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"Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and the strength of salvation."

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Poetry.

SOWING THE SEED.

BY JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ., SHEFFIELD

[The following lines were given us in M.S. by a young lady of the Scottish Metropolis, several years ago. They had not then appeared in print. We can scarcely suppose, however, that they have remained in M.S. until this time. Be that as it may, our readers may peruse them with pleasure and profit.]

Sow in the morn thy seed,
At e'en hold not thy hand,
To doubt or fear give thou no heed,
Broad cast it o'er the land.
Beside all waters sow,
The high-way furrows stock ;
Drop it where thorns and thistles grow,
Scatter it on the rock.
The good and fruitful ground,
Expect not here, or there,
O'er hill, and dale, in spots 'tis found,
Go, spread it everywhere.
Thou know'st not which shall thrive,
The late or early sown ;
Grace keeps the precious germs alive,
When, and wherever strewn.
And duly shall appear
In verdure, beauty, strength
The tender blade, the stem, the ear,
And the full corn at length.
Thou shalt not sow in vain,
Cold, heat, and moist and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garners in the sky.
Then, when the glorious end,
The day of God is come,
The angel reapers shall descend,
And heaven shout "harvest-home."

MARY ANOINTING THE SAVIOUR.

MATTHEW XXVI. 6-13 * * * *

BY THE REV W. LYALL, KNOX'S COLLEGE.

It is generally supposed that this Mary was the sister of Martha and of Lazarus. Others think that it was Mary Magdalen; but whichever of them it was, the act was the same; and it will be interesting to attend to the principles involved in that act, and to the lessons derivable from it.

The scene took place in Bethany, where Martha and Mary lived, which was the frequent resort of Christ, whether he had repaired to enjoy a season of repose from his labours and relief from his griefs, in the sympathy of such attached and congenial minds. In this instance, however, he was in the house of Simon the leper—a circumstance in itself significant. Christ had probably cured this man of his leprosy, and in grateful return for this act, Simon had, perhaps, frequently before entertained Christ at his table, or was now in the act of entertaining him. Those whom Christ heals—whom he cures spiritually—become henceforth on terms of intimacy, as it were, with him. Christ comes to them, and makes his abode with them; he comes in to them, and sups with them, and they with him. There is the communion of faith, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Have you believed in Christ? Then you should be willing to entertain him. Does Christ dwell in your hearts by faith? Do you receive Christ, and entertain him, by receiving his truth, and by cherishing and imitating the visitations of his Spirit? It is a false faith if it does not lead to this.

It was customary, (and the custom still obtains in Eastern countries, at feasts or repasts, for strangers or visitors to come in during the progress of the repast, and seating themselves at the side of the apartment, to enter into conversation with the family or guests at table. An incident of this kind is noticed in the account of "the Mission to the Jews," and the writer of that narrative refers to it as illustrating the incident here recorded. At eastern tables they took their food in a reclining posture. When Simon and Christ were at meat, probably Mary entered. She would first seat herself at the side of the room, and, having prepared her alabaster box of ointment, she would step forward and pour the ointment on Christ's head.

Now, mark what was contained in this act. It was an expression of faith. Mary believed that Christ was the Saviour, else she would not have done this. It was to the Saviour that she did it. She believed in him as her Saviour. She was

reposing her salvation on him. Her sins she had committed to him to be washed away in his blood. And there is something peculiar in the faith of Christ's disciples previous to Christ's death—especially such a faith as was that of Mary Magdalene, or Mary, the sister of Lazarus—so confident, so strong, so evangelical. They had to believe, not in what Christ had done, but what he was to do. They had to see Christ's work, as it was already accomplished—the blood of redemption, as it was already shed—the penalty of sin, as if it was already borne—Christ, as if he was already offered up! The woman, in this instance, actually anointed his body for the burial. So great was her faith, that she anticipated this event—the sad and melancholy rite connected with it. She embalmed him for the tomb. So Christ interprets her action, and so probably it must have been meant. Christ had been anointed before, and then it was Mary Magdalene who performed the act; but it was his feet only that were then anointed. Here it is his head, and consequently his whole body. At all events, it was because he was the Saviour that Mary performed this act. It was an act of affection to him. The use of these ointments was peculiarly grateful in the East; and it was very common among those who were able, to indulge in the luxury. It was attachment, then, to the Saviour that prompted this act. The ointment was very precious. There was a large quantity of it. If the incident recorded in the 12th chapter of John, be the same as this (which I sometimes suppose), it was a pound of spikenard; and, according to Judas's question, it might have been sold for three hundred pence, which, in our money, would be above £9 sterling (£9 13s. 9d.) The value of it, however, was nothing when it was for the Saviour. Mary believed in Christ. She, by this act, confessed him. She thus exhibited her faith. It was as if she had said: "Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." There was something appropriate in the act,—for Christ was "the anointed" of God. We can conceive her dwelling upon the characteristic of Christ, as the anointed of God, till her faith and her love so wrought in her, that she performed this symbolical action. "Thou art the anointed of the Lord; I believe that thou art 'the Christ.' Thou art my Saviour—my Lord and my God." This was faith. Mary already saw Christ's blood cleansing away her sins. She already trusted in the efficacy of his atonement. She had indistinct ideas, perhaps, about his death; but she knew enough to trust in it for salvation. It was mixed indistinctly in her mind; but there it was; and he was to die for her sins.

The act was also an expression of love. Love to Christ presupposes faith. She loved Christ because she believed in him as her Saviour. It was