

## The Canadian Independent

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All subscriptions, current or back, notices of change of address, and other matters connected with the business of the paper, to be addressed to the Business Manager, Box 2648, P. O., Toronto.

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TORONTO, DEC. 15, 1881.

As we propose to issue the Jan. number of the INDEPENDENT Monthly as near as possible to Christmas, and as the filling of space equal to two numbers of the present issue, without any advertisements, requires considerable labour, this is the LAST NUMBER of the weekly issue.

### VALEDICTORY.

As intimated above, this number closes the weekly issue of the INDEPENDENT and with it my editorial connection comes to an end. Two years ago, I very reluctantly, yielding only to the repeated pressure of friends, assumed the duties. The step was against my best judgment, my hands were full, associated as I was in a large business requiring constant care and attention, while for any spare moments I might have, my official position in the church and my much-loved school gave full demand. The experience of the two years has confirmed me in my judgment. I have not had time to attend to the duties I undertook, and I know that the paper has suffered in consequence; in fact had it not been for the help most generously given by the Rev. John Burton, the paper would often have made a very poor exhibit indeed. The present seemed, therefore, a fitting time to relinquish the duties to Mr. Burton, and I do so with the satisfaction that springs from the knowledge that he will be the right man in the right place. His experience and scholarship will give value to all that appears in the pages of the magazine, while his attachment to what is true and sterling in our Congregationalism will enable him to be a true guide to our churches and to aid in redeeming the interests of our denomination throughout the Dominion.

Let me here tender my hearty thanks to those friends who, to my faults "a little blind," have given so many words of cheer and encouragement during my brief tenure of office. It has been very gratifying to find that my attempt to serve the churches has been so warmly appreciated by so many. This has proved a great support and a bright light on my work. Some have not agreed with what I have written. I regret it; I did not expect to escape criticism, and have not, but I am convinced to-day more than ever that the policy I have advocated, which has come to be known as "Organized Congregationalism," is the only safe living policy to follow.

Although I cease to be editor, my connection with the INDEPENDENT will not be entirely severed. I shall have pleasure in speaking through its pages from time to time. Finally, I commend the magazine to the churches, pastors and people,—give it a hearty support, it can do you good service, and it rests with you whether it shall send your one dollar forthwith, but do not send it alone, get another, two, three, more—to send with it, and you will reap a hundredfold.

HENRY J. CLARK.

### "THE INDEPENDENT."

The letter of the Rev. J. R. Black, published in another column, reflects, we believe, the opinion and feeling of a majority of our subscribers on the proposed change of the INDEPENDENT from a weekly back to a monthly issue. At the same time there are some, pastors and laymen alike, who think otherwise, who, deeming the change three years ago from a monthly to a weekly a mistake, look upon the present determination, not only as the natural consequence of that mistake, but on other grounds, as the right thing to be done. For ourselves, we are free to confess that we regret the step, we have not only earnestly desired the continuance of the weekly issue, but have done all that we could to preserve it; we feel with Mr. Black that a monthly is not an adequate representation of a denomination such as ours is, or ought to be; a weekly we should have. We are met, however, by the inexorable logic of facts; the income is not sufficient to meet the expenditure, cut down as it has been to the very lowest cent. For two years no editorial payment has been made, and for most of that period the business management has also been a labour of love. There remained only one of two courses open, to increase the receipts, or to bring the paper to a monthly. We laid the matter before our readers, and, although we received some kind letters anent, we are not aware that any subscribers were added to our list. One thing we were determined upon, not, under any circumstances, to increase our liability to the printers; the former debt, a large portion of which still remains unpaid, was a warning beacon, at the same time we have had to draw upon a friend of the paper to a certain extent to keep a clean sheet with the printer; we trust that the reduced expenses will enable us to repay this early in the year.

The plan proposed by Mr. Black would not, we fear, be practicable in our case. A lecturer, even supposing he did the work gratuitously, which we have no right to expect, would have considerable expenses travelling from place to place, while his receipts in each place would be necessarily small. We may say in this connection, that a large portion of the overdue indebtedness to the INDEPENDENT is owing by parties in places where there is no church of our order, and so no one to remind them, or to get their subscriptions. To visit a number of these places would cost all that would be collected, even were we sure of payment. We know as a fact, that one year the collection for one of our Societies, where the agent visited only

the principal places, and collected in each far more than could be hoped for the INDEPENDENT, the cost was one third of the receipts. Our experience on this point forbids us expecting anything from that plan.

