

## Sunday School Advocate.

TORONTO, JUNE 9, 1866.

### JESUS AND THE HAPPY FAMILY.

John xi. 5.



AM now going to tell you about a very happy family who lived at Bethany, a little village a short distance from Jerusalem. Why were they so happy do you think? "Perhaps," you say, "they were very rich." No, dear children, *that* would not have made them so happy. One little verse tells us how it was: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister and Lazarus;" and he often staid at their house when He was near Jerusalem. Those must be happy whom Jesus loves.

The first time we read anything about Martha and Mary was when Jesus was travelling, and they received Him into their house. As soon as Jesus had sat down, He began to speak to them of the things of God. Mary was eager to catch every word which fell from the Saviour's lips. She sat at His feet, and heard His word.

Now Martha was really a good woman too, and no doubt loved Jesus; but she did not show her love in the best way. She was so anxious to provide a good meal for her Lord, that she had her mind too much taken up with making it ready. At last she became quite vexed that her sister did not help her. She came and begged that Jesus would send her to assist. Hear how Jesus answered her: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things *but* (or only) one thing is needful."

Ah, dear children, you know that is the care of the soul. It is not wrong to attend to the business of this life. No. God has told us that we must not be slothful in business; but we must still be fervent (or earnest) in spirit, serving the Lord. Jesus Himself tells us not to seek what we must eat, or what we must drink, but to "seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness." (Matt. vi. 33). This was just what Mary had done; and no doubt she had learnt such sweet lessons from our Saviour's lips as she could never forget.

A short time after this, Martha and Mary were in great trouble. Their dear brother, Lazarus, became very ill. Jesus was a long way off, beyond Jordan, but they sent directly to tell Him. I am sure you think that Jesus would go at once and heal him, and I dare say they expected it too. No. Jesus could show His almighty power more wonderfully by waiting a time. After He knew, therefore, that Lazarus was sick, He remained two days longer in the same place where he was. During this time Lazarus died. Do you not think his sisters must have wondered that Jesus had not come to them in their trouble?

At last Jesus set out towards Bethany. As he was journeying, He told His disciples plainly that Lazarus was dead. When they reached Bethany, they found that he had been buried four days. Many of the Jews came from Jerusalem to comfort Martha and Mary. Some of these took the first news to the poor sisters that Jesus was coming. As soon as Martha heard this, she ran to meet him; but Mary sat still in the house.

When Martha met the Saviour, she cried, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died. But *even* now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, He will give it Thee." Jesus said, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha thought Jesus meant that he should rise again at the last day.

Then it was that the Saviour spoke those wonderful and blessed words which are now used in our burial service every time a body is committed to the grave. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 25, 26). Jesus asked Martha if she believed this. She answered. "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

And now Martha became quite uneasy at Mary's absence. She sent to call her secretly; and then Mary arose and came to meet Jesus.

He had not gone into the town, but was still in the same place where Martha had met Him. Many Jews followed Mary, thinking she was going to the grave to weep there. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews that were with her weeping, His tender spirit was much troubled, and "Jesus wept." The Jews talked together as they went along. Some said, "Could not this man have prevented his dying? He opened the eyes of the blind; surely He might have saved Lazarus."

At last they came to the grave. It was a cave, and a large stone was laid on it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha told him that, as the body had been four days in the grave, it must be already in a state of decay. Jesus only answered her by repeating that, if she would believe, she should see the glory of God. The stone was taken away. Jesus prayed for a moment, and then cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth." Immediately, he that was dead came forth, bound round with grave-clothes, and his face covered with a napkin. Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go."

Do you not know, dear children, that a day is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear the Saviour's voice, and shall come forth? (John v. 28). Oh, what an awful call will that be to those who have died in their sins! but oh, how blessed to those who have loved the Saviour here on earth! How joyful y will they rise to meet Him when they hear His voice! They will not come out of their graves in the same poor, vile bodies which they had before they died. Those will have turned to dust; and instead of them, Jesus will give them glorious bodies like His own (Phil. iii. 21), and they shall be with Him and be like Him for ever.

Dear children, pray that you may learn to love Jesus now, and it will not signify whether you are alive when He comes again, or whether your poor bodies have lain in the grave for a few years. When He does come, those who have died in the faith and love of Jesus shall rise *first*; then His own people who are alive on the earth shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thes. iv. 18).

You have now heard of three dead bodies which were raised to life by the power of Jesus. Try and remember who they were.

1. The little daughter of Jarius—she was only just dead.
2. The young son of the widow at Nain—he was being carried to the grave.
3. The third had been buried four days—this was Lazarus.

I think you will wonder very much when you hear that only *some* of the Jews who had seen Lazarus raised from the dead believed. The rest went to the Pharisees, and told them what was done. They were more enraged than ever against Jesus, and were determined He should be put to death.

THE WRONG SIDE OF HEAVEN.—A little Swedish girl, while walking with her father on a starry night, absorbed in contemplation of the skies, being asked of what she was thinking, replied, "I was thinking if the wrong side of heaven be so glorious, what must the right side be."

### THE STAR AND THE CHILD.

A maiden walked at even tide  
Beside a clear and placid stream,  
And smiled as in its depths she saw  
A trembling star's reflected beam.  
She smiled until the beam was lost,  
As 'cross the sky a cloud was driven,  
And then she sighed, and then forgot  
The star was shining still in heaven.  
A mother sat beside life's stream,  
Watching a dying child at dawn,  
And smiled as in its eye she saw  
A hope that it might still live on.  
She smiled until the eyelids closed,  
But watched for breath until the even;  
And then she wept and then forgot  
The child was living still in heaven.

### "I WISH I WAS A CANDLE"



O said Harry Hopeful as he sat one winter evening at the table learning his lesson for the next day. "I wish I was a candle."

His mother, who was at her needle-work on the other side of the table, presently said:—"That is rather an odd wish, my boy; but why would you like to be candle?"

"Because it would be so nice to give light-mother!"

"You are quite right, Harry; but the kind of light you have been thinking about *you* can never give. Yet you may shine and give light. I will try to tell you how. Jesus, the children's friend, when teaching the people on the mountain, said, 'Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven.' Jesus meant that those who know and love him are like lights set up in a dark world, while his words also teach us that those who do not know and love God are living in darkness. If you really love God, the light has shined into your heart, and you have learned that your heart is very wicked, and the danger to which those who love sin are exposed; and you have asked for forgiveness, and prayed God to help you not to do wrong any more. God has taught you that you are a sinner in his sight, and need pardon and forgiveness; and you have seen the evil of your ways, and resolved to show your sorrow for sin by not wilfully offending again.

"Now, if all this is true, dear Harry, and God has given you to see the evil of sin, and shown you the way to escape from its punishment, others will be sure to notice it, and may be led to seek the same change which you have felt; and thus your light will shine and others will be able to see it."

We cannot tell you all that Harry's mother said to him: but this much we know, that he felt afterward more than ever anxious to prove that he loved Christ, by so behaving himself that others were obliged to confess that he was what he professed to be, a pious boy: and some even desired to imitate his example.

LIGHT AT THE LAST.—A little boy, aged four years, blind from his birth, died, a short time ago, of scarlatina. About an hour before the little sufferer departed he exclaimed, "Papa, I see now; darkness is all gone; day is come." In a few minutes he was with the angels.