

## Family Circle.

## SHOULD HE BE PERMITTED TO PREACH?

CHAP. VIII. LETTERS FROM RICHARD, CONTINUED.

Nellie wept, no one but herself knew how bitterly, at this strange aspect of affairs. She would not for a moment stand between Richard and his religious duty. But it was anomalous to her that he and Mrs. B. could have coolly sat down and calmly discussed her matters, and heartlessly set aside all her sacred claims, and decided on Richard's future as though she had not existed and was not his affianced, not only before God but in the eyes of the community in which she lived. For they had been engaged for months, and as we have before said were at one period within two weeks of marriage.

Nellie wept, and strange forebodings seized her soul, as amid tears and sad disappointment she read and re-read Richard's second letter. The whole matter had suddenly taken upon itself a mysterious aspect, and intuitively she felt great anxiety. Yet she did not doubt Richard. She could not—she loved him so. Nor could she stand for a moment as an obstacle in his pathway of duty. But she saw the hand of a third party, one who knew her not, cared not for the deep wrongs she might suffer, would not stop to think of her claims, although the setting them aside might be eternal anguish to poor Nellie's stricken soul.

A long week of suspense, such as words can never portray, and again the postman left a letter from Richard.

Nellie found her way to her room, and there with locked door, and trembling hand, and pulsing heart, she tore open the envelope and,—and shall I say, read it? Ah, no, she caught from its pages at a glance the fearful intelligence that Richard "had ceased to love her."

Two weeks before, they had parted at that little gate, on which her wild eyes were now so hopelessly fixed, and had received with faltering voice and streaming eyes his unchanging, eternal love. Two weeks!—and he had ceased to love her! The god of selfish ambition had asserted his sway in his drivelling soul, and the dastard hand had deliberately penned these cold, calm lines, which he knew—as fully as his meagre nature could appreciate her great love—would strike death to her heart.

This is Richard Landon—the student for the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. With Baptists the ministry is getting to be, in many cases, a mere profession—a means of bread and meat and reputation. Better that we examine our candidates for ministerial orders and for our pulpits as to their knowledge of the faith once delivered to the saints and of their acquaintance with the Word of Divine Truth, and their teaching by the Holy Spirit—rather than in homiletics and Hebrew, and the amount of culture they have received in the schools, and their ability to do church work. These are good in their place. But what our pulpits are sadly in need of now throughout the land, are men of faith, men of God, men who spend much time with Jesus alone on the mount, learning of Him. No man can be a strong man, whatever may be his culture, his literary advantages, his advantages of travel, his working ability, or his personal advantages, unless the sublime, the comprehensive truths of the Gospel are imbedded in his soul, and are under all circumstances the main-spring of all he teaches and does. And no church can be a strong church, in the true acceptance of the term, without a strong man in the pulpit. "Like priest like people." "Water cannot rise above its source." Homely but true aphorisms. "When the Son of Man cometh will he find faith on the earth?" No mention is made of works as that which will be sought by the King of kings. Indeed, works built on any other foundation than that of faith shall be burned as wood, hay, and stubble. May the Holy Spirit give the people of God to see the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord, so that the leaders of the people may not cause them to err. We cannot temporize with error. We dare not put men into pulpits to lead us and our children to heaven, who have not themselves learned the way.

Nellie Mason sat transfixed—the letter open in her rigid hand. There was a cold, dead stare in her soft, dark eye, for the fountain of life had been suddenly frozen. An indescribable, indefinable dread had seized her soul, and its icy hand held her whole being. She was as motionless as a statue. Alone with her God and her great

sorrow, which for the time paralyzed her soul, Nellie Mason sat as one suddenly petrified. The sun flooded the room, but it was darkness to her. Birds sang cheerily from the thick boughs of the great trees in the yard, but her ears were deaf to all sounds. The breezes swept in through the open windows and lifted the hair from her pale forehead, and swept the envelope from her lap—but she was unconscious of it. It is a sad thing thus to see all hopes suddenly dashed out from the human heart. The thunderbolt rives the uplifted oak, and as the forest giant lies splintered on the ground, we exclaim, "What a wreck!" The dashing torrent sweeps over the plain and leaves it a waste and we look abroad mournfully on the desolation wrought. The fierce red flame billows roll over the village, and in their track we see only smouldering ruins and heaps of ashes, and as we stand amid the fearful ravages, we reckon the loss with a sigh. But thunderbolt and torrent and earthquake and flame—all combined—cannot work the eternal ruin that is wrought in the human soul suddenly bereft of hope. This is not a partial nor a temporary wreck which may be relieved, but one that is complete and enduring. And such was the sad condition of Nellie Mason on that glad July day as the fatal letter revealed to her the fact that he whom she had trusted and loved so fondly had deceived her and cast her love away as a trifling thing. Well for her in this hour of deep darkness, that she could, though tremblingly and uncertainly, stretch out the arms of faith towards God. Earth presented nothing on which a hope could rest—all was blank and dead.

