

has seen a crop of pines spring up and grow on a surface denuded of oaks and hickories. And, on the other hand, he has seen a thrifty growth of deciduous trees spring up after the ground has been cleared of evergreens. Soft wood, deciduous trees, he has witnessed taking the place of the hard; and *vice versa*.—Changes in herbaceous plants are still more observable. In large districts of our country, where wheat was once a common crop, it has almost ceased to be grown.

Where it was formerly grown with little care, year after year, it is now cultivated with success only with manures, and as one crop of a rotation. Rotations which once answered the purposer of the cultivator, have in time required the introduction of new crops and new manures to ensure success. For a time, more perfect culture kept the crop from deterioration. Then a more extended list in the rotation, embracing root crops. Following this is a deeper cultivation, by means of subsoil plowing and underground drainage, enabling the roots to get food from a soil before out of their reach. Contemporaneous with these improvements, have been discoveries in science by which the soil has been renovated with new chemical agents. But with all these palliatives, ground long cultivated in cereal grains is deteriorating for their production; and much of the grain-eating population of the world is now fed from fields lately opened in the wilds of North America and Russia.

The inquiry, What has caused our prairies? seems, then, to deserve attention as a practical question. The grasses with which these vast plains are covered may have had their round of changes, until the best food for that class of plants has become nearly supplanted by the excrement which they loathe. The very rapid growth of trees and shrubs planted on prairie ground seems to favour the idea that the time has arrived for the great change to take place from grass to trees. The inferiority of the growth of cultivated grasses on the prairies favours the same conclusion. Almost everywhere the timber land, when cleared, is more productive in the grasses than the prairies; and equally general is the superiority of the prairie in the growth of newly planted trees, over lands cleared of timber. The cereal grasses—maize, oats, and wheat—are new to the prairie, and will, for a time, succeed in a good degree. With equal fertility and adaptedness, in other respects, it is pretty certain that cleared of a heavy growth of timber, it produces one year with another better crops.

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1850.

BELIEVING PRAYER.

Much efficacy is attributed in Scripture to the prayer of faith. The individual or the Church is in one very proper sense strong in proportion to the prevalence of such a grace; and this grace is not, as one might be led to infer from the way it is often spoken of, a fitful transient emotion. We presume the view of many is that it may be exercised occasionally under strong excitement by those who ordinarily live far from God, and from duty; and that it is only very rarely that consistent Christians are so fortunate as to be possessed of it. This mistake arises from that want of discrimination which confuses sympathetic emotion and strong natural excitement with the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart; and which reckons all depression of spirits from whatever source as a species of carnal unbelief.

But as the good Dr. Owen said long ago, "He who prays as he ought, will endeavour to live as he prays," and only he who lives as he ought can offer believing prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." There is a great deal about prayer that will ever be an insoluble mystery to us this side of heaven. Of these points the sceptic avails himself to perplex and confound the disciple of Jesus. It is certain that ignorant man cannot inform the Omniscient Governor of the Universe. Is it not equally absurd to think that he can effect any change in the sovereign will or purpose of Him who saw the end from the beginning, and who has said, "My council shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure?" Yet will not God be enquired of to do for his people all that they need? Will He not answer prayer?

The only explanation of this seeming inconsistency is in the fact, that an intimate relation exists between holy souls and God; and that God, dwelling in the hearts of those who are truly his, communicates his will, and kin-

dles emotions and desires consistent with his purposes. "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." The religion of a man who prevails with God must then be more than a mere Sunday religion; it must extend over a greater space than the sanctuary, and be more enduring than the social religious exercise which so often rouses the stupor of an indolent professor, and gives him for a few hours a sort of spasmodic life, the very energy and intensity of which as clearly proves it unhealthy and unreal as does its transitoriness. The life of a truly godly man is so immediately connected with his prayers or rather with their answer that it almost justifies what is sometimes said that a man must answer his own prayers. The reader may have heard of the priest who was called upon to pray over the barren fields of his parishioners. He passed from one enclosure to another, and pronounced his benediction, until he came to a most unpromising case. He surveyed its sterile acres in despair. "Ah!" said he, "brethren—no use to pray here—this needs manure." However much or little reason or religion the priest may have exhibited in the preceding cases, in this instance he exhibits good sense and does not contradict the true doctrine in regard to prayer. Prayer can never supersede manure on a sterile ground, nor the truth in a minister's public labors, nor a holy example on the part of a parent before the family followed up by faithful counsel, nor the godly walk and conversation of a church in need of a revival. Believing prayer, the prayer that prevails with God is then the prayer of a believing, godly person, originating in the holy impulses which the Holy Spirit imparts in such as keep themselves as the temple of the Lord.

