

WHY HAVE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN CANADA?

It is sometimes openly asked, but more frequently the question is secretly entertained, why have this denomination in this new country? Why not be satisfied with Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, and Methodism? Why may not those of our people who have special reverence for dignified form in public worship unite with Episcopalian; and they of the brotherhood who are specially doctrinal in their conceptions of religion, and who prefer a plainer worship identify themselves with the Presbyterians; and they who have peculiar sympathies with the exciting and fervid, cast in their lot with the Methodists? Without insisting on the natural retort, why not do without either of these? and merely hinting the fact that our friends can have all such forms of excellence in our comprehensive, and in respect of mere details eminently elastic system; we feel bound to reply as follows:—

1st. In our judgment it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance to all the interests of Zion, and to the advancement of our Lord's kingdom in the world, of having membership of the visible Church, based, not on infant baptism and confirmation in youth because of competent knowledge of a catechism; nor on the fact of early parental consecration together with knowledge of a catechism and nothing against the moral character; nor on the profession of being engaged in the work of seeking salvation, however good and excellent these things may be in their places; but on fair credible evidence of regeneration, or the possession, through grace, of a new heart and a right spirit.

2nd. We attach no little value to the influence of our church polity when fairly treated, in training its members to a robust manliness of character; to a large hearted catholicity of sentiment and of feeling towards other communions; to a self-reliant activity in the work of the Lord; and to a firm adherence to great truths and principles, combined with a reasonable elasticity in respect to details. Besides, the service we have done and may yet perform in maintaining the spirituality of our Lord's kingdom free from all control of or support by the civil government, is not to be ignored.

3rd. Conceding to our brethren of other communions a recognition of their evangelical ministrations, and praying that they may be

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