"How am I to understand this?" said Nellie Mason to herself. "It cannot be—it cannot be—he has deceived me! There surely is some sad mistake!" Then she endeavored to read the letter a second time—but her brain whirled as her eye rested on the fearful announcement that "his love for her had ceased." And this in less than a week! Strange contradiction: she sat bewildered.

The human soul possesses wonderful powers of reaction—and although hope may be swept away, it will after the paralysis of the first heavy blow has passed always look about it for something on which to rest.

As Nellie Mason wildly cast her thought over the dreadful situation in which she found herself placed—the victim of a set of circumstances she could not fully understand—it seemed to her impossible that Richard Landon, whose life for months and months past had been devoted to her who when absent the previous summer, had written her daily letters, each of which was filled with expressions of the sincerest affection—whose constancy she had never, not even for a moment, had reason to doubt—who had so recently parted with her under the appearance of the deepest grief, and whose last letter, penned only a few days before this, breathed the old story of undying attachment—that this man, to whom she had given her heart's holiest adoration, could have so suddenly changed, unless a pressure of outside influences had been brought to bear upon him. She concluded, at looking at the matter, that his mind had been swayed from its proper judgment by her to whom he was henceforth to be indebted for food and raiment, for board and lodging. She was assured in her own mind that Richard had been induced by Mrs. B. to write that fatal missive. Her supposition ran thus: Mrs. B. had decided that her promising protegee could not study theology successfully, and at the same time be in love. One or the other must be given up, and as Richard must be made a star in the ministerial galaxy, being possessed, as it was thought, of great mind power, the far away girl, for whom Mrs. B. cared nothing at all, let her be whom she might, or having what claims she might, must be given up—the less for the greater good.

Ah! if Nellie could just then have buried her heart, though breaking, far out of sight, and rallied her judgment, she might have seen, what she must yet see, what her friends then realized, and what all who read this story must admit, that a man who could thus lightly set aside sworn vows, could thus, like a genuine Uriah Heep, sell himself for a few hundred dollars—who could so far forget duty to another, in seeking to meet the demands of duty to himself, was in no way—nay, not in one jot or tittle—worthy of the confidence and love of a true woman; but, on the other hand, deserved to have heaped upon him the contempt and contumely of all honorable and just persons. But, alas for her, her eyes were blinded by her love, and she sought to excuse what she could

not justify, and to find a cause for Richard's strange conduct in the undue influence of Mrs. B. over his judgment. Had she been wise she would have seen her doom sealed when she read that the coward had laid bare the secret of their love to the eyes of a stranger and discussed his engagement to her in the light of business. Here she could have spurned him from her as ignoble. And though it cost her her life, she should have turned from him with disgust. When a man sacrifices his honor thus far, he is drivelling enough for any mean thing. No true girl could any more dare to link her fate to such an one than she could dare to precipitate herself from a cliff a hundred feet high and expect to be saved from death.

Nellie locked her sad secret in her own bosom. She wept and prayed alone in her chamber. Then he dried her eyes, hid away the horrid letter, and masking her sweet, sad face with a smile, which was such hollow mockery, went as resolutely as possible about her evening duties.

Minnette Joy, the motherless one, offered the same beautiful sacrifice on the altar of duty, when on that fearful evening the father had brought her the letter of doom from Richard Landon.

To be continued.

## The Christmas Tree.

It is very pleasant for each family or Sunday School to have its Christmas tree with gifts to distribute and make glad the hearts of those who receive. But ought not everyone to be like a Christmas tree, from whose branches there might be good gifts bestowed all the year round.

If the love of Jesus whose life is celebrated on Christmas be in our hearts and his Spirit dwell in us, the Bible tells us, Gal. 5: 22, the fruits will be, "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Now if we possess such a rich cluster of fruits, surely we will not only be able, but willing to do good.

There was a little girl named Tiny of whom I read the other day who seemed to believe it was "more blessed to give than to receive," and so seemed to be a sort of Christmas Tree. Here is the story I clipped from a paper.

Wearied with play, Leila and Tiny drew their garden chairs close together, and sat down under the chestnut tree which grew beside their home. Their laps were full of flowers, which they had just gathered to make into a nosegay for their mother. Birds were singing in the branches overhead, and a little robin, which they fed every day, it was quite tame, hopped round them with a consequential air, and sometimes perched on their shoulders.

Both children had been quite silent for a few minutes, when Tiny suddenly raised her blue eyes and said:

"I am so happy. I do love the flowers, and birdies, and you, and everybody so much."

Then she added a whisper:

"And I love God who made us all so happy. Sister, I wish I could give him something."

