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TORONTO, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1881.

TESTIFYING TO PRESBYTERIANISM.

A RECENT copy of the Belfast "Witness" contains reports of two ordination services. Each of them had a feature which we think might with advantage appear more frequently among ourselves on such occasions. There was in both cases a separate address, entitled "A Defence of Presbyterian Polity." We know that a large number of our ministers do not see their way clear to making "Church Government" the subject of their Sabbath pulpit exercises. Why they should have such hesitation is not very evident, if that church system is part of the "all truth" to be stated and defended. But surely even they could have no hesitation about making the Presbyterian form of Church government the subject of their discourse at those times when they are carrying it into actual operation by the ordination or induction of a Christian brother to the office of the ministry. Instead of unduly magnifying our Presbyterianism, the danger at present lies in the opposite direction, and hence a very large proportion of the youth in the Presbyterian congregations of our land could give no intelligent reason for their being what they are rather than something else. This ought not so to be. The Congregationalists generally on such occasions have a discourse on their church polity, and it is an example others might follow with advantage.

WITHDRAWAL OF A PASTOR.

THE Rev. A. E. Simpson, for a good number of years minister of Knox Church, Hamilton, and now in New York, intimated on Sabbath, the 6th inst., that he proposed to resign his pastorate on the following day, on account of having changed his opinions on infant baptism. Mr. Simpson said, very reasonably, that he "believed a minister was bound to be the defender and expositor of all the doctrines he had promised to maintain," and that therefore, as he had ceased to be able to do this, he could not wait to be put out, but would voluntarily withdraw. He advised his people to stay where they were and work honestly for the cause of evangelical religion, "believing, as he had tried to explain, that while he, as a minister, was bound to vacate his pulpit if he could not set forth the whole body of doctrines, they were not bound to leave their pews because they dissented in a minor matter." He hoped there would be no division on the matter, and even as little discussion as possible. On the Monday following the pastoral tie between Mr. Simpson and his congregation was dissolved by the Presbytery without prejudice to his standing as a minister of Christ.

Many of his old friends in Canada will regret the course Mr. Simpson has taken, but with his convictions he could have done nothing else and continued an honest man. He knew the terms on which he became pastor of the Thirteenth Presbyterian Church, New York. He was equally aware that, though still honestly preaching Christ according to his light, he could no longer conform to these terms. All, therefore, that remained for him was to "step down and out."

CHURCH DEBTS.

LARGE debts on both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches are far too common. It is all very well to have fine ecclesiastical buildings. It may not only be allowable, but in some cases positively dutiful to have such, even though the whole cost be not paid in one year or in five. Still, as a normal thing, a mortgage is not a pleasant ornament on a church any more than on a private dwelling; and if

it hang like a millstone about the neck of a congregation for year after year with little or no reduction, it comes to be a positive curse to all concerned. Some say that posterity ought to pay some of such debt because it reaps part of the benefit, and that it would not be fair that one generation should be burdened and another eased. But is there any real force in such a way of putting things? We think not. The next generation will have plenty work of its own, and we rather think the present one is not likely to burden itself with more than becoming expenditure on behalf of Christ's cause. If the children have the church building free, they will just be able to do more in other fields. Besides, it seems a strange and unwarrantable thing to spend large sums in paying the interest on borrowed money. In short, if a congregation can afford a fine church they can pay for it. If they can't, they ought to be satisfied with something less showy and expensive. We notice with pleasure that there is a growing disposition all through the country to pay as they go. There are, to be sure, still too many who go hopelessly into debt in order to show their zeal for the Lord. But the number of these is decreasing. We venture to say that proportionately there are more churches in the Presbyterian body in Canada now opened free of debt than at any previous point in its history. And this is the best plan, provided the people don't rest on their oars and think they have good reason to be idle after their extra effort. We don't think there are many Canadians who will hurt themselves much by giving to the Gospel. That is not the easily besetting sin either here or elsewhere. But the debt on the church building is often made a very fair excuse for doing little or nothing on behalf of missions and other extra or supposedly extra work—and this ought not so to be. We like fine churches very much, and cannot reckon either cushions or footstools as hindrances to devotion. But these cushions and other conveniences would be greatly more enjoyed if it were understood that they actually belonged to the congregation and not to the money-lender. We wonder how much interest has been paid on church debt in Toronto alone during the last ten years. It must have been very large, while it is, we fear, still going on. No doubt the congregations can easily pay all they owe. If so, let them hasten and pay it as soon as possible.

MORRIN COLLEGE, QUEBEC.

The formal opening of the present session of Morrin College took place on the evening of the 2nd inst., in the hall of the College. The faculty, clothed in the robes of their office, and the students in cap and gown, presented a fine appearance as they entered the hall and took their seats. The venerable Principal, Dr. Cook, presided. After devotional exercises, he briefly reviewed the history of Protestant education in the ancient capital, and told of the difficulties which he and others had to contend with in trying to establish a school in which lads and young men could get a good education. The result of their labours was the establishment of the High School, which had done and is doing an excellent work. He also gave an account of the origin of Morrin College, and of the work which it had done. He stated that the present session was opened under very favourable circumstances. Dr. Mathews had been appointed professor of Systematic Theology, and the Rev. W. B. Clark professor of Church History. A gentleman in Quebec has given five hundred dollars, to be awarded to successful candidates in scholarships varying from twenty-five to one hundred dollars each; another friend in Montreal had given two hundred and fifty dollars for the same purpose. He also spoke of the character of the students, and said he had every reason to hope for excellent things from them.

Mr. Clark was then introduced, and delivered the opening lecture of his course. The subject was "The Fulness of Time," and was dealt with in an able and interesting manner. Dr. Weir read the names of the successful candidates for scholarships.

This College, although it has never received any aid from the Church, is doing a very excellent work in a quiet way. Its graduates are occupying positions of usefulness in the various professions, and the people in the eastern part of the province are beginning to appreciate its work. A brighter future is in store for it, we trust, as it was whispered that by the beginning of another session there might be one or two well-endowed chairs in connection with the College.