

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5th, 1878.

"RING OUT THE OLD; RING IN
THE NEW."

THE long contemplated change in the form of the INDEPENDENT, comes into force with this issue. It has passed from the monthly to an eight-page weekly. The last issue contained valedictory words; with this we bring salutation to all our many friends. "A happy New-year" to all; not only new in brighter hopes and broader success, but also new as regards our literary messenger to the churches. We hope our new-dressed friend may have as warm a greeting from its many patrons, as it sends to them in this time of pleasant wishes.

It is impossible to pass away from the old servant of our Canadian Churches without a grateful retrospect. For a quarter of a century, it has served us as well as its limited capacities would allow. It has defended our principles nobly, and has been on the side of what we deem right. Its columns have been repositories of the brightest thoughts of our people—the thought both of our pulpits and our pews. It has brought its monthly burden of news ecclesiastic; the doings and gatherings of our people at home and abroad. Nor can we forget the labours of the true-hearted brethren who have had its supervision and guidance. Their task was often difficult, and sometimes unremunerated; but they fulfilled it for the sake of the churches they love, and they deserve and have the grateful remembrance of those they have served so long. Just as we do not part with the old year and greet the new without mingled feelings; so we do not see the old journal giving place to the new without conflicting sensations.

The new paper will make a bold venture for success. We shall endeavour to make it both spirited and spiritual. It will be racy and at the same time thorough. Wherever it sees the manifestation of the Christian spirit, it will not be slow to welcome it, and wherever it sees anything militating against the liberty and usefulness of the Christian church, it will not be slow to dissent. While speaking right out in meeting, it will ever respect the rights of others, preferring to err on the side of charity, than severity.

No paper can expect to live in these days of wide-spread literature, unless it is live and sparkling. Everything that will make the INDEPENDENT efficient, readable, and welcome, will be attempted by the publishers. But success does not alone depend upon the publisher—the recipient has some share in it. If the people are slow to help our new venture, and wait until it shall become a success, instead of helping it to become a success, its work will be up-hill; but if every recipi-

ent takes a live interest in it—takes it up—seeks to increase its circle of patrons—it will be removed from even the shadow of apprehension. We are confident we have a place among the journals of our land. We have principles to enunciate which are worth enunciating; we have plans to propose which are worth considering. There are errors which we should have a hand in removing. There is a millennial brightness which we should help to bring about. And if we all believe this, both at head-quarters, and out in the field, the best energies will not be grudged to make our venture a success. To all our churches, as well as to all other Christian churches, we send our kindly greeting.

STRENGTH.

STRONG men are wanted everywhere to-day. But when were they not wanted? When were weaklings desired in Church or State, or anywhere else? Men of steadfast will, of patient endurance, of unflinching perseverance, have always been in demand; but it seems as if they were in greater demand to-day than they ordinarily are.

Strong men are called for by the Church—they are needed in the Church, and the Church is looking to every point of the compass for them. Will it find them? Where will it find them? How will it find them? It must find them! It must find them, or its work will not be done—the end of its existence will not be attained.

It must find them for its ministry. No pigmy has any business to occupy any position of responsibility and leadership; and, certainly, no pigmy has any business to be in the Christian ministry. We may lay it down as a rule, that God never intended a small, puny man—mentally, morally, spiritually—to be the overseer, the guide, the director, the teacher, of his brethren. How can ignorance make men intelligent? How can dulness make men keen? How can lethargy make men active?

Strong men are God's men in every hour of emergency; and they are God's men for every hour—emergency or no emergency. Luther, Wesley, Chalmers—men of that stamp, men of strong minds, of strong hearts, of strong characters and lives—such men are always His elect ones; such are the men whom He appoints to do every work of moment in the world. And such certainly are the men whom He owns in the Christian ministry in our generation.

The church must find strong men for its membership. Of course there is room within its pale for weak men too. One of its designs is that it shall be a hospital, where the morally sick shall find healing. There must be provision for educating and ennobling men. There must be means employed for their advancement in all the Christian virtues and graces. The church welcomes broken, helpless, infirm men; but it will never do if all

within its circle are of that class. You must have whole men to care for, to nurse, those that are sick. You must have men of vitality and vigor, to deal with those that are worn out, exhausted; and these must be found apart from what is called "the ministry." "The ministry," standing by itself, can accomplish but little for Christ and men. It must be supported by some portion at least of the membership. Ordinary Christians preach as effectively as do ministers. Office does not necessarily increase a man's power of rendering service to God. It is possible for the least known—the least conspicuous of Christ's brethren, to do better work for Him than the best known—the most conspicuous. Character, after all, decides a man's capacity of usefulness, and not position.

Strong men—men who have a great soul in them, will do good work, must do good work, wherever you put them, and no others can do good work. We need such men, then, as deacons, Sunday school teachers, to take part in our prayer-meetings, in all departments of authority. But where shall they be found? And how? The answer is ready. God must furnish them. God makes every man that appears in this world. God makes every "man," we say; friends make some things that are called men. Society fashions some objects that pass occasionally for men. But we insist on this, that God produces every true man—every man of might; every man who has been a real power in his day, has come from God. Not that He furnishes them apart from ordinary agencies and instrumentalities. He furnishes them, indeed, by means of these. There is no miracle in all this. The Elijah, the Paul, came in a natural way; but it is a natural way that is supernatural, that is above the usual level, out of the beaten track. So it follows that we have something to do besides indolently waiting for them. We may help to secure them—what can we do?

The church should be a better school, a better training-institution than it has been as yet. It is doing a fair amount of pre-conversion work; but what about its post-conversion work? What is it trying to do in the way of educating, systematically and thoroughly educating, those whom it receives into its communion. We can accomplish a great deal, if we only set our hearts on making our people intelligent and thoughtful. It is not for us to say what machinery will best answer the purpose; but the means will be discovered when the end is right. But the church must do something definite for the grounding of its members in the knowledge and faith of their religion. If it does not, it can never look for strength in its membership.

Then there must be a constant looking upward to heaven. The rule for everything in this world is: Do your best yourself, but after all, lean upon God; use your own power, but trust in Divine power—and that