

## BIBLE LESSON XII.

John 11:1

### MARY AND MARTHA

“Martha” represents the preachers and active workers in religious bodies since ever there was any teaching in the world concerning the Being and office of God. These have ever asserted that God is Omnipresence and without flaw or imperfection of any kind, absolutely good.

At the same time they have been telling of many grievous things happening, as earthquakes, death, loss, which could not possibly have transpired if God’s mercy had been shown forth, or if God had not been the “absence of the good” then and there. Such discrepancies of statements as that God, the absolute Good, is Omnipresence and “the absence of good” have necessitated “Martha’s” placing Deity on a throne somewhere in the far spaces, as a Being with uncertain moods, who might and might not reward and punish, according to petitions.

The truth is that God is Principle. The principle of goodness. Goodness is best. To do the best you can is to serve the best, and the best as a principle will reward you. “His reward is in His hand.” Just as surely as you do the best you can the best will come to you. This is the principle of righteousness. To trust the sure action of this principle will

demonstrate the sight of the best speedily. Not to trust its intelligent action retards the sight of the best.

And the best you could imagine, and "greater" will come to you by trusting that, no matter what you accomplish, your motive being good, the best is sure to come to you. This is Principle.

It is either worth while to trust to the righteousness of your motive to bring you out right, or it is not worth while. The sooner you make up your mind whether you will trust to the motive to bring to pass, or to the method of action, the better for your peace of mind. This is the chief tenet of Christian science doctrine – not the method, but the motive. The good motive is the Christ presence – Christ principle – never absent, always working. To do the very best you can is sure to bring you out right; an unfeeling, unalterable law.

Suppose that you have had some noble idea of what was right to do under certain circumstances, as, for instance, that by some special attention, you could bring forth the genius so near to the surface of the loud woman or the coarse man? You must give them your kind support and friendly counsel. You know this to be right. But some of the people you love best withdraw their acquaintance and friendship on account of your new comrades. You must trust that the simple being in the right will be your satisfactory demonstration. The best will come of it, because you did your best. Trust it and the demonstration thereof will be speedy.

It is not a choice of friends, though their sophistry might put it that way. It is a question of what is right, and you must trust it to act.

When Martha's brother was sick they did the best they could, and that best was the Christ's presence. If they trusted it they would have seen it work whether Jesus was present or not. Lazarus would have got well. It was not to trust that Lazarus would get well, nor to any method of hot or cold applications, drugs or poultices, but to trust their motive which prompted every action. The successful healers often do very poorly according to the world's ideas of methods. They succeed because they do trust to their ideas of right.

The difference between a small trader and a merchant prince is that the small trader looks anxiously to his pints and quarts and wonders how they will act with him next, while the merchant prince knows of the wheat crops of the world, who owns the ships, and what winds are blowing, to determine the prices in advance. That you are in the right must sustain you. That your highest ideal of what is right must be carried out by you - must be your principle of action.

This was the doctrine of Jesus Christ: "Have Faith in God." God is Good. Good is right. Right is best. A lively confidence in the success of the doctrine of doing your best will be like the confidence of Jesus Christ. If a man should set out that he could feed all the world's hungry children he could do it if he loved the idea enough to persevere in

practicing it. People might call him a fanatic or an idealist, and prophesy that he would break his neck on his ideals, but back of him would be the infinite bounty of the right idea.

Two women were conversing about giving forth freely their highest ideas to the people. One said she thought it a conservation of energy to keep your original ideas to yourself. Original ideas were not plentiful. People did things over and over, and great ideas would soon give out if you gave them forth freely. The other said that she felt like a clear pane of glass through which bright ideas went freely till she tried to hoard them, then she felt like a pane that had gathered dust.

The first one not only did not bless the people, but got into a confused and timid state of mind with a sick body. The second one grew clearer and clearer and blessed and cheered and delighted the lowest as well as the highest, besides having a body as healthy as her mind. Both knew that it is right to believe in the bounty of God as unfeeling. One trusted the principle, the other did not.

Mahomet was asked to put away Cadijah for a younger and fairer woman. "No! By Allah! She made me," he said.

Napoleon was asked to put away Josephine. "The star is mine, Napoleon," she reminded him. He yielded to the temptation, however, and from that hour his decline began. The days find his name slipping from the praise of men, while the years increase the millions who honor Mahomet. There is such a

close and vital connection between standing for the principle of right and failing it!

