

The Canadian Independent

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"THE INDEPENDENT."

The INDEPENDENT appears to-day in a new and enlarged form and under new arrangements. This fresh departure calls for a few words of explanation to our subscribers, and affords an opportunity of placing its claims before the Churches.

When the INDEPENDENT was changed from the monthly magazine form to a weekly paper it was the sanguine hope of its friends that the increased subscriptions and receipts from advertising would compensate for the largely increased outlay. This was not realized to the extent expected, although the circulation did increase nearly fifty per cent. The result was certain, a weekly loss and an accumulating debt, until a couple of months ago the indebtedness to the printer exceeded a thousand dollars. In such circumstances it was not surprising that grave doubts arose as to the practicability of continuing the paper, as it was sinking some five hundred dollars a year; in fact, had it not been for the energy and determination of the Rev. John Burton, who was temporarily in charge during the absence of the Editor in England, the publication would likely have been suspended. Mr. Burton, with the co-operation of some shareholders of the Publishing Company, made arrangements for a canvass of the churches in the interest of the paper, the idea being to extinguish the debt by contributions, and so to increase the list of subscribers as to put the paper on a sound financial basis. Mr. Burton's first visit, to Kingston, was so very satisfactory that he is encouraged to go on with the work, which he proposes doing, later in the month, when the friends will probably have returned from their holidays. In the meantime provision had to be made for the regular issue of the paper, and after some discussion a proposal was received from one who feels a warm interest in its continuance, to assume the responsibility of its publication for a time. This offer was accepted by the Directors. In making new arrangements for the issue it was found possible somewhat to enlarge the sheet, and so to-day it is presented with thirty-two instead of twenty-four columns as before.

Such, very briefly stated, is the position of the INDEPENDENT to-day. It now remains to be seen what the churches will do towards the support of their own paper. By our Year Book it appears that we

have upwards of seven thousand members, without taking note of adherents in our body. From such a constituency we ought to get five thousand subscribers. Half of that number would enable us still further to enlarge and improve, shall we not have that half? We may be pardoned repeating what has before been stated, but it is well that the fact should be thoroughly understood. All the literary work done for the INDEPENDENT is free. The receipts are applied solely to the production of the paper, and a pledge has been given that if the income shall exceed the expenditure the surplus shall be devoted to such improvements in the paper as may be deemed best. Those who are doing the work, and bearing the burden financially will not, under any circumstances, profit one cent.

We believe that the INDEPENDENT is needed, that it has a work to do; we were never more persuaded of this than to-day. It has no rival, interferes with no other interest, seeks only the upholding of the Churches and the spread of our principles. Ministers and members, shall it live strong and vigorous? Practical and valuable help may be given by many in our churches, and we earnestly ask that it be not withheld. Ministers can help us by speaking of the paper to their people, commending it to them, and endeavouring to get a copy into every household in their connection; all can help by a kind word in its behalf and by showing it to those who do not already take it.

To our subscribers, one word. Two months of our year have passed, and out of a list of about fifteen hundred only about two hundred have paid their subscription! Will you not remit us that DOLLAR at once? It may be a small thing to your thoughts thus to write about, but the aggregate of unpaid dollars clogs the wheels and blocks the way. We want to make the INDEPENDENT better than it ever has been, help us by paying your subscription and paying it now.

NEEDFUL OR NOT?

A recent writer on Mohammed and Mohammedanism writes:—"No religion is exclusively good, none exclusively bad. Any religion which has a real and continuous hold on a large body of mankind must satisfy a spiritual need and be so far good. What we have to do is to feel after God in each and all, assured that He is there, even if, haply, in our ignorance we can find no trace of Him." Again, "The highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day agree in yielding to Mohammed the title of prophet—a very prophet of God." Moreover, under some peculiar circumstances found in Africa, Islam, not Christianity, "is the religion most

likely to get hold of the native mind and so in some measure to elevate the native character." Herbert Spencer somewhere writes of all religion: "We are under necessity to contemplate the ultimate existence as some mode of being, and we shall not err in doing this so long as we treat every notion we thus frame as merely a symbol, utterly without resemblance to that for which it stands." Thus we are led to very similar horns of a dilemma: either all religions are more or less true, Christianity containing the most of that which is true, or, all religions are alike false but necessary, and Christianity the least false. In either case the gospel has no exclusive claim as against other religions.

