

Northern Messenger

Wm Bronscombe
1902

VOLUME XXXVII. No. 31.

MONTREAL, AUGUST 1, 1902.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

B. F. Jacobs

(By Rev. Simeon Gilbert, D.D., in 'Union Signal'.)

It is no extravagance to say that the adoption of the uniform International Sunday School Lesson System marked a boldly distinct epoch in modern religious and educational history, and in the recent death of Mr. B. F. Jacobs, the man who conceived the idea of this tremendous innovation, the religious world has lost a great power. Individuals—men or women—who inspire such noble undertakings deserve grateful memorial. Their lives, moreover, are particularly worth studying.

To Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, England, history gives the credit of being the founder of the modern Sunday-school as an institution. To B. F. Jacobs belongs the credit of having been the man who conceived the idea of the universal adoption of a common interdenominational, national and international Sunday-school Lesson System, and of having been the chiefly dominant personal force in actually securing its adoption.

Few men have been more fortunate or happier in their association with other leaders of historic movements than was Mr. Jacobs. Peculiarly happy in his home-breeding in the East, he came at the age of twenty (in 1854) to Chicago, then a city of some 30,000 people, and this, for him, was exactly the right time. With the forth-pushing spirit of the place and the time he was in perfect accord. As a Christian he wasted no time in doubt and dawdling. Day by day, as the way opened—like young Dwight L. Moody, who came about the same time—he saw the thing for him to do, and did it—did it with a vim.

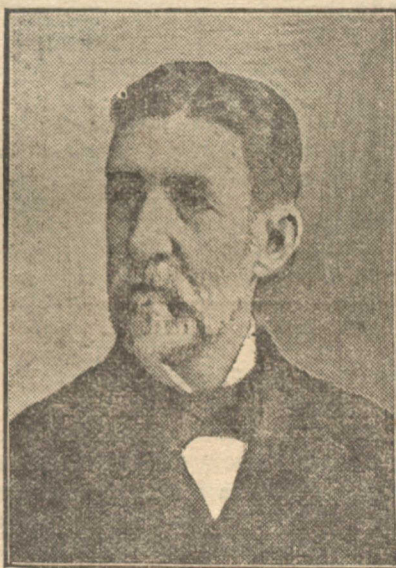
When the great national revival year came—1857-8—it found young Jacobs and Moody ready for their part in it—and as well for the next great advance movement—that of city missions and the Young Men's Christian Association. When the war came and the Christian Commission found its tremendous exigency, Jacobs and Moody were aflame with zeal for ministering to the religious needs of the Boys in Blue.

When the Sunday-school 'convention' idea in Illinois, for the city, the county, the state, came into vogue, Moody and Jacobs, and a number of other young lawyers, burning with the new spirit of tremendous seriousness and practicality, in part engendered by the strenuous activities of the war, went in among these conventions like the prophet's 'torch among the sheaves of wheat.'

When, moreover, that young Methodist preacher at Galena and at Joliet, John H. Vincent, who had caught some notable ideas in England from the English Sunday-school Union, to which his original genius had added ideas of his own, and had invented the Sunday-school 'Institute,' as a normal training school for preachers and Sunday-school teachers; and when, also, this other irresistible visionary, young Vincent, plumped down in Chicago with the new magazine he had found-

ed, the 'Chicago,' afterwards 'The National Sunday-school Teacher,' and began in it the publication of the first lesson scheme for Sunday-school Bible Study ever published, at any rate in this country—then it was that something else that was new began to dawn on the vision of Mr. B. F. Jacobs.

Vincent did not remain long in Chicago, not more than one year, having been called to New York to take charge of the Sunday-school department of his own



THE LATE B. F. JACOBS,
The veteran Sunday-School leader.

church; but he had stayed here long enough to found 'The Teacher,' and by means of it to demonstrate what a new scheme of lessons could be made to be, and to do. Edward Eggleston, the brilliant young 'Hoosier Schoolmaster,' took his place as editor of 'The Teacher,' when, for the next few years, he did incomparably the best work of his life. The 'lessons' which he continued to prepare, following the scheme invented and started by Vincent, presently arrested universal attention.

And now it was that B. F. Jacobs came to his kingdom. The kind of lesson system which was now coming into rapidly extending use was, he saw, a system that might, should, must, henceforth, be made universal. Jacobs had a vision in his eye, a fire in his bones. For the time he was as one of the prophets. His whole soul was in it. The result was inevitable. The Sunday-school work in all the churches was rescued from its chaotic condition, and was radically and thoroughly revolutionized. A new epoch was made in the whole movement for the universal popular education, secular as well as religious. From it dates also a new era in the movement towards the practical unification of Christendom. Especially did it anticipate and prepare for the world-wide fellowship in reform, symbolized by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

D. L. Moody, B. F. Jacobs, John H. Vincent, Frances E. Willard—each in their own way strikingly unique and individual, and yet in essential genius, spirit and character, were notably alike. And how enormous and beneficent the scope and

power of influence, which these three or four contemporaries, starting from Chicago, have exerted upon the world for its advancement.

Our Post-Office Crusade

(To the Editor of the 'Northern Messenger'.)

Dear Editor,—Appended is a letter of great interest from India. Mrs. McLaurin writes that after the papers are read at the Reading Room some of the Christian soldiers carry them to the hospital. This hospital has been hitherto supplied for years through the Crusade, but now we are sending to Mrs. Moore first, and the soldiers, I am told, will distribute the literature. This week I have to acknowledge with sincere thanks the kind words and help of S. S. Waskentine, in Manitoba, and the letters from the following contained pleasant messages as well as money: \$1.00 from A. J., a Tenth-giver; \$1.00 from M. W.; \$1.00 from Edith Laycock for a 'Messenger' to be sent to a little girl in India; \$2.00 from Mr. Tweedie, in Montreal.

I shall send Edith the name and carry out the wishes of my other generous correspondents. Five papers have come by express and post. Some of these from Folder's Corners, and from Point Fortune. The Sunday-school books sent by the C. E.'s at Watford are greatly appreciated in a French community. It would be wise in sending papers to Mrs. Moore in India to enclose name and address, so that the proper parties may receive acknowledgment. I often get more thanks than I deserve. At present I have a grand opening to send literature free of charge to settlers in the North-West. It would confer a great favor on me if people who have good Canadian or Old Country magazines, such as 'Leisure Hour,' 'Girls' Own,' 'Quiver,' 'Chambers's Magazine,' or any Old Country British magazine, would send them to me. Such papers as 'Onward,' 'Westminster,' 'World Wide,' and other Canadian magazines will all be useful. Please do not send denominational papers. Every church should attend to that branch of work for themselves.

The North-West is being rapidly settled. Some say the balance of power will be in British Columbia in ten years. If so we want to inoculate freely with the best British Christian sentiments. Mark the words 'British Christian.' Faithfully,
M. E. COLE.

112 Irvine Ave.,

Westmount, Que.

The letter from Miss Jessica E. Wardale is as follows:—

'God is love.' I know, I feel.

May my life His love reveal.

Soldiers' Home,

Wellington,

South India.

May 15, 1902.

Dear Mrs. Cole,—Ten copies of a most interesting and helpful little paper called 'Sabbath Reading' have reached us this week from Canada, and I am so glad dear