competent person in the church, except the pastor, should be chosen to this office, and should be continued in it year after year. No church can take too great care of its records, or be too scrupulous in approving them, as a legal controversy would show.

b. Church Treasurer. The treasurer of the church should be honest, and so affable that he can collect a church debt without giving offence. As church support is voluntary, the treasurer should have the confidence of everybody. Hence the best pecuniary interests of the church demand the election of a good treasurer.

c. The Church Board. Most of our churches have a body, composed of the pastor and deacons and elected members, which is called the "Standing Committee," or "Examining Committee," but which would be better designated the "Church Board" or the "Board." This Church Board (§ 143, viii., 7) has taken the place in part of the primitive board of elders found in each church planted by the apostles (§ 91), and is of the greatest importance in the discipline (§ 108) and management of the church. It may stand for the local

church presbytery referred to by Paul (1 Tim. iv. 14), somewhat modified in form as in name. The wisest men should be chosen upon this Church Board, since the management of the church affairs falls so largely into their hands.

d. Committees. The church can choose committees for any purpose it sees fit, as for the trial of certain cases (§ 108), and these committees act for the church and report to the church their doings. They cease to exist when their report has been received by the church (§ 153).

e. Superintendent and Teachers of the Sunday School. The Sunday school is the church school, and the right to choose its Superintendent and teachers lies in the church and not in the school. The highest interests of church and school demand that a supervision be exercised by the church over the school, in the election of its officers, and the selection of its lessons.

VII.—The Christian Sacraments.

100. Baptism. The Congregational churches hold that the application of water

to a person in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is valid baptism; that this application may be made by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion; and that every unbaptized believer ought to confess Christ in this sacrament. They hold, also, that the children of believing parents may receive this rite.

101. The Lord's Supper. The Congregational churches hold that only those in full membership in some Evangelical church should be invited to partake of the Lord's Supper; and that all such should be most cordially welcomed. (*Boston Platform*, Pt. II, vii. 4). (See also §§ 143, xii., 177).

102. Sacraments—by whom Administered. Good order requires that these sacraments be generally administered by duly authorized ministers of the Gospel; but the efficacy of them depends wholly on the spirit in which they are received. Under pressing exigencies they may be administered by laymen; but these exigencies must be other and graver than inconvenience of exchange by a licentiate (§ 77), or delay of the ordinance for a few weeks. They must be extraordinary and pressing.

VIII.—Church Discipline.

103. Offenses Disciplinable. It must be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh (Matt. xviii. 7). All offenses are not disciplinable by the church; but all scandalous offenses, all flagrant violations of covenant vows, fundamental doctrinal errors, and many minor offenses, call for discipline. The church must guard its purity of faith and practice by strict discipline. Yet trivial offenses should not be noticed; nor should a man be arraigned on charges which can not probably be proved. A church should enter upon all discipline with calmness, prayerfulness, and charity, seeking purity through penitence.

104. The Law of Discipline. Christ gave the law of discipline (Matt. xviii, 15-18), which, in all private offenses, should be literally followed. In cases of notorious scandal, a more summary process is warranted (§ 106). But inasmuch as one end of church discipline is the repentance and confession of the offender, the church (§ 32) should exhaust all wise measures to bring

him to penitence before proceeding to public trial. If these measures are unavailing, the case should be brought before the church and conducted with prayer and the greatest impartiality.

105. Private Offenses. The proper steps are definitely marked out in Matt. xviii, 15-18.

First Step. The injured man is required to go privately to the offender and tell him his fault, earnestly seeking to reclaim him. Time for passion to subside should here be allowed.

Second Step. The first effort proving unavailing, the injured party takes one or two discreet persons with him, and, in their presence, tells his brother his fault, and in a Christian way tries to bring him to a penitent frame of mind. If he succeed, the matter is dropped; for he has gained his brother. But if the offender continue obdurate, then follows the

Third Step. A formal complaint, usually in writing, should be made to the church (§ 146). The church, hearing the complaint, votes to entertain the same, fixes a day for trial, notifies the defendant of the

charges, of time of trial, and of the witnesses; and, at the set time, hears patiently and prayerfully the case, and renders its judgment (§§ 32, 112). (§ 170.)

106. Public Scandals. The first and second steps may be omitted in cases of public scandal, though here also the end of discipline should be the penitent reformation of the guilty. In such cases any member may prefer the proper charges; but if no one assumes this responsibility, then the deacons or Church Board of the church should prefer them (§ 99, c). (§ 169.)

107. Procedure in Trial. The church having been duly called and organized, with moderator and clerk (§§ 93, 99, a). should designate some one or more to conduct the case and examine witnesses, and should give the accused a full opportunity for defense (§ 53). It is often desirable to appoint a committee of investigation, to hear the case, record the testimony, and report the result of the examination for the final action of the church. Hence—

108. Trial by Committee or Jury of the Church. The discipline of some offenders is difficult either through the nature

of the offense or the length of the trial, in which cases the church should empower its Church Board, or appoint another committee, as a jury, to hear the case, record the evidence, and report to the church its findings and recommendations of censure, if any. The church acts in and through such a committee, and when it accepts the report (§ 154), the case is issued. The records of the case should be preserved on file, and the action of the church with the censure (§ 112), if any, should be spread upon the church books. This process is right and desirable.

109. Rules of Evidence. Legal rules of evidence cannot be used in ecclesiastical trials, as no church, Association, or council has power to compel the production of testimony, or to punish for contempt. This necessitates broader rules. Hence "parties in interest are not excluded on account of bias, from giving their testimony; husband and wife are not prevented from testifying for or against each other. Hearsay evidence is not excluded. But everything is admissible that the council choose to admit, that will help them come to an un-

derstanding of the case. The Supreme Court has never qualified this license of proof, or been called to qualify it" (Buck's *Eccl. Law of Mass.*, 227).

This liberty of evidence applies to all ecclesiastical trials, whether before the church, an Association, or a council, since the reason is the same for all; though great care should be had lest injustice be done in censures based on insufficient evidence.

110. Irregularities in Procedure. Irregularities do not invalidate procedure, unless they are of a material nature. To set aside a trial or procedure of any kind, the irregularity or irregularities must be the determining ground of the transaction; *i. e.*, if there had been no mistake or irregularity the result would probably have been otherwise. A merely technical error ought not to invalidate proceedings. A neglect of Christ's rule (Matt. xviii. 15-17), in cases of private offenses, would invalidate proceedings, since it might be the determining ground of the issue or result of the trial.

111. Confession. The penitent confession of the wrong-doer may stop all further proceedings; and no censure, or suspension,

or excommunication can afterward be inflicted on the offender for the sin so confessed. The confession should be made as public as the offense, and, if made to the church, the fact should be entered on the records of the church.

112. Censures. These may be reproof, suspension, or excommunication, according to the gravity of the offense.

If the excluded member shall become penitent for his sin, and shall desire re-admission into church privileges again, it is his duty to make the facts known unto the church from which he has been expelled, and to give the requisite proof of his penitence and amendment. If the church be satisfied of his repentance, it should restore him to full membership again. This it may do by passing a vote reciting the facts, and lifting the censure inflicted. Such a vote restores the excommunicated to full membership.

113. Censure of Ministers. The relation of an ordained man to the general fellowship of the churches is such (§ 73), that he should not be treated in discipline by a church as merely a private member. Before

the case is issued, a council of churches should be called to advise in the matter, selected by the church itself, since the church deals with him as a ministerial member, and neither as a minister, nor as a lay member. Such a council is neither a Mutual (§ 50), nor an *Ex parte* (§ 51), but a Singular Council (§ 48).

Since, however, offenses demanding church discipline would necessarily unfit one for the ministry, while offenses demanding ministerial discipline (§§ 87, 88) might not demand church action and censure, it would be better for a church wishing to deal by way of discipline with a ministerial member, after the preliminary steps (§ 105), to ask the offending ministerial member to join in calling a Mutual Council (§ 50) to consider the case and advise in the matter. Such a course would rest on the fact that the church is dealing with a minister who stands related to all the churches (§ 73). No lay member could have such a privilege or right. Hence a council called by a church to advise in lay discipline is neither Mutual (§ 50) nor *Ex parte* (§ 51), but Singular (§ 48)).

114. Witnesses. Any one, whether church member or not, who is competent to give testimony (§ 109), may testify before a church, an Association, or a council. Witnesses cannot be held by the legal rules of evidence (§ 109). Hence for this as well as other reasons they should be put under oath by the moderator of the body.

The oath or affirmation may be in the following or similar words:—

“You solemnly promise, in the presence of the omniscient and heart-searching God, that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best of your knowledge, in the matter in which you are called to witness, as you shall answer it to the great Judge of quick and dead. So help you God.”

115. Legal Protection of Parties in Discipline. Every one who takes part in good faith in any case of discipline or trial, whether he makes complaint, gives testimony, acts, votes, pronounces the result orally or in writing, before a church or any other body, is protected from civil suit for the same. This protection is involved in the decision of the United States Supreme

Court: *Jones v. Watson*, 13 Wallace, pp. 722-734. This protection is expressly given by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts: *Farnsworth v. Storrs*, 5 Cushing, 412. An Association, even in suspending a ministerial member, and in publishing him in the papers, while citing him to trial, has been sustained by the court (*Shurtleff v. Stevens*, 51 Vt. 501; 31 Am. Repts. 704). The principles underlying these cases have general application.

116. Membership, a Covenant. "The idea of membership in a Congregational church is the idea of a covenant between the individual member and the church; by virtue of that covenant the member is responsible to the church for his conformity to the law of Christ, and the church is responsible for him; and this responsibility does not cease till the church, by some formal and corporate act, has declared the dissolution of the covenant" (*Result of Brooklyn Council*, 1874, p. 232).

There has not, however, been perfect uniformity of usage among our churches. Some have held the rigid rule that members can lose their membership in a local

church only in one of the three following ways, namely: (1.) By dismissal to another church; (2.) by death; or (3.) by excommunication. But milder views are now prevailing, though membership be still held to be a covenant.

117. Dropping Members. "If any member be convinced that he is not truly regenerated, but that he professed religion under self-deception, and shall request a dissolution of his connection with the church, if there be no scandal in his life requiring discipline, his request—he having first been duly labored with—shall be granted by a simple vote declarative of the facts" (Roy's *Manual*, 21).

In like manner members who are absent for a long period should be hunted up, asked to take letters to another church, such as may be given under the circumstances (§ 120); but if they persist in neglecting their covenant obligations, fellowship should be withdrawn from them, and a statement of the facts put on record.

In case a member joins another church without having taken a letter—a thing which every member should be careful to

avoid, even when a church will not receive him on his letter (§ 121)—his name should be dropped from the roll, without censure, by vote of the church reciting the facts.

118. Certificate of Membership. When members expect to be absent for a short time, it is of great importance that they take a certificate of church membership—not of dismissal—which they can present as an introduction into the confidence, fellowship, and communion of the churches (§ 145).

119. Letters of Dismission. If members remove from one place to another they should take with them letters of dismissal and recommendation to some sister or Evangelical church. Good order and their own spiritual welfare require this. It is of the greatest importance (§ 144).

120. Letters from Churches. The forms of letters from churches are different. Ours (§§ 119, 144) dismiss and recommend; unless, in peculiar cases, they certify that the person was a member in good standing at the time he left, and dismiss him without recommendation. The church receiving such a letter should examine the bearer

of it as to the reasons for such neglect of duty, and receive or reject him on result of such examination. Some communions simply certify to the membership of the bearer, while others, not giving letters to other denominations certify to membership or give letters to one of their own churches. When such letters are presented the church may make such examination as it pleases, and act on the letters favorably or unfavorably. If favorably, the bearers should be received on their letters.

121. Letters to Churches not Receiving them. If a member desire a letter to a church which does not receive letters from our churches, the letter should be granted, provided the church be Evangelical (§ 122); since the letter is due the bearer as a worthy member, and will be a certificate of good character, if nothing more, to the church to which it is addressed.

122. When Letters Cannot be Given. A letter cannot be given to a member under charges or on trial. Nor is it consistent with fealty to the Head of the Church to issue letters to members desiring to join churches which we cannot fellowship. Such

members should be labored with, reclaimed, and given letters to churches held to be sound in faith and practice; but if such labors prove unavailing, they must be dealt with according to their deserts.

123. Force of Church Letters. The bearer of a letter is a member of the church granting it, until he has been received into another church, during which period his letter may be recalled, and he brought to discipline. Nor does the acceptance of a letter by another church shield the bearer from discipline for offenses committed before the granting of the letter, and discovered after his reception on it. If the offense be heinous enough the church granting the letter can call the attention of the church receiving the letter to the offense, when the latter church can appoint a committee, or request the former church, to try the case and report its findings and recommendations, on which report the offender can be dealt with in proper censures (§ 108).

124. Sunday Subscriptions. Subscriptions for church building or debts or repairs, etc., are often taken on Sunday. They

are declared to be acts of charity and, therefore, legal by the Supreme Court of Michigan (*Allen v. Duffie*, 43 *Mich.* 1; where authorities are cited from England and several States). *Per contra*, the Supreme Court of Indiana hold that "a church subscription made on Sunday is void, and is not made valid by a subsequent oral acknowledgment and promise to pay it, without consideration" (*Catlett v. Trustees M. E. Church of Sweetser Station*, 62 *Ind.* 365; 30 *Am. Repts.* 197. All authorities cited are Indiana cases).

