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CORRESPONDENCE.

MESSRS. EDITORS: As your patrons have entered upon a new year, may they be enabled by Divine grace to live a new life, devoted to the honor and glory of the triune Jehovah.

You will expect your subscribers to do their duty by remitting at an early date, those in arrears not excepted. Enclosed you will find two dollars for the new year, which is my 28th annual remittance for the VISITOR. In remote sections where there is but little preaching, a sermon from the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, even should it be one of his productions designated by some "hard shell," will be appreciated generally by your readers, especially those of the old school.

It is over forty years since the writer enlisted and fought, though imperfectly, under the blood-stained banner of King Jesus. Now I am growing old, my natural force abates, head bald, vision dim, grinders low, beard sprinkled with gray, but my faith in Christ is all to me. I must soon lay my armor down and go home to receive my bounty.

Jan. 1st, 1879.

Church Farming.

Agriculture and church culture are similar. One is soil-culture, the other is soul-culture. The laws which govern them are not unlike. What is sown is reaped in both departments. There is another law of agriculture which it is well to notice as having an application to church work. It is known that no more can be taken out of the soil than is put into it without impoverishing it. All skilled farmers are governed by this fact, so they are careful to prepare fertilizers, and expend labor for the recuperation of the exhausted soil, and even to increase in this way its fertility. In most instances where crops are failing, it is allowed that this law has been violated. Laborers in the Lord's vineyard may have some lessons to learn in this direction.

This is a time of much complaining in our churches, and especially with our ministers in these Provinces. Many churches are pastorless, and some pastors are churchless, and some are even worse off, both as churches and pastors. The chief cause of complaint is that the fields are so barren and unproductive, that the laborers cannot live on them. Some of us are acquainted with churches formerly strong and rich in productiveness, now unfruitful; only able to support the cheapest labor, and very little of that. Where shall we look for the cause of this? Shall we say that the Holy Spirit's influence has been withheld? That no sunshine and heavenly showers have descended? That seed time and harvest have failed to put in their appearance, and that a continued winter has succeeded? No one dares say this, for it is not true. When a farm is from year to year becoming less productive no farmer is fool enough except it be an ignorant sluggard, to argue

that the seasons are all at fault. Every intelligent man knows that the real cause of this increasing sterility is unskillful farming. That year by year more, be it ever so little, has been farmed out than has been farmed in. Does not this law hold true of the Lord's vineyard? If so, the cause of this poverty in the churches is easily accounted for. I have great love and respect for our ministers, and yet I cannot shut my eyes to facts. I am forced to the conclusion that the cause of our churches poverty to-day is that more has been taken out of them, than has been put into them. Bad, very bad church-farming has weakened us. True it is also that others than pastors are to share the blame for this condition of things. Too many besides pastors are taking more out of the church than they are putting into it, heedless of the command, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, etc." And then it may be that those who are reported the most successful laborers, because of the great numbers they baptized, are very poor and ruinous church-farmers. Instead of increasing the fertility of our Zions, they are only increasing their acreage and sterility, and are soon obliged to move themselves off to better cultivated fields. Then I have noticed that some of our denominational agencies do no little injury in our churches. They go out to *enrich* rather than to *cultivate*. Their success is usually measured by what they get out of the churches, rather than by what they impart to them. By purely artificial fertilizers they raise a pseudo enthusiasm, gather a large crop and leave the field quite destitute of the only material in which a true benevolence can be healthily rooted. It may take years of careful husbandry to undo the mischief thus wrought. But by the blessing of God on skillful laborers cultivating it can be done. Pastors must take the lead in this work. The Lord of the harvest has bound them to it; or to starvation. As the developments and fruitage of the farm is the measure of the farmer's success, and the crown of his hope, so is the pastor related to his church, and the laws of Christ's Kingdom are immutable. The labors of His faithful servants never fail. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." But be it remembered that all the heavenly influence promised to you are no substitute for bad church-farming. Let our young ministers, and those who are seeking for settlements, as well as all our pastors think of these things; and be encouraged, and determined to be workmen that needeth not to be ashamed. May all our members soon arise to a clearer conception of the importance of all Christian industries. Then, and not till then, will our churches be as the garden of the Lord. So prays, and so says

JOSEPH FARMER,
Digby, Dec. 31, 1878.

Tobacco.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—Would not those holy, pure minded, useful Christians, who occasionally sit down quietly and enjoy their pipe, be very much more useful in God's vineyard, if by precept and example they protested against this useless and wasteful practice.

Answer: Outside of our own salvation, the great work of the Christian is to be the means in the hands of God of saving others. Whether Brother H. be pastor or laymen; suppose that he is now attempting to save that young man who has become a slave to the intoxicating cup. He urges him for the sake of his family, friends, and for his own present and eternal interests to reform. His answer is prompt. "It is no use to talk to me. I have tried often to give it up; but have as often failed. If the glass of liquor was before me, and I was sure that by drinking it I should immediately drop into hell, I could not resist."

