

considered by us is not how to abolish drink, but how to minimize drunkenness" (loud and prolonged applause). Much was made of the phrase, "Biblical temperance." The report was so beautifully vague and persistently indefinite that nothing in particular could be gathered from it further than that the Church of Scotland is sadly in need of an awakening with regard to the drink traffic.

There were several cases relating to individuals that attracted considerable attention and called forth lively discussion.

There were three trials, which thoroughly aroused the Assembly. Two of them were for drunkenness and "scandalous conduct," the third for heresy. It was a very painful sight to see ministers of the Gospel brought before the Church court, charged with such sins, and sadder still to see quite a number of men condoning and excusing these misdemeanors, even although the charges were clearly proven. However, I was glad to see the tender yet firm way in which the Assembly dealt with the erring sons of the church. They were treated with all consideration and kindness, and great regret was shown at having to proceed to harsn measures, but they were solemnly deposed from the sacred office of the ministry.

Perhaps the heresy trial called forth the most heated discussion of the Assembly. Although as a general rule, I have very little sympathy with heresy-hunting, still undoubtedly there are times, and perhaps this was one of them, when the Church must vindicate and defend her doctrine.

The defendant was a Mr. Robinson, of Kilmun, a young, mild, gentle-looking man, who did not look at all like a heretic. About eighteen months ago he published a book entitled, "The Saviour in the newer light." In this book he denied the authenticity and credibility of the Gospels, and with one stroke swept away the miracles, divinity, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as generally accepted by the Church.

So far as I could understand his position, his book was but a re-hash of German Theology as taught and upheld in Berlin by Pfleiderer. The peculiar part of his defence was that he tried to prove that his position was the legitimate and logical development of the "Confession of Faith."

He was defended principally by the young men of the Church, who showed much more zeal than ability in his defence. The principle pleas put forward in his behalf were "that he was a good man, and had given an organ to his church," that it was high time that heresy-hunting should be abolished, that the book was not worth noticing, and if one man were put out of the Church many others would have to follow. They did not even attempt to discuss the case upon its merits.

Drs. Storey, Scott, Laing and McLeod were the men who gave the principle speeches on the other side. The vote re-

sulted in the defendant's being condemned by 307 vs. 134. Nothing struck me more forcibly than the reluctance of the Established Church to lose her sons; at the same time a firm determination was shown that immorality or heresy would not be permitted within her precincts.

#### THE FREE CHURCH ASSEMBLY

With very little outward pomp or show the Free Church Assembly was opened. Principal Millar of Madras College, India, was the retiring Moderator, and owing to recent illness his discourse was read by his brother.

Dr. McMillan, of Greenock, was installed as Moderator, and delivered a very able and comprehensive retrospect of the Victorian era. He dealt with the development of the arts and sciences, and the inventions of the age. He noticed the principle attacks upon the Christian religion, and the discoveries that have been made corroborative of the Bible and Christianity. Dr. McMillan, as can readily be perceived from his published works, has a remarkable grasp of scientific truth, with a perfect genius for applying this knowledge to the elucidation of the Gospel.

One thing that impressed me very favorably in the Free Church Assembly was the highly spiritual tone that characterized all its proceedings. A prayer-meeting of half an hour, and sometimes an hour, was usually held before beginning the business of the day; the earnestness and fervent directness of the prayers being inspiring.

Everything was done decently and in order, Dr. McMillan making a model chairman. By his beautiful language, gentleness of manner, and charming, inimitable way of doing everything, the Moderator made the rough places smooth and the crooked places straight.

Principal Rainy was undoubtedly the great personage of the Assembly. He sat on the right hand of the Moderator, and whenever the business of the house became confused or mixed up, he came to the front, and with great coolness proceeded to unravel the tangle. He is the great church lawyer of Scotland, and is invaluable to the Free Church. It is said that Gladstone remarked long ago that, if Rainy had gone into politics instead of the Church, he would long before now have been prime minister of the United Kingdom. For polished oratory, Dr. Ross Taylor, Glasgow, was perhaps the most conspicuous man of the Assembly; in figures and statistics, Mr. Howie, of Govan, came to the front; as men of the strongly evangelical type, Mr. Ross, of Cowcaddens, Glasgow, and Dr. Wells, of Pollockshields, Glasgow, appeared to me to be the most noticeable; but as an ecclesiastic Principal Rainy stood head and shoulders over all others.

The church statistics contained the following figures: Members on roll, 287,689;