125. Voting Members. Children, on giving credible evidence of conversion, are wisely admitted into full communion and membership (§ 13); but it does not follow that they, while children subject to the will of their parents, are entitled to all church privileges. They should not have the right to vote in church meetings until of age, for until then they cannot cast, legally, a free vote. The most important interests of a church, as the choice or dismissal of a pastor, the discipline of members, its pecuniary matters, should not be left to the possible decision of those who are called in law "infants," and whose vote may be com-

pelled by parental authority. It is the dictate of common sense to provide against such evils by rules adopted and enforced when no exciting issue is pending. It is manifest to all that money will not be freely contributed for church purposes, if the disposal of it and the higher welfare of the church be subject to the determining vote of minors. The bearing of this question on the prosperity of the churches is great. Formerly only adult males could vote; now adult women also generally enjoy the privilege; but children are excluded by usage and should be by rule.

IX.—Church Worship.

126. Each Church Regulates its own Worship. The worship of each congregation of believers is subject to its own control (§ 27) enlightened by the New Testament. No one has the right to lay upon a church any other rule. In this liberty our churches stand; for it was purchased at a great cost of blood. Yet there is a general agreement in the forms of service adopted by the Congregational churches. A few

use a liturgy; many use responsive readings; each church chooses a form of worship best suited to its own edification. It is the right of the church, not of the pastor, to regulate its worship.

X.—Denominational Differences.

127. Fundamental Differences. These all, as respects ecclesiastical matters, are involved in the constitutive principles already mentioned (§ 15). As these principles are radical and antagonistic and irreconcilable, they can never be harmonized or united into one. All attempts to yoke any two of them in permanent co-operative efforts have failed, and must fail from the nature of the case. The Presbyterian, the Episcopal, and the Roman Catholic polities are mutually repugnant, as respects their constitutive principles; yet they agree in using authority in securing unity among their adherents. Unity is sought in the denial of liberty to the local congregation of believers. They severally deny the independence of the particular church, and the free, voluntary union of

churches in larger bodies. Hence they are more radically opposed to Congregationalism than to each other. They use force in manifesting unity, each in its own way; Congregationalism uses liberty in unity, since each local church is autonomous, independent. Other constitutive principles destroy the liberty of local churches, made by Christ independent of external control (§ 34); our constitutive principle establishes that liberty. Hence questions of church polity have the widest possible influence upon, and the closest possible relation to, religious and civil liberty. It concerns all men, whether church institutions be built about an Infallible Primacy, or about Apostolic Succession, or about Authoritative Representation, or about the Independence of the local church, as Christ and His apostles built them (§§ 30-34).

128. Incidental Differences. These differences, except as modified by circumstances, are normal outgrowths of the differing constitutive principles referred to (§ 127); and hence they would disappear largely if those principles were changed. The following are some of the differences:

129. The Baptists. The Baptists are Congregationalists in polity; but, as Roy says:

“Congregationalists differ from [Regular] Baptists with regard to baptism and church communion. Baptists hold that immersion alone is baptism; that none but adult believers should be baptized; and [they generally hold] that none but immersed professors should be admitted to the Lord’s Table; while Congregationalists admit the validity of any baptism in which water is applied to the person in the name of the Trinity; they hold that baptism [may] also be given to the infant children of believers; and they welcome to the Lord’s Table all Evangelical Christians.”

130. The Presbyterians. Congregationalism differs from Presbyterianism in this: A Congregational church manages its own affairs, in subordination only to Christ the Head; a Presbyterian church elects ruling elders, generally for life; these elders, with the pastor or pastors, constitute the session of that church; this session receives, dismisses, and disciplines all members, chooses from among its own number

commissioners to the Presbytery and Synod; the Presbytery chooses from itself commissioners to the General Assembly, each lower judicatory being subject to the next higher. Thus the General Assembly rules the Synod, the Synod rules the Presbytery, the Presbytery rules the Session, and the Session rules the church. The people have no voice in the government, except in the choice of ruling elders, who are usually elected for life (§ 15).

131. The Episcopal Methodists. The Methodist Episcopal Church is Presbyterian in polity, though its bodies are differently named. The bishops do not constitute a separate order in the ministry; yet they have the power to fix the appointments of the preachers; in the intervals of the Conferences, to change, receive, and suspend preachers, as necessity may require, and as the discipline directs; to consecrate Bishops, and ordain Elders and Deacons, etc. With Congregationalists, the church property is held by trustees, chosen by each local church, or church society, and is the property of that church, or church society; but, with the Methodists, all church

property is held by the Conference under the following rule and condition, namely: "In future we will admit no charter, deed, or conveyance for any house of worship to be used by us, unless it be provided in such charter, deed, or conveyance that the trustees of said house shall at all times permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference of the ministers of our Church, or by the Annual Conferences, to preach and expound God's holy Word therein," etc. (*Discipline*). This places both the church property and the pulpit beyond the control of local congregations, by whose self-denials their church edifices have been built. A Congregational church controls its own pulpit and property (§§ 15, 27-34).

132. Episcopalians. The Episcopalians generally hold Apostolic Succession as essential to constitute a congregation of believers a true church or an ordained man a true minister. Church property duly consecrated cannot be alienated without the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese; and the

Bishops have jurisdiction over the clergy (§ 15).

“Congregationalists differ from Episcopalians in ceremonies of worship, and in church government. The Episcopalians use a liturgy in worship; hold to three orders in the ministry, and confide the admission and exclusion of members to the pastor, and the diocesan Bishop, who is set over the churches and ministers of a particular district, and alone has power to confirm members and ordain ministers. Amongst Congregationalists, every pastor is a bishop, as among New Testament churches, and all ministers are equal in office” (*Roy's Manual*, pp. 13, 14).

133. Congregationalists differ from the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Church, in many points above enumerated, and others besides, especially the infallibility of the church. It is hardly necessary to specify particulars, as our system and these are at antipodes (§ 15).

IV.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIMITIVE, AND THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

“Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.”—PAUL.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIMITIVE, AND THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

134. **The Great Commission.** Our ascending Lord gave the final command: "Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19). That this laid a solemn duty upon local churches as well as upon individual believers to evangelize the world, is put beyond dispute by the manner in which the first foreign missionaries were sent out. The teachers and prophets were ministering to the Lord in the church at Antioch, when "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts xiii. 2, 3). This first call of the first foreign missionaries came through a church, and it was by church action that they were sent forth; and, on returning, they reported to the church. No church can throw off

responsibility respecting home and foreign evangelization upon the consciences of its individual members. It is bound to provide for such work by church action, in ordering stated collections to be taken for its several departments, by prayer, and by training laborers for the field.

The churches, by combining their wisdom, contributions, and labors, can carry on all missionary work at the greatest advantage; and it should seem but the statement of a first principle, to say, that churches which are entrusted with the great duty of evangelizing the world, are therein authorized to manage for themselves the instrumentalities necessary for discharging the trust. They in their independence are not compelled to leave the management of the trust to individual believers. The churches should manage all their affairs; and hence all the agencies used should be by their own appointment, under their own management, that the churches may constantly feel the duty of saving sinners and evangelizing the world.

135. Activity of the Primitive Churches.

The primitive Christian churches confess-

edly were congregationally governed (§ 34), and they were full of missionary zeal and labor. In a few years they planted churches in every part of the known world; and, in a few centuries, in spite of terrible persecutions, paganism was overthrown wherever these churches had been established. Their form of government stimulated to every form of evangelistic labors by imposing, in a peculiar manner, upon each congregation the responsibility of the Master's final commission to His disciples, to preach the Gospel to every creature.

136. Activities of Congregational Churches. The early churches of New England entered immediately and successfully into the work of evangelizing the Indians, of whom they gathered many churches. Later, they formed the oldest missionary society in America, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and they have ever been foremost in the formation and support of all sorts of benevolent and missionary enterprises. They have been the chief contributors to union societies, until, by the withdrawal of others, they have been left to act alone.

While limiting the exercise of authority to the local churches, the Congregationalists have embraced in their love and labors every philanthropic object.

137. Co-operative Societies Recommended by the National Council.

I. *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.*—(Org. 1810.)—Office at Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

II. *American Congregational Union, or Church Building Society.*—(Org. 1853.)—Offices at Bible House, New York City, and at Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

III. *American Home Missionary Society.*—(Org. 1826.)—Office at Bible House, New York City.

IV. *American Missionary Association.*—(Org. 1846.)—Office 56 Reade Street, New York City.

V. *Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society.*—(Org. 1832.)—Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

VI. *American College and Education Society.*—(Org. 1816, 1843—united 1874.)—Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

VII. *The New West Education Commission*.—(Org. 1879.)—Office Chicago, Ill.

VIII. (1.) *The Woman's Board of Missions*.—Org. 1868.)—[Embracing territory east of Ohio]. Office, Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

(2.) *Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior*.—[Embracing territory between the eastern boundary of Ohio and the Rocky Mountains.]—Office, Chicago, Ill.

(3.) *Woman's Board of Missions of the Pacific*.—[Embracing territory west of the Rocky Mountains.]—Office, San Francisco, Cal.

IX. *The Woman's Home Missionary Association*.—(Org. 1880.)—Office, Congregational House, Boston, Mass.

138. Theological Seminaries.

I. *Andover Theological Seminary*, Andover, Mass.—(Opened 1808).

II. *Theological Seminary*, Bangor, Maine.—(Opened 1816).

III. *Theological Department of Yale College*, New Haven, Conn.—(Opened 1822).

IV. *Theological Institute of Connecticut*, Hartford, Conn.—(Opened 1834).

V. *Theological Department of Oberlin College*, Oberlin, Ohio.—(Opened 1835).

VI. *Theological Seminary*, Chicago, Ill.—(Opened 1858).

VII. *Pacific Theological Seminary*, Oakland, California.—(Opened 1869).

V.

CONGREGATIONAL FORMS AND RULES.

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”—PAUL

CONGREGATIONAL FORMS AND RULES.

I.—Admission of Members.

139. **Articles of Faith.** Every church should have articles of faith as the standard of its teaching in the pulpit and Sunday school, and as the basis of its fellowship; but care is needed in making them tests of admission to the church. The New Testament (Rom. xiv. 1-4) and our Platforms (*Cambridge Plat.*, 1648, ch. xii. 3; *Boston Plat.*, 1865, Pt. II., ch. vii. 2) warrant the admission of weak Christians, if sincere, to church privileges (§13). A temporary exigency, however, carried our churches away into severer credal tests for admission than were enforced probably by any other communion. A return to our early and scriptural position has begun. While enjoining church creeds somewhat elaborate, and insisting on regeneration by the Holy Spirit as essential to church membership, the Ohio Manual (1874), the Pocket Manual (1883), the

Report of the Commission of the National Council (Dec. 19, 1883), and the Church-Kingdom (1887) separate between the articles of faith and the confession required for admission, thus retaining a full creed as the standard of teaching and basis of fellowship, while admitting children and others on a simpler confession. To aid in this return to the simplicity of the gospel, we subjoin the Statement of Doctrine and the Confession of Faith reported to the churches by the National Council's Commission, and recommend their use, as indicated in the subjoined Constitution (§143. Art. iii).

140. Statement of Doctrine.

I. We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible ;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who is of one substance with the Father ; by whom all things were made ;

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who is sent from the Father and Son, and who together with the Father and Son is worshiped and glorified.

II. We believe that the Providence of

God, by which He executes His eternal purposes in the government of the world, is in and over all events ; yet so that the freedom and responsibility of man are not impaired, and sin is the act of the creature alone.

III. We believe that man was made in the image of God, that he might know, love, and obey God, and enjoy Him forever ; that our first parents by disobedience fell under the righteous condemnation of God ; and that all men are so alienated from God that there is no salvation from the guilt and power of sin except through God's redeeming grace.

IV. We believe that God would have all men return to Him ; that to this end He has made Himself known, not only through the works of nature, the course of His providence, and the consciences of men, but also through supernatural revelations made especially to a chosen people, and above all, when the fullness of time was come, through Jesus Christ His Son.

V. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the record of God's revelation of Himself in the work of redemption ; that they were written by men under the special guidance of the Holy

Spirit ; that they are able to make wise unto salvation ; and that they constitute the authoritative standard by which religious teaching and human conduct are to be regulated and judged.

VI. We believe that the love of God to sinful men has found its highest expression in the redemptive work of His Son ; who, became man, uniting His divine nature with our human nature in one person ; who was tempted like other men, yet without sin ; who, by His humiliation, His holy obedience, His sufferings, His death on the cross, and His resurrection, became a perfect Redeemer ; whose sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world declares the righteousness of God, and is the sole and sufficient ground of forgiveness and of reconciliation with Him.

VII. We believe that Jesus Christ, after He had risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, as the one Mediator between God and man, He carries forward His work of saving men ; that He sends the Holy Spirit to convict them of sin, and to lead them to repentance and faith ; and that those who through renewing grace turn to righteousness, and trust in Jesus Christ as their

Redeemer, receive for His sake the forgiveness of their sins, and are made the children of God.

VIII. We believe that those who are thus regenerated and justified, grow in sanctified character through fellowship with Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth ; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith ; and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God.

IX. We believe that Jesus Christ came to establish among men the kingdom of God, the reign of truth and love, righteousness and peace ; that to Jesus Christ, the Head of this kingdom, Christians are directly responsible in faith and conduct ; and that to Him all have immediate access without mediatorial or priestly intervention.

