

THE

# Canadian Independent.

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VOL. XVI.

TORONTO, MAY, 1870.

No. 11.

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## MINISTERIAL HONESTY.

Few things are so essential to the success of a religious teacher as public confidence,—confidence in his piety, his integrity, and his fidelity to truth and to conviction. A man may lecture on almost any subject within the range of the natural sciences, and his character, and religious opinions, if not flagrantly obnoxious, may go unchallenged. He is the representative of no sect or society, and no one can be held responsible for his sayings or doings but himself. But the moment he sets his foot in a pulpit, or enters the domain of morals and religion, his personal character and theological tenets become matters of prime importance. He is now the mouth-piece of a church, and the exponent of its principles, and he must not only “point to heaven,” but “lead the way.” His hands must be clean, and his teaching sound and honest, or few will care to hear him for his learning or his eloquence. A minister who, in nautical phrase, has “boxed the compass” of religious beliefs, or who is suspected of trimming his sails for the latest breath of popular applause, may as well betake him to some other calling, for no one wants him in the pulpit.

Men meet with so much falseness and chicanery in the world, that they long all the more for honesty and truth in the preacher. Engrossed with their secular affairs, they rely on him to a great extent,—far too largely, indeed,—for the investigation of the great questions relating to their spiritual and eternal well-being; and if he is to reach them and benefit them by his preaching, it can only be by the possession of their entire confidence that the things he speaks are “most surely believed” by him. “You will always be a very imperfect orator,” says Fenelon, “if you are not penetrated with the sentiments with which you wish to inspire others; and it is not as a spiritualist I say this; I speak only as an orator.”