



Martha

"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee . . . Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." John 11:21, 22, 27

It is a measure of our human weakness that we tend to remember people's faults and forget their virtues. The apostle Thomas, for instance, is mostly remembered for his doubt; seldom remembered is his loyalty and courage in urging the disciples to accompany Jesus to Bethany even if it cost them their lives. Likewise Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus, is most often thought of as the woman who complained to Jesus, the one who was unfavorably compared with her sister.

Yet Martha, though very different from her sister Mary, was a most conscientious and worthy woman; and Jesus loved her. When she complained to Jesus that she had to do all the work about the house, He did not censure her industriousness. He gently corrected her outlook; Mary's total dedication to Himself was a sign of her holiness, not laziness.

During His ministry on earth the response most yearned for by Jesus was faith. Constantly He stressed this in His teaching, and invariably His miracles were a reward for faith. It is Martha's greatness that she made one of the most earnest professions of faith recorded in the Gospel narrative.

Though Lazarus, her brother, had been dead for four days when Jesus arrived in Bethany, Martha declared that had Jesus been present her brother would not have died. In reply Jesus told her that He was the resurrection and the life: whoever believed in Him even though dead shall live. Then He asked Martha, "Believest thou this?" Without a moment's delay she professed her belief and declared: "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

When thinking of Martha let us think of her as she really was. Though lacking the exceptional spiritual insight of Mary, she deeply loved Jesus and her family, and never spared herself in attending to their needs. Above all she was a woman of faith, one of the few who declared unreservedly that Jesus is the Son of God.