X. We believe that the Church of Christ, invisible and spiritual, comprises all true believers, whose duty it is to associate themselves in churches, for the maintenance of worship, for the promotion of spiritual growth and fellowship, and for the conversion of men ; that these churches, under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures and in fellowship

with one another, may determine—each for itself—their organization, statements of belief, and forms of worship ; may appoint and set apart their own ministers, and should coöperate in the work which Christ has committed to them for the furtherance of the gospel throughout the world.

XI. We believe in the observance of the Lord's day, as a day of holy rest and worship ; in the ministry of the Word ; and in the two sacraments, which Christ has appointed for His church : Baptism, to be administered to believers and their children, as the sign of cleansing from sin, of union to Christ, and of the impartation of the Holy Spirit ; and the Lord's Supper as a symbol of His atoning death, a seal of its efficacy, and a means whereby He confirms and strengthens the spiritual union and communion of believers with Himself.

XII. We believe in the ultimate prevalence of the kingdom of Christ over all the earth ; in the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; in the resurrection of the dead ; and in a final judgment, the issues of which are everlasting punishment and everlasting life.

141. Confession of Faith.

[Candidates for admission to church on the profession of their faith should be requested by the minister to come forward as their names are called, and stand before the pulpit. Then should the minister say :]

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. [Ps. cxvi. 12-14.]

Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father, which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father, which is in heaven. [Matt. x. 32, 33.]

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [Rom. x. 10.]

Dearly beloved, called of God to be His children through Jesus Christ our Lord, you are here that, in the presence of God and His people, you may enter into the fellowship and communion of His Church. You do truly repent of your sins ; you heartily

receive Jesus Christ as your crucified Saviour and risen Lord ; you consecrate yourselves unto God and your life to His service ; you accept His Word as your law, and His Spirit as your Comforter and Guide ; and, trusting in His grace to confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, you promise to do God's holy will, and to walk with this church in the truth and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accepting, according to the measure of your understanding of it, the system of Christian truth held by the churches of our faith and order, and by this church into whose fellowship you now enter ; you join with ancient saints, with the Church throughout the world, and with us, your fellow-believers, in humbly and heartily confessing your faith in the gospel, saying :

I BELIEVE in God the FATHER Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in JESUS CHRIST, His only Son, our Lord ; who was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, born of the Virgin Mary ; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried ; the third day He rose from the dead ; He ascended into heaven ; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Al-

mighty ; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the HOLY GHOST ; the holy catholic Church ; the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting. Amen.

[Then should baptism be administered to those candidates who have not been baptized. In administering this sacrament the minister should stand before the one to be baptized, should announce his or her name, and, while sprinkling water upon the head of the person, should say :]

I baptize you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

[Then should the minister, returning to the pulpit, announce the names of those who are to unite by letter, and invite them to come forward also before the pulpit. After they have taken their places, he should say to them :]

Confessing the Lord whom we unitedly worship, you do now renew your self-consecration, and join with us cordially in this, our Christian faith and covenant.

[The members of the Church present should rise.]

We welcome you into our fellowship. We promise to watch over you with Christian

love. God grant that, loving and being loved, serving and being served, blessing and being blessed, we may be prepared, while we dwell together on earth, for the perfect communion of the saints in heaven.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” [Heb. xiii. 20, 21.]

[Then the minister should, on behalf of the church, give to each one admitted the right hand of fellowship, and also, at his discretion, a scriptural motto.]

II.—Constitution of a Church.

143. The following Constitution embodies the Principles of this Manual, and is suggested to the churches for adoption :

CONSTITUTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF

.....
Adopted.....

ARTICLE I. NAME.

The name of this church shall be The
Congregational Church of....

ARTICLE II. GOVERNMENT.

SEC. 1.—This church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its Supreme Head, and accepts the Scriptures as its only infallible guide in matters of religious faith, order, and discipline.

Sec. 2.—The government of this church is therefore vested in the body of its members, of legal age, whose vote is final. (See Art. V., Sec. 2 and 3 ; Art. IX., Sec. 5 (8) ; Art. XIV.)

ARTICLE III. CREED AND SUBSCRIPTION.

SEC. 1.—The Statement of Doctrine and Confession of Faith adopted by the church constitute a part of this Constitution, and they are therefore subject to its provisions.

Sec. 2.—The assent to the Statement of Doctrine required of members on admission is subject to the following principle, adopted by our churches in General Council, in 1648 and again in 1865, namely : " Those who

desire to profess their faith in Christ, and to follow him, may be admitted into the church, though weak in the faith, because weak Christians, if sincere, have the substance of that penitent faith and holiness which is required in church members, and such have most need of the ordinances for their confirmation and growth in grace. Such charity and tenderness are to be used, that the weakest Christian, if sincere, may not be excluded or discouraged."

Sec. 3.—The pastor and deacons of this church, and all other members of the Church Board, shall assent to and subscribe the Statement of Doctrine before entering upon their respective duties.

Sec. 4.—The Statement of Doctrine shall govern the teaching of the pulpit and the Sunday school, and shall be read at the communion seasons of January and July.

ARTICLE IV. FELLOWSHIP.

SEC. 1.—As the kingdom of heaven is chiefly manifested in particular local churches, these churches are required by the law of Christ to exhibit the unity of the kingdom.

in free and equal fellowship one with another in the bonds of peace.

Sec. 2.—While seeking this fellowship in suitable organic relations, this church holds itself amenable to no authority save that of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament.

Sec. 3.—On these principles this church will cultivate as a duty and privilege the communion and coöperation of sister churches.

Sec. 4.—But since it is held to be the inalienable right of the churches in any locality to give and withhold fellowship, this church shall, in calling a council on matters of fellowship, ask the local association to which it belongs to act as such council, with the right of appeal from its action, if aggrieved, to a mutual or *ex parte* council, for review of the case and advice.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP.—VOTERS.

SEC. 1.—All persons who give credible evidence of regeneration may become members of this church on publicly assenting to the Confession of Faith and entering into covenant with it.

Sec. 2.—Only the members of the church,

of legal age, shall be entitled to vote in the admission, dismissal, discipline and censure of members, the election of deacons, delegates, church board and such other matters as pertain exclusively to the spiritual affairs of the church.

Sec. 3.—In the election of trustees, the call of a pastor, and such other business as falls within the purview of the General Statutes of the State on Religious Corporations, the members of the church, if otherwise qualified under the said General Statutes, and no others, shall be entitled to a vote.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS.

SEC. 1.—The annual meeting of the church for the election of officers and such other business as may come before it shall be held on the....after the second Monday of each year. No business shall be transacted by the church at the annual meeting or at a special meeting called, pursuant to Sec. 2 of this article, unless fifteen members are present who are entitled to vote.

Sec. 2.—A special meeting of the church may be called on due notice, when, in the opinion of the pastor or deacons or trustees,

it shall be deemed expedient ; and shall be called, due notice being given, upon the written application of five members of the church of legal age.

[NOTE.—A due notice varies with the object of the meeting ; but, ordinarily, it is a two weeks' notice.—See statue on Religious Corporations.]

Sec. 3.—There shall be a meeting of the church and congregation on.....evening of each week, for devotional and religious conference, and for the transaction of business that may regularly come before the church ; and at a specified time during the week, immediately preceding the Sabbath of Communion, a meeting shall be especially devoted to preparation for the proper reception of that ordinance, at which meeting the records of the church shall be read and approved.

Sec. 4.—Meetings for worship shall be held Sundays, and at such other times as the church may authorize.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS.

SEC. 1.—The permanent officers of this church shall be a pastor, deacons, trustees, clerk, treasurer, auditors and church board. They shall be elected by ballot (See §§ 171, 172).

Sec. 2.—Special committees shall be chosen at any meeting when deemed expedient.

Sec. 3.—The trustees and clerk shall be elected for three years, except to fill vacancies; the treasurer and members of the church board, except the pastor, clerk and deacons, shall be chosen for one year. These officers, except the pastor and deacons, shall hold office until their successors are elected and enter upon their duties.

ARTICLE VIII. DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

THE PASTOR.

SEC. 1.—It shall be the duty of the pastor to preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, watch over the spiritual interests of the congregation, and ordinarily preside over church meetings, when not relating to himself; but over all meetings for corporate business the president of the board of trustees shall preside.

He shall have control, subject to the vote of the trustees, of the pulpit and all the public services of worship connected with the church, and shall execute the discipline of the church, when so ordered.

DEACONS.

Sec. 2.—The deacons shall assist the pastor generally in the spiritual care of the church and congregation ; shall aid him in the celebration of the Lord's Supper ; and shall have oversight of the poor of the church and congregation, visiting them and relieving their necessities. They, with the trustees, shall constitute a joint committee of pulpit supply. They shall also act as peace-makers when differences and troubles arise in the church. The charitable and benevolent contributions shall be under their especial supervision, subject to the action of the church. They shall be ordained by the laying on of hands and prayer (See § 177).

In accordance with the custom of the primitive churches, deaconesses may be chosen, whenever deemed needful for the work of the church, to care for the sick and needy, and to assist in the spiritual oversight of the members.

TRUSTEES.

Sec. 3.—The trustees—who are a legal corporation, and a majority of whom must, by statute, be members of the church—shall

hold and care for the property of the church, control the use of the church edifice under the direction of the church; shall superintend the raising and distribution of all funds of the church except those for charity or benevolence.

The trustees shall, within ten days after the annual meeting of the church, meet and organize by the choice of a president and clerk, and may appoint various committees, among which the duties of the trustees shall be divided.

CLERK.

Sec. 4.—The clerk shall keep a faithful record of all the proceedings of the church and a correct schedule of all its statistics. He shall, with a committee of the trustees, audit the annual report of the treasurer. He shall issue letters of dismissal, or any other letters, directed by the church, and shall make a statistical report at each annual meeting.

TREASURER.

Sec. 5.—The treasurer shall receive, collect and disburse all the funds of the church; disbursing the charitable and benevolent funds un-

der the direction of the deacons or the church itself; forwarding benevolent funds to their several destinations, and disbursing the secular funds under the direction of the board of trustees. Of all receipts and expenditures he shall render an itemized and audited report at each annual meeting.

AUDITORS.

Sec. 6.—There shall be a board of three auditors, which shall audit, before their presentation to the church, the accounts of the benevolent, missionary, and other societies in connection, as well as the accounts of committees and officers, not otherwise provided for, and affix its report to said accounts.

CHURCH BOARD.

Sec. 7.—The church board, which shall consist of the pastor, deacons, clerk, and two others, shall meet at times appointed by the pastor or by itself, shall examine all applicants for admission to the church, and shall report the names of such as the board approves to the church for action thereon.

This board shall also act as a committee of inquiry and discipline, and bring such

cases before the church as in its judgment may require action.

It may also mature and recommend such measures as in its judgment may conserve the purity and peace of the church and advance the Redeemer's kingdom.

It shall also report its doings, and a list of the absent members, at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE IX. ADMISSIONS, ABSENTEES,
DISMISSIONS, DISCIPLINE.

ADMISSIONS.

SEC. I.—Candidates for admission to the church, whether by letter or on profession of faith, shall make application to the church board at least one week before the day of Preparatory Lecture. To each candidate, at such time, there shall be given a copy of this Constitution, also the form of admission to the church. If recommended by them, the name of each candidate shall be read at the regular service on the Sabbath previous to communion season, and the church shall vote upon their application at Preparatory Lecture. If received by such vote, candidates shall present themselves for public admission in

connection with the communion service following.

ABSENTEES.

Sec. 2.—Any member of this church removing from stated attendance on its worship, must within two years after such removal ask for transfer of membership to some other church, or give satisfactory reasons for not doing so. Any absentee whose residence remains for one year untraced, after proper effort, shall be entered on a list of absent members, which list shall be read by the clerk at each annual meeting, and on the fourth reading, being three years from the first time when the name is read, if the church has not received satisfactory explanations, the watch and fellowship of the church shall be withdrawn, and the clerk shall so record it. Whenever such members shall appear before the church, or report to it satisfactory reasons for absence and delinquency, they may, by vote of the church, be reinstated.

When members who have been long removed from our watch-care shall ask for letters of dismission, the said letters shall only vouch for their standing at the time when the members left our fellowship.

DISMISSIONS.

Sec. 3.—Letters of dismission to sister churches shall be given by vote of the church to all members in good and unimpeached standing, who desire them, and when duly accredited by such churches their membership with us ceases. If said letter shall not be presented within one year from its date, it shall be treated as forfeited, and another must be asked for. A week's notice shall be given before the church shall be called upon to vote on the request of any member for dismission by letter or otherwise.

GIVING PUBLIC NOTICE.

Sec. 4.—The public reading of names, either for admission or for dismission, shall be deemed to lay upon each member of the church and congregation the duty of informing the church board, if in his or her judgment any reason exists why the person named should not be admitted to church privileges or dismissed to another church. Upon the receipt of such information further action on the application of said person shall be suspended, until the cause of complaint shall

have been investigated by the church board, and its report thereon laid before the church for final action.

ADMINISTRATION OF DISCIPLINE.

Sec. 5.—The church shall be governed in cases of discipline by the following rules :

(1.)—Habitual neglect of public and social worship, and all common offences against the church, shall be presented for action to the church by the church board ; and the church may act immediately on such cases, or appoint a time and place for hearing them, as under sub-section (5) of this section.

