

selves into a church, and settling a minister. But first they have to agree upon some creed or covenant which is to be the basis of their union. In drawing up this creed they are usually assisted by some neighboring minister, and it is then submitted for approbation to a meeting of all the church members, and is *thoroughly discussed* and altered till it suits the peculiar and prevailing shades of opinion of the assembly. When at length it is assented to, it is submitted to a council of neighboring ministers, who examine into its scriptural basis, and who, according as they approve or disapprove of it, give or withhold "the hand of fellowship."

The next step is to elect a pastor. After hearing several candidates preach, they invite one to remain with them; and, after he has been ordained by the neighboring ministers, agree on the salary to be insured to him, for the collection of which certain members become responsible. It rarely exceeds 700 dollars, and more usually amounts in rural districts to 500 dollars, or 100 guineas annually.

By the Congregationalists, a church is defined to be a company of pious persons, who voluntarily unite together for the worship of God. Each company being self-created, is entirely independent of every other, has the power to elect its own officers, and to admit or exclude members. Each professes to regard creeds and confessions of faith simply as convenient guides in the examination of candidates, not standards of religious truth. They may be the opinions of good and wise men, venerable by their antiquity, but of no binding authority, and are to be measured in each separate church by their conformity with Scripture. As to the union of different churches, it is purely voluntary, and has been compared to a congress of sovereign states, having certain general interests in common, but entirely independent of each other. There are no articles of union; but if any old or new society is thought to depart so widely from the other churches that they can no longer be recognized as Christians, the rest withhold or withdraw their fellowship.

Upon the whole, the separate congregational churches, both in Old and New England, in all above 3000 in number, have