

MARTHA - MARY

While the story of Martha does not contain the same wealth of contrasting material that the story of Esther does, it still provides the student with an abundance of rich meaningful material. For further investigations the Presiding Officer may enjoy adding further elements of contrast, such as Mary and Judas, Martha and Judas, etc.

MARTHA

In the previous study, it was discovered that the investigations of the existing contrast led one to a sense of commending one personality and to the questioning of the other. It was not a question of condemning Jephthah, Orpah, and Zeresh. Rather, it was a simple case of evaluating various personalities and behavior patterns to determine which are worth emulating.

In the effort to become a finer individual who reacts to the world in which he lives with increasing effectiveness, one must be constantly discriminating. What cannot help one to accomplish the most basic and primary objective must be recognized as having a negative influence and be ultimately discarded.

BOTH MARTHA AND MARY HAVE CONTRIBUTIONS

However when one comes to the lesson of Martha, one discovers contrast to be sure. But, unlike the other lessons, there is no clear cut line which establishes only one personality as better or more worthy of consideration than the other. Both Martha and Mary have valuable instructive contributions with which to reward the earnest student. Those, who by virtue of their own personal nature find themselves kindred spirits with Mary, may feel that Mary profits them the most.

Those of an intensely practical, energetic temperament may feel deeply drawn to the hard-working, comfort-creating Martha. The variation in human personalities demands accommodation in approach if adequate instruction is to be given to all who seek such help. The fourth Star Point lesson provides a wealth of such variation.

Mary seems to have been a most sensitive person, whose sympathetic nature suffered as acutely from the distress and sorrow of another as she did from her own discomforts. Mary felt that the failure to publicly acknowledge the fineness of Christ through appropriate deferential services was affronting to the greatness and grandeur which she worshipfully recognized in Christ. At that time, it was the custom to anoint dignitaries, great personages, or honored guests with oil. The servants further contributed to the comfort of such persons, by bathing their feet in cool water to remove the dust and grime which clouded about their feet as the travelers walked along the primitive roads.

No such services being accorded Christ, the humble, adoring Mary came forward to bathe and anoint the feet of Christ. For a towel she used her long flowing hair and for ointment she used the cooling, fragrant and very costly spikenard.

After her ministrations to Christ the whole house was filled with this lovely odor. Judas was very much upset by this procedure. He asked why it was that the ointment has not been sold and given to the poor if Mary had that amount of valuable perfume to spare. Christ, however, who thoroughly understood Mary's act of honor, answered that the poor were with them always but that they would have Him for but a while.

Mary's lavish gift was consistent with the emotion felt by her particular personality. That God can recognize worthy motivation, whether the means of its expression is a simple or great gift, is firmly established. If it is our finest effort, it is an acceptable gift to God.