

union-table, which is placed in the middle, or most convenient and conspicuous part of the church. At his invitation the members promptly and decently approach the Lord's table, and sit down promiscuously without distinction of age or rank. The practice, of the men communicating first, and then the women separately, is not enjoined by law, but established by immemorial custom.

After a few prefatory sentences, left to his own discretion, the minister distributes, in the words of institution, the bread and wine to those who are nearest to him. He then pauses, and sitting down partakes of the same himself; and while the sacred symbols are, being handed from one member to another along the table, a solemn and impressive silence prevails in the assembly. When all at the table have communicated, the minister stands up again, and addresses to them words of comfort and exhortation; after which they return to their pews, or seat themselves in some other quarter of the church. Betwixt each table-service, and until all intending communicants have so received the holy Supper, a small portion of Scripture, such as the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, or a similarly appropriate passage, is then read by the clerk or precentor, or a few verses of a psalm or hymn are sung. The clergyman, who has delivered the sacramental discourse, or what in Scotland is called the action-sermon, conducts the whole of the sacred service; and in some communities, he is sometimes called to address upwards of thirty tables consecutively. His addresses, which are of necessity very short, consist chiefly of remarks on the verses previously read by the precentor betwixt each table. Reverting again to the Form for the Communion Service, the minister next reads the invitation to thanksgiving and praise, and offers up the concluding prayer, with the Lord's Prayer. Finally, a psalm or hymn is sung, and the benediction is pronounced. In the afternoon or evening of the same Lord's day there is a thanksgiving service. The frequency of the celebration of this holy ordinance we reckon to be productive of the happiest effects upon the Dutch community. The preparatory and thanksgiving services are neither injudiciously numerous, nor unnecessarily long.

As it is impossible, especially in large towns, that every member of a family can attend on the same day, the sacrament is dispensed on the succeeding Sabbath, to give all an opportunity of communicating.

On sacramental occasions, the officiating elders and deacons are, like the minister distinguished by a mantle and band. The reader, who is also precentor, always appears in church dressed precisely as the clergyman.

INTERESTING EXTRACTS.

A THOUGHT FOR A SACRAMENTAL SABBATH.

Before our most blessed Redeemer left this sinful world, which he came to save, he instituted the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper to be observed by his own disciples, who had been his earthly followers, and to be commemorated by all his faithful people to the end of time. How privileged, indeed, were his own immediate companions, who were permitted to take their places with their Lord and Master at that blessed banquet! I have often imagined to myself "that large upper room, ready furnished," where the lowly Jesus sat down with Peter and John, and the rest of "the glorious company of the apostles;" and I have thought what a thrill must have passed through the frames of these favoured guests as their Divine entertainer exclaimed, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer!" Before I suffer! It was, they knew, the last time he would sit down with them at this feast, which he had ordained; they had already heard him utter the words, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" already in his intercessory prayer he had exclaimed, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee;" and even while sitting together they heard him declare, "I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

We are not privileged with the visible presence of our Saviour when we meet to celebrate this ordinance; yet, whenever we surround the holy table for that purpose, he is not far from every one of us. His words apply peculiarly in this case, "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and the believer, by the eye of faith sees his Redeemer presiding at his own board, and hears him saying through his word, "Do this in remembrance of me;" and though he rejects the erroneous notion of the Romish Church that the bread and the wine are the natural body and blood of Christ, he nevertheless beholds in the consecrated elements, after a spiritual manner, that flesh which for him was torn and pierced on Calvary, and that precious blood

which for him was spilt, that it might wash away his pollution, and "cleanse him from all sin." If at any time the renewed soul holds intercourse with its Lord, it is the time when "the most comfortable sacrament of the body and blood of Christ" is by that soul received; then it is that the Christian draws close to his Surety; holds intimate fellowship with him; leans, as it were, on his bosom at the supper; listens to the Saviour's encouraging words, "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Is he weak and ready to faint under numberless afflictions? then he hears Christ's whispering accents, "my grace is sufficient for thee, my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness." Is he beset by manifold temptations? then in this sacrament he hears a voice reminding him that he hath not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of his infirmities, but one who was in all points tempted like as he is, yet without sin. Is he in bondage through fear of death? then he hears his Redeemer say, "when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee;" he tells him that, amid the swelling waves of Jordan, he shall be enlivened and comforted by the sweet accents of his voice, saying, "It is I, be not afraid;" and assures him of the inheritance so that though we see not our Master at the feast with our natural eyes, yet if we are spiritually discerning, we shall behold him in the midst of us, and shall taste of his love. Reader, think what a noble privilege you may enjoy if you have really this desire: if you possess it not, seek to procure it; and come not to the banquet, unless from your inmost soul you can say with him of old, "As the heart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!"

You who despise this holy festival, think for a moment of what you lose, the companionship of Him who is "very God of very God," whose smile is life, and whose law is love; and O repent ye of your conduct, and join with those who in this supper have indeed "tasted that the Lord is gracious."—*Church of Eng. Mag.*

UNMARRIED LADIES.