(2.)—Any member injured or aggrieved by another member, shall seek the removal of the offence in the spirit of the gospel, by fraternal conference with the offender *alone*.

(3.)—If the difficulty be not thus removed, the offended shall take with him one or two judicious members, and with their mediation strive for Christian satisfaction.

(4.)—This failing, he shall bring the matter to the notice of the church board, who shall endeavor to bring about a reconciliation, and who (if this cannot be effected and harmony be not restored) shall prefer a formal com-

plaint before the church against the offending member.

(5.)—If the church entertain the complaint, they shall appoint a time for a hearing of the case, and summon the offender to be present at that hearing, furnishing him, at least one week before the time of the hearing, with a copy of the charges against him, together with the names of the witnesses who will be relied on for proof.

(6.)—If on such hearing, the church are satisfied of the guilt of the party accused, they may vote, (1) to admonish him publicly, (2) to suspend him for some definite period from the privileges of the church, or (3) to excommunicate him from its membership, according to the aggravation of the offence.

(7.)—If the church, in difficult cases of discipline, shall deem it advisable, it may appoint a special committee of six discreet persons to act as a jury, which jury shall hear the case, record the evidence, formulate its findings, and report the same to the church, with such recommendations as it may deem just and expedient, for final action by the church.

(8.)—The vote of censure shall be taken

by ballot, and shall require the concurrence of two-thirds of the votes cast.

(9.)—In case of excommunication, notice of the fact shall be given to the church at the following communion season.

ARTICLE X. CHOICE OF A PASTOR.

SEC. 1.—When the pastoral office shall become vacant, the deacons and trustees shall constitute a joint committee of supply.

Sec. 2.—It shall be the duty of this committee (1) to secure a regular supply of the pulpit during the pastoral vacancy, and (2) to present for the consideration and action of the church candidates for the pastorate, whom the committee recommends. The candidate receiving a majority vote of the members of the church voting, entitled to vote under the Statutes of the State and the provisions of this Constitution, shall be declared to be elected pastor.

ARTICLE XI. DELEGATES.

SEC. 1.—This church shall appoint delegates and alternates to the Associations with which it is connected, and to such councils as it may vote to attend. In case a delegate

or alternate shall be unable to represent the church, he shall have power to secure a substitute, who shall be the delegate of the church, the same as if so elected.

Sec. 2.—The necessary expenses of all delegates to ecclesiastical bodies shall be paid by the treasurer from the funds of the church, on the order of the church board.

Sec. 3.—Delegates to ecclesiastical bodies shall make a report of their doings at the weekly meeting next succeeding their return home, or thereafter at their earliest convenience.

ARTICLE XII. ORDINANCES.

SEC. 1.—The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall ordinarily be celebrated on the first Sunday of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

The following invitation shall be given at each celebration, namely : All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are members in good standing of some evangelical church, are cordially invited to remain and commune with us in the Supper of our common Lord.

Sec. 2.—The sacrament of Baptism shall be administered to unbaptized believers on

admission to the church, and to children of Christian parents, if presented, either on the Sunday morning following the Lord's Supper, or on special occasions after application to the pastor or deacons of the church.

ARTICLE XIII. SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND CHURCH SOCIETIES.

The Sunday school and the missionary, benevolent, and other societies, connected with the church, shall be regarded as departments of work and activities of the church, under its general supervision, and shall make an annual report of their doings to the church.

They shall have the free use of the church edifice for meetings, and shall receive such other encouragement and aid as they may, in the judgment of the church, need.

ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS.

No alteration shall be made in this Constitution, except at a regular meeting of the church, the said alterations having been pro-

posed in writing at a regular meeting and announced on two Sundays previous to action thereon; and then only by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.

III.—Church Letters.

144. 1. Of Dismission.

This certifies that _____ is a member in good and regular standing of _____ Church of _____. As such _____ is at _____ own request, hereby dismissed, and affectionately recommended to the fellowship and care of the _____ Church of _____, and, when received by it, _____ membership with this church will cease.

By vote of the church,

_____, Clerk.
_____ A. D. 18—.

(Please inform this church as soon as the bearer of this letter has been received to membership.)

145. 2. Letter of Introduction.

To whom it may concern:

This may certify that the bearer, _____, is a member in good and regular standing of the Congregational Church in _____. Expecting to be absent from us for some

time, and desiring Christian intercourse during — absence, — is hereby affectionately commended to the occasional communion and fellowship of any Church of Christ with which —, in the providence of God, may desire to worship.

—————, Pastor (or Clerk)

————— (Date.)

146. 3. Complaint Against an Offender.

To the Congregational Church in ———

DEAR BRETHREN: It becomes our Christian duty to bring to your notice the offense of a member, and to ask you to deal with it according to the law of Christ.

We charge — with being guilty of the sin of —; and particularly on the — day of —, 18— (and at other specified times, if any), and of denying the same (or remaining obdurate in regard to the same); in violation of his duty as a Christian, and of his covenant vows.

The witnesses thereof are ———

We respectfully ask you to entertain this charge, and to try the party accused, according to the law of Christ.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

—————
————— (Date.)

IV.—Letters Missive Calling a Council.

147. 1. To Organize a Church.

To the Congregational Church in ———

DEAR BRETHREN: The Great Head of the Church having inclined a number of believers here to think that it is our duty to become associated as a Congregational Church, and having taken the preliminary steps toward it, we respectfully request you, by your pastor and a delegate, to meet in council ———, in this place on the ——— of ———, at ——— o'clock ———, to consider the expediency of our action, and advise us in reference thereto, and, if thought best, recognize such organization by public and appropriate exercises.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace, we subscribe ourselves

Your brethren in Christ,

(Here insert names of committee of those proposing to unite, also the names of the churches invited).

148. 2. To Ordain or Recognize or Install a Minister.

The Congregational Church in ——— to the Congregational Church in ———, sendeth greeting :

BELOVED BRETHREN: The Great Head of the Church has kindly united us, and

the congregation statedly worshipping with us, in the choice of Mr. (Rev.) A B as our pastor and teacher, and he has accepted our invitation to that office. We therefore affectionately request your attendance, by pastor and delegate, at _____, on the _____ day of _____ next, at _____ o'clock _____, to examine the candidate, and advise us in reference to the same; and, if judged expedient, to assist in the ordination (recognition or installation) exercises.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,

We are fraternally yours,

*(Here insert names of committee of the church,
also the names of the churches invited.)*

[This form may be altered and used for the ordination of one to the ministry, but not as a pastor.]

149. 3. To Dismiss a Pastor.

*The Congregational Church in _____ to the
Congregational Church in _____, sendeth
greeting :*

DEAR BRETHREN: Whereas our pastor has resigned, and the church has accepted (or declined to accept) his resignation (or, whereas, unhappily, a state of things exists among us, which, in the judgment of the pastor or a majority of this church, renders it expedient that a council should be called

to advise in the matter), we affectionately invite your attendance, by pastor and delegate, at, _____ on the _____ day of _____, at _____ o'clock in the _____, to examine the facts and advise us in the premises.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,
We are yours in the Gospel,

_____ }
_____ } Committee.

_____ (Date.)

(Here insert the names of churches and persons invited.)

150. 4. To Discipline a Minister.

*The Congregational Church in _____ to the
Congregational Church in _____, sendeth
greeting :*

DEAR BRETHREN: Whereas, Rev. _____, having committed things worthy of discipline (or having lapsed from the faith), remains obdurate under our attempts to reclaim him, we most urgently invite you, by pastor and delegate, to sit in council on the _____ day of _____, at _____ o'clock in the _____, in the _____, to hear the charges against him, and to take such action on the

case as the facts and the usages of our churches warrant.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace.

We are fraternally yours,

_____ } Committee.

_____ (Date.)

_____, [Minister.

(Here insert the names of churches and persons invited.)

V.

151. Order of Procedure in Council.

Good order requires proper organization and procedure, that the best interests of all parties concerned may be secured. The following order of procedure may be observed:—

(1.) Reading of letter missive, usually by the oldest pastor present.

(2.) Election of temporary moderator and scribe.

(3.) Making Roll of council.

(4.) Election by ballot of permanent moderator and scribe, provided a quorum be present; if a quorum be not present, adjournment to a fixed time and place (§ 44).

(5.) Devotional exercises.

(6.) Reading records of action of parties touching the calling of the council.

(7.) The business specified in the letter missive.

If it be the ordination, installation, or recognition of a minister, then:—

(8.) The candidate's certificate of church membership, his licensure or credentials of ministerial standing, and, in case of recognition or installation, his call and acceptance to the pastorate. If these are found satisfactory, then:—

(9.) The examination of the candidate in beliefs, Christian experience, and fitness.

(10.) The council vote to be by themselves for action upon the examination, and the advice to be given. If the council advise the church to proceed, a committee is appointed to arrange with the church and candidate the parts in the public services.

(11.) Announcement to the church of the action of the council.

(12.) Reading and approval of the minutes.

(13.) Order of public services.

- a.* Reading of Minutes.
 - b.* Introductory Prayer.
 - c.* Scriptural Lesson.
 - d.* Sermon.
 - e.* Prayer of Ordination, Recognition, or Installation.
 - f.* Right Hand of Fellowship.
 - g.* Charge to the Minister.
 - h.* Address to the People (omitted, except in cases of pastors, and sometimes then).
 - i.* Benediction.
- [Hymns interspersed as desired.]

VI.—Parliamentary Rules.

152. Rules of Order a Common Law.

In the transaction of business in any society it has been found expedient to observe certain rules of procedure, whether those rules have been adopted by the body or not. The most important of these rules have become the common law which every body recognizes as binding. Besides these general rules special ones are often adopted. The general rules are sufficient for ordinary ecclesiastical meetings.

153. To Bring Business before the Body. When one wishes to introduce any business before a church, council, Association, or other body, he rises in his place and addresses the presiding officer by his proper title, and then waits until he is recognized by the presiding officer. When thus recognized, he has the floor, and can introduce the business by making a motion covering it, or by a communication. No one can interrupt him, or take the floor from him, until he yields it or forfeits his right to it.

The motion must be seconded or it cannot be entertained. The mover of the motion cannot himself second it, nor can his announcement that another will second it, be sufficient. Another must give his support to the motion with his own voice.

The communication, when a paper or a report, may at once be read unless objection be made, in which case the chairman puts the question: "Will the assembly hear the communication?" or "Will the assembly receive the report?" If the vote be in the affirmative, the report or paper, whether read or not, is before the house and must be disposed of in some way by the assembly.

A committee, unless a standing committee, ceases to exist, the moment the assembly receives its report, if not a report of progress, whether the report be read or not; and the committee cannot act again unless revived by the recommitment of its report, or by special vote (Robert's *Rules*, §§ 28, 30; Cushing's *Manual*, § 293).

154. To Dispose of Business before the Body. A communication may be referred to a committee, laid on the table, postponed to a fixed time for consideration, postponed indefinitely, or adopted as expressing the sense of the body.

A report may be recommitted, referred to another committee, laid on the table, postponed to a fixed time, postponed indefinitely, or adopted, accepted, or agreed to. The adoption, or acceptance of, or agreeing to, a report has the same effect precisely, namely, to make the doings of the committee the acts of the assembly, the same as if done by the assembly. The word "accept" is often used in ecclesiastical bodies in the sense of "receive," to bring a report already read before the body for action, and not to dispose of it. But a re-

port whether read or not, if laid before the body by the committee without objection is received (§ 153), and is as much before the assembly and its property, as it can be without adoption. Hence this ecclesiastical use of the word “accept” is of no use, and should be avoided.*

When a motion has been made and seconded, certain things may be done to it, and certain things may not be done to it; and it is of the greatest importance to good order and prompt dispatch of business, that each member of a body know what can and what cannot be done to a motion

* Whenever a report or paper has been read or formally placed before the body, it has been received. It is before the body, and must be disposed of in some way. The body can at once adopt it, or do what it pleases with it. To accept is to adopt:—“When the assembly is to consider a report, a motion should be made to ‘adopt,’ ‘accept,’ or ‘agree to’ the report, all of which, when carried, have the same effect, namely, to make the doings of the committee to become the acts of the assembly” (Robert’s *Rules*, § 31). “When accepted, the whole report is adopted by the assembly” (Cushing’s *Manual*, § 295).

before the assembly. Hence we add tables taken from Robert's Rules of Order, to which work we must refer for a fuller treatment of the points raised.

155. Motions Amendable. The main question or motion may be amended:

(1.) *By adding or inserting certain words or paragraphs;*

(2.) *By striking out certain words or paragraphs;*

(3.) *By striking out certain words and inserting others;*

(4.) *By substituting another motion on the same subject for the one pending;*

(5.) *By dividing the question into two or more questions, as the mover specifies.*

An amendment may be inconsistent with one already adopted, or may directly conflict with the spirit of the original motion, but it must have a direct bearing upon the subject of that motion.

156. Motions Unamendable. The following motions cannot be amended:

(1.) *To adjourn* (when unqualified).

(2.) *For the orders of the day.*

(3.) *All incidental questions.*

- (4.) *To lie on the table.*
- (5.) *For the previous question.*
- (6.) *An amendment of an amendment.*
- (7.) *To postpone indefinitely.*
- (8.) *To reconsider a vote.*

157. Undebatable Questions. The following questions must be decided without debate, all others being debatable:

(1.) *To fix the time to which the assembly shall adjourn*, if made when another question is before the body. As the main question, it is amendable and debatable.

