

baptism, knowledge of doctrine, or desires to be Christian, are not sufficient to make us members of the household of faith. We do not undervalue any of these. We believe in their worth, in their place; but, we do say that if there is not love to Jesus Christ in the heart, the individual has no right to be in the fellowship of the church: such profession is a lie. No one can judge infallibly of the true state of the heart; but we can look at their lives. Even then, we cannot apply the same standard to every one, to determine fitness; for natural disposition, temperament, training and daily environments have much to do in giving character to individual lives. This we do—enquire of every candidate, "If they love Jesus Christ, and have taken Him as their personal Saviour, and are seeking to make Him the rule of their life?" To admit any one into a Congregational Church, without such a confession in substance, would be to sin against our distinctive principles. Deceived we sometimes are, but the sin lies at the deceiver's door.

It teaches, that the local church is subject to none but Christ. With its officers duly installed, it is complete as an organization. Christ as its head and lawgiver, His word and life are final in everything expressed. When He does not speak, or we do not exactly know what His will is, we form, as a church, our own judgment upon it; and the majority make it law. If on any occasion, we find it difficult to agree in any of these matters, or we desire advice or help, we are at liberty to call in the aid of sister churches to counsel us; but, in no case, do we allow any man or body of men, whatever their standing, to say what we shall or shall not do. They may withdraw from us, because they think we are grievously in the wrong; but rule us, they cannot. We are free. To illustrate this independence:—If we want an organ we can have one. If we want our pastor to wear a gown and he is willing, he can wear one. If we want to change our Hymn Book, we can do so, and get the one we want, whether it bears the *imprimatur* of our Union or not. If we want to use a liturgy in our public worship, we can do so. If we want a change in the pastorate, we can fulfil our obligations to our pastor, and he goes. If we want class-meeting and fellowship meeting forming part of our religious life, they can be ours. Yea,

whatever we desire different to what we are doing, of what the Lord Jesus Christ allows, we can do it. No one can step in and say, "You shall not exercise this freedom," whether Bishop, or Conference, or Assembly, or Council, or Pope. We know no master but Christ.

This liberty does not interfere with our co-operating with sister churches, to promote any good work. Our Missionary Society consists of these free churches banded together, to assist those that are needing help in their weakness, directed by men appointed from among themselves. Union then with other bodies, except fraternally, will never take place, until they come to acknowledge and allow this freedom. Individual members in the ministry and out of it may go, but the churches as a whole will not. One thing is cheering amid our struggles in this Canada of ours, as well as elsewhere. Other churches are coming every year nearer in spirit and practice to us. The spirit of the age among the masses in the churches, and the nations, is: The right of the *people* to have a say, what they shall believe, and who shall be their rulers and leaders, and how their money shall be spent.

This conviction is increasing in strength every year, and no power can stop it. Emperors and monarchs are feeling its growing power, and the wise among them are adapting their policy thereto. The absolute Pope and legislative conferences and assemblies, feel the powerful current, and are being moulded in their deliverances thereby. What religious body in the land would say, that the leading churches in their respective denomination should not have the minister they desired, if available? Usages and rules are being ignored in their demand for self-government. God is working out in His providence in the churches this liberty of His people, which we have as Congregationalists, so long enjoyed.

It teaches that the churches are a brotherhood, having no superiority over each other, except what they may give each other for the good of the whole. Whatever distinction there may be among the members in social or political life, as masters and servants, etc., in the church they are brethren, members one of another, each possessing a vote and voice, in all matters pertaining to the government and life-working of the church. The officers