

THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

Published by the Congregational Publishing Company

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All communications for the Editorial, News of Churches and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, the Rev. W. MANCHEE, Box 204, Guelph, Ont. Any article intended for the next issue must be in his hands not later than Monday morning.

All letters relating to business, remittances, or advertisements, must be addressed to the Business Manager, Rev. J. B. SILCOX, 340 Spadina Avenue, Toronto.

\$1.00 per annum payable in advance. The paper will stop when the subscription expires, unless previously renewed.

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CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25th, 1878.

SALUTATORY.

THE Directors of the Congregational Publishing Company have undertaken to supply a want long felt by our Canadian churches. As a monthly, the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT has done us good service, but the time has come when a weekly is a necessity. In sending out the specimen copy we shall be expected to give some idea of what we intend to do.

In the first place we shall aim to make our paper a constant medium of communication between our churches in the Dominion. We need to hear of each other oftener than we have done, that we may take a more lively interest in one another. We shall therefore make the "NEWS OF THE CHURCHES" as full and stimulating as possible.

Our intention is to give considerable space to both British and American news, not forgetting items of interest from other lands. We are part of a great whole, and we shall strive, by our selections of matter and news, to help our readers to realize what is being done "along the whole line."

We purpose opening our columns for articles and letters from casual correspondents on topics of both general and denominational interest. We shall allow considerable liberty, though personalities will be always fearlessly ruled out. We wish for the freest interchange of ideas, believing that the highest advancement and purest growth will be thus secured. True we are Independents, but Independency is no synonym for isolation. An intelligent Independency means free enquiry, life, and progress; a self-contained isolation means a lingering death.

We hope our friends will not suppose we are going in for that molluscous kind of thing, namely, a paper that will accommodate itself to everybody's views and be without definite and decided principles. Far from this. Our historic record, the urgent needs of the present times, and, above all, the honor of Christ, forbid this. We know what we believe, and, when occasion requires, will be ready to speak

out. At the same time we will give ample scope to all that is worth noticing—whether in theology, politics, religious or common life matters not; and let the fittest survive the friction.

We hope also to bring the subject of our church services before our people. There are many points in this matter needing consideration, both in the musical and other parts of the service. These are not merely matter of aesthetic taste and culture. They have a mighty influence as auxiliary helps in gathering and keeping those whom we wish to influence for good. Our views on this subject will be given more fully in future issues.

It will also be a paper for the family. A wholesome, cheery, religious newspaper is a necessity in every home. Such will be the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT. It will aim not only to please, but also to develop true principles of christian character.

The Sunday School will find our paper a valuable help. The Lesson Notes alone will be worth the rate of subscription. It is our purpose to give this department special attention. In addition to the "Notes" we shall give sketches of various methods of Sabbath School working, Normal Class matter, and facts connected with the great world of school enterprise.

In regard to the Temperance question we stand fairly and squarely on the Total Abstinence platform. We class the liquor traffic among the worst evils that prey upon the commonwealth. We shall do our utmost to rid the land of this gigantic curse. Dr. Guthrie said truly that "we shall make no national conquest of the vice and ungodliness of the people until the Church of God faces in right earnest the drinking question." We mean to face it and fight it.

We hope, also, to show our relation as Congregationalists to the public questions and movements of the day. We wish to avoid all narrow sectarian bigotry, yet at the same time to vindicate our principles by showing their application to the duties and obligations of an enlightened citizenship. We think that the prevalence of these principles will be the strongest safe-guard against tyrannical oppression on the one hand, or an unrighteous communism on the other. We must show that we have an interest, and that of the deepest kind, in all that goes on around us.

STRAWS SHOWING THE CURRENT.

AS a system of church government, Congregationalism has ever done consistent and perpetual battle for the rights of the laity. It has shown itself willing to trust the common sense of those who sit in the pews. And it has been pre-eminent in calling in their aid, and utilizing it in the furtherance of its plans. Necessarily, therefore, it has always been sturdily opposed to those systems which have sought to concentrate the power in the hands of the ministers. It is logically

and warmly at issue with all clerical legislation. And so it welcomes any event which indicates that clericalism is losing its hold, and that the people of the pew are being admitted to their rights as regards legislation.

The question often comes to the front: Is Congregationalism making any headway? Do any of the systems which are essentially clerical show any signs of relaxation? In answer to this question, it may be safely asserted, that in the Protestant communities, the current is everywhere setting in the direction of Congregationalism. Events in ecclesiastical quarters are continually transpiring which show unmistakably that the simple and just principles of our system are being received in circles, which hitherto have been warmly opposed to them.

Such an event occurred the other day at Belleville. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was in session. A fraternal address was being delivered by Bishop Haven, one of the great leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. In the course of his address, Bishop Haven said, "Lay delegation is a good thing. It has been a good thing for us, and it works without any friction. It strengthens us among the laity." Then turning to the Canadian bishop, he said, "I believe you have not yet introduced the laity into your General Conference." Bishop Carman replied, "We are completing our plans to bring them into it." Whereupon Bishop Haven said, "Well, you will have to hurry up; for there is scarcely a church in the world that has not adopted lay delegation."

"Scarcely a church in the world that has not adopted lay delegation!" That is an important statement, coming from so high a quarter as it does. It is a straw revealing unerringly the direction in which the current of ecclesiastical thought is setting. In those bodies which are intensely clerical, clerical in their make-up and working, a change is occurring, and that is in the direction of admitting the laymen to the legislative councils of these churches. In view of such radical changes, the adherents of Congregational principles have no cause for feelings other than those of satisfaction.

And the adoption of laymen's rights is only a question of time! The vast communions, which have been so fond of prelacy or oligarchies, will gradually become Congregationalized. The spirit of the age is democratic. And the Church is catching that spirit. Men like Morley Punshon may issue their warning, "Beware of Congregational Independency. Ye are not independent men!" And men like Punshon do not warn when there is no danger. But they may warn, while the current flows on in the right direction, quite heedless of their alarm. All we need as Independents is the calm and untiring enunciation of our principles, and the revelation of their happy working in our churches, and