

# **CONGREGATIONALI STS, WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO**

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Congregationalists, who They are and what They Do by Theodore P. Prudden

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THE PILGRIM PRESS

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AND

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THEODORE P. PRUDDEN



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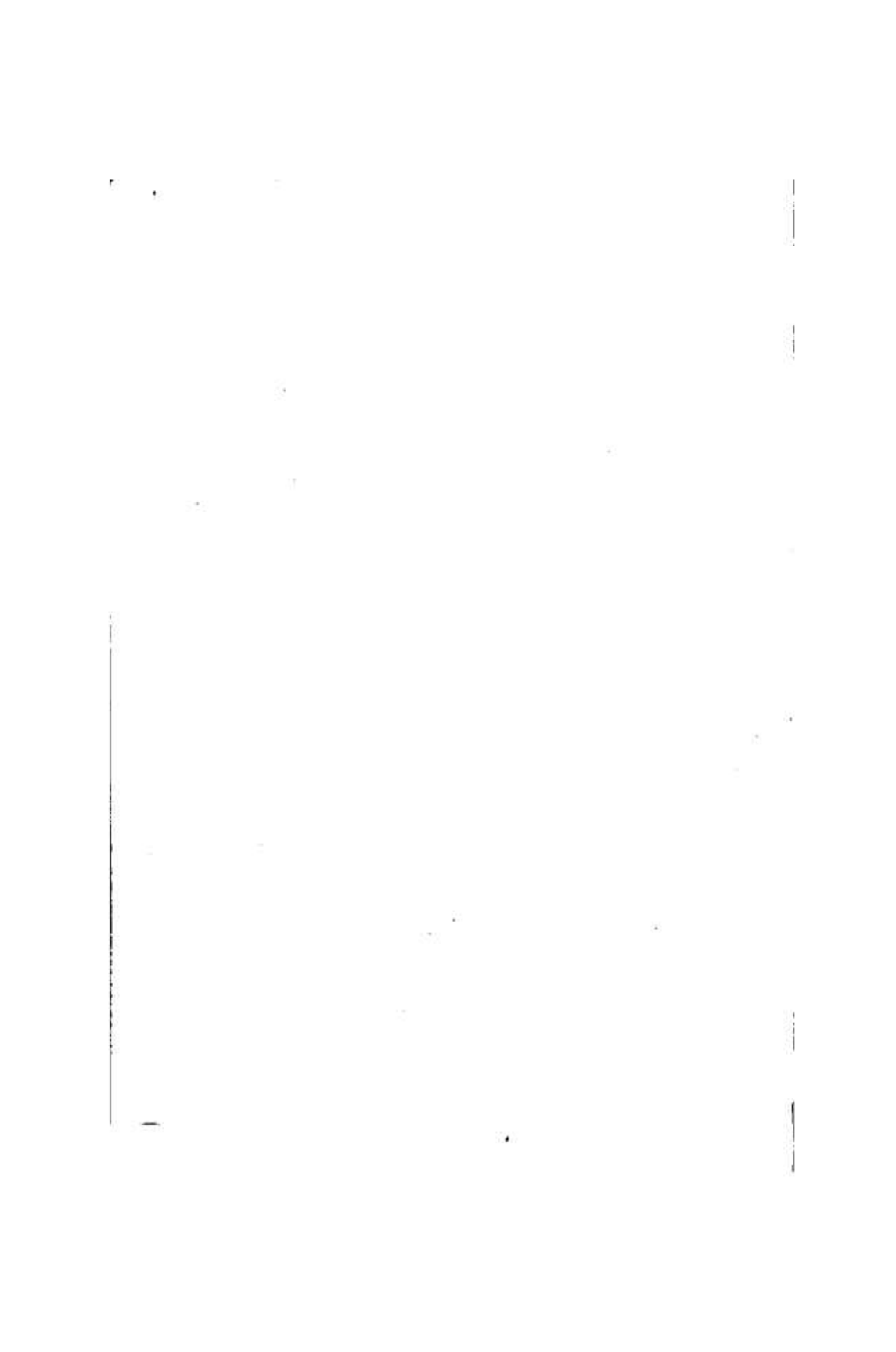
THE history of Congregational churches is so honorable and interesting, their influence has been so extensive, and is so connected with our national development and institutions, that the important facts about them should be more generally known by all Congregationalists.

Such facts I have endeavored to set forth in a compact form for the information of both old and young, who do not read larger works, that they may perceive the heroic origin, the principles, the ideals, the spirit, and the notable achievements of Congregational churches, and also the work which they are now doing. In preparing this statement of facts, I am chiefly indebted to Walker's *History of the Congregational Churches in the United States* in The American Church History Series, Vol. III., Dunning's *Congregationalists in America*, and Clark's *Leavening the Nation*. I have also gleaned valuable information from *The Congregationalists* by Leonard Woolsey Bacon, *The Beginnings of New England* by John Fiske, *The Genesis of the New England Churches* by Leonard Bacon, *History of New England* by Palfrey, *The England and Holland of the Pilgrims* by Morton Dexter, and other books referred to in the notes.

THEODORE P. PRUDDEN.

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# CONGREGATIONALISTS

## WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO

### I

#### Who are Congregationalists?

They are a Protestant Christian denomination whose churches are chiefly in the United States and Great Britain, but many are in Australia, Canada, and foreign missionary fields.

#### Why are they called Congregationalists?

They are so called because the supreme authority is not in the officers, or in any body outside of itself, but in the people (or congregation) composing a local church.<sup>1</sup>

#### What is the Congregational idea of a church?

It is that a company of Christians covenanting together for religious worship and work is a complete and self-governing church, which is (1) responsible only to Christ, and entirely independent; but it also (2) recognizes and honors the principle of fellowship, and exercises its independence

<sup>1</sup> When the term "Congregational" came into general use is uncertain; Rev. John Cotton entitled a treatise, issued in 1648, "Way of the Congregational churches cleared"; since no other churches existed for nearly a century in New England, Congregational churches were frequently described as "The New England Churches."