

MARTHA

Martha belongs to the gallery of famous Bible Women. It was to Martha that Jesus spoke the ringing words to which those in grief have clung to from that day to this: "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. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26).

The two sisters, Martha and Mary, lived in the quiet little village of Bethany, southwest of the Mount of Olives. From here it was a short, pleasant walk to the Temple at Jerusalem.

There is every evidence that Martha and Mary were women of means. Guests enjoyed coming to their comfortable home, and Martha excelled as a homemaker.

As hostess, Martha was attentive, warm-hearted and affectionate, striving for perfection in the management of her household. More especially when a guest the family loved as much as they did Jesus came for a visit.

John 11:1-46 reveals the second scene in the New Testament in which Martha and Mary figure prominently. This is their more triumphant experience, because it deals with raising their Brother Lazarus from the tomb. The two sisters were the first named women in the New Testament to witness Jesus' expression of grief for a friend. Lazarus had been Jesus' well-loved friend.

The loyalty of the two sisters meant much to Jesus in His loneliness, and to other believers in Bethany, who looked to Martha and Mary for leadership because of their close friendship with Jesus.

Mary herself had not inscribed her memorial on a gravestone. She had poured out her precious ointment in wholehearted devotion to the living Jesus and her broken Alabaster vase would fill the world with fragrance down through the ages.

We can be certain that Martha, too, sanctioned her sister's lavish gift to their Master, who so soon would trudge to the cross ALONE.