The single state is no diminution of the beauties and the utilities of the female character; on the contrary, our present life would lose many of the comforts, and much likewise of what is absolutely essential to the well-being of every part of society, and even of the private home, without the unmarried female. To how many a father, mother, brother, and not less a sister, is she both a necessity and a blessing! How many orphans have to look up with gratitude to her care and kindness? How many nephews and nieces owe their young felicities and improvements to her? Were every woman married, the paternal home would in declining life be a solitary abode, when affectionate attentions are most precious and, but from such a source, not attainable. It is the single class of women which supplies most of our teachers and governesses; and from the lower ranks nearly all the domestic assistants of our household come. What vast changes not promotive of the general happiness would ensue in every station of life if every female married as soon as she was fully grown! Certainly human life would in that case have a different aspect, and must be regulated on a new principle, and would lead to consequences which cannot be calculated. The single woman is therefore as important an element of social and private happiness as the married one. The utilities of each are different, but both are necessary; and it is vulgar nonsense, unworthy of manly reason and discreditable to every just feeling, for any one to deprecate the unmarried condition. If from what is beneficial we turn to what is interesting, the single lady is not surpassed by the wedded matron. For no small portion of her life, I think for the whole of it, with judicious conduct, she is indeed the more attractive personage. The wife resigns, or ought to resign, always her claims to general attention; and to concentrate and to confine her regards, and wishes, and objects to her chosen companion, and domestic claims and scenes. She has quitted the public stage; she seeks no more the general gaze; she has become part of a distinct and separated propriety. But the unmarried lady remains still a candidate for every honourable notice, and injures no one by receiving it. Those of the male sex who are in the same condition are at full liberty to pay her their proper attentions as she is to receive them. Being in this position as to society at large, she is always interesting wherever she goes; and, if she preserve her good temper, her steady conduct, and her modest reputation undiminished, and cultivate her amiable, her intellectual, and her truly feminine qualities, she cannot go anywhere, in any station of life, without being an object of interest and pleasurable feeling to all those of her circle with whom she may choose to be acquainted.—*Turner's Sacred History.*

A mind well trained and long exercised in virtue, does not easily change any course it once undertakes.

Miscellany.

OBSERVATIONS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS MORAL AND DIVINE.

[SELECTED FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS, FOR THE GUARDIAN, BY W. N. OF CORNWALLIS.]

I. Dr. HENRY HUNTER observes respecting the Jews: We behold them involved in one mighty ruin, driven from their capital and their country, their temple, the great bond of union, razed from the foundation, and themselves thenceforward scattered among the nations, during a period of more than two thousand years. And yet by a strange and an unaccountable interference of providence, though hated, despised, and persecuted of all men, evidently under the displeasure of heaven, we behold them preserved from total annihilation and oblivion, kept distinct from all men, as much a separate people as in the zenith of their glory, under David and Solomon; the subjects, perhaps, of a revolution, greater and more important, than any thing they have already undergone: reserved, it may be, to be the last grand trophy of the Redeemer's triumph, the concluding evidence of the truth of christianity, the final monument of the riches of free sovereign grace! When this great mystery shall be finished, the mighty chain extended, the connection and dependence of link upon link discovered, hell shall be confounded, the inhabitants of the world astonished, angels shall rejoice, and the praise of God ascend from every tongue.

II. Dr. Hunter farther observes, that the characters of men are mixed like their fortunes. The most perfect instruction, for the generality of mankind, which history furnishes, is perhaps supplied from the exhibition of mixed, that is, of imperfect characters. Those examples, therefore, are to be considered the most useful, as I flatter myself they are the more frequent, which exhibit a mixture in which goodness predominates, and finally prevails; in which virtue is seen wading through difficulties, struggling with temptations, recovering from error, gathering strength from weakness, learning wisdom from experience, sustaining itself by dependance upon God, seeking refuge from its own frailty and imperfection in divine compassion, and crowned at length with victory over all opposition, and the smiles of approving heaven.

III. Dr. Hunter remarks on the two following characters:—

First, On Aaron, he observes, we behold him at the very aera of his appointment, an abettor of idolatry.—We find him meanly and wickedly envying his meek and gentle brother, and with his sister Miriam, heading a revolt from his just authority. But, alas! were perfect men only to minister before God, the altar must soon be deserted. Were not sinful men, to be addressed by sinful men, the world must speedily be destitute of preachers. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Cor. iv. 7.

The Second instance that Dr. Hunter mentions of character, is that of Balaam. He thus observes, that truth is not injured by being conveyed through an impure channel, and therefore ought not to be refused on that account. Indeed it rather confers a higher lustre upon it, just as hypocrisy pays the most honourable compliment to true religion, by assuming its sacred habit and form. For observe, the word of God shall not fail of its effect, though Balaam, or though satan speak it.

Now follows an anecdote of the great Mr. Harvey. For some years before the death of Mr. Harvey, he visited very few of the principal persons in his neighbourhood. Being once asked why he so seldom went to see the neighbouring gentlemen, who yet shewed him all possible esteem and respect, he answered, "I can hardly name a polite family, where the conversation ever turns upon the things of God. I hear much worldly frothy chit-chat, but not a word of Christ; and I am determined not to visit those companies where there is not room for my master as well as myself. The gift of speech is one of the greatest prerogatives of our rational nature, and it is a pity that such a superior faculty should be debased to the meanest purposes." He farther added, "suppose all the stately vessels that pass and repass the ocean, were to carry out nothing but tinsel and theatrical decorations, and were to import nothing but glittering baubles, and nicely fancied toys; would such a method of trading be well judged in itself, or beneficial in its consequences? Articulate speech is the instrument of much noble commerce, intended to transmit and diffuse the treasures of the mind. And will not the practice be altogether as injudicious—must not the issue be infinitely more detrimental, if this vehicle of intellectual wealth, be freighted only with pleasing fopperies."

The Rev. Mr. Berridge, being once visited by a very loquacious (or talkative) lady, who forgetting the modesty of her sex, and the superior gravity of an