(2.) *To adjourn.*

(3.) *Call for the orders of the day.*

(4.) *An appeal*, when made while the previous question is pending, or when simply relating to decorum or transgressions of the rules of speaking, or to the priority of business.

(5.) *Objection to the consideration of a question.*

(5.) Questions relating to

- a. Reading of papers;*
- b. Withdrawing a motion;*
- c. Suspending the rules;*
- d. Extending limits of debate;*

e. Limiting or closing debate;

f. Granting leave to continue his speech to one who has been guilty of indecorum in debate.

(7.) *To lie on the table.*

(8.) *To take from the table.*

(9.) *The previous question.*

(10.) *To reconsider* a question which is itself undebatable; otherwise it is debatable.

158. Subsidiary Motions. A motion made to bring any particular subject before the assembly for its consideration is the principal or main question. The assembly may not wish to act immediately on that motion but dispose of it in some other way, or it may wish to terminate debate. To accomplish its wish, the assembly may pass any one of the following motions, which yield to Privileged and Incidental Questions (§§ 159, 160), and which are arranged in their order of precedence among themselves:

(1.) *Lie on the table.*

(2.) *The previous question.*

(3.) *Postpone to a certain day.*

(4.) *Commit.*

(5.) *Amend.*

(6.) *Postpone indefinitely.*

“Any one of these motions (except amend) can be made when one of a lower order is pending, but none can supersede one of a higher order. They cannot be applied to one another except in the following cases: (*a.*) The Previous Question applies to the motion to Postpone, without affecting the principal motion, and can, if specified, be applied to a pending amendment; (*b.*) the motions to Postpone to a certain day, and to Commit, can be amended; and (*c.*) a motion to Amend the minutes can be laid on the table.”

The effect of a motion to “lie on the table,” if carried, places on the table everything that adheres to the subject; so that if an amendment be ordered to lie on the table, the subject which it is proposed to amend, goes there with it. The following cases are exceptions: (*a.*) An appeal; (*b.*) A motion to reconsider; (*c.*) An amendment to the minutes of the body. These can be ordered to lie on the table without carrying the original subjects with them.

159. Incidental Questions. These are such as arise out of other questions, and, consequently, take precedence of, and are to be decided before, the questions which give rise to them. They yield to Privileged Questions, and cannot be amended.

- (1.) *Appeal (or questions of order).*
- (2.) *Objection to the consideration of a question.*
- (3.) *The reading of papers.*
- (4.) *Leave to withdraw a motion.*
- (5.) *Suspension of the rules.*

160. Privileged Questions. These, on account of their importance, take precedence over all other questions whatever. They are as follows:

- (1.) *To fix the time to which the assembly shall adjourn.*
- (2.) *Adjourn.*
- (3.) *Questions relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly or any of its members.*
- (4.) *Call for the orders of the day.*

161. Motions Requiring more than a Majority Vote. The following motions require a two-thirds vote for their adoption, as the right of discussion, and the

right to have the rules enforced, should not be abridged by a majority:

(1.) *An objection to the consideration of a question.*

(2.) *To take up a question out of its proper order.*

(3.) *To suspend the rules.*

(4.) *The previous question.*

(5.) *To close or limit debate.*

(6.) *To amend the rules (requiring previous notice also).*

(7.) *To make a special order.*

VI.

NATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL BODIES.

“That they may all be one * * * *
that the world may believe that thou didst
send me.”—PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST.

NATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL BODIES.

162. National Synods. Until 1871 there were no stated but only occasional national gatherings of the Congregational churches in this country. Their first "Synod" was held in 1637, at Newtown, now Cambridge, Mass. The second "Synod," of a general nature, was convened at Cambridge, 1646-1648. It gave us the Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline.

The next was a "Convention" held at Albany, N. Y., in 1852. The fourth was the "Council" held in Boston, Mass., in 1865, which gave us the Boston Platform of Church Discipline. These gatherings were not frequent enough, either to express our unity or to secure organic efficiency.

163. The National Council. The Congregational churches met at Oberlin, in 1871, and organized themselves into a National Council, meeting every third year thereafter. The following are the Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules of Order of this Council.

164. Constitution

OF THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL, ADOPTED IN OBERLIN, O.,
NOVEMBER, 17, 1871.

The Congregational churches of the United States, by elders and messengers assembled, do now associate themselves in National Council:

To express and foster their substantial unity in doctrine, polity, and work; and

To consult upon the common interests of all the churches, their duties in the work of evangelization, the united development of their resources, and their relations to all parts of the kingdom of Christ.

They agree in belief that the Holy Scriptures are the sufficient and only infallible rule of religious faith and practice; their interpretation thereof being in substantial accordance with the great doctrines of the Christian faith, commonly called Evangelical, held in our churches from the early times, and sufficiently set forth by former General Councils.

They agree in belief that the right of government resides in local churches, or congregations of believers, who are respon-

sible directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Head of the church universal and of all particular churches; but that all churches, being in communion one with another as parts of Christ's catholic church, have mutual duties subsisting in the obligations of fellowship.

The churches, therefore, while establishing this National Council for the furtherance of the common interests and work of all the churches, do maintain the Scriptural and inalienable right of each church to self-government and administration; and this National Council shall never exercise legislative or judicial authority, nor consent to act as a council of reference.

And for the convenience of orderly consultation, they establish the following Rules:

I. *Sessions*.—The churches will meet in National Council every third year. They shall also be convened in special session whenever any five of the general State organizations shall so request.

II. *Representation*.—The churches shall be represented at each session, by delegates, either ministers or laymen, appointed in number and manner as follows:

1. The churches, assembled in their local organizations, appoint one delegate for every ten churches in their respective organizations, and one for a fraction of ten greater than one half, it being understood that wherever the churches of any State are directly united in a general organization, they may, at their option, appoint the delegates in such a body, instead of in local organizations, but in the above ratio of churches so united.

2. In addition to the above, the churches united in State organization appoint by such body one delegate, and one for each ten thousand communicants in their fellowship, and one for a major fraction thereof:—

3. It being recommended that the number of delegates be, in all cases, divided between ministers and laymen, as nearly equally as is practicable.

4. Such Congregational general societies for Christian work, and the faculties of such theological seminaries, as may be recognized by this Council, may be represented by one delegate each, such representatives having the right of discussion only.

III. *Officers.*—1. At the beginning of every stated or special session, there shall be chosen by ballot, from those present as members, a moderator, and one or more assistant moderators, to preside over its deliberations.

2. At each triennial session, there shall be chosen by ballot a secretary, a registrar, and a treasurer, to serve from the close of such session to the close of the next triennial session.

3. The secretary shall receive communications for the Council, conduct correspondence, and collect such facts, and superintend such publications. as may from time to time be ordered.

4. The registrar shall make and preserve the records of the proceedings of the Council; and for his aid, one or more assistants shall be chosen at each session, to serve during such session.

5. The treasurer shall do the work ordinarily belonging to such office.

6. At each triennial session, there shall be chosen a provisional committee, who shall make needful arrangements for the

next triennial session, and for any session called during the interval.

7. Committees shall be appointed, and in such manner, as may from time to time be ordered.

8. Any member of a church in fellowship may be chosen to the office of secretary, registrar, or treasurer; and such officers as are not delegates shall have all the privileges of members, except that of voting.

IV. *By-Laws*.—The Council may make and alter By-laws at any triennial session.

V. *Amendments*.—This constitution shall not be altered or amended except at a triennial session, and by a two-thirds vote, notice thereof having been given at a previous triennial session, or the proposed alteration having been requested by some general State organization of churches, and published with the notification of the session.

165. By-Laws.

I. In all its official acts and records, this body shall be designated as THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES.

II. It shall be understood that the term for which delegates to the Council are appointed expires with each session, triennial or special, to which they are chosen.

III. Statistical secretaries of state and territorial bodies, ministers serving the churches entertaining the Council, and persons selected as preachers, or to prepare papers, or to serve upon committees chosen by this body, shall be entitled to all the privileges of members in the session in which they are to serve, except that of voting.

IV. The term "Congregational," as applied to the general benevolent societies, in connection with representation in this body, is understood in the broad sense of societies whose constituency and control are substantially Congregational.

V. The provisional committee shall consist of seven persons, chosen by the Council, two of whom shall have been members of the last previous committee, with the addition of the secretary, registrar, and treasurer *ex officio*, of whom four shall be a quorum. This committee shall specify the place and the precise time at which sessions shall commence ; shall choose a preacher of the opening ser-

mon ; may select topics regarding the Christian work of the churches, and persons to prepare and present papers thereon ; shall do any work which shall have been referred to them by the Council ; shall name a place and time for the next triennial Council ; and shall make a full report of all their doings, the consideration of which shall be the first in order of business after organization.

VI. The session shall ordinarily be held in the latter part of October, or the early part of November.

VII. The call for any session shall be signed by the chairman of the provisional committee and the secretary of the Council, and it shall contain a list of topics proposed by the committee ; and the secretary shall seasonably furnish blank credentials, and other needful papers, to the scribes of the several local organizations of churches.

VIII. Soon after the opening of a stated or special session, the following committees shall be appointed :—

1—A committee on credentials, who shall prepare a roll of members.

2—A committee of nominations, to make all nominations not otherwise provided for.

3—A business committee, to propose a docket for the use of the members. Except by special vote of the Council, no business shall be introduced which has not thus passed through the hands of this committee.

4—A publishing committee of five, including the secretary, registrar, and treasurer, who shall contract for and distribute all publications ordered by the Council.

5—A finance committee.

6—A committee on each of the national Congregational charitable societies, to which, severally, may be referred any statements from, and any communications relating to, said societies.

7—A committee on the Congregational theological seminaries, to which may be referred any statements from, and any communications relating to, said seminaries.

Committees shall be composed of three persons each, except otherwise ordered.

IX. In the sessions of the National Council, half an hour shall every morning be given to devotional services, and the daily sessions shall be opened with prayer, and closed with prayer or singing. Every evening shall ordinarily be given to meetings of a specifically

religious rather than business character, and the Council will join in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at some convenient season.

X. No person shall occupy more than three-quarters of an hour in reading any paper or report, and no speaker upon any motion, or resolution, or any paper read, shall occupy more than ten minutes, without the unanimous consent of the Council.

XI. An auditor of accounts shall be appointed at every session.

XII. The provisional committee may fill any vacancies occurring in any committee or office in the intervals of sessions, the person so appointed to serve until the next session.

XIII. The Council approves of an annual compilation of the statistics of the churches, and of a list of such ministers as are reported by the several State organizations. And the secretary is directed to present at each triennial session comprehensive and comparative summaries for the three years preceding.

XIV. The Council, as occasion may arise, will hold communication with the general Congregational bodies of other lands, and with the general ecclesiastical organizations of other churches of evangelical faith in our

own land, by delegates appointed by the Council or by the provisional committee.

XV. The presiding officers shall retain their offices until their successors are chosen; and the presiding moderator, at the opening of the session subsequent to the one at which he was elected, shall name the nominating committee, the business committee, and the committee on credentials ; and he shall be an honorary member of the Council.

166. Rules of Order.

The rules of order shall be those found in common parliamentary use, not modified by local legislative practice, with the following explicit modifications :—

1—When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received, except the following, namely : to amend, to commit, to postpone to a time certain, to postpone indefinitely, to lay on the table, and to adjourn,—which shall have precedence in the reverse order of this list, the motions to lay on the table and to adjourn alone being not debatable. But the Council at any time, on the motion of one member, seconded by five other members and by a

two-thirds vote of those present and voting, may order a vote to be taken upon the pending question ; after this is so ordered, the debate shall not be cut off for one-half hour, provided any member desires to speak ; but during that time no speaker shall speak more than five minutes.

2—No member shall speak more than twice to the merits of any question in debate, except by special permission of the body ; nor more than once, until every member desiring to speak shall have spoken.

3—Ordinarily, voting shall be *viva voce*, or by show of hands ; but any member may call for a division, in which case the number voting on each side shall be counted, announced by the chair, entered in the minutes, and published in the printed reports of the proceedings.

4—If the report of committee contains nothing more than matters of fact for information, or matters of argument for the consideration of the Council, the question is : *Shall the report be accepted?* and that question, unless superseded by a motion to reject, to recommit, to postpone, or to lay upon the table, shall be taken without debate. Such a report,

if accepted, is placed upon the files of the Council, but, not being an act of the Council, is not entered on the minutes.

(a)—If the report is in the form of a vote or resolution, or of a declaration expressing the judgment or testimony of the Council, the additional question arises : *Shall the report be adopted ?* and motions for amendment are in order. Such a report, if adopted, with or without amendment, is the act of the Council, and is entered on the minutes.

(b)—If a report gives the views of the committee on the matter referred to them, and terminates with the form of a resolution or declaration in the name of the Council, the questions are : *Shall the report be accepted ?* and *Shall the resolution or declaration be adopted ?* And while the report at large, if accepted, is placed on file, that part of it which has become the act of the Council is entered on the minutes.

SUPPLEMENTAL.

SUPPLEMENTAL.

[The following Section should have been placed between Sections 58 and 59].

