

means for the instruction of the people on this great question, and for the restraint of drunkenness, will certainly receive the deepest attention and will no doubt lead to wise and prayerful measures to meet this gigantic evil.

Let us trust that the action of this Synod will have a commanding effect upon the people at large, in regard to these leading public questions, and let us hope that the example of this Synod, will be followed by all the Synods of the Church.

DR. TALMAGE.

THE proceedings taken against this Brooklyn celebrity have dragged their way slowly along since our Editorial upon the subject. The prosecution terminated its labours in the beginning of last week, and the counsel for the accused was well on with the defence at its close. From all appearances we think that the judgment of the Presbytery may be reached this week or early in the ensuing one.

And the judgment, we may say without violating the rule of reticence which it is necessary to observe during the majority of trials, will be one of acquittal. It gratifies us to find that the case has turned out exactly according to our article already referred to. We maintained that, while there was sufficient to expose Dr. Talmage to serious criticism, the evidence that could be produced would not warrant Presbyterian action. It is notorious that the prosecution has utterly failed to prove the charges contained in the various specifications of the libel. Indeed, there is danger of the prosecution itself being prosecuted for the very crimes which it has so industriously laid at Dr. Talmage's door. Mr. Crosby, the principal mover against the accused, has had the tables turned upon him in rather a serious manner, by being charged with rashness and bad feeling in the use of his tongue. Dr. Van Dyke, who commenced the prosecution with the utmost keenness, has made himself conspicuous by his absence from several sessions of the Presbytery. A motion to the effect that the various specifications be dismissed as frivolous would have carried, had not the defence, for obvious reasons, insisted upon completing the case. The conclusion is foregone that Dr. Talmage will be sustained and acquitted.

The trial has so far placed Dr. Talmage in a more favourable light as the retiring editor of the "Christian at Work." It has shown at all events that the Doctor, as well as sinning, has been sinned against. There can be only one feeling in regard to the surreptitious manner in which Dr. Talmage introduced his valedictory and the advertisement concerning the "Advance" of which he had become Editor, and his conduct in the negotiations with the new proprietor of the "Christian at Work," and this is a feeling of sorrow and shame. But neither was Dr. Talmage well used, and it just shows what ministers may expect who involve themselves in financial speculations, and are not satisfied with the honours and rewards of the pastorate alone. If the great preacher has learned not to burn his fingers with the

commerce of literature, it will be a lesson for which he will have reason to thank God every morning and night. Our readers will observe we emphasize the word commerce, for far be it from us to say one word against a minister or any other man using his pen profitably for himself as well as for others. The great bulk of wholesome literature is written by clergymen, and they are only carrying on a work that is intimately connected with that of their profession, when they address an audience larger than can be reached by the human voice through the magical touch of the pen.

As to the grave charges of lying and deceit, these have broken down. The only one about which we had a feeling of doubt was that concerning the telegrams and bogus subscriptions to the Tabernacle. This was fallen from by reason of the positive refusal of the parties who could testify to appear before the Presbytery. One of them, nephew to the accused, has published an open letter in which he characterises Mr. Crosby in not very flattering terms. There is much sympathy expressed for Dr. Talmage and his trustees because of the financial pressure that was brought upon them through the destruction by fire of the former Tabernacle, the inadequate insurance upon the buildings, and the necessity of rebuilding in a time of commercial distress; still, Dr. Talmage's conduct is not to be commended. As to the matter of deceiving the public by the statement that the pews of the Tabernacle were free, when they were assessed to all intents and purposes, this proves to be rather flimsy. The pews were virtually free. A poor man might occupy the best of them at a nominal figure, while the rich man might have to content himself with an undesirable one, though subscribing largely. That is the only extent to which a church can be free, as every one knows the expenses must be honourably met. Dr. Talmage appears in a favourable light in reference to this specification. It was evidently his one absorbing ambition to have a church whose doors would in reality be open to the rich and poor alike. This was honourable to himself; but it raises the question as to what is, after all, the meaning of a *free church*, and whether it is not better to call a spade a spade, and support the church by the people paying for what they get in the same way as they do for clothing and house accommodation.

With all that can be said for the acquittal of Dr. Talmage, much may be affirmed against many of his methods and practices. There can be no doubt that he owes this prosecution to his own extravagance. He is so accustomed to speak in the language of hyperbole, that he is insensibly surrounding himself all the time with a cobweb of untruthfulness. He is altogether too sensational. That kind of preaching is not needed for success, as witness the sober common-sense and heartfelt earnestness of Drs. Hall, Taylor and Ormiston who are just as prominent as the Brooklyn Star. In our opinion Dr. Talmage and his people owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Crosby, though the gentleman will have but a sorrowful return for

his toils in prosecuting one so influential and so eminent. If the trial sober the irrepressible Brooklyn preacher, and lead him and his to avoid the least appearance of evil, it will have accomplished a valuable end.

NEATNESS.

OUR church buildings should all be made as bright and cheerful as possible. Nowhere do taste and artistic beauty seem more in place than in the house of God. The surroundings of the Gospel should be pleasant and attractive. We do not advocate gaudiness. A church edifice may be made so grand as to be nothing more than a magnificent burial vault to a people. Self-denial and piety may be lost to sight in them. But we do advocate neatness and taste both in the interior and exterior arrangements of our churches. Anything like slovenliness we can hardly forgive.

Yet, how often is neatness overlooked. Approach one church, and the first thing that meets your eye is a gate hanging on one hinge, or a fence sadly dilapidated, or a step broken down, or the roof all moss-grown and leaky. Enter another, and a lot of unsightly tin pails hanging under the stove-pipe greets you. Or the lamps have either a broken or uncleaned chimney, through which the light vainly attempts to reach your hymn-book. Or the frosting is scratched off the glass panes. The stove is red with rust, looking as if blacking was dear and elbow-grease scarce. Or there is a great pile of wood hurled carelessly down by the front door. And so on, *ad libitum*. Now we contend that at a very little cost all these slovenly things might be set to rights. And they ought to be. The fence should be mended. The step fixed. The gate re-hung. The stove blacked. And so forth. And if some matting were laid down in the aisles, the late comer with No. 12 boots on would not so easily disturb the solemnities of the service.

An occasional sermon on "neatness," as it respects the person, the home, the house of God, would not be out-of-place. Culture should be made a handmaid to the Gospel. The pious heart loses nothing by the cultivation of its æsthetic tastes.

HOME MISSION DEBT.

MR. EDITOR,—The Presbytery of Montreal, at its meeting on the 1st inst., resolved, on the recommendation of its Home Mission Committee, to endeavour to raise the twenty-five per cent. struck off the grants of its missionaries and supplemented ministers. We called a meeting of the city elders to consider the matter. The meeting was held to-night, and was attended by twenty elders. The subject was discussed, and it was resolved to raise not only the twenty-five per cent. taken from the grants of our own Presbytery's missionaries but an additional sum towards the liquidation of the debt of the Assembly's Home Mission Fund. The elders present pledged themselves to canvass the members of their respective congregations for special subscriptions, and the meeting adjourned to convene again next Monday evening, to report progress.

From the spirit manifested there is no doubt that Montreal will do its share to wipe off the Home Mission debt. The ministers of the Presbytery have subscribed close upon \$300, nearly all of which has already been paid.

R. H. WARDEN.

Montreal, April 21st, 1879.