Says Brother H., "Don't talk so. Do you not know that Jesus can give you strength to overcome this vice, if you will but give yourself to Him. See the number that have been saved in connection with Moody's meetings just as far gone as you are. Come, try again! and I will help you."

They separate, and the young man soliloquizes as follows: "Well, I like friend H., and am thankful to him for the interest he takes in me. Perhaps Jesus can save me. But there, while friend H. was talking to me, I detected the fumes of tobacco on his breath; and have I not often heard him, and other Christians too, say that tobacco using was a nasty, sinful habit, and they wish they could give it up; and that they tried to often, but they cannot. I wonder why friend H. did not go to Jesus for help to give it up. He says Jesus can help me give up the drink, why is not Jesus able to help him give up the tobacco? I would like to be saved; but it looks as though there is a fraud or deception here, and that Jesus cannot take away this appetite and save me."

Moral: God cannot save that man by H., because his slavery to the tobacco habit misrepresents the pure and holy character of Jesus. H. is just as thoroughly enslaved to a sinful lust as is the young man he attempts to save. Other things being equal, are we not successful in saving souls just in proportion as we are holy and Christ-like in our lives and conversation?

Ought not the standard of Christian morality to be raised, by applying Bible principles to our daily life? Is it not high time that the Christian Church was awakened to the sad fact that the *Deiliah* of the tobacco habit is clipping off the locks of the Church members, so that many of them are *perfect weakness*, and the devil has a grand chance to impair, if not wholly destroy their spiritual eyesight.

When shall the time come that, as Churches, we shall possess so much practical holiness or Christ-likeness, that no tobacco user shall find admittance to membership, even as it is now the practice in India and China, by our missionaries, that no opium user is admitted to membership, until the habit is wholly abandoned? Praise the Lord that in some Church connections they refuse to ordain to the pastorate any person who is addicted to the vile lust.

Ought not the denominations at their annual gatherings to instruct their Home and Foreign Mission Boards, to give no aid to tobacco using ministers, and thus practically protest against the vice.

The ostrich hides its head in the sand, and thinks itself safe from its pursuers. Just so, tobacco-users, perhaps unwittingly, try to drown the now awakened conscience by taking another chew, and smoking another pipe; but it is all to no purpose. God will bring every work into judgment in due time, and the wood, hay, and stubble of bad habits, and bad examples shall be burned up, and they shall suffer loss; though they themselves shall be saved yet so as by fire. 1 Cor. iii. 15. Alas! for the many who are now stumbling over tobacco-users into perdition.

Yours in Christ,
D. ARCHIBALD,
Summerside, P. E. I., Dec. 25th, 1878.

Dr. Landels' Address.

The following report of a speech, by the pastor of Regent's Park Church, at the annual meeting of the College, bearing the same name, is worthy of perusal:

Rev. Dr. Landels remarked that he did not know why he should have been asked to speak, except to show by contrast the advantages of passing through such an institution, for he had not had such an advantage. If all that had been said about the necessity for so much learning was true, was it not marvellous that some of them had managed to succeed at all? It would, however, be encouraging to them to remember that after all, if Fuller were living to-day, although he might not have passed through a college course, he would probably find a church who would not be unwilling to receive him as its pastor. There might be spheres of usefulness for men who could not put letters after their name. The power of their ministry was to be found after all not in being learned, but in knowing what part of a man's nature they had to appeal to, and the adaptive power of the Gospel to it. Perhaps they could discuss evidences and engage in dialectics a little too much for profit. The great mass of English people are not greatly troubled with speculative doubts. They are pass-

ing to God's eternity, and ask, "How can we stand before God in judgment?" We find in man's nature scarcely anything deeper than his sense of guilt, not always very clearly defined or intelligently expressed, but there it is; and so long as he is conscious of guilt, and has to look across the fashions of this world into the invisible, so long will we have a source of power when we present the Gospel in answer to the question his conscience is constantly asking. Nothing else would answer his questions or give peace to his disturbed conscience. They had, perhaps, tried other things, but they did not meet the wants of man's nature; and, after all, as they had to bring him to the truth, it might be presented even were there is not so much learning, in clear Gospel terms, which, indeed, would be found to be the great power of the ministry. He thought, too, if they brought God's Word in its simplicity to bear on the lives and hearts of men it might be of greater service than arguing about it. He quoted an illustration of an old American harp, which some men found, and were quarrelling about. But an old harper took it up, and swept his fingers delicately across the strings, and as he produces sounds of unearthly sweetness every ear is strained and every eye is moistened. There was then no disputing about the qualities of the instrument; all question was settled. And so was it with the Bible. If we were to let it tell its own message instead of pleading on its behalf, the hearts of men would tremble under its influence, and they would then find a response in the human heart to the truth of God's word. Adverting to the suggestion of the chairman that the ministers and the churches of London should invite students to occupy their pulpits, he replied that he should first like to know how the students could preach, for experiments could not safely be made with the churches. This difficulty would, he thought be overcome if the students would attend some of their week evening meetings for prayer and otherwise, and take part, becoming, in fact, in church work also like ordinary church-members. When thus the church became acquainted with them he would think strangely of it if they were not welcomed. He congratulated the college on the success shown by the report. The students had done nobly. He would not pretend to give hints to the students, for he had heard them smothered with advice. He would, however, say by way of contrast, work as hard as possible while they had the chance, and the more reason they would have to be thankful when their college course was closed. Notwithstanding all said about education, perhaps there was a temptation on the other side, quite as strong. Dr. Chalmers once had a student about whom an opinion was expressed that he had some "rumble and gumption" about him—meaning rattle and sense—and the doctor replied that he had plenty of rattle, but he was not so sure of the gumption. In spite of all the intelligence of the age, there is a great demand for rattle, and a student might be tempted to think he could dispense with the gumption. He reminded them, however, that unless gumption accompanied the rattle, the latter would very soon make people tired of hearing it, and they would go and find something like gumption after all. Let them have a thunderpeal as much as they liked—though if a little more musical it would be none the worse—only let them also have the quiet lightning dead of which the thunderpeal is but the echo. Get the gumption of which the rumble shall be the expression, and with the rumble and gumption together, he thought they might look forward to a very prosperous ministerial course.

