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Miscellaneous Articles.

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PSALMODY AND LITURGY.

I AM sure of the sympathy of hundreds of ministers in saying, that there is scarcely a more depressing influence on preaching-energy and on the devotional sentiment, than the indifference of a congregation to the act of praise. How melancholy, after reading such a psalm as

“Firm on a rock he made me stand,  
And taught my cheerful tongue  
To praise the wonders of his hand,  
In a new thankful song.

“I’ll spread his works of grace abroad;  
The saints with joy shall hear,” &c.

to look over the congregation, and see even those “saints,” whose very hearts should exult in such suggestions, sitting as listlessly as if deaf and dumb; not a voice, nor a tear, nor a look implying emotion, nor even attention; the psalm-book, if held at all, held away from the eyes; whilst the sacred song is carried through by some dozen, and the majority of these young and scientific performers in the gallery, whose glances at note-books, signals of time, sympathetic nods, and other communications, show that their minds are absorbed with the musical execution more than the sentiments uttered.

This subject has often been treated in its more common aspect of dullness and inconsistency. Our people are accustomed to say, “how much more lively and suitable it would be if all the assembly should unite in this part of worship!” and this is just. But there is another light in which the magnitude of the defect was never more apparent than in the present relative position of our church

sibility for the salvation of their children, and especially of those who are themselves impenitent. We appeal to them on the ground of parental instinct and parental love, not to train their children for perdition, even if they are not afraid to perish themselves. This result will flow naturally from the very laws which govern their parental intercourse; unless God should interpose, in a way which no parent has a right to expect, to suspend those laws, or to carry their offspring beyond the sphere of their influence. This is often done, in the mysterious sovereignty of electing love; but no man may presume upon it, in the neglect of the revealed laws by which divine grace operates.

II. How careful and anxious Christian parents should be, not only to walk blamelessly before their households, but far more, to *preserve the life of God in their own souls*. It is this vital principle, and this alone, which can impart life to the souls of their children. You may form an artificial corn of wheat, with never so nice a resemblance to the real living germ, so that no difference can be seen, but it will never germinate or bear fruit, unless the life, which God alone imparts, be in it: much less will any religious character or influence, germinate or bear fruit in the soul of your child, however scrupulous in all the outward forms and observances of religion, unless it be instinct with the genuine life of God in the soul.

III. What a blessed thing it is that spiritual life can be propagated in the children of the church by the instrumentality of sanctified parental influence. It is this that hallows the relation, and brings it within the scope of the rewards of Christian faithfulness. When the endeared bonds which unite parents and children, become the channels of saving spiritual influence, they become thereby imbued with an element of immortality, which secures their transfer to that world, where alone all that is immortal finds scope for its endless development and its infinite fruitfulness.

IV. What encouragement the faithful Christian parent has to pray for and expect the sure and certain fulfilment of his hopes, for the salvation of his household! Besides the ceaseless play of Christian influences in that sacred precinct—the family—there are streaming into the soul of his child the countless influences of the Christian church: and above all, there is the promised agency of the Holy Spirit pervading both, and waiting to quicken the seed, sown in faithfulness and tears, into a joyous harvest of immortal blessedness and glory in the church above. . M. B. H.

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### THE COTTAGE BIBLE.

THE Cottage Bible is a thick-set, square volume, which has seen better days as to its outward condition. It has been rebound once, and has had new lettering, back and corners, several times. But the remains of ancient gilding are still visible, and there is not a

leaf gone. It was printed in Edinburgh more than a century ago, and has the old Psalms at the end.

In those days there were no American quarto Bibles; this was brought over by a pious emigrant family. Most carefully was it preserved on shipboard; and after the arrival in this country, it was carried about, from one resting-place to another, as lovingly as the infant at the breast, and as reverently as Israel carried about the ark. Some mementos of its wanderings may be found in the Family Record, which occupies several leaves, left vacant for that purpose, between the two Testaments. Here are entries of marriages, births, baptisms, and deaths, occurring in various places, in both hemispheres, but all duly and religiously noted. Some of these take us back almost to the first Reformation period, having been transferred from previous records.

From generation to generation the Cottage Bible has been brought out to family-worship every morning and evening, and to the instructions of the Lord's Day. Thus it is not only an heir-loom in the house, but a monument of many thousand acts of worship. The patriarch who introduced it to our land, read it through many times, in these exercises, and made much use of it in his declining years, when its fair large print was grateful to his failing eyes. Grandchildren remember how his quivering voice, leading off the old tune called *French*, used to glory in the strain,

"My mouth shall speak a parable,  
and sayings dark of old;  
The same which we have heard and known,  
and as our fathers told.  
We also will not them conceal  
from their posterity;  
Them to the generation  
to come declare will we."

The Cottage Bible has been present at death-beds, and its precious words have more than once been read aloud at the worship of God, in a time when as yet the Presbyterians of the neighbourhood had built no churches. Its sacredness kept it from being marked with pen or pencil; though the smaller Bibles of the family, which were carried to church and school, bore many remembrances of this kind in the margin. The family Bible was honoured with a separate shelf, where it lay in a decent strip of hemmed plaid. It was not employed for the administration of oaths, even when the owner was a magistrate; according to old Presbyterian custom, he made oath with the uplifted hand.

With proper care, the Cottage Bible may yet outlive several generations, thus reminding one of the verse, "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever." 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. It may last till several eminent prophecies respecting Israel and respecting Babylon shall have their accomplishment. What an interesting memorial in any household! It is in a poor man's dwelling; but the children can read in

that record names that are better than those of princes; names, we trust, written in the Lamb's book of life. What a testimony to the perpetual covenant! "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." Isa. lix. 21. This book, though an inanimate thing in its exterior, may be said to have heard the family-prayer and praise of a hundred years. For what is said of the great stone which Joshua set up under an oak? "Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God." Josh. xxiv. 27.

These are delightful and sacred associations, blending sweetly with our tenderest affections, but altogether unknown in families where God is not worshipped with the perpetual "sacrifice of praise." All the magnificence of architecture, all the sumptuousness of furniture and plate, all the exquisite art, all the brilliant fashion, all the jovial entertainment, will not so surely guard against care, as the lowly but invaluable Cottage Bible. C. Q.

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### CHRIST AND MOTHERS.

THERE seems no natural tie that God has formed so close as that between mother and child. Other relations may or may not exist. There may, or may not be, husband or wife, brethren or sisters; but *that* must be known to every human heart. The very founding of the asylum, who may care as little as he knows of other connexions, both *knows* he had a mother and *feels* some longing for her that bare him. Universal and indispensable as is this tie to humanity, until its admission carries us to the very principle on which we found our strongest arguments for the existence of a great first cause, the sacredness of the tie is not lessened by its indispensable requirement in the necessity of things, nor a sense of its holiness lost in the knowledge that it is often desecrated. Nay, it is the assurance that He who is our elder brother, knew this tie of earth in the flesh, that gives the strongest link in the chain that binds his humanity and his Godhead—that makes us feel that He is very *man* as well as very God!

If Jesus, with all of human nature that his life shows, had appeared among us as mysteriously as did Melchisedec, all that we see of God in his miracles would have shaken our faith in his *humanity*. We should not have taken him as the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head. There might have been a mysterious *seeming* of humanity in that God among men, who both received and claimed the worship of Deity. But that he was our