

BRETHREN OF THE CONVENTION :—

WE meet here to-day to review the work of the closing year, and consider plans for a new year. This is the fortieth annual meeting of this Convention. The mention of this fact naturally turns our thoughts to the past. The greatness of the changes which have taken place since the organization of this body, it would be difficult for us to conceive. The second annual meeting, which was the first to receive reports on the business of the Convention, was held in Nictaux. On the list of members then present are the names of twenty-four ministers, one-third of whom are still with us. There were at that time about 14,000 church members, nearly one-half of whom were found in a few large churches. The church whose ample hospitality has opened pleasant homes to this large number of delegates was then a small body of sixty-five members, under the pastoral care of Rev. Charles Tupper. The constitution of that day defined the objects of the Convention in general terms, giving special prominence to foreign missions and the support of superannuated ministers. At that second meeting committees on the following subjects were appointed: Amending the constitution, Bible-translation, religious publications, the colporteur enterprise, religious liberty and Catholic aggression, union with Canada, increase and improvement of the ministry, the present state of religion in the Provinces with suggestions for improvement, Sabbath schools, temperance, Union Societies and quarterly meetings. The directors in their report also say that they "consider the interests of education and home missions to be fully as much matters which might easily be connected with this Convention without trespassing hurtfully on any local interests." 'The fathers' certainly took a comprehensive view of their obligations. For the most part the objects in which they were interested and for which they wrought, still continue to call for labor and money. Though the workmen have changed, the work goes on. It would be both interesting and instructive to trace step by step the changes that have taken place in the methods and organizations adopted from time to time by our churches within these forty years for the promotion of christianity at home and in distant lands. But such an examination would be more naturally undertaken on some other occasion. The history of this Convention divides itself into distinct periods. It has seemed to me that we are just at the close of one of these periods, and that it might be well to