"THE MORNING COMETH."—The morning cometh when the student's eyes shall brighten with the long-desired vision of the truth, when the sufferer shall change his crown of thorns for the immortal wreath of victory, when the mourner shall find out that death is but another name for sleep, when tears shall only be like the dew of night, dried up by the beams of the morning. Yes, "the morning cometh." The morning has come to many, and it will come to us; celestial illumination will fall upon those dull eyes; our whole life will be irradiated with the light of heaven. All around us will be the noontide splendor of eternal day.

Faith and Fairs.

We believe in the inspired declaration that "faith conquers all things." We admit and admire the grandeur of a life of faith. We respect such men as Muller, of Bristol, and Spurgeon, of London, who have shown such a range of spiritual vision and unfaltering trust in God, while engaged in great work for Him.

Fairs we don't believe in, though we see in them nothing positively wicked. As a means of raising money for religious purposes we don't like them. But when they are conducted properly they may not be harmful. We have been engaged in fairs, knowing at the time that it was not the most honorable or most Christian way of procuring funds, but did not feel blame-worthy, because in the fair there was nothing objectionable.

But faith and fairs do not go together. When an institution professes to be conducted on the grand idea of faith, fairs do not well come in. For instance, the "Consumptives' Home" at Grove Hall, a noble charity, conducted successfully by Dr. Charles Cullis, professes to be built on faith. It is a sort of "Muller" idea, and claims to be a faith-work. And yet about this time a fair is being held to secure funds for it. This objectionable mode of raising money is resorted to in aid of a work of faith. "We don't beg for money; we trust God for it, we pray for it," say the managers. And just as we begin to admire the sublime idea, we see great flags flung across the public streets, inscribed, "Fair for the Consumptives' Home." This is certainly one form of begging, and is the farthest possible remove from faith. Mr. Muller, while professing to ask no one for money, sends his pathetic reports all over the Kingdom, and these reports in the most touching and pathetic way solicit aid. But he does not have fairs and bazaars. He repudiates those. But our American Mullers not only claim "the life of trust," but support faith with fairs. There does seem to be something a little inconsistent in this on the part of those who profess to rest entirely on faith. We have sometimes felt our own inconsistency while so doing.

Where faith is professed most strenuously we often see the principle abandoned in this way. "Where have you been this week?" we were once asked by Mr. Spurgeon. "We have been looking over the wonderful Orphan Houses of Mr. Muller," was the reply. "Ah," said Spurgeon, "Muller has wonderful faith, which I have not. I must have works as well as faith. When I pray to God for anything I don't wait for it to come, I set right to work and try to get it." And this is according to the gospel. Believe and work. There may be faith in fairs, but it is so mixed with this world that we take little stock in it. *Watchman.*

Religious Selections.

Faith is nothing else but the soul's venture. It ventures to Christ in opposition to legal terrors; it ventures on Christ, in opposition to all guiltiness; it ventures for Christ, in opposition to all difficulties and discouragements.

We know not what evils we have been preserved from; for dazzling prospects do not always bring the cheer and comfort we expect, and promise of future good often results in disappointment and sorrow. There are blessings and privileges in every life; let us be thankful for all those which fall to our lot.

Is thy burden hard and heavy? do thy steps drag wearily?
Help to bear thy brother's burden; God will bear both it and thee.

Art thou stricken in life's battle? Many wounded round thee moan;
Lavish on their wounds thy balsams, and that balm shall heal thine own.

—Mrs. Charles.

True faith is the soul's outward, not its inward look. The object on which it fixes its eyes, is not the heart's ever-varying frames and feelings, but the never-varying Christ. If you would be sure of your path at night, you do not look down to the ground at your feet, but away to the light in the window, that shows clearly the way to your home. —*Baillie.*