

produce startling innovations, mostly borrowed from a formal and worldly church, in the hope of making the service more attractive. If a Baptist church wishes to make a fool of itself, I suppose it has the privilege. Some four Baptist ministers, who wear quins, scholastic gowns, frooth—and affect quite as much impudence to this article of apparel as the clergymen of the arrogant Anglican Church. If a Baptist minister wishes to make himself ridiculous, I suppose that is his prerogative, all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. A few days ago I overheard a party of Presbyterian ministers discussing the "ministerial gown," and one of their number, referring to a leading Presbyterian pastor who is an advocate and wearer of the scholastic gown said: "Such a garb savors of pride and ostentation and is to be condemned." Said our own Dr. Loring a short time ago in a public address: "The wearing of a gown by a Baptist minister is distinctly a step backward."

The specious argument advanced in support of all this vainglorious show and ecclesiastical millinery is the desire to attract and hold the fashionable and wealthy classes of our great cities. If these people must be attracted by such devices are they worth attracting or holding? Will they ultimately become barnacles which will help sink the ship? The experiment is dangerous. I know of one Baptist church where a gowned minister, enamored of ritualism, introduced a formal service, which created an appetite for the spectacular, and his church became the nursery of a fashionable and worldly Episcopal church immediately contiguous. Frills and finery in a Baptist church always result disastrously. To say the least, the introduction of a formal liturgical service in a Baptist church is dishonoring to the simplicity that is in Christ, makes worship a purely mechanical thing, a thing of posture and form, and has a dangerous tendency to make religion fashionable by utterly destroying its holy and divine character, and wherever introduced is evidence of decay in spirituality and vital religion.

As loyal Baptists we profess to be a spiritual people. Who ever heard of a wealthy and fashionable Baptist church? The Lord pity it, if wealth and fashion are its only mark of distinction! Our Lord died to have a spiritual church, and a spiritual church He will have at any cost. Formalism and ritualism too often mean spiritual lethargy, inertia, worldliness and death.

I know of a certain Protestant church with Romanist tendencies which has not the courage to go, or the honesty to remain; where the preaching is a ten-minute affair and below mediocrity; where young ladies of a sentimental age, particularly, are accustomed to resort ostensibly for the worship of God, but in reality to exhibit their fashionable gowns. The rites and ceremonies, the boy choir, the imposing processions and recessions, the bowings and genuflections, the swinging of censers, the lifting of the mass, the holy millinery, the dim religious light, are enough to make an angel—weep or laugh! The effect of such a performance is wholly sensuous and spectacular. As the ritualistic Baptist church was a nursery for the Episcopal church, so this high Episcopal church is a nursery for the Roman church, for some of its rectors, and many of its members, have gone into that body.

The Lord pity our Baptist churches if they ever depart from the New Testament simplicity, to ape a formal and worldly church!

**Solemnity.**—The great sin of our age is irreverence. The Romans called it "infas." It was regarded as a capital crime, and was punishable with death. But the wind is now blowing from a different quarter. Men take great liberties with God. We speculate and philosophize about His existence and being. We regard Him as an invisible and impenetrable somewhat, to be assumed as the convenient basis of a doctrinal system. Men theorize about His attributes, estimate His stature in terms of arithmetic, and measure His stately stepplings with a span. They thoughtlessly bandy His august name back and forth as in a game of shuttle-cock. This spirit of irreverence manifests itself in various ways—in a total disregard of things sacred and holy, and in flippancy of bearing and deportment in God's holy sanctuary. Many churches are sadly deficient in decorum, to say nothing of devoutness.

The dignity of the pulpit and the solemnity of worship has been marred in many instances by

the discussion of worldly topics, the introduction of the stereopticon graphophone and other questionable devices, and the over-stylish, vulgar and worldly entertainment have frequently disrupted our worship; the little reverence that remained to God's sanctuary.

Very often, too, the chief singer in destroying the solemnity of divine worship is the choir, or one of its representatives.

### New Brunswick Convention

The tenth annual session of this body was held with the Oak Bay church, Charlotte Co., opening on Saturday, 26th inst.

The weather throughout the meetings was all that could be wished, and every one appeared to thoroughly enjoy the exercises.

At 3 p. m. the Baptist Amnity Association held its annual meeting, nearly all the delegates remaining to hear its reports. The society now helps some fifteen annuitants and is doing a good work.

The capital fund is reported at \$12,226.00 and this is located in good securities, chiefly in Fredericton. It was generally felt that the churches should aid the benevolent work of the association to a greater extent, and a resolution of this nature was accordingly passed. By this it is hoped to keep the regular grants up to the constitutional limit, so that no reduction will be necessary.

On resuming the business of the convention the officers were duly elected, and the following appointed a committee of arrangements: Rees H. D. Worden, I. N. Thorne, J. W. Gardner and R. Ganong. All visiting brethren were invited to seats.

