

SAVE THE BOY.

ONCE he sat upon my knee,
Looked from sweet eyes into mine,
Questioned me so wonderfully
Of the mysteries divine;
Once he fondly clasped my neck,
Pressed my cheek with kisses sweet,
O my heart! we little reck
Where may rove thy precious feet.

Once his laugh with merry ring
Filled our house with music rare,
And his loving hands would bring
Wreaths of blossoms for my hair.
O! the merry, happy sprite!
Constant, ceaseless source of joy,
But to-night, O God! to-night,
Where, oh where's my wand'ring boy!

'Midst the glimmer and the glare
Of the room where death is dealt,
Scarce you'd know him; but he's there,
He who once so reverent knelt
At my knee and softly spoke
Words into the ear of God.
Oh my heart! 'tis smitten, broke;
Crushed, I bend beneath the rod.

Oh this curse that spoiled my boy,
Led him down and down to death,
Robbed me of my rarest joy,
Made a pang of every breath.
Mothers, fathers, hear my plea!
Let your pleading pierce the sky;
Pray and work most earnestly;
Let us save our boys or die!

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLKS:

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, AUGUST 9, 1884.

THE CATECHISM IN THE SCHOOLS.

WE observe in the reports of the proceedings of the Conferences recently held the statement that in the schools of some of these Conferences there was a great neglect in the study of the Catechism. Now this is a most serious matter, to which we wish to call the earnest attention of all Sunday-school workers. It is of the utmost importance that our young people be thoroughly grounded in the doctrines of Holy Scripture. In an age of infidelity and skepticism nothing will prove such a safeguard against the assaults of doubt and error as a familiar acquaintance with those doctrines as taught in the admirable Catechism of our Church. For several years the Editor of the Sunday-school periodicals has inserted in all those periodicals and Lesson Leaves a portion of the Catechism for every Sunday in the year. That these portions of the

Catechism have been largely studied is shown by the following extract from the Sunday-school Report prepared by the Rev. Alfred Andrews, the energetic secretary of the S. S. Board, and presented to the General Conference of 1882:—

"A marked improvement is shown in the attention given to the study of the Catechism, the number of scholars engaged in that study having increased in four years from 15,041 to 26,912, being an increase of 9,871, or over 60 per cent."

The Sunday-school Committee, at the suggestion of the present writer, made the following recommendation:—

"THE CATECHISM.

"It is also unanimously recommended that the General Conference be requested to reiterate its injunction that the study of the Methodist Catechism be a part of the regular Sabbath instruction in our schools, in accordance with the present plan of giving sections of the Catechism in the Lesson Helps of our Church. Also, that the ministers be required to call the attention of parents to the duty of catechetical instruction in the homes as well as in the schools."

This recommendation was unanimously adopted by the General Conference, and was subsequently printed in pamphlet form with the rest of the S. S. Committee's Report, and a copy was sent to every minister and, as far as their addresses could be obtained, to every S. S. Superintendent in the then Methodist Church of Canada.

The General Conference also appointed a committee, consisting of Drs. Dewart, Harper, Burwash, and Withrow, to edit the new English Wesleyan Catechism for publication in Canada for the use of our schools. That was done, and large editions of the new Catechisms, Nos. I. and II., were printed and published. As soon as the first or Shorter Catechism appeared it was issued in brief portions in each number of the *Sunbeam*, and has been so issued in every number since. It was accompanied by the following editorial recommendation, which we here repeat, that all our Sunday-school workers may have "line upon line" on this important subject:—

"THE CHILD'S CATECHISM.

"A little girl, who had heard a good deal about the Catechism, once asked if there was not a 'kitty-chism,' for little children. She meant a shorter and simpler form, having about the same relation to the Catechism that a kitten has to a cat. Now there is such a beautiful little book specially prepared for the youngest children. A little bit of it will be given with each Sunday-school lesson, in each number of the *Sunbeam*, and we want every one of our little readers to learn it off by heart and say it, first to their ma or pa at home, and then to the teacher at school. We hope that parents will help the little folk to learn and say this short lesson, and that each teacher will see that it is not neglected. A good plan will be to have it said by the whole class together at the close of the lesson. It will only take a minute, or less, and, if well learned, will never be forgotten, and will be a great blessing to the children all their lives long."

At the beginning of the present year the old Larger Catechism, which

had been published over and over for years in the S. S. papers, was superseded by the new Catechism which we introduced with the following editorial note:—

THE CATECHISM FOR 1884.

