

Mary and Martha

Luke 10: 10: 38-42.

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The little scene which closes this chapter is peculiar to Luke, serving his general purpose of instructing us in great principles of truth. The two sisters here introduced were differently minded; and, being brought to the trial of the mind of Christ, we get the judgment of God on matter of much value to us.

The house which we now enter was Martha's. The Spirit of God tells us this, as being characteristic of Martha; and into her house, with all readiness of heart, she receives the Lord, and prepares for Him the very best provision it had. His labours and fatigue called for this. Martha well knew that His ways abroad were the ways of the good Samaritan, who would go on foot that others might ride, and she loves Him too well not to observe and provide for His weariness. But Mary had no house for Him. She was, in spirit, a stranger like Himself; but she opens a sanctuary for Him, and seats Him there, the Lord of her humble temple. She takes her place at His feet, and hears His words. She knows, as well as Martha, that He was wearied: but she knows also that there was a fulness in Him that could afford to be more wearied still. Her ear and her heart, therefore, still use Him, instead of her hand or her foot ministering to Him. And in these things lay the difference between the sisters. Martha's eye saw His weariness, and would give to Him; Mary's faith apprehended His fulness underneath His weariness, and would draw from Him.

This brings out the mind of the Son of God. The Lord accepts the care of Martha as long as it is simple care and diligence about His present need; but the moment she brings her mind into competition with Mary's she learns His judgment, and is taught to know that Mary, by her faith, was refreshing Him with a far sweeter feast than all her care and the provision of her house could possibly have supplied. Mary's faith gave Jesus a sense of His own divine glory. It told Him, that though He was the wearied One, He could still feed and refresh her. She was at His feet, hearing His words. There was no temple there, or light of the sun; but the Son of God was there, and He was everything to her. This was the honour He prized, and blessedly indeed was she in His secret. When He was thirsty and tired at Jacob's well, He forgot it all in giving out other waters, which no pitcher could have held, or well beside His own supplied; and here Mary brings her soul to the same well, knowing that, in spite of all His weariness, it was as full as ever for her use.

And oh, dear brethren, what principles are here disclosed to us! Our God is asserting for Himself the place of supreme power and supreme goodness, and He will have us debtors to Him. Our sense of His fulness is more precious to Him than all the service we can render Him. Entitled, as He is, to more than all creation could give Him, yet above all things does He desire that we should use His love, and draw from His treasures. The honour which *our confidence* puts upon Him is His highest honour; for it is the divine glory to be still giving, still blessing, still pouring forth from unexhausted fulness. Under the law He had to receive from us, but in the gospel He is giving to us; and the words of the Lord Jesus are these: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And this place He will fill for ever; for, "without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better." Praise shall, it is true, arise to Him from everything that hath breath; but forth from Himself, and from the seat of His glory, shall go the constant flow of blessing, the light to cheer, the waters to refresh, and the leaves of the tree to heal; and our God shall taste His own joy, and display His own glory, in being a Giver for ever. J. G. B.

