

# Northern Messenger

ALBERT GULLICKSON  
1008 S. 3RD ST.  
MONTREAL, P. Q.

VOLUME XXXIV., No. 42

MONTREAL, OCTOBER 20, 1899.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

## Father of Modern Sunday Schools.

THE WORLD-WIDE WORK AND INFLUENCE OF MR. B. F. JACOBS—HOW THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS ARE SELECTED.

The central figure in the largest religious movement of modern times is Mr. B. F. Jacobs, of Chicago. He is the originator of the uniform system of Sunday-school lessons which are to-day studied by more than 13,000,000 persons.

Mr. Jacobs is the guiding genius of the Sunday-school organizations throughout the world, which now include in their membership over twenty-two millions of teachers and scholars. He is president of the World's Sunday-school Convention; chairman of the executive committee of the United States; a member of the international lesson committee; and has been a Sunday-school superintendent for over forty years.

Mr. B. F. Jacobs is a prominent business man of Chicago, who, at sixty-four years of age, is as sprightly in body and mind as a man of forty. Though actively engaged in large business interests, Mr. Jacobs finds time to keep a watchful eye on the Sunday-school workers and problems in every quarter of the globe. A considerable portion of his time is devoted to travelling in this and foreign lands, attending conventions, committee meetings and conferences on how to keep the Sunday-school movement abreast of the times in every particular. He is aflame with enthusiasm for this institution, which is unparalleled in the world's history for rapidity of growth, and effective service to the home and the nation.

During an interview with a representative of 'The Ram's Horn,' Mr. Jacobs said that the recent criticism of the Sunday-school by an Eastern editor was laughable in its ignorance of the real facts. He said the Sunday-school movement has never been so prosperous as it is to-day. It is growing at the rate of 1,200 new scholars each day of the year. It possesses an organization more thorough in its working than any political body in the country. Fifteen hundred Sunday-school conventions, are held yearly in the State of Illinois alone.

The International Lesson Committee recently held its annual meeting in Chicago. At its close, Mr. Jacobs gave the following vivid account of how the lessons in the international series are selected:

'How are the lessons in the international series selected?' said Mr. Jacobs, repeating the question which had been put to him. 'The process is far more elaborate than is generally imagined by those who have any conception whatever of the work. To give a clear idea of the labor which goes into the selection and editing of the international lessons as they appear in the quarterlies issued by the publishing houses of the various denominations, let us go back to the appointment of the present lesson committee. This was made in the International Convention of 1896, held in Tre-

mont Temple, Boston. The task before the fifteen members of this body was the selection of the lessons for the Sunday-schools of the entire Protestant world from the beginning of 1900 to the close of 1905. In the committee are thirteen men from the United States, and two from the Dominion of Canada. The first meeting of the committee was held in Philadelphia, in February, 1897.

'The first thing which a new committee attempts is that of determining the general scope and character of the lessons for the entire period to be covered by the series. This was done at the Philadelphia meeting, which marked the beginning of the present committee's labors.

'As a result of this first sitting, which occupied several days, it was determined that two and one-half years would be devoted to the study of the Old Testament, and three and one-half years to the New Testament.

'After the appointment of time between



B. F. JACOBS.

the Old and New Testaments was fixed, the earliest part of the period for which we were planning, was taken up. The first eighteen months of the six years were given a series devoted to a study of the life of Christ, the arrangement of the lessons being of a chronological character. This happy suggestion gave the key to which the entire course for six years was pitched. The modern tendency is to study history from the viewpoint of biography. Events cluster about great personages and having begun with the greatest character of all history, it seemed fitting and harmonious that the same line of selection should be held to the end. Therefore, the decision was made that the lessons should be arranged upon the basis of biographical study, alternating between the Old and New Testaments, at intervals of six months.

'The verses ultimately chosen for the lesson text are selected by degrees. It is agreed that a certain chapter should furnish the text of the lesson in question. Then the inquiry is put: What passages contain the very heart of this chapter? Next, the lines are drawn still more closely, and the selection of the Golden Text is made. This is one of the most difficult and exacting tasks which the committee has to perform. Each golden text must be high

above all denominational lines, must contain the very soul of the lesson, and must be so clear and simple that it may come within the grasp of the smallest and youngest toddlers who attend Sunday-school.—'Ram's Horn.'

## The Origin of 'Just as I am.'

(By the Rev. Handley C. G. Moule, D.D., in 'The Record'.)

The author of this world-known hymn, Charlotte Elliott, was born in 1789, and died in 1871. Henry Venn Elliott, founder of St. Mary's Hall, Brighton, and Edward Bishop Elliott, the author of 'Horae Apocrypticae,' were her brothers.

She was always responsive to the gospel of her home; but there were long periods in her young life when, partly, no doubt, as a consequence of weak health—for all along she was often an invalid—her faith and hope were bewildered and beclouded. Then Caesar Malan crossed her path. It was in May, 1822, at her father's home, Grove House, Clapham. He was made the messenger of God to her. Peace and joy in believing were unfolded to her heart through his private ministry, as never before. She reckoned that time of intercourse as a bright new era for all the rest of her days.

But ill-health still beset her. Besides its general trying influence on the spirits it often caused her the peculiar pain of seeming uselessness in her life while the circle round her was full of unresting serviceableness for God. Such a time of trial marked the year 1834, when she was forty-five years old, and was living in Westfield Lodge, Brighton. Her brother, the Rev. H. V. Elliott, was just then engaged on the plan of St. Mary's Hall—a school for the daughters of clergymen—and a bazaar was being held—a work which in those days carried with it no doubtful associations. Westfield Lodge was all astir; every member of the large circle was occupied morning and night in the preparations, with the one exception of the ailing sister, Charlotte—as full of eager interest as any of them, but physically fit for nothing. The night before the bazaar she was kept awake by distressing thoughts of her apparent uselessness; and these thoughts passed—by a transition easy to imagine—into a spiritual conflict, till she questioned the reality of her whole spiritual life, and wondered whether it were anything better after all than an illusion of the emotions, an illusion ready to be sorrowfully dispelled.

The next day the troubles of the night came back upon her with such force that she felt they must be met and conquered in the grace of God. She gathered up in her soul the grand certainties, not of her emotions, but of her salvation; her Lord, his power, his promise. And taking pen and paper from the table, she deliberately set down in writing, for her own comfort, the formulae of her faith. Hers was a heart which always tended to express its depths in verse. So in verse she restated to herself the gospel of pardon, peace and heaven. 'Probably without difficulty of long pause,' she wrote the hymn, getting comfort by