

# The Home Mission Journal.

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## The Coming of Caroline.

BY MARY E. Q. BRURIL.

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### CHAPTER VIII.

AT St. John's Church the pews had seldom been empty ones. Every Sabbath there had been congregations goodly in numbers. Goodly too in looks, as became so fine an edifice. For St. John's was truly a triumph of its architect. Its interior was beautiful and impressive, with its dim, religious light; the subdued glory of sunbeams sifted in through glass of crimson, pearl, amber, purple and emerald; there were fine frescoes, elaborate carvings of oak and walnut; rich carpets were soft to the feet and overhead at nightfall hung glittering branches loaded with electric lights like glowing opals. And then, to the silent music of design and color, came the notes of the grand organ pealing forth in rich, triumphant chords, or stealing softly through the aisles up to the fretted roof. So it was little wonder that at the time of service the pews were filled with the rustle of silk and satin the soft warmth of furs, the purple and fine linen of those in power. "St. John's had the cream of the town," so it was said. But of late, so it was also said, strange things had taken place at St. John's! The same people attended, that is, for the most part, but all through the large congregation there seemed a strange, new influence. Formerly, they had been comfortably sleepy, or politely attentive, as the case might be, but now every face was wide awake, alert, eager, expectant, listening to words that seemed like the trumpet-call of the captain of the Lord of Hosts.

"Awake, awake, daughter of ease! Awake, thou that slumberest!" Throughout the town and beyond had spread the tidings that there was "a revival at St. John's."

And it had all come about so quickly, just as the train comes down gently, sweetly, after a long continued drought! Mr. Leonard's sermons were as classically perfect as before; he fashioned in them all the riches of his scholarship, all the painstaking of his methodical habits, but far more than this, he poured into them, like the precious contents of Mary's alabaster box, which filled the room with its fragrance, the power of the Spirit so recently given unto him. He had not calculated the cost; he had not stopped at the question of expediency; he had not dallied with the thought that he might offend, might alienate the conservative—he preached Christ, the crucified one, the living Christ, the loving Christ, the pleading Christ! He revealed to his people the Christ-power, the divinity which might be added to each life, the broadness of Christian living, the supreme, the all absorbing happiness of working in accord with the Master.

Up from the sordid, idle lives; up from the maelstrom of trade and barter, fashion and the mockery of social success—up into the clear, pure air of love and sacrifice, broad sympathies and patient helpfulness!

There may have been discouragements along the way, but Mr. Leonard did not heed them; "he hurried through the low-lands that he might breathe the pure air of the hill tops." Success crowned his labors, because, never doubting the

Christ-power back of him, his aim was to be what little Caroline quaintly called a "Jesus preacher." So, though there had never been many empty pews at St. John's, it was now difficult to find even a single one that was not full. And, O marvel! side by side with him of the "gold ring and greedy apparel," there sat the poor man in "vile raiment." And hands that were bare and hard and horny, or hands clothed in humble cotton and wool, were taken in the friendly grasp of hands covered by softest kid and silk; both held the same hymn book, as their respective owners sang heartily, "Bless be the tie that binds." For the Spirit had come down mightily into St. John's, and now, therefore, none were strangers and foreigners, but all were fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

One happy evening, a slender, dark robed woman slipped shyly into the well-filled room, and listening to the sacred songs and to words that were as music, felt herself touched by the strange, un-own influence, and held spellbound. She was brought face to face with the black things which had warped, dwarfed and embittered her life—unbelief, rebellion, enmity toward God—aye, brought face to face with them so that she saw them as they were, and passed aglow at what they had made her. Then they faded away, driven into outer darkness by the glory of a Cross intervening and the tender face of the Christ! Ah that was a night of battle and of victory. The clouds and mists were rolled away and she went on her way rejoicing; went back to her humble home to kiss the rosy child sleeping there, the wail Caroline, whose coming had been, as it were, the finger touch on the latch of a door opening into a broader and a better life. And this new joy and peace could not be confined; it shed its influence all around her, and even her neighbors felt themselves warmed by the new graciousness which was manifested so plainly in her life.