"Mother says if we love him, that is what he likes best of all," replied Leila. Leila thought a little and said:

"Perhaps you could print a text for the flowers' mother sends every week to the sick people in the hospitals. They are so glad to have flowers, and then the texts make them think about our Father in heaven."

"Oh, I should like that. I will write, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.'"

But Tiny was only six years old, and it was very difficult for her to hold a pen, so she only did two letters every day, until it was finished. Then she went alone to her room, and knelt down. "Please God," she said, "I did this text for you. Please take it from Tiny for Jesus Christ's sake." And God heard the prayer for he always listens when little children truly pray.

So Tiny's text went up to London and a lady put a very pretty flower into the card, and took it to an hospital. She stopped beside a bed where a little boy was lying. His face was almost as white as the pillow on which he lay, and his dark eyes were filled with tears.

"Is the pain very ill to-day Willie?"

"Yes, miss, it's dreadful-like. But it's not so much the pain as mind; I'm used to that yet know. Father beat me every day almost, when he was sick. But the doctor says I'm too ill for him to have any hopes of me, and I'm mighty afeared to die."

"If you had a friend who loved you

very much, and you were well, should you be afraid to go and stay with him, Willie?"

"Why, no; I'd like to go in course."

"I have brought you a message from a Friend who has loved you all your life long; he wants you to trust him and to go and live with him. He will love you always, and you will always be happy."

Then the lady read Tiny's text, "Suffer little children to come unto me." She told him how Jesus had died, and then rose again and went to heaven to prepare a place for him and many other little children too. She told him how Jesus is still saying "Come," and his hand is still out to bless.

So Willie turned to the Good Shepherd and was no longer afraid.

A few days afterwards he whispered, "Lord Jesus, I am coming," and died with Tiny's text in his hand.

The little girl's work had helped to bring a soul to Jesus, and Willie is waiting for her in heaven.

Many persons die without learning to be patient. It is a hard lesson to learn; but very precious when it is learned. Happy is the man who learns it soon and well.

Patience is a plant of slow growth. It grows in the mellow soil of trial—"the trial of your faith worketh patience." It strikes its deep roots down into the sub-soil of faith, and pushes its head out into the sunlight and storm. It bears precious fruit of experience and hope. Its blossoms are full of fragrance and beauty.

God is the God of patience. Christ is the one perfect model of patience. Be ye also patient. If God gives grace to be patient you can exercise it. If Christ goes before you as a perfect and inspiring example, you can follow him in patience. If other saints are patient you may be.

## Smiles.

"Do you know anybody that's buried up in that cemetery?" said an elderly lady passenger to a railroad conductor, pointing to a resting place for the dead that the cars were whizzing past.

"No, ma'am, I don't."

"How long have you been conducting on this road?"

"About four years, ma'am."

"Well, if I'd been four years on this road, I'd found out suthin' or other. I sh'd hate to be so ignorant," and an expression of extreme disgust stole over her face as she put down her parasol with a thud.

A young lady at the East End ate half a wedding cake and then tried to dream of her future husband. Now she says that she would rather die than marry the man she saw in that dream.

"Is this the Adams House?" asked a stranger of a Bostonian. "Yes," was the reply, "it's Adam's House until you get to the roof—then it's (Eve's) eaves."

"Those suspenders, madam, are long enough for the shortest boy or short enough for the longest man; they will just fit your fine-looking youngster." "Perhaps so; but I don't want to sew buttons on his boot-legs. I want them to hold his pants on. Them suspenders is long enough for the Colossus of Rhodes." "Just so, madam, I sold old Colossus a pair out of the same box yesterday."

Literary clubs are now very fashionable. Twenty servant girls have a class in English literature, and one of them recently said to her mistress, who was talking about what to read at the next reception: "Sure, mam, why don't ye rade from the Iliad the partin' betwene Heether and Andromackey? and Pope's translation is the only wan that's fit!"

**J. J. SHARPE,**

Watchmaker and Jeweller,

HAS OPENED AT

No. 18 Dock Street,

A FULL ASSORTMENT OF

**WATCHES, CLOCKS**

AND

**JEWELRY.**

Which will be sold CHEAP.

Watches, Clocks, and Jewery Repaired

In a thorough manner and at reasonable rates

Remember the place.

No. 18 Dock Street.

## THE

## VISITOR BOOK ROOM

## 99 GERMAIN ST.

## NEW BOOKS

## FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS,

## School Books

As perscribed by the Board of Education.

## Stationery

In Great Variety.

## HYMN BOOKS.

## TEACHERS' BIBLES.

## MOTTOES.

## S. S. CARDS.

## CLASS BOOKS

All requisites for Day and Sunday School and Churches.

**J. E. HOPPER,**

99 GERMAIN STREET.