

bitter sorrow, tender reproach, and struggling hope seem all together mingled. The Saviour makes to her a promise so wonderful that it is not understood. Then comes Mary with her sorrow, deep as Martha's, but silent. The heart of Jesus was torn with an agony that struck wonder into all who witnessed it, and is not fully explicable at this distance. With tears still in his eyes he stands before the sepulcher and calls its inmate back to life. For eighty or ninety hours had Lazarus lain in death; but ears that were deaf to the sobs of his dearest heard distinctly the voice of our Saviour. Life again thrilled his frame, and forth he came to renew his interest in the world's activities. Our moral natures have been as dead as was the body of Lazarus. Christ's voice calls us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Our bodies also will soon be as dead as was his. The voice of Jesus will call us from the silence and night of the grave to the light and the music of heaven.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verses 21, 22.** Jesus had sent word of his coming; he wished to see the sisters apart from the "mourners;" for the funerals of the Jews were really oppressive. While Martha hastens to meet the Master, we are to picture Mary seated on the floor of the chamber of mourning, disheveled and wailing, and surrounded by people who make loud lament—some because they cannot contain their grief, others hired at so many pence by the job. Each sister acts true to her own character. **Lord, if thou hadst been here.** These words express the burden of the sisters' hearts during all their trial. "If Jesus had only been here." Dr. Lyman Abbott says: "This is the very essence of soul-torture. In affliction we continually echo Martha's 'If,' saying to ourselves, 'If we had done this,' or 'If we had not done the other;' 'If it had not been for our blunder, or that of our friends, or our physician, our beloved had not died.'" But read verse 4 of this chapter. (1) *Chance is the God of atheism, and is a comfortless God in the time of our trouble. But I know.* If Martha cherishes a flickering hope that Jesus may raise her brother from his grave, it is too faint to be directly expressed, and yet already two miracles of resurrection had been wrought.

**23, 24. Jesus saith.** The purpose of Jesus in these words and those that followed was to awaken and lift up Martha's faith. **Thy brother shall rise again.** Those words were not only for her comfort, but for ours. The raising of Lazarus, soon to be wrought, was to be a foretoken of a higher and more glorious resurrection. **The resurrection at the last day.** Probably her thought of the resurrection was less consoling than ours, for as yet the full truth had not been revealed. But (2) *even now few Christians realize how completely the resurrection triumphs over death.*

**25, 26. I am the resurrection, and the life.** As if the Saviour had said, There is no need for me to pray to God (see verse 22); there is no need, either, to look forward to the last day (see verse 24). "In me the dead is certain to live, and the living is certain never to die."—*Godet.* **Who-soever liveth and believeth.** Whosoever possesses that spiritual life by believing in me. **Believest thou this?** Notice how Christ by

statement and by appeal was drawing forth the faith of Martha.

**27. I believe that thou art the Christ.** We are not to suppose that Martha had an enlightened conception of Christ's personality, his divine nature, and his spiritual kingdom. But she believed in him as the Messiah, and that was faith sufficient for her day. Clearer views would come later to one who had laid the foundation of belief in the Messiahship of Jesus.

**28, 29, 30. Secretly.** There should be no comma after this word, which belongs to "saying," rather than to "called." **The Master.** Rather, "the Teacher." **Into the town.** Rather, "into the village." Christ sought a private interview with the sisters.

**31, 32, 33. Comforted her.** Better, "were comforting her." The only sort of comfort that this world can ever offer is a mere echo of the wail of a breaking heart. The Jews comforted the bereaved by upsetting chairs and couches, strewing broken crockery around, and crying louder than those who had most reason to cry. And while we are much more decorous and less demonstrative than Orientals, the best comfort we can give is very much of the same sort. We attend funeral services, and offer funeral flowers, and drape ourselves in black, and mingle our tears with theirs; but precious little "comfort" there is in all this. **Followed her, saying.** Better, "thinking." **Lord, if thou hadst been here.** Exactly what Martha had said. **Weeping . . . weeping.**

(3) *The tears of the sorrow-stricken stir our Lord's tenderest sympathy.* The weeping of the "Jews which came with her" aroused his fiery indignation. For one was sincere; the other false. **Groaned in the spirit.** Better, was angered in spirit. These Jews were his enemies, and he hated to see their hypocritical and sentimental tears mingle with the heart-felt tears of his loving friends. **Was troubled.** Rather, "he troubled himself." That is, he agitated himself. Probably he trembled from head to foot with emotions he could not repress.

**34, 35. They say.** "They" are the sisters. **Jesus wept.** That is, shed tears. (4) *Jesus sympathizes with all who suffer.*

**37, 38. Opened the eyes of the blind.**