167. How to Form Church Associations. Associations of churches may be formed in the following way:

a. When it is desired to organize a District Association (§ 58 a.), let some church appoint a committee to correspond with the other churches in reference thereto; and, in case they are favorably disposed, to invite them to meet by pastors and delegates in convention for the purpose of constituting themselves into an Association. When they in convention shall have adopted a Constitution, Doctrinal Basis, and By-laws, the said churches become an Association.

b. When it is desired to organize a State or Territorial Association (§ 58, b.), some District Association, or, in case there be none, some church, may appoint a committee of correspondence and invitation, as above, to call a convention of the churches

by pastors and delegates, for constituting the Association.

c. In either case, great care should be had in adopting the Constitution, Doctrinal Basis, and By-laws, as they form the organic law of the body. A committee appointed for the purpose should derive needed help from the action of other co-ordinate bodies in this respect, whose Constitutions, Doctrinal Bases, and By-laws have been published.

[We append a service for administering Infant Baptism, though not so related to Polity as to require it, but yet so needed as to justify its insertion. For the limitations of this rite, see Section 100].

Service for the Baptism of Infants.

DEAR FRIENDS: In presenting your infant offspring to the Lord in Christian baptism, you do show the same religious carefulness and parental solicitude that led the Virgin Mary to circumcise her Holy Child, and to present Him in the Temple. The impulse lies deep in parents' hearts, beautiful in itself, and nurtured by our holy religion, to consecrate by some outward rite their children unto God. And Abraham, four hundred years before the giving of the Law, was commanded to apply the seal of His covenant with God to himself and to his male offspring. And perhaps nothing in the life of our Savior was more touchingly beautiful than His laying His hands on the heads of little children while He blessed them. And what words of His

are dearer to parents' hearts than these: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The parental feelings which respond so warmly to these words, have since Abraham's day found a fit expression in the sacrament either of blood or of water, in infant circumcision or in infant baptism.

Prompted by these feelings, trusting in a risen Savior, believing that the promise made to Abraham is also made to you and your seed, you stand here in this presence to discharge a joyous but solemn duty. Glad that the Lord has blessed you, you now present the child of your love, and solemnly dedicate *it* unto God

In doing so, you promise, in dependence upon the Divine grace, to train *it* up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to teach *it* the great Doctrines of our holy religion; to instruct *it* in all His precepts; and to use your best endeavor to bring *it* early in life into the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bear ever in mind, the obligations of this significant rite. During the long period of

childhood, God has laid upon you the duty of *its* moral and religious culture, which no one else can so well perform. Be faithful and patient, with all prayer and tenderness, assured that God will guide and reward you. So train your *child* by precept and example that when *its* soul like an opening bud shall reach out after light and life, *it* shall find them in Him who is the Light and the Life of the world. Then shall your dear little *one*, in the Lord's appointed time, go to be forever with Him who took little children in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.

[*Baptism, and closing Prayer*].

169. Procedure in Cases of Common Fame. In cases of notorious scandal, action may be taken without the preliminary steps (§105), in summarily excluding the offender from church privileges (§106); but cases of common fame are somewhat different and need consideration. Such offences have peculiar characteristics that separate them both from private offences and from notorious scandals. They have been thus described: "The rumor must specify some particular sin or sins; it must be general, or widely spread; it must not be transient, but permanent, and rather gaining strength than declining; and it must be accompanied with strong presumption of truth" (*Presbyterian Discipline*, chap. iii., Sec. v). In such cases no person needs to be named as the accuser. "Common fame is the accuser." Yet all needful attempts to reclaim such offenders should be patiently made before final action is taken.

170. Citation of the Accused. Whenever a church would take final action on a case of private offence (§105), or of public scandal (§106), or of common fame (§169), it should cite the accused to appear for trial

of the charges on a specified day and hour and at a designated place. This citation should be given at least ten days before the trial, and the church should ascertain that its citation has been seasonably served. If the accused do not appear for trial at the time specified, the church may issue another citation or proceed with the trial, as it may judge expedient.

The citation of the accused may be made in the following or similar

FORM OF CITATION.

Mr., Mrs., or Miss.... .

Beloved :—A complaint has been made against you to the church, a copy of which is herewith placed in your hands, and the church has voted to entertain the same, and to summon you to trial in the....room of the Congregational church on...day of...., 18..., at....o'clock..... You are hereby cited to appear at the said time and place, to answer to the charges made against you in the said complaint. And may God overrule the inquiry to the spiritual good of all concerned, and to the glory of his name.

By the order of the church.

.... ., Clerk.

Dated.....

As the witnesses mentioned in the complaint (§146) must also be cited, the above can easily be modified to suit their case.

171. Can a Corporation Authorize a Member to Cast its Ballot for Trustee?

This question is of the greatest legal importance, wherever ballots are required by law. Such a ballot, being single, is of necessity unanimous. If the body should be absolutely unanimous in authorizing it, the single ballot when cast would be legal, as then it would express the full will of the corporation. But if there be opposition to authorizing such a ballot, expressed by vote or by refusal to vote, the said single ballot does not express the will of the body, and is therefore oppressive and illegal, as every voter has a legal right to cast a ballot, and to have his ballot counted. It is wise, therefore, to rule a motion authorizing such a single ballot out of order, as subversive of the purpose of a ballot. This principle applies to all cases where the law of the State or the constitution of the corporate body requires a vote by ballot.

172. Can an informal ballot be made formal and legal by a hand or voice vote?

No; such a hand or voice vote, where a

ballot is required, is as illegal and void as the informal ballot itself. Surely a non-legal vote cannot make a non-legal ballot legal. The thing is absurd. An informal ballot is merely a quick way of ascertaining the sense of the body. It has no organic or legal force whatever ; and, when a ballot is required, no other way of voting than by ballot is legal. Two illegal or non-legal votes do not make a legal ballot. Such attempts should be banished as illegal and void.

173. Consolidation of an Ecclesiastical Society with its Church. The primitive churches had no ecclesiastical society, but managed, each for itself, all their affairs (§§ 30-34) ; but when the church and State were united under Constantine the Great, a foreign and evil element was introduced, from which no churches, not even the Puritan churches, had freed themselves at the time the American Colonies were planted. The leading Colonies of New England at first gave the suffrage only to members of Congregational churches. When the right to vote was extended beyond such members, the parish or ecclesiastical society emerged from this union of church and State. (*The Church-*

Kingdom, 328-330). Our churches, even in New England, are now seeking to be rid of the parish system, as foreign in principle to our polity. In most of the States (§ 24, note), churches may organize as corporate bodies, without a parish or ecclesiastical society in connection. These churches should elect their own trustees to hold and manage their property, and so discard the vanishing relic of the union of church and State, the ecclesiastical society or the parish. So also many of our churches, connected with such societies, desire to return to their primitive model, and a question of the greatest importance arises : How may an ecclesiastical society or parish become consolidated with the church in connection, without the risk of the legal loss of its property and funds held in trust ? Of course each church must act under the special or general laws of the State in which it is located ; but where no law details the process of consolidation, but allows church and society to become one, the following plan may be followed, namely :

1—Let a legal notice be given of a meeting of the ecclesiastical society at a specified time and place.

2—Let the said notice state the purpose of the said meeting in these or similar words, namely,—

(a)—To limit the membership of the society hereafter to members of the church of legal age.

(b)—To change the name of the society to the name and style of the church in connection.

(c)—To change the time and place of meetings to those of the church in connection.

If, at the said meeting, these changes are effected by the requisite vote, the church and society become one body, managing all its spiritual and secular affairs. If bequests have been made to the trustees of the society, the funds are not forfeited, for the trustees are the same legal body under a new name legally adopted. But no one holding membership in the society at the time of the consolidation can be deprived of the right to vote until the time of said membership expires.

Care should be taken to keep the business of the church as a corporation separate from the business of the church as a spiritual body, in notices, rules, procedure, and records, so

far as may be needful to escape confusion and to ensure legal action.

174. National Council on Ministerial Standing. The first two of the following resolutions on the pastorate and ministerial standing were reported by a committee to the National Council of 1886, and were adopted without a dissenting vote. The other resolutions here given were otherwise introduced, but were adopted by the same Council, a small minority voting against them :

*“Resolved, (1) That standing in the Congregational ministry is acquired by the fulfilment of these three conditions, namely : (1) Membership in a Congregational church ; (2) Ordination to the Christian ministry ; and (3) Reception as an ordained minister into the fellowship of the Congregational churches, in accordance with the usage of the State or Territorial organization of churches in which the applicant may reside ; and such standing is to be continued in accordance with these usages, it being understood that a *pro re nata* council is the ultimate resort in all cases in question.*

“Resolved, (2) That all Congregational ministers in good standing in their respective

States, who have been installed by Council, or who have been regularly called to the pastorate by the specific vote of some church, have formally accepted such position, and have been recognized as such by some definite act of the church, should be enrolled as pastors ; and we advise that all our denominational statistics, and direct that, so far as possible, our Year Book conform to this principle.

“ *Resolved*, (3) That this National Council commends to the churches, in accordance with our ancient usage, the importance of properly called ecclesiastical councils, ordinarily selected from the vicinage, and especially the great importance of the installation of ministers to the pastorate by councils, when it is practicable, as conducive to the purity of the ministry and the prosperity of the churches.

“ *Resolved*, (4) That the State organizations and local organizations of churches be recommended to consider such modification of their constitution as will enable them to become responsible for the ministerial standing of ministers within their bounds, in har-

mony with the principle that the churches of any locality decide upon their own fellowship.

“ *Resolved*, (5) That the Year Book designate pastors who have been installed or recognized by councils called to examine the pastor elect and assist in inducting him into office, by the letters p. c., and pastors otherwise inducted by the letter p.; it being understood that these changes shall be first made in the Year Book for 1888 ” (*Minutes*, 43, 44).

175. Ministerial and Church Standing Guarded. The inalienable right of the churches in any locality to protect their fellowship (§§ 88; 143, Art. iv. 4) may be better secured and exercised in and through their stated district Associations than in any other way. For the membership of these bodies is easily known, and each holds regular meetings and keeps permanent records. When, therefore, an Association ordains (§ 77, d. e.), receives to membership (§ 85), disciplines (§ 87), or dismisses (§ 89), it acts as a known and accountable body ; but when a council does any of these things, it acts as a selected, temporary, and irresponsible body, having no power to meet again, to preserve its minutes,

to correct a mistake, or redress a wrong. It ceases to exist forever, whenever it adjourns. We see herein sufficient reasons why churches in their Associations should both give and withhold fellowship, provided their liberties as independent churches are properly guarded.

We give, therefore, what we hold to be a complete safeguard of their liberties. By it their inalienable right as independent churches and their equally inalienable right, in their associated capacity, to protect themselves from unsound or unworthy churches and ministers, are preserved inviolate. Let each church put into its Constitution the provision given above (§143, Art. iv. 4); and then let the Association adopt in its Constitution provisions similar to the following, and both rights are sufficiently guarded :—

“ARTICLE II.—INALIENABLE RIGHTS.

“SEC. 2.—This Association recognizes the right of every church to administer its affairs, free from external control; and it shall not, in any case, assume legislative authority, or become a court of appeal.

“Sec. 3.—While thus recognizing the inalienable right of every church to administer

its own affairs, even in the ordination and installation of its pastors ; and also the equally inalienable right of the churches in any locality to extend and withhold fellowship, and to have a voice in all other matters of common concern ; the members of this body will seek to preserve both these rights inviolate by asking their Association to act as a council of advice in matters of common concern.

“ ARTICLE III.—MEMBERS.

“ SEC. 1.—Churches, on application, shall be received to membership by a two-thirds vote of any regular meeting of the Association, provided that their form of government and confession of faith be in essential harmony with the doctrinal basis of the general Association of the Congregational churches and ministers of the State.

“ SEC. 2.—Any Congregational minister within the bounds of the Association, with proper credentials, may, on application, be admitted to membership by a two-thirds vote of any regular meeting, and by subscribing to this constitution.

“ SEC. 3.—Ministerial credentials shall be ordination, installation, or recognition papers;

results of councils ; and transfers from co-ordinate bodies.

“ Sec. 4.—Any church in membership shall be entitled to representation in all sessions of the body (except as in cases hereinafter specified) by its minister, either its Sunday School Superintendent or Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, if a church member, a delegate chosen by its Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, if a church member, and one delegate.”

“ ARTICLE IV.—MINISTERIAL STANDING.

“ SEC. 1.—The sitting of a minister in the sessions of the Association, in virtue of his being the pastor or delegate of a church, does not give him ministerial standing in the body and does not entitle him to a letter of transfer [§ 67].

“ Sec. 2.—Ministerial standing in the Association [§§ 80, 85] entitles one to certification for the list of Congregational ministers, published in the Year Book ; to membership in the General Association of the State ; and, on vote of the Association, to a certificate of transfer to a coördinate body.

“ARTICLE V.—DISCIPLINE.

“SEC. 1.—When the standing of any church or minister of the Association is called into question, a committee shall be appointed to inquire into the case, and report; if then a trial shall be deemed necessary, a special meeting of the Association shall be called by the Moderator and Registrar, or by either one, in case of the absence or incapacity of the other, for said trial, which meeting shall consist of all the ministerial members, and one male delegate of lawful age from each church in the Association.

“Sec. 2.—If any church or minister shall feel aggrieved by the action of the Association in such trial, at any time within three months, appeal may be taken to a mutual council.

