

diately after the election of the moderator, held by the Assembly as read, and committees appointed the morning of the second day to consider them. If on the afternoon of the same day the Assembly did not meet but those committees did, we would then have their recommendations before the Assembly early, when they could be discussed with care and deliberateness, very much to the advantage of the several schemes and of the Church as a whole.

The chief, indeed the only objection that we have heard to the printing of the reports has had reference to the expense of so doing. This objection however can scarcely be urged now. Formerly the expense of printing the several reports in the appendix to the Assembly minutes was borne by the Assembly Fund. Last year a change was effected and each standing committee has now to bear its portion of the expense. The additional cost to these committees of throwing off 400 or 500 extra copies for distribution at the meeting of Assembly after the type has been once set is so trifling that no one would think of urging it as a plea for not having the reports printed for the Assembly.

We hope that the clearly expressed feeling of the Church in this matter will induce every one of the standing committees to have their reports printed before the Assembly meets, and a copy placed in the hands of every member on the morning of the second day of its meeting at the latest.

THE TALMAGE CASE.

THE famous Talmage case is terminated. It is ended so far at least as the Presbytery is concerned. Forty-five in all voted, of whom twenty-five recorded their names for acquittal. The remainder went in for a verdict of condemnation. A strange feature of this judgment is that the majority was largely composed of ministers, while the minority was more than half made up of elders.

This latter is a curious fact, and it is worth dwelling upon. In many matters the view taken by elders is very likely to be the correct one according to the rules of business or of commercial integrity. We do not even hint at the supposition that ministers would willingly wink at the faults of a brother. But they think of him as the preacher, the man of influence, or in the light of the work he accomplishes. Business men on the contrary have always before them the standard of absolute right. They cannot enter into questions of casuistry. They do not explain away inconsistencies by justifying motives. In their view a word is either true or false. An action is honest or dishonest. A certain line of conduct is to be justified or condemned.

It is therefore a painful conclusion that so many business men have recorded their votes against Dr. Talmage. It is also suggestive that a minority of twenty should have such pronounced views upon the conduct of the accused. The feeling cannot be got rid of that in the opinion of twenty honest men, the minister of the Brooklyn Tabernacle is a guilty man in respect of the charges brought against him. A majority vote cannot obliterate

from the public mind the painful reflection that there are so many of a contrary opinion. But we feel inclined to urge that Dr. Talmage should have the benefit of this acquittal, in so far as it frees him of the charge of positive and deliberate lying. The vote as it stands when rightly interpreted just means this. There is so much good in Dr. Talmage that we are willing to forget his evil things, and there is much in him that cannot be commended which we hope he will avoid in the future. While, therefore, the judgment of Presbytery became the basis on which a motion was founded to the effect of specially commending this brother to God and to the confidence of the Church at large, there is the element of rebuke in it, which arises from the fact that so many could not conscientiously agree to it.

That there was much to rebuke no one can deny. There is not a little of the mountebank in Talmage as a preacher. Natural eccentricity we appreciate. The mannerism as well as the sayings of a genius must appear more or less eccentric to the general spectator. But with Talmage, there is frequently the coarse utterance, or a sentence verging on prudery, or something that shocks the ear of the reverential. All this is worse than the theatrical in manner that is becoming much too common in our times. To the fact that most of his sentences are ejaculatory we do not so much object. The printers must often be sorely puzzled to find sufficient type for ejaculation periods. But we do most earnestly enter our protest against the sort of sermons Talmage has this year been giving upon scenes of vice in the great city. Any that we have read we unhesitatingly pronounce unworthy of the pulpit and entirely derogatory to a minister of Christ. Theatrical descriptions of vice can not possibly do good. The idea of a minister going and making himself familiar with these by actual observance must incline others to go. The wonder is that Talmage could keep quiet when looking on. We would have expected a rush of feeling to have come over him, that would have compelled him to cry out: "Escape for thy life." It is moreover a mistaken notion that one has to see vice for himself and describe it for others in order to produce a sentiment of disgust. The Saviour knew all men, and needed not that any should testify regarding men; but we do not find him unveiling the scenes of vice on which His omniscient eye fell. He is found weeping over Jerusalem because of her sins. By the purest teaching He makes the sinner feel his lost condition. He touches the heart by one sympathetic glance, or by a single word. The sinner the moment he recognizes the lofty character of the Saviour utters his piercing cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner." Vice displayed before us in spectacular form will never convince the sinner. But when he casts his eye upon Christ, then he feels the pangs of self-condemnation. Such sermons as those which Dr. Talmage preached upon city vices are on every account to be condemned, and we trust the fact of the minority being so large will have the effect of preventing their repetition. The trial will have