"For some months we have been printing in the *Sunbeam* the new Methodist Catechism, No. I, for the little folk. We begin with the New Year to print in the PLEASANT HOURS, *Banner* and *Quarterly* the new Methodist Catechism, No. II., for older scholars. It is the best summary of Christian doctrine and Bible history we ever saw. It was prepared at the request of the Wesleyan Conference in England, by the Rev. Dr. Pope, one of the ablest theologians living, and is published by order of the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Canada. We hope that both these Catechisms, No. I. and No. II., will be diligently studied in the schools. We know of nothing that will so fill the mind with Scriptural views of God and our relation to him, and the duties springing out of these relationships, as the study of these little summaries of the doctrines of Methodism throughout the world."

There are thus placed in our schools every Sunday no less than 185,000 copies of consecutive sections of the Catechism of our Church.

This is nearly three times as many as were in circulation at the time of the General Conference two years ago, and the number is rapidly increasing with the increasing circulation of our S. S. periodicals. For it is a fixed principle with the present Editor that whatever else shall be omitted from those periodicals the doctrinal teachings of our Church, as taught in these inestimable Catechisms, shall not be omitted.

If, therefore, there has been any neglect in any quarter to properly study the Catechism, it has not been for lack of facilities for that study.

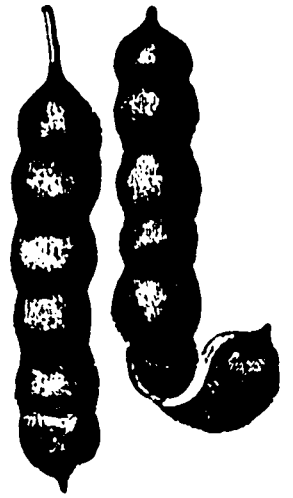
In addition to these, within the past year successive editions, amounting to 28,500 copies, of the new Catechisms have been called for. Of the old Catechisms it is impossible now to say how many have been printed—probably not less than a quarter of a million.

We are glad to learn that some of the Conferences are making special efforts to introduce an ample supply of the Catechism into every school on every circuit. May this effort go on till every child in every school is taught the saving truths of our holy religion.

We earnestly hope that all teachers and superintendents will kindly and heartily co-operate in securing the learning of the Catechism. We would suggest that its recitation should take place in connection with the opening or closing exercises. It need not take more than two or three minutes, and will be of incalculable benefit to the children and youth committed to our care. We have pleasure in this connection in reprinting from the S. S. *Journal* the following suggestions as to the use of the Catechism:

THE CATECHISM IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

The superintendent of a Sunday-school in New Jersey writes us an interesting account of his method of catechetical instruction in the Sunday-school. He uses the Catechism in connection with the Church Hymnal. The portion of the Catechism to be used is announced a week beforehand,



CARROB BEANS.

and hymns are carefully selected appropriate to the catechetical lesson. Every hymn is read and commented on before singing. At the close of the regular Bible lesson the superintendent asks the selected questions from the Catechism, and after the answers have been given by the school, the appropriate passages of Scripture that are found in the Catechism are read responsively by the superintendent and the school. Not over ten or fifteen minutes are used in this exercise, and our correspondent says that great interest is manifested in it.

The idea of uniting appropriate singing with the Catechism is one worthy of attention. No doubt it helps to fix the whole subject in the minds of the scholars. The same may be said of the excellent Scripture selections.

The value of early catechetical training cannot be gainsaid, notwithstanding some modern objections to it. The Rev. Jesse Lee, a famous man in American Methodism a hundred years ago, writes his experience concerning it: "In a thousand instances when I felt an inclination to act or speak amiss, I have been stopped by the recollection of my Catechism, some parts of which I did not understand; yet it was good upon the whole that I learned it."—*Memoir*, p. 4.

We cannot afford to neglect our excellent Catechism. Let us "hold fast the form of sound words."

CARROB BEANS.

THESE curious-looking beans are found in Palestine. In Luke xv. 16, we are told that the prodigal son desired to eat "husks." These carrob beans are what is meant by "husks" in that text. None but the poorest and most miserable people think of eating them.

They are sometimes brought to this country, and are sold under the name of "St. John's Bread," or "locust beans," because some people think that John the Baptist ate them. But the locusts which he ate were not locust beans, but the insects of that name.

THE Rev. Jacob Freshman is steadily pushing the work of evangelization among the Hebrews in New York city. The plodding routine work of this noble missionary and his assistants, though seldom attracting public attention, is destined to bring forth large and permanent results in the near future. He deserves the prayerful sympathy and the practical help of all God's people.—*Christian Advocate*.