

LIVING PREACHERS.

CONCENTRATION AND DIFFUSION.

A SERMONETTE BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.—John xii. 3.

You will notice, if you read the narrative attentively, that the two sisters and the brother, who made up the favoured household at Bethany, though all most truly loving Jesus, had each one a different way of showing that love. Even so true children of God do not always feel moved to serve the Lord Jesus in the same fashion, or to express their love to him in precisely the same manner.

Martha served: she was the house-keeper, and with much diligence made him a supper. It would have been a sad omission had there been no table spread for so blessed a guest; and who could prepare it so well as Martha? Sometimes we have heard people speak disparagingly of Martha, but truly they mistake the Lord, who never chided her for serving, but for being on one occasion so cumbered by it as to think hardly of her sister. Martha in this instance did not fall into the fault which her Lord once so gently chided; she did her part quietly and well, and thereby set forth her attachment to Jesus in the most commendable manner. We have sisters in the church whose way of serv-

ing Christ is in the household, or by caring for the sick and the poor; like Dorcas, they make garments for them; or like holy women of old, they minister to the Lord of their substance. Their work is with things temporal, but they are none the less approved of their loving Master. Brethren, too, as deacons, may better honour the Lord by serving tables, than they could by attempting to edify saints, when the gifts suitable for that work are denied them. Each man and woman must labour according to his ability and calling.

As for Lazarus, he was "one of them that sat at the table." We might hastily imagine that by sitting there he did nothing. But, my brethren, the people had come together very much to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead; and for him to sit there, and to show himself, and especially to eat and to drink, was to do the best thing to convince onlookers that he was indeed alive. Our blessed Lord himself, when he rose from the dead, found it needful to convince his disciples that he was really alive, and in a real body, and therefore he took a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb, and did eat before them all. When they saw him eat, then they were sure that he lived. So when Lazarus ate at the table, sceptics could not say, "It is merely his corpse set upright to look like life, or a mere phantom to deceive." Lazarus eating and drinking was a testimony for Jesus, and I