REPORTS ON CONVENTION.

We are led to expect that a good number of our brethren from each Province will be in attendance upon the Convention which meets with the Baptist Church in Portland two weeks hence, September 21st. We hope that all who have Reports to submit will remember the same, and if, not present themselves see that they are forwarded. Considerable dissatisfaction has been expressed on each occasion which we have had, because Secretaries' Reports and Treasurers' accounts were not forwarded. We meet to transact important business and it is impossible to act intelligently and wisely unless we have before us all the information which can be given by the several office-bearers of what has been entrusted to their management during the year.

Having no aim but to facilitate the business of the Convention, and to have things in readiness when the occasion comes; we may be excused, we presume, for reminding kindly our brethren interested in these matters of what others expect. Reports will be expected from the Secretary and also from the Treasurer of the New Brunswick Union Society; also from the Secretary of the Superannuated Ministers' Fund, and from the Treasurer of the Fund in Nova Scotia; also from the Secretary for Foreign Missions, and from both Treasurers, one in New Brunswick and the other in Nova Scotia. The interest and confidence of the Churches cannot be retained unless full and satisfactory Reports are annually given, especially of the disbursement of the funds and of the security and profitable investment of what may be in hand. We hope all will be in seasonable readiness and that much good will be effected by the brethren when they shall assemble.

The importance and wisdom of the suggestions of a Farmer in another column, we presume will at once be apparent, and we hope that another Convention will not adjourn without correcting what may be seen to be amiss in those particulars. From one part, however, we dissent that is the dispensing with the aid and agency of the American Baptist Union, if we can be allowed by them to retain it. That Board have an established credit in London and in India and wherever it is known, a credit which has never been allowed by its managers to be impaired. Now this is absolutely essential in the case of a Missionary in India that we have somewhere between us and him this indisputable credit. This we have not ourselves, and if we had not had the American Board to depend upon while our Missionary was there, he would have been left destitute long ago, whilst we had funds enough in the Treasury and to spare. We doubt if there is a merchant in these Provinces who would be

willing to do this business for our Board, nor do we think it at all probable that Baring & Brothers would for a moment think of a business so restricted as ours would be, except as it stands connected with and indeed makes up a part of the large amount of the American Baptist Union. We are persuaded that an attempt to conduct this business without the Agency of either the American or English Board would be impracticable, and our being so immediately connected with that of the American Boards, and our opportunity of communication with them being so easy, we think the present arrangement one of the best features of our arrangement.

As we shall be under the necessity of leaving town before this paper goes to press there may be some little inaccuracies discovered. We are glad to see in town, on their way to the Association, which convenes to-morrow at Maugerville, brethren Bill of Nic-taux, and Burton of Yarmouth. We shall probably be able to give a full synopsis of the doings of the Association in our next.

We have taken the liberty of publishing brother Chute's Report in this week's paper, having it in hand for transmission, that we may have the more space in our next for the Reports and doings at Maugerville.

Brother Hall's communication did not reach us till after our last paper was out, though it was intended for that paper.

The Rev. I. E. BILL, from Nova Scotia, will preach in the Baptist Chapel, Brussels-street, on Sunday next, (D. V.) at 11 A. M. and 6 P. M.

Rev. John Francis will preach in the Baptist Chapel in Portland on Sunday next, at 11 A. M., and also in the same place at 6 P. M.

Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

UNION SOCIETIES.

No. II.