“Sec. 3.—Whenever the Association shall act as a council of advice, the limitations in membership, given in the preceding sections of this Article, shall be observed.”—(*From the Constitution of the Eastern Association of the Congregational Churches and Ministers of Michigan.*)

If a church or minister present the result

of any council, or a transfer, or any other credentials (§ 89), for admission as a member, the association of churches has the right to inquire into the genuineness of the said credentials, and to make any examination of the candidate which, in its discretion, it may deem best.

Thus the complete autonomy under Christ of each local church is amply guarded, while each church and minister, seeking the fellowship of unity, is put under obligations to keep the faith and to walk orderly. If they violate these obligations, it is no authority over them to withdraw fellowship from them.

176. The Origin and Value of Councils. The system of councils (§§ 38-56) which has grown up in this country is not found elsewhere. And it has been lately shown (*Church-Kingdom*, 268-271) that the system arose out of the union of church and State, and had a civil or political rather than an ecclesiastical origin. The General Court of Massachusetts, in 1631, enacted that only members of Congregational churches should be allowed to vote ; and, in 1636, that no church should be gathered without the approbation of the magistrates and the greater

part of the churches in the jurisdiction ; and, again, in 1658, that no person should publicly and constantly preach, or be ordained to the office of teaching elder " where any two organic churches, council of State, or general court shall declare their dissatisfaction thereat." The shortest way of gaining the approbation of the churches, in compliance with these laws, was to call a council at every organization of a church and at every ordination or installation, which is re ordination. Here in this need was the origin of councils for such purposes, which have by usage prolonged their existence far beyond the duration of those laws, and even the union of church and State.

But since our churches have become organized into district associations, the need and value of such councils as safeguards of purity have largely vanished. A church need not call a council to examine its creed, and rules, and to recognize it (§ 23, a) ; it may, instead, present these credentials by its delegates to the next meeting of the nearest district association of churches (§ 23, b), and ask to be admitted. That association should refer them to a committee for examination, on

whose report the church may be admitted to equal membership (§ 60), if its credentials (§ 89) are approved (§ 65, b) ; or excluded, if its credentials are not approved (§ 64). By so doing it secures the same fellowship without the expense in time and money of a council of recognition, and the trouble of a double inquiry, once by a council, and again on application for membership in the association. The only exception to be made here, is when those desiring to form a church are in doubt whether or not it is expedient for them to do so. Such cases are rare, but when they occur a council of advice as to the expediency of organizing a church may be called.

So an association of churches may ordain to the ministry (§ 77, d), thus becoming a better safeguard of purity and liberty (§§ 73, 88, 91, 175) than a council, and at less expense in time and money, as it may set men apart to the work of the ministry at its regular meetings.

The decline of councils is a sign that our practice is adjusting itself to our principles, by the giving up of an historical but abnormal local development, due to the union of church and State.

Councils are destined to continue, however, as bodies of mutual reference in cases of trouble and grievance (§§ 50, 51, 66, 87). Here they are of the greatest value.

177. Service for the Administration of the Lord's Supper.

As ministers come to us from other communions, which have different methods of celebrating the Eucharist, and as uniformity conduces to the acceptable observance of the rite, we are glad to present an order of service which has been kindly furnished by Rev. Philo R. Hurd, D. D., of Detroit, who says : "It is that which used to be followed in Yale College by President Day, and, I presume, by President Dwight before him."

COMMUNION SERVICE.

[It will help to prepare the minds of the communicants for the ordinance, if one or two verses of some appropriate familiar hymn are sung. After which the minister should say :]

DEARLY BELOVED :—The same night in which our Lord was betrayed, He took bread, and blessed it. In imitation of His example, let us look to God for His blessing on the bread.

[After a short prayer of consecration, the bread should be broken, and the minister, holding the bread in his hand, should say:]

When our Lord had blessed the bread, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, saying : “ This is my body which is for you : this do in remembrance of me.” Take this bread, therefore, beloved, and eat ye all of it, rejoicing that “ as often as ye eat this bread, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till He come.”

[The minister then gives the bread to the deacons, who, in perfect silence, bear it to the communicants who remain seated. Then the deacons return the plates to the minister and take their seats. The minister then passes the bread to them. After which he should pour the wine, and, holding a cup in his hand, should say :]

When our Lord had distributed the bread, He, in like manner also, took the cup, and gave thanks. In imitation of His example, let us give thanks.

[After a short prayer of thanksgiving, the minister should say :]

When our Lord had returned thanks, He gave the cup to His disciples, saying: “ This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for many unto remission of sins.” Take this cup, then, beloved, and drink ye all of it, rejoicing that “ as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till He come.”

[The minister should then deliver the cups to the deacons who present them to the communicants in their seats, in perfect silence as before. When the deacons return the cups to the minister and are seated, he should serve the cup to them, and return it to its place.]

Then the usual communion collection should be taken. After which the minister should say:]

After the Supper, the disciples sung a hymn, and went out. Let us also sing a hymn.

[After the singing of the hymn, the church is dismissed with an appropriate benediction, as Hebrews xiii. 20, 21, or some other.]

If the minister wishes to address the communicants, he should do so before the celebration of the Supper, not during its progress. But let him avoid, as utterly unsuited to this feast of love, all reference to their faults, as he would if they were seated at his own table.]

178. In conformity with the suggestion made in § 98, the following Service for the Ordination of Deacons is given :

Ordination of Deacons.

[Immediately before the celebration of the Supper the pastor should read the names of those chosen to be deacons, and ask them to rise. Then he should say :]

BELOVED : Our Lord and Saviour ordained, through the mouth of inspired apostles, that there should be a ministry of tables in addition to the ministry of the Word, that His churches might the better be served in their manifold relations. Hence deacons were appointed, and set apart by the laying on of hands and prayer (Acts vi. 1-6). Having been duly chosen to the Diaconate, we would as a church set you apart in a similar way to your work.

But since it is required of deacons that they hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," you will answer, truly and unreservedly, the following questions :

1.—Do you cordially assent to and subscribe the articles of faith adopted by this church as its creed, and will you maintain the same as long as you hold the office of deacon in this church ?

2.—And since the good order, peace and prosperity of the church depend largely on

its officers, do you promise to study, observe, and enforce the rules adopted for the government of this church ?

3.—And since no church lives unto itself alone, will you, while maintaining the independence under Christ of this church in matters of control, encourage also its fellowship and coöperation with other churches in the evangelization of the world ?

Having given satisfactory answers to these questions, you will come forward and be ordained to the office and work of the Diaconate.

[The candidates, having come forward into the pulpit, should kneel ; when the pastor, on behalf of the church, should set them apart with the laying on of hands and prayer. The other deacons, if desired, should also lay hands upon the candidates during the prayer. After the ordaining prayer, the deacons thus set apart should return to their places and remain standing, while the minister gives them the following, or a similar, charge :]

BELOVED : Having been set apart in this solemn manner to one of the two permanent offices in the church of God, “ the pillar and ground of the truth,” we charge you in the name of Christ, the Head, to be faithful in your new calling, to omit no duty, to feed the

lambs, to foster the purity, peace, and prosperity of this church, to hold fast and forth the grand doctrines of the blessed gospel, and to live in all humility and godly sincerity. The church is a spiritual body and an organized brotherhood, needing a dual ministry, the ministry of the Word and the ministry of tables. Hence our churches in National Council (1865) have said :

“ Deacons are chosen in every church to help the elders, chiefly by receiving the contributions and whatever gifts are offered to the church ; by keeping the treasury of the church ; and by distributing from it for the relief of the poor, especially of those in communion, for the supply of the Lord’s Table ; and, if needful, for the support of the ministry. As almoners of the church, they are to care for the poor, to know them personally, to inquire into their wants, and afflictions, and to be the organ of communication between them and the brotherhood.”

This call to assist the pastor is more urgent now than when each church had two or more elders to minister unto the saints, as was the case with the primitive churches, and with those first planted in New England (§ 91). See

to it, therefore, that none of your duties are laid upon the ministry of the Word. **C**hosen to be among the standard-bearers of the church, fulfil your trust with all humility and patience. On you rests largely the welfare of this church. Study, therefore, to show the gravity, the sincerity, the generosity, the temperance, the blamelessness, the wisdom, the fidelity, and the fulness of the Spirit, which are required of deacons. "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Be full of prayer, gentleness, and the sweet love of God, and you shall find His grace sufficient for you in every responsibility of your office, and your new service will be a joy here, and a crown of glory hereafter. Amen.

179, Laying a Corner-Stone.

- 1.—Hymn.
- 2.—Prayer.
- 3.—Psalm cxxxii, read responsively.
- 4.—Scripture Lesson, 1 Cor. iii. 9-23, or some other passage.
- 5.—Sermon or address.
- 6.—Contributions or subscriptions.
- 7.—Hymn.
- 8.—Depositing box and laying the stone, assisted by the builder, the minister saying, as the stone is put in its place :—
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I lay this corner-stone for the foundation of a house to be builded and consecrated to the worship of Almighty God, according to the faith, order, and usages of Congregational churches. Amen.
- 9.—Prayer.
- 10.—Benediction.

180. Order and Covenant for the Dedication of a Church.

[The following order may be changed, by using "re-dedicate" for "dedicate," to fit it for Re-dedication.]

1.—Doxology.

2.—Prayer of Invocation.

3.—Anthem, or Hymn.

4.—Responsive Readings.

5.—Te Deum Laudamus, or Anthem.

6.—Scripture Lesson.

7.—Hymn.

8.—Sermon.

9.—Solo, or Choir.

10.—Statement of the Trustees.

11.—Hymn.

12.—Dedicatory Covenant. (Congregation standing.)

PASTOR.—Unto thee, infinite and eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost,

PEOPLE.—*We dedicate this house.*

PASTOR.—To the honor of thy law, to the celebration of Thy love, to the proclamation of Thy truth, to the publication of Thy gospel, and to the glory of Thy great name,

PEOPLE.—*We dedicate this house.*

PASTOR.—That in this place Thy goodness and truth may ever be manifested to Thy people, and Thy promises continually fulfilled among Thy servants ; that the simple may here find wisdom ; the feeble, strength ; the troubled, peace ; the weary, rest ; the sinful, forgiveness ; and all, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,

PEOPLE.—*We dedicate this house.*

PASTOR.—For the purposes of a Christian church, open to all for whom Christ died ; where Thou shalt be worshipped in spirit and truth ; where Thy word shall be proclaimed in purity, faithfulness and love ; where Christian zeal and fellowship shall abound ; and where every effort to lift the degraded, help the helpless, save the lost, shall find sympathy and aid,

PEOPLE.—*We dedicate this house.*

PASTOR.—As a tribute of gratitude, love and praise, from those who have drunk deeply of the cup of Thy goodness, and have known in rich experience Thy mercy and Thy grace,

PEOPLE.—*We dedicate this house.*

PASTOR.—Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, forevermore ; and separating this place of worship from every unhallowed thing,

making it a house of prayer for all the people, and so perfecting holiness in the fear of God,

PEOPLE.—*We dedicate this house to Thee, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

ALL.—Arise, O Lord, and fill Thy sanctuary ; let the glory of the Lord fill the house of the Lord ; then shall we worship Thee in the beauty of holiness. Amen, and Amen.

13.—Gloria Patri. (All standing.)

14.—Dedicatory Prayer.

15.—Hymn.

16.—Benediction.

181. MARRIAGE SERVICES.**First Form.**

DEAR FRIENDS : With hearts united in love you stand here in this presence to join hands in holy wedlock, to enter into a relation of Divine appointment. May it be to you as pure and sweet as the first bridal in Eden ! and that it may be so let me urge you to walk together in the light of God's holy word touching the duties you will henceforth owe to each other in this blessed relationship.

Let me now receive your mutually plighted troth, and seal your marriage vows.

In token of your choice of each other as husband and wife, you will please to join your right hands.

Do you promise before God and these witnesses to receive each other as companions in wedlock for life ? And do you promise to live together as such, in the exercise of the duties and graces which God has enjoined upon those united in the bands of holy wedlock ? If you so promise, you will say—I do.

[If the parties desire to be married with the ring, the minister shall say to the groom :]

What token do you give to seal your plighted troth ?

[Then they shall loose their hands, and the man shall give unto the woman a ring. And the minister taking the ring from the woman, shall deliver it unto the man, to put it upon the fourth finger of the woman's left hand. And the man holding the ring there, and taught by the minister, shall say :]

With this ring, I thee wed ; and with my love, I thee endow ; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I, therefore, in accordance with your sacred promises, and in virtue of the power conferred on me by the laws of this Commonwealth, pronounce you husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

[After the minister shall have prayed, the husband and wife, one flesh, shall again join their hands, and the minister, placing his right hand upon theirs, shall pronounce the Aaronic benediction :]

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee :

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee :

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

Second Form.

[Furnished by Rev.W. B. Williams.]

The ordinance of marriage was instituted by God Himself during the innocence of our first parents in Eden.

In the simple though beautiful and expressive language of inspiration, we are told that "the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone ; I will make him an help meet for him." This ordinance was also sanctioned by the presence of our Saviour at the marriage in Cana of Galilee.

A holy apostle also declares that "marriage is honorable in all."

In short, both reason and revelation show that when this relation is wisely assumed with a due regard on the part of those entering it, to the mental, moral, and physical traits of each, by diminishing the sorrows of life and increasing its joys, it is highly conducive to human happiness.