At the Saturday evening service addresses were given: (1) On Home Evangelization and its opportunities by H. M. Superintendent; (2) The Basis of the Foreign Mission Enterprise, by Rev. W. C. Goncher, M. A.; (3) The Divine Law of Giving, by Rev. J. W. Gardner. The remarks of the speakers elicited the deepest interest of all present.

The Sabbath exercises were of an exceptional character and highly spiritual in tone. At 11 a. m. Rev. M. Addison preached the convention sermon from Isaiah LXIII. 1. It was a rare treat. The whole audience seemed as if taken possession of by the Spirit's influence and power, and all present attested to the helpful nature of the meeting and its attendant exercises. The sermon was along the old go-pel lines, and proved that no modern methods, higher (?) criticism, or any of the later skeptical brood, were needed to attract the attention and save the souls of men. At its conclusion Rev. C. Currie offered a very impressive prayer, evidently in sympathy with the discourse and the prevalent feelings in the minds of all.

At 2.30 p. m. a paper was read entitled "The Temperance Reform and How to Effect It," prepared by Rev. J. A. Cahill. Following this came another on "The Sunday School Lesson and How to Conduct It," by Bro. W. C. Newcombe. After singing, an address on Sabbath School work was given by Rev. J. W. Gardner, and another on the B. Y. Problem of our Cities and Villages by Mr. Ganong of St. Stephen.

At the Sabbath evening service a letter of Christian greeting from Rev. S. D. Ervine was read. This brother, now in confined health at San Jacinto, California, wished to express his gratitude to the brethren at home for their sympathy and practical help.

References were also made to the absence of Bros. Hughes and Hall, both of whom by reason of illness were missing for the first time from the sessions of the convention.

Gospel addresses were given by various brethren, after which an evangelistic service followed. A large number took part and at the close several arose asking for prayer. It was truly a time of deep spiritual refreshing.

During the Monday sessions the report in the of the Denomination was presented. This showed six ordinations to the ministry—the largest in our denominational history—four deaths in the ordained ministry; three houses of worship dedicated; two new church organizations, and two church edifices remodelled and re-dedicated all within the convention year just closed.

The question of the necessity of undertaking a mission to Newfoundland was again introduced and a resolution passed commencing such a project to the attention of our churches.

The following resolution was also heartily carried. Resolved that this convention concur in the proposal for a union of the Free Baptists and Baptists of these provinces, and view with favor the steps now being taken to effect so desirable an end.

The Monday evening service was of a devotional and social character and proved a fitting conclusion to one of the most interesting gatherings ever held among us. Other conventions have had larger numbers present, and perhaps more to attract attention, but none in recent years we venture to assert has been more highly profitable and helpful to those in attendance, or awakening in direct influence upon the unconverted assembled with us. We are looking for good fruits in the near future.

### Letter of Rev. S. D. Ervine.

"To the ministers and delegates composing the New Brunswick Baptist Convention, convened at Oak Bay:

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ:

I am glad to know that you are again congregated together in Convention to continue the interests of the Lord's work, for which the body was originally organized. I trust your meeting at the present season will be crowned with the Master's presence and result in the advancement of His glory and the general good of His cause. As you meet in this Convention God only knows how my heart yearns to be with you to enjoy the blessed associations and labors of past years, when I was in vigorous health and my heart aflame with love for Jesus and full of holy zeal for his service.

I do not really love Him less now, nor has my interest in His cause become less. But through my long-continued physical decline I have lost the ability to exhibit either by utterance or act my heart-felt love and attachment to the cause of my Master. Somehow, though over 3,500 miles stretch between us, I do not feel to be so far from you. To me the best people on earth dwell on the soil of the little province of my nativity, where my life-work has been done, and which must ever seem dearest of all lands under the sun. For,

"Of every land both east and west,  
I love my native land the best."

Though not so rich in diamonds, yet to me it contains that which is more precious than silver or gold. In my native land there is a kindly brotherliness that I do not find elsewhere. The church of Christ has a higher spiritual tone, a more positive belief in the word of God, a deeper desire to obey the Lord's commands, and less catering to the world than in any place I have yet seen, though I fear the late day trend is somewhat after the course of others to too great an extent.

Then too in our home land the Sabbath is more sacredly kept and enjoyed as a day of rest and worship. There men generally, both professed Christians and those who do not make such profession, have a sense of honor that can not be found in this country. Here promises are nothing; everything must be bound by written agreement. Promissory notes must be ratified by an endorser, or secured by a recorded mortgage.

In our native land it is assumed in most cases of business men of reputation that their promise is as good as their signature, or in other words, that the honest man's word is as good as his note, and his note as secure as a mortgage on his property.

The moral tone too of our home land is generally of a much higher type than elsewhere. Character is prized even above worldly fame. The marriage tie means life—companionship, culture of children, and all that is dear to the honest mind. Then why should not I love and prize the honored characteristics of the early acquaintanceships of my native land?

During the past year I have through our denominational papers and correspondence with brethren and friends kept in touch with you in the Lord's work. I have rejoiced with you in