MY DEAR BROTHER VERY.—In giving my views as to the best mode of raising money for those objects embraced by the Union Societies, I may reiterate former observations made in a previous communication, in which I merely penned a brief outline of my fanciful theory, but which I shall now minutely define, and show the practical results which are sure to follow by its adoption. I heartily approve of every object included in the Union, and doubtless my sincerity will not be questioned if I express the desire that its funds may be largely increased. The plan which I now suggest in this article does not originate from any whimsical objection which I may entertain against the present system of operation in the Christian world, but I have come to my present conclusions by observing that every system has failed in accomplishing its desired results in sending the Gospel to the world after the impressions produced by its novelty has passed away. It has been so with our Union Societies after the first year of their existence; since then they have sadly failed to bring forth a sufficient revenue for the Lord's cause, hence I have been disposed to question the utility, of every organization, except that of the Church, for accomplishing the designs of the Almighty for the conversion of the world. If the Church of God is the grand agent to save a lost world, any other instrumentality which might impede its operations, or prove obstructive to its moral power must have a neutralizing influence on her benevolent activities, and probably some of the institutions at the present day may have this effect. If we follow out this principle we must arrive at the consequent inference that many of the agencies now retained by the Church and that internal machinery in the form of Presidents and Vice-Presidents, Committees and Sub-Committees, may prove in many cases useless and cumbersome appendages to the Christian Church, hence much of that apparatus belonging to Union Societies is wholly unnecessary; every Church should be a Missionary Society, Bible Society, Tract Society, in short, a society embracing every good object under heaven. In order to interest the members of our respective Churches, and to induce them to give liberally to sustain these objects, a distinct knowledge of the whole field of Gospel enterprise must be imparted, this is done in a variety of ways at the present day by religious papers, pamphlets and tracts, but

there is no way so powerful or so efficient as the voice of the living teacher appealing to the hearts consciences and understandings of the people.

Much responsibility will rest upon the ministers of Christ, for the proper development of Christian principle in their respective Churches, and sure I am that if we were all properly interested in these matters our Churches would give their hundreds, where they only now give their pounds, and thousands where they now only may be giving hundreds. Such applications to the liberality of our congregations might be made from time to time by the respective pastors, and suitable sermons preached in which all these objects might be brought before their minds, followed up by a personal application to each member of the congregation, men, women, and children, by collectors, selected by the Ministers, or by the Church. As to the amount to be paid by each, this may be left to the free will of the giver, according to his inclinations and ability; such an arrangement would render unnecessary the visits of some transient agent. The liberality of the Church being steady and systematic, would gradually assume the features of expansiveness and energy, which would alone be satisfied with the conversion of this Earth to God; as to the ultimate application of such funds, that could be left to the society called by us the Union. I am not averse to a Board of Management in Saint John, or any other central place, but I humbly conceive that committees in Churches on these matters are totally inexpedient. If great results might follow this plan, and on this point our theory is not altogether Utopian, the operation has been tested in a County in which only Five Pounds were given last year, where Fifty may be given this year, and where it is pursued systematically by every Pastor, we may reasonably expect double the amount for another year; how much more important would be the spiritual results which would pervade the Churches as a consequence of the softer influence of the giving principle. All would partake of the feeling, from the Minister down to the youngest and smallest giver of his congregation. The preacher's soul would kindle up with heavenly zeal whilst expatiating on the vastness and grandeur of the enterprise, the depth of this world's degradation would be vividly presented to his mind's eye when surveying the whole field of the Gospel enterprise, and the love of the Saviour would be felt with ten-fold power as he contemplated in imagination the darkness of heathenism. Thus the little spot where a beloved Burpe has laboured would seem to him like an oasis in the desert, and his sympathies and prayers would instinctively turn to that portion of the world by reason of that interest which he had in the Missionary.—His feelings and thoughts which may have become localized by labouring in one small corner of the vineyard would acquire a comprehensiveness in their range, and an intensity in their action which could alone be bounded by the universe of God; and throughout the whole body a vitality would be felt arising from the simple circumstance that all were contributing to the Gospel. I would also suggest another mode of enlarging our benevolent efforts, which if adopted, might be followed by many good results. Every thoughtful person can form some idea of moral obligation, but it is to be feared that many have but a dim and indistinct perception of this branch of moral science; the mind which would shrink from the charge of dishonesty in the concerns of this world, might be disposed to regard with indifference any delinquency which concerns the interests of religion.—Now in order to awaken this principle in our Churches, if the Association would give expression to their opinion as to the amount of funds which ought to be expected from each county or section of the Province within the bounds of the several Associations, a sense of moral obligation might be created which the different counties might endeavour to discharge. For example, beginning with Saint John county, belonging to the Western Body, an estimate might be made of the ability of the Churches in that section to give according to their number and wealth, and a certain amount might be appropriated for them to contribute, not in the way of assessment, but merely for the purpose of promoting a sense of moral duty. I am sure that every minister and deacon in that section would use no means untried to discharge the moral claim; in the same manner, let Charlotte county do her part, and York county, and all the counties within the limits of the Association.