answered a good purpose if it moderates Talmage in the slightest degree.

The address of Dr. Talmage given after the vote was a novelty. Richard was himself again. The famous preacher was bound to be sensational to the end. There is something of the mock heroic in the words he uses in expressing his regard for the prosecutors. It is ludicrous to hear him expressing the hope that they would all meet in Heaven. Fancy a man saying he would be glad to meet them there, at least, after the second or third day. It would not have surprised us to be told that Talmage hugged his enemies on the spot, and kissed Mr. Crosby in the presence of an admiring throng. The whole scene is ludicrous in the extreme, and almost inclines us to condone the offences of the preacher on the ground that he is not all there.

It will not astonish us to learn that the Tabernacle congregation will vote themselves out of the Presbyterian Church and become Congregational. There is a slight hint of this in Talmage's closing speech. But we still think that the Brooklyn preacher would prefer the Presbyterian Church. We say so for this reason. What would Talmage be in the Congregational Church? He would have things all his own way without any interference. He would no longer knock against a Presbytery, or elbow a Synod, or glory in a prosecution before the Assembly. As a Congregationalist, we are afraid his candle would be blown out. Talmage will not be satisfied without another case; and he could not be so sure of it anywhere out of the Presbyterian Church. Possibly the appeal of Dr. Van Dyke will again bring up the whole matter, though we should feel sorry if it did.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO H. M. FUND.

We gladly make room for the following additional ministerial subscriptions to the Home Mission Fund deficit:—

Presbytery of Quebec.—Rev. F. Dewar, \$5; Rev. Dr. Cook, \$50; Prof. Weir, \$4; Rev. A. Tully, \$5; Rev. J. McDonald, \$5; in all, \$69.

Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew.—Previously reported, \$87.50; Rev. W. Ross, \$4; in all, \$91.50.

Presbytery of Toronto.—Previously reported, \$429; Rev. J. Pringle, \$5; in all, \$434.

Presbytery of Owen Sound.—Previously reported, \$59; Rev. A. H. Scott, \$10; Rev. Alex. MacLennan, \$5; in all, \$75.

Presbytery of Paris.—Rev. Dr. Cochrane, \$50; Rev. Walter Inglis, \$20; Rev. J. Little, \$15; Rev. W. A. McKay, \$10; Rev. T. Lowry, \$4; Rev. J. Anderson, \$8; A Friend (ministerial), \$10; in all, \$118.

THE London "Nonconformist" says: "A committee has been formed for the erection of a memorial statue to William Tyndale on the Thames Embankment in London, where a site has been granted by the Metropolitan Board of Works. It has long been felt that this great reformer and martyr, to whom the English nation is indebted for its first translation of the Bible from the original tongues, has had no adequate memorial; for although a monument was erected in his native county of Gloucester twelve years ago, there is none in the metropolis, where he preached, where he began his translation, and which was the first place to benefit by his work. The committee for this memorial proposes to raise the money in all parts of the British Isles. The total expense will be from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Duke of Westminster, and other distinguished persons, including ministers of almost all denominations, have joined the general committee."