These agnostic, broad views are prevalent, apparently growing, and are influencing minds that would be slow to own such influence. Certainly this is not the spirit which gave to the present century its great missionary impetus, and it does not seem to be in accord with the great charter of Christian missions given, e.g., Mark xvi. 15, 16. Must we re-read that charter?

It is a matter for thankfulness that the spirit of seeing everything as evil that is not of our own is yielding to a wider and more charitable one, but "Woe unto them that call evil good and put darkness for light." Those words of the Saviour in that most tender of all his addresses, John xiv:—"No man cometh unto the Father but by me," have not only comprehension but exclusion. The brighter the light the sharper lined the shadow, and where Jesus seems the tenderest, there, in most unequivocal lines are to be seen the dark other-side of condemnation. True love, it would seem, does not consist in blurring or obliterating the boundary truth has drawn, rather in rendering it more distinct. We are not kind to a friend by leading him to believe we think lightly of his faults. The blunt accuser is better than the fond but false flatterer; and we need not hold our Christianity lightly in order to be just towards those who call not on the one great name. There lurks oftentimes a fallacy in the pressing of the alternative "it is either true or not true," nevertheless there must be a sense in which Christianity, as it differs from the world religions, is either necessary or indifferently. The world needs Christ, or it can do without Him, and they who possess this Christ will do the world best service by making their Christ appear the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. It is said that in clear sunshine a lamp light will cause a shadow; let the true light shine, that will dispel the darkness sooner than by trimming smoking and dying lamps. No Christian worker should venture forth with a "peradventure" on his

lips and a "perhaps" in his hand. The spiritualism of Islam and the purity of Buddhism are not there, and the lands where those systems rule are not blessed; it is to the people that in some form hold the Christian ideal that we look for the world's renovation, and to the simple faith of the gospel for the thorough purifying of our Christian land from the putrefying remains of heathenism. Charity is of heaven, but it is not charity to trace lines of truth in systems that are false. He who seeks a jewel in the city sewer may find the fever germ of death. Just now we need, with charity, a more stern bea-fing against error and sin in every form. We all need Christ as our gospels give Him.

WAITING GRACE.

Whittier in one of his poems describes some eastern devotees sitting under a cypress tree in Ceylon, waiting for the falling of the leaves, which only takes place at certain intervals; he who has the fortune to find and eat one of these wondrous leaves is immediately restored to health and youth. There those venerable Fogeese sat, heedless alike of the song bird's note and the tempest's roar. Over them the tropic night storm bursts, the day's fierce sunbeams glare, in silent watchfulness they wait, trusting to feel a youthful freshness steal through torpid pulse and failing limb. If, urges the poet, these poor blinded ones wait in trustful patience, shall we, who sit beneath that tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations grow weary in our watch, and murmur at the long delay?

"Easier to smite with Peter's sword  
Than watch one hour in humbling prayer,  
"Life's "great things," like the Syrian lord,  
"Our hearts can do and dare.  
"For oh! we shrink from Jordan's side,  
"From waters which alone can save:  
"And murmur for Abana's banks  
"And Pharpar's brighter wave."

Among the graces most needed in these uncertain times, patient waiting is not the least; We do not mean the wait and do nothing of those who are only too ready to loiter along life's way, but the waiting of the watching and working ones, the labouring on and not being weary, assured that results not seen will appear.

We are an impatient people, quick returns is what we want, but we must remember providence is not to be hurried, and forced growth means too often only premature decay. The pen is mightier than the sword though the one writes quietly line by line, whilst the other flashes in its stroke and smites as with a lightning beam. That "the world" should be taken by the flashy and pretentious is not to be wondered at. It is to be regretted and amended that Christian people should allow themselves to be carried away by that which is showy rather than real, impatient because the seed they sow does not rush up at once to the waving full eared field. Reference has more than once been made in these columns to the con