Little Miss Spooler, in friendly chat with the tailor over the garden fence, said tremulously, with tears of gratitude in her faded eyes: "No; it don't seem as though I could have kept up during ma's long sickness if it hadn't been for Mrs. Rossman. To think of my always feeling so shy towards her—but she was a bit distant once! One day she seen the doctor stop here twice and so she come over, brought flowers and jelly, and was just as friendly! "Miss Spooler," says she, "you go and lie down and have a nap and I'll see to things." I was so tucked out that I didn't say aye nor nay, but flopped right down on the veranda and had such a good rest, and when I woke, Mrs. Rossman had tidied up the room and made ma comfortable. She was with ma when she died. Ma felt kinder tear-son, but Mrs. Rossman held her hand and spoke so comfortably and prayed, till ma turned her face towards me, all shining and happy and she says, "It's all right, daughter Tiddy. The river is black and deep and the weather stormy, but He'll carry me over to where there's no more pain nor crying nor worry!"

Mrs. Saltys, who was also a listener of Miss Spooler's recital weeping with ever ready Irish sympathy, broke out earnestly, "Aye, she do be a Protestant, Mrs. Rossman be, but the blessed Virgin won't overlook her, I'm a-thinkin'! I used to believe, an' it was yerself that did, too, Miss Spooler, that she looked upon us as we do on the dirt that covers our petaties, good enough in its place, sure; but she's that changed that one hardly knows her! And it's meself that'll niver forget her kindness when Tommy upstot the taykittle on little Nora Ellen! What's made the change in the leddy, I'm sure I can't tell, but I'm sure that the comin' of that dear little creature Caroline has had something to do with it!"

Miss Spooler nodded assent.

"Yes, that was the beginning; 'twas like the spring sunlight melting away the frost. And sometimes it seems to me that when the Lord wants to do some extra good in this world he makes use of a little child to help him?"

(To be Continued.)

# The Sunday School.

NOVEMBER 30.

Gideon and the Three Hundred.

Judges 7: 1-8

**GOLDEN TEXT.** It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. Psalms 118: 8.

About two centuries had now elapsed since the conquest of Palestine. Sover judges had ruled over Israel, including Othniel, Ehud, Barak and Deborah. Following the oppression from which Deborah had delivered the Israelites, there had been a period of rest. Now, however, the Midianites, who may be described as the Highlanders of Canaan, had overrun the territory of the Israelites, and they were in some distress.

## THE CALL OF GIDEON.

However dark the hour of distress in which God's people may find themselves, God is always able to deliver them. Indeed, as we study the course of human history, we are reminded again and again of the fact that God raises up chosen leaders for special crises, and that these men and women are divinely aided to accomplish tasks which otherwise they would be powerless to do.

Gideon was such a chosen leader, divinely called to the work of freeing the Israelites from their enemies who threatened their annihilation. It was the angel of the Lord who summoned him to place himself at the head of his countrymen, and that there might be no uncertainty in his mind about his divine call, various miraculous tokens were given to him whereby he was assured that the Lord was indeed with him.

## THE SELECTION OF HIS ARMY.

A general must have soldiers, and Gideon's first care, when assured of his divine call, was to raise a force with which he might smite the Midianites. Some thirty two thousand men had assembled themselves under his standard, but these were to many he was plainly told, "The elimination of the timid ones still left an army of ten thousand, but the Lord said, "The people are yet too many."

Once more, by the test, which was wonderfully adapted to the needs of the situation, Gideon reduced his forces, and the three hundred men, who merely lapped the water from the brook, were declared to be sufficient to deliver the Midianites into the hands of Israel.

## THE WEAPONS OF HIS WARFARE.

Gideon was destined to overcome the Midianites, not by superiority of numbers, but by strategy. The unique weapons with which he provided his followers were intended to deceive the enemy into thinking that they had been surrounded by a great host, and the flashing of the three hundred lamps and the noise of the breaking pitchers had precisely this desired effect.

## THE VICTORY WON.

God's stratagems never fail, and Gideon found that implicit obedience to the divine commands was the road to a victory that left nothing to be desired. The host of the Midianites were thoroughly defeated, and for forty years the land had rest from its enemies.

## THE PRACTICAL LESSON.

There are many suggestions of practical value which may be drawn from this story of Gideon's band. Perhaps the most important lesson we may learn from it is this, that we must use the weapons that God directs in order to win the victory over the hosts of sin. If we attempt to follow our own wishes in this matter we shall surely fail, but if we will use the weapons of spiritual warfare indicated for us in God's most holy Word, then we may confidently look for a victory as grand as that won by Gideon and his band.