"Even now," said Martha. The church always says that if only some one had been on hand to trust the God principle. Why did not the church herself have the faith? It is a working principle. Why not exercise it? Jesus tarried away, hoping they would realize that the truth of God is never absent as a live-saving certainty. They had heard Him tell that they must speak true words as intensely as they feared or grieved. Fear and grief are intense feelings to which the world sets fearful and grievous words. Thus the fruits are grievous. No matter how much grieved you are, never say, "I am grieved." The grief is a fertile soil for such words, and grievous things come up quickly to you if you speak such appropriate words. Say, instead, "In my idea of good there is no grief." A wonderful change of mind will take place which will be a forerunner of good tidings.

Martha assured Jesus that she expected Lazarus to rise at the "last day." Why at the last day? Why not now? "Now is the accepted time" with the Good. A hospital patient was told to wait till after death for her cure by pious physicians, but one who believed that Lazarus ought to be raised today cured her this side the tomb, and she rejoices to know that there is a difference between a great idea believed in and doubted.

"I am the Resurrection," said Jesus. Anybody who believes in the life and goodness of the principle he advocates will demonstrate

it. He will be so at one with the principle he advocates that he will not know the difference between himself and it. Jesus advocated the power of a right confidence to change the particles of our bodies into a transcendent substance incapable evermore of seeming to die.

"Believest thou this?" Martha told Him that the expected Messiah would do this. This idea of a Messiah had got mixed with the sight of the Roman conquerors. They wanted someone who would trample on the living necks of their enemies till they were dead. But this Messiah who had come in answer to the prayers of the saints had refused to take away life. "I came that you might have life . . . more abundantly." I did not come for your honors, your social distinctions, your favors; I came to tell you how to trust God for your bread and home and health.

Then "Mary" came out and wept and spoke exactly as "Martha" had. "Mary" represents the modest laymen who always do exactly as the preachers and bold workers tell them to do, but who have a better trust than their leaders. It is their very simplicity of faith that leads them to do as they are told, but when they hear a principle they love it and verily wish "Martha" would let them act out their deepest convictions.

Then Jesus "groaned." He was indignant. He was to what extremity bondage to doubt of the good would lead. He spake within Himself some bold, good words to match the intense feeling. When your environments grieve or anger you, do not let your thoughts run down

their gloomy track, but rise with the clear utterance of the conviction that has never been whispered by you. This is it: "there is good for me and I ought to have it." The bird says this and flies hither and yon, and the stones look up and around for the good they know is theirs by right. The galley slave believes this and the prince reels through the banquet halls to find it. Just as soon as the idea has utterance, that which is for you

Will rise the hills and swim the sea  
To fall, fair sunshine, full on thee.

The stenographer at her keys and the sewing girls at her dull task must speak forth this long-chained conviction, speak it boldest when the hours are blackest. The streetcar man and the cash boy - kings are they all, and into their inheritance they begin to come with the utterance of the confidence of their hearts: "There is good for me and I ought to have it." There is infinite fullness of good for you, child.

Roll away the stone of belief in future good. Say, "Now." Don't be afraid to speak intensely; "I do not believe there is any power in the universe can keep me away from my good."

"Martha" objects to hopes being raised and says that if the child you pray for should live he might grow up a drunkard, or that prosperity might spoil him.

Jews believed that an angel dropped a bit of gall on the people whom death had covered. Death is nothing but the fruit of doubt. This is the preaching of resignation to disappointed hopes. Don't you be resigned to evil of any kind. Throw it out of your faith. Refuse

traditions. Refuse to hear anybody who says the worst is good.

There are beautiful ways for God to work. Do not believe that a railway accident has harmed your family though all the papers say so. Get their rooms and table ready. Roll away the stone. Give thanks that you have faith in the action of the good and do not believe in mixing your ideas of good with any kind of evil. Then call to them to come home. The low lands will answer, "Coming" and the uplands will cry, "We come." For omnipotent love hears the prayer of faith. "By faith the dead are raised." Faith is only confidence in the action of a principle as sure as mathematics.

You believe that water will run down hill. Well, "Let the Lord be thy confidence. He will not suffer thy feet to be taken." Loose Lazarus from his grave clothes when he is risen. Loose the maimed bodies of your loved ones from the murmurs that they are not returned home as sound as they went away. Loose your partial cure which came in answer to prayer from your complaining that it is not all restored.

Praise God for what has come so far forth.

Hold fast what thou hast,  
Then they will soon be "every whit whole."  
The morn swings incense silver gray.

The night is past!

No priest, no church can bar its way,  
The night is past.

The spirit and the bride say come. Come  
boldly up and drink, thirsty heart.

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