There is only one true legitimate method, and that is the increase of the subscription list. Failing that, there is a plan, however, simple and easy, by which the weekly might have been sustained. The plan proposed by the Editor at the Montreal Union meeting, a guarantee fund by a few individuals of, say \$200 per year; probably the half of that only would be required. Some three or four signified their willingness on that occasion to do so, but not sufficient, and nothing came of it.

As we may consider that under present circumstances the monthly is a forgone conclusion, let us try to make the best we can of it in the meantime, until, as we shall hope, a weekly may be recommenced on a surer basis. A monthly cannot do what a weekly can; admitted, but it can do something, and in some respects, as we said last week, it can do that something better. A weekly, in the hands of one or two individuals having other duties to perform, is apt to show crude, hurried writing, and it must inevitably lack the finish which time and care alone can give. The monthly gives, also, an opportunity for the insertion of articles of value and permanent interest from various sources, which would hardly be in place in a newspaper, and we trust that it will be found that if we lose in one direction we shall gain in another.

Let no one, however, think of dropping his subscription now, the rather let there be, as asked last week, an earnest effort made to increase the list; every additional paying subscriber will help to make the magazine better, it will encourage to spend money upon it in various ways where it will be useful and give increased value. Who will act for us in the various churches?

OTHER friends have written lately, regretting the backward step to a monthly from a weekly issue, and ask "Is it inevitable?" We say no. Double our paying subscription list, and we will give a weekly of which none need to be ashamed. Let friends, too, remember that it is over twelve months since the C. I. publicly appealed to its patrons, and we have waited—money even having to be advanced, beside gratuitous service. No response! We wanted to improve the weekly; could not, and now feel that a good monthly will be better than the weekly we have been compelled to give. We are satisfied when the monthly is out friends will begin to think we have not seriously retrograded. To one course, however, we are fully committed, to incur no more debt for printing, nor open another bank account. When subscriptions stop, we stop, unless some other guarantee is provided. Aid us, friends, and the weekly shall return improved. Our emoluments are nil—we shall spend every cent upon the paper.

### CHRISTMAS.

Once again the revolving seasons bring us to the time celebrated as the birth-time of the Christ of God into

the world. We may not be sure that it was just at the time we fix that this wonderful event took place, but that is of little consequence, it is the recalling in this universal manner the great fact of the incarnation that is the important thing. It may be, as said, that we have largely lost sight of the spiritual in the social idea, that Christmas Day has become a holiday and has ceased to be a holy-day—that it is a season given up to feasting and social enjoyment, and not to devout thankfulness for the great gift of God. There is some truth in this, no doubt, hope that over social and family or, harmless but common there is an uprising in fulness from myriads of hearts that the world has heard the song of the angels on the fields of Bethlehem, and that "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" was the key-note of the song they sang. We are told that the waves of sound once set in motion roll on forever, and it is blessed to think that the sound-waves of that song have well-nigh filled the world, and are rolling on and on, until not a human being upon the world but shall have heard the glorious prelude to the coming of the Prince of Peace. From Bethlehem has gone forth an influence that is to re-create the world, a power before which the kingdom of Satan shall fall, and the sin-enraptured sons of man shall rise to the liberty of the sons of God. O, Bethlehem's Babe! Saviour of the world! we look back through the centuries to the time of thy coming, we see the Star of the East, we hear the Angelic Choir, we rejoice as we keep this day of thine, and we pray that the consummated fruits of thy coming may soon appear.

We are already wishing each other all the good wishes of the seasons, little bits of card-board, with their dainty devices and seasonable word; are flying through the land, and across the sea, telling of peace and good will. Is it any profanation to say of these tiny messengers of the season, "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it." Into every home they enter, they tell the old, old story, ever new, and ever fresh, first proclaimed by an angelic choir, nearly nineteen hundred years ago. And are we to stop here? Have we done all that we can, or need do, to celebrate this blessed time? Should we not, the rather, be incited to fresh earnestness and increased activity to tell of this salvation? First, to see that we ourselves are walking in the light of Christ's coming, and then to consecrate our efforts to tell of the salvation we have found.

But, "peace and good-will," are we realizing here the power of Christ's Gospel? Are we at peace? We do not ask just now with God, but with each other? Is there peace in our families, peace in our social circle, peace in our church relations? It is a sad thing to see hatred and division in families, when children of the same earthly parents are at enmity; but is it not far more so to see professed children of the Heavenly Father at strife and variance, and yet we fear that many of our churches do show this. We heard, not long ago, of what we would fain hope was