

The Synod of Toronto and Kingston.

(Special to Dominion Presbyterian.)

The Synod of Toronto and Kingston met in Knox Church, Toronto, on Monday evening at eight o'clock. The retiring Moderator, Rev. H. Gracey, of Gananoque, preached the opening sermon from the text: 1 Cor., 16: 8-9. The preacher spoke of the open doors that are now before the individual, the home and the Church, dwelling especially upon the opportunities presented for work among the young, in the home field and in the foreign field. Adversaries, great and many, are found in the race for something new, leading many to adopt a baseless hypothesis for the foundation of belief. These discourage, but should not drive us from the field. As Paul determined to remain at Ephesus, partly because of the strength of the opposition aroused there, so we, when the enemy is especially active, may often find in that very activity a reason for sticking to our post and manfully contending for our Master.

The Presbytery of Owen Sound had exercised its right to nominate for Moderator of Synod, and had named Rev. A. Gilray, of College Street Church, Toronto. Mr. Gilray was the unanimous choice of the Synod, and was duly welcomed to the chair by the retiring Moderator.

The usual routine business, the adoption of the roll of Synod, the changes in Presbytery rolls, and other matters pertaining to them, were submitted and passed.

Tuesday morning was given to business, in accordance with the decision of last year, that mornings should be devoted to routine business, afternoons to conference, and evenings to the consideration of the reports of the standing committees.

The various Presbyteries asked for permission to license students. Some of these have not appeared for preliminary trials, but permission was given provided the Presbytery satisfies itself that they are worthy persons to receive licenses.

In the afternoon the conference began. This is rapidly becoming the most important part of the work of the Synod. Considerable dissatisfaction was expressed because the conference for this year was so much along old lines, and the same names appear year after year. There is force in the objection. However admirable the views of any one man may be, it is not desirable that he should have undue preference. Better far to have a subject presented from a different point of view, even if the sight of the one who presents it be less clear. The papers of the afternoon were certainly admirable, that of Rev. J. McD. Duncan, of Woodville, being an exceptionally fine paper on "Prayer in Public Worship." Dr. Robertson addressed the Synod, and gave an admirable ad-

dress. The Dominion Presbyterian has recently given a sketch of one of these faced the prevalent current of adverse addresses, and we shall not further discuss it here.

The keyword of the discussions at this Synod was given in the opening sermon. "Opportunity" was the note struck by the retiring Moderator in his eminently practical sermon on Monday evening. As if by prearrangement, it reappeared in the opening paper of the conference, and other speakers seemed to take their cue from it.

Yet, strange to say, the tone of discussion was querulous rather than encouraging. The sermon enumerated the open doors, but pointed out that the path to many of them was untried. The open doors for mission effort, of which the first conference paper spoke, were never filled by ingoing laborers, though we were told, in the next paper, that a crowd of able-bodied men stood waiting permission from the Church to enter. In the matter of family worship, and in the ministry of intercession, as these were presented to us in other papers, there was an undercurrent of remonstrance, because the splendid opportunities each offered were being allowed to pass unimproved. The Young People's societies were losing ground; the Sabbath school was gaining, but the speaker thought it necessary to dwell upon the things that ought to be remedied. In Church life and work, notwithstanding the almost unanimous testimony of pastors, that family religion was growing stronger, the reports bewailed the fact that it was not what it ought to be. Augmentation is in better shape than ever, but ———, and so on.

There was one harmonious note in the prevalent minor chords. Rev. Jas. Rollins, in one of the closing addresses, entered his protest against the prevalent undertone of sorrowful reproach. He found in the conduct of the Young People's societies much for which to give thanks. The problem committed to comparatively untrained workers was the most difficult the Church had to face; was one indeed that the Church had failed to solve. It had handed this problem over to the young members, and now that they found its solution difficult, and seemed to make little progress towards a satisfactory solution, was it fair to fling reproaches at them? Rather should minister and elder and experienced Christian workers recognize the magnitude of this problem of dealing with the young men and women of the congregation, whose sympathies were so open to the world and so suspicious to the restraints of religion? Should there not be the heartiest co-operation with the Young People, and an earnest solicitude to make the work of winning the young for Christ successful.

Mr. Rollins is a young man. His face and expression betoken a strong, well-balanced personality. That he has courage was shown by the fact that he faced the prevalent current of adverse criticism—or perhaps it was merely pessimism—in respect to the results of the work of Young People's societies. And so manly and self-respecting was his hearing that the impression created, even among the pessimists, was a favorable one.

In this Synod it was noticeable that the young men took a prominent part. The new convener of the Sabbath School Committee, Rev. W. W. Peck, of Napanee, made a good impression in his address in seconding the report. Of course he did forget the flight of time, and was ruthlessly reminded, by another young man, that his speech belonged to the adoption of the report rather than to its reception, but what he said was to the point, and it was spoken respectfully. This could not always be said of his predecessor.

It was expected that the Convener of the Assembly's Committee on Augmentation would be present to speak of that part of the Church's work, but at the last moment he had intimated to Dr. Warden that he could not reach Toronto in time, and Dr. Warden was asked to speak of the work of augmentation. Dr. Warden's opening sentence, that the committee closed the year with a balance of \$23 to its credit; after deducting the surplus from last year, created a little ripple of applause. But, he told us, there were more than two score congregations waiting for the assistance of augmentation to enter the list of settled charges. There is need for an increased yearly revenue of \$8,000 in support of this scheme. Because of the small revenue many congregations that would do better work as settled charges must remain year after year as mission stations.

Dr. Warden found it impossible to limit himself to the discussion of the one fund, and the members were not sorry. He spoke of it in its relation to other funds, and was naturally led on to speak of the relation of congregations to all the schemes of the Church. His illustration of these as the eight children of Mother Church was an apt one. He entered a strong plea for the support of the small, weak children. It was unfair to give all support to the lusty fellow and neglect the weakling. But when it was proposed to apply a strictly proportionate scale to the support of each scheme, Dr. McTavish neatly punctured the fallacy by reminding the speaker that the need of certain schemes was strictly limited, while that of others was practically illimitable. The demand for the support of Ministers' Widows' and Orphans, for example, was limited, while the call for Home Missions could not be limited.