In token then of a due consideration on your part, of the nature and obligations of the conjugal relation, and of your free, deliberate, and decided choice of each other as partners for life, you will join your right hands.

Do you, A B and C D, now solemnly promise in the presence of Almighty God and of these witnesses, to receive each other as husband and wife, and to practice with mutual fidelity, until separated by death, all those offices of affection and kindness that God in His word has enjoined upon those who are united in this relation? Do you thus mutually promise and engage? [Let each respond "I do."]

[Here let the groom place a ring on the fourth finger of the left hand of the bride, saying:]

"With this ring, I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods, and my heart's faithful affections, I thee endow."

[The Minister should add:]

And may it remain a fit emblem of the brighter link uniting your hearts, of the richer circle of your common enjoyments, and as it is without end, may your happiness and prosperity endure forever.

Agreeably, then, to the laws of this State, and the higher law of heaven, I pronounce you, A B and C D, husband and wife, henceforth in interests and destiny, as in affection one, and "what God hath joined together, let not man put asun-

der," and may the God in whose presence you have entered into this solemn covenant look upon you in mercy to preserve and prosper you, make you blessed and a blessing in the sphere you may be called to occupy, and bringing you through all the troubles and perils of this brief life, grant you a glad and eternal reunion in heaven. Amen.

[Prayer.]

Third Form.

[Furnished by Rev. Philo R. Hurd, D. D.]

MY DEAR FRIENDS : The transaction in which you are about to engage, you will suffer me to remind you, is one of great solemnity and importance. It is certainly one of great importance to you personally, inasmuch as upon it your happiness in the present world, and possibly in the next, will largely depend.

Marriage, I may also remind you, is not merely a human device, but an ordinance of God established by Him for the highest and holiest purposes. It is not, therefore, to be entered upon lightly, or without due consideration, but thoughtfully and in the fear of God.

Trusting that it is with these views and feelings you propose to enter into this sacred relation, I now ask you to join your right hands.

Do you (naming the man) take this woman whom you hold by the hand to be your lawfully wedded wife ; and do you solemnly covenant and promise in the presence of God and these witnesses to be unto her a loving, faithful husband ; and, forsaking all others, to cleave to her alone, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, so long as you both shall live ? [To which the man answers, I do.]

And do you (naming the woman) now take this man whom you hold by the hand to be your lawfully wedded husband ; and do you covenant and promise, in the presence of God and these witnesses, to be to him a loving and faithful wife, and, forsaking all others, to cleave to him alone, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, so long as you both shall live ? [The woman answers, I do.]

[In case a ring is to be given, the minister may say, handing the ring to the bridegroom :]

In confirmation of these solemn vows let

this ring, the fitting emblem of an unending fidelity, be given and received.

[The bridegroom puts the ring upon the bride's finger, when the minister says:]

As a minister of God, then, and by the authority given me by the laws of the State, I pronounce you husband and wife ; and what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

[Prayer.]

182. BURIAL SERVICES.

[After the casket has been lowered into the grave, the minister may use at his discretion one of the following forms of committal:]

1.—“ Jesus said, I am the resurrection, and the life : he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.” In unwavering confidence in this blessed hope of a future life, we lay the remains of our loved one in the ground ; earth to earth. ashes to ashes, dust to dust. May God enable us all by His grace to be prepared for a glorious immortality.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, shall be the praise forever. Amen.

2.—It having pleased Almighty God our heavenly Father, in whose hand our breath is, and who doeth all things well, to remove from earth the soul of our beloved, we commit the body to the grave ; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust ; remembering the words of our Lord Jesus, when he said : “ For I go to prepare a place for you. And

if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." To those dying in Jesus there is a glorious immortality in His presence. For "there remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest," waiting with patience until we shall see Him as He is.

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

3.—"Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in His wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our deceased *brother*, we therefore commit *his* body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ;

at whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead ; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed, and made like unto His own glorious body ; according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself” (*Book of Common Prayer*).

“ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.” Amen.

INDEX.

	Page.
Accept, same as adopt.....	162
Activity of Primitive Churches.....	118
Modern Congregational Churches.....	119
Adjournment, effect on Councils.....	41, 42
Admission of Members.	17, 125
Form for.....	131
Apostles had no Successors.....	67
Appeal, No, from local church.....	32
Associations, Church.....	53-62
Authority of.....	56
Churches should join... ..	27
Conditions of membership in	26, 55, 57-60
Doctrinal bases of.....	14
How to form.....	187
Justified in excluding members.....	56, 58, 59
Kinds of.....	53
May join in calling councils.....	38, 48
Membership in, guarded	55, 61, 200
Ministerial delegates in, not members... ..	61, 62
Ministerial standing in.....	60, 77, 198, 200
Names of.....	55
Nature of.....	53
Not Presbyteries.....	57-60

Object of.....	56
Responsibility of.....	56, 57
Standing of churches in.....	60
When may ordain.....	70, 71, 202
Associations, Ministerial.....	63, 64
Continuance of.....	64
Nature of.....	63
Origin of.....	63
Standing in.....	76
Use of.....	63, 64
Authority, Associations have what.....	56
Councils possess what.....	51, 52
Ecclesiastical, where deposited.....	30
Ministers have none over churches.....	66
Autonomy, Church.....	30, 33-36
Ballot, authorizing a member to cast, illegal.....	194
Informal, cannot be made legal.....	194
Baptism.....	91, 92
Service for Infant.....	189
Baptists, differ from Congregationalists.....	110
Number of.....	6, 7
Baptized children, when communicants.....	14
Basis, Doctrinal, of union.....	14
Bible, Standard of Congregationalists.....	11
Bishops, what in New Testament.....	32, 66, 67
Board, Church.....	90, 91
Bunsen, on Primitive Churches.....	34
Burial Services.....	227
By-Laws of National Council.....	176
Cambridge Platform and the ministry.....	64, 65
Censures, How to lift.....	98
Certificate of membership.....	103, 152

Challenge, no right of.....	47
Church, A, what.. ..	23
How formed	24-27
Material of.....	24
Membership in, a covenant....	101
Officers in.....	84, 87, 89
Standing of, in Associations.....	60, 200
Worship controlled by.....	107, 108
Church, The Invisible.....	22
How manifested.....	22, 23
Indivisible	36
Theories of.....	21
Church Board.....	90, 91
Churches, Congregational, legal relations of... ..	27, 28
Number of, in the world.....	6
Citation of the Accused.....	192
Civil liberty and polity.....	108, 109
Clerk, Church.....	89
Coleman, on Primitive Churches.....	34
Complaint, form of.....	153
Commission, The great.....	117
Committees, Church.....	91
Common fame, Procedure in.....	192
Conferences (see Associations).....	53
Confession.....	97, 98
Confessions of Faith, General.....	12
Congregationalism, Constitutive principle of.....	22, 29, 30
Congregationalists.....	3-7, 108-113
Meaning of name.....	3, 4
Number of.....	6
Origin of.....	4, 5
Consolidation of church and society	195

Constitutive principle of Congregationalism	22, 29
Proof of	33-36
Constitution of National Council	172
Co-ordinate bodies	61
Corner-stone, Service for laying	216
Councils of Churches	37-53
Adjournment and	41, 42
Dismissing, when needed	42
How called	38, 45-50
Kinds of	43, 44
Binary	45
<i>Ex parte</i>	48
Mutual	46
Singular	45
Membership in	38-40
Must be fairly chosen	49
National	171
Objects of	42
Origin	205
Procedure in	52, 157
Quorum in	40
Result of	51
Scope of	42
Value of	205
Covenant, church membership, a	25, 101
Form of	133, 134
Credentials, Church	82
Contents of	83
Ministerial	82
Creed, Apostles'	132
Church	12, 126
Dedication of a church, Service for	217

Delegates, Members only may be	55
Ministerial, not members of Associa-	
tions.....	61, 62, 203
Reports from.....	52, 62
Denominational differences.....	108-113
Deposition from the ministry.....	76, 78-81
Diaconate... ..	87-89
Deacons.....	87
Deaconesses	88
Duties of.....	88
Election of.....	88
Ordination of.....	88, 212
Discipline, Church.....	93-107, 204
Citation in.....	192
Jury trial in.....	95
Law of.....	93
Offenses.....	93, 94, 95
Procedure in.....	94, 95
Discipline, Ministerial, by Associations.....	79, 204
By churches.....	98
By councils.....	79
District Associations.....	53
Doctrine, Evangelical.....	15
Importance of.....	11
Standard of.....	11
Dropping members.....	102
Ekklesia, meaning of.....	3
Never used of a collection of churches.....	23
Ecclesiastical authority, where deposited.....	30
Society consolidated with its church.....	195
Unscriptural.....	31
Ecumenical Association.....	54

Elders, Plurality of in Primitive Churches.....	84
Same as bishops, presbyters, pastors.....	32, 67
Election of church officers.....	31, 88, 89
Episcopacy, Constitutive principle of.....	22
Episcopalians, how differ.....	112
Equality in churches.....	55
Evidence, Rules of.....	96
Excommunication.....	98
<i>Ex parte</i> councils.....	48
Fellowship, Church.....	53
Conditions of.....	60
How secured.....	26, 27
Reciprocal rights in.....	27, 58, 60
Greek Church.....	113
Hatch, on Primitive Churches.....	35
Inalienable Rights of Churches.....	80, 200, 201
Independence, Church.....	22, 30, 58
Conceded.....	33-35
Proof of.....	31-33
Infant Baptism, Service for.....	189
Installation.....	71
Decline of.....	86
Irregularities, Force of.....	97
Jury trial in churches.....	95
Lawyers in ecclesiastical trials.....	50
Laying corner-stone, Service for.....	216
Legal relations of churches.....	27
Letters of Dismission.....	103
Force of.....	105
Form of.....	152
To churches not receiving them.....	104
When not to be issued.....	104

Letters of Introduction.....	152
Letters Missive.....	37
Forms of.....	154-156
Liberty in non-essentials.....	15
Relation of polity to.....	108, 109
Licentiates, laymen.....	69
When may administer rites.....	92
Lord's Supper.....	92
Relation of baptized children to.....	14
Service for administering.....	209
Marriage Services.....	220
Material of a church.....	24
Membership, Associational.....	55, 61, 204
Church, guarded.....	13
In councils.....	39
Weak Christians and church.....	17
Methodist Episcopal Church.....	111
Milman, on Primitive Churches.....	34, 35
Ministerial Standing.....	73, 203
Guarded how.....	200
Held in church associations.....	77
National Council on.....	198
Not held in councils.....	76
Not held in ministerial bodies.....	76
Transferred from local churches.....	74, 75
Ministers, Authority of.....	66
Examination of.....	13, 73
When pastors.....	68, 86
Ministry, a function, not an office.....	64
Doctrinal guards to.....	13
Not a priesthood.....	66
One order in the.....	66

Missionaries, Antioch church first send out.....	117
Missionary Societies, Churches may control.....	118
List of Congregational.....	120
Mosheim, on Primitive Churches.....	34
Mutual Councils.....	46
National Council.....	54, 171
By-Laws of.....	176
Constitution of.....	172
Doctrinal Basis of.....	14
Ministerial Standing and.....	198
Rules of Order of.....	181
Non-essentials, Liberty in.....	15
Oath, Form of.....	100
Officers, Church :	
Deacons.....	87-89
Pastors.. ..	84-87
Other officers.....	89
Election of.....	31, 88
Ordination, what, and by whom.....	68
Service for, of deacons.....	212
Papacy, Constitutive principle of.....	21
Parties calling councils, not members.....	39
Parties when protected in trials.....	100
Pastorate.....	84-87
Theory of the.....	65
Pastors.....	84
Duties of.....	87
Induction into office.....	85
Installation of.....	71
Recognition of.....	72
Should be church members.....	68
Presbyterianism, Constitutive principle of.....	22

Presbyterians, how differ.....	110
Presbytery in local church.....	84
Procedure in church meetings.....	159-163
Church trials.....	147
Common fame.....	192
Councils.....	157
Quorum in councils.....	40
Recognition, council of.....	72
Reciprocal nature of fellowship.....	27, 58, 60
Religious corporations in States.....	28
Reports of delegates ...	52, 62
Representation, what.....	55, 61
Roman Catholics	113
Rules of Order in National Council.....	181
Parliamentary	159
Disposing of business.....	161
Introducing business.....	160
Motions amendable.....	163
Incidental.....	167
Privileged	167
Requiring two-thirds vote.....	167
Subsidiary....	165
Unamendable.....	163
Undebatable.....	164
Sacraments.....	91, 92
Administered by whom.....	92
Seminaries, Congregational Theological.....	121
Societies, Congregational National.....	120
Standing, Ministerial and Church..	73-78, 60, 200, 204
Sunday subscriptions.....	105
Superintendent of Sunday school.....	91
Synods, National Congregational.....	171

Theories of the Church.....	21
Constitutive principles of.....	21
Diverge where.....	23
Treasurer, Church.....	90
Trial by jury in churches	95
Trustees, Board of.....	141
Unifying principle	36
Development of	37
Unions, Congregational.....	55
Unity, not secured by force.....	108, 109
Veto, Pastors have no power of	31, 87
Voting limited to adult members.....	68, 106
Waddington, on Primitive Churches.....	33
Weak Christians admitted.....	17
Whately, on Primitive Churches.....	33
Witnesses	100
May be put under oath.....	100
Protected in their testimony.....	100
Worship, Each church regulates its own	107

