

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1876.

THE GREAT WEEK.

We now approach the commemoration of the most wonderful week the world ever knew, or ever can know, until the Son of Man shall sit on His great white throne in the Heavens. It has been variously named *Passion Week*, *Holy Week*, and the *Great Week*; and it embraces the discourses and actions of the Saviour until they culminate in that most astonishing surrender of life by Him who made the worlds; which is the source of all our solace here, and the foundation of every hope we can have in the hereafter.

The first day of the week is usually called Palm Sunday, the Sunday of Palms; and is that on which the Lord made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass, an animal well suited in the East for such a purpose. In His progress to His capital city, which was once the joy of the whole earth and which to him was still as dear as ever, He had collected around Him one of those vast multitudes that were accustomed at times to hang upon His teaching and to admire His miraculous power. The assemblage, gathered together for the purpose of proclaiming his triumph over the hearts of the populace, and also to shadow forth however dimly his future glory, was probably the largest and the most enthusiastic multitude that ever collected around the footsteps of the Son of Man in the days of His humiliation. So intent were they to do him honor that, having sat him on the beast he had selected, the immense throng, with one accord, marched onward in procession to conduct him to the palace of the Great King, the Temple of Jerusalem. They spread their garments to form a rich carpet over the road he was to travel; they cut down palm trees and strewed the magnificent branches along both sides of the road, so as to form a noble avenue through which the King of Kings was to pass. As the vast crowd surmounted the top of Mount Olivet and were passing down the upper part of the slope towards Jerusalem, the city with all its buildings and streets lay full in view before them. The one object however, on which the eye of the Israelite would dwell with the proudest satisfaction was the glorious Temple, which had been rebuilt and decorated from the votive offerings of the seed of Abraham, gathered from all parts of the then known world. Herod had superintended the architecture of it; forty and six years the building had been going on; and it had not yet reached the grandeur and beauty marked out for it. It was constructed of the purest and loveliest white marble; it glittered in the sunbeams as they successively played around its pinnacles and turrets; and as Josephus informs us, it looked, from a distance, like a glorious and

beautifully ornamented mountain of shining snow. As the city with its splendid Temple came in view of the successive portions of the multitude, the innumerable assemblage were wrought up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; and with united voices they sang their "Hosannahs to the Son of David," "Hosannah in the Highest." They more than rent the sky with their acclamations; the music of their voices filled the vast amphitheatre of mountains surrounding Jerusalem, echoing and re-echoing among the walls of the temple and city, and softly dying away among the distant hills. Business in the city was suspended, and as they could see the multitude coming down the slope of Mount Olivet just as plainly as they could hear their loud Hosannahs filling their streets and reverberating among the mountains—filled with astonishment and perhaps with some degree of terror, they called out during one of the intervals of the song, "Who is this?" They were answered back by the crowd outside the city, "This is Jesus, the prophet, of Nazareth, of Galilee."

On his entrance into the Temple, amid the complainings of the priests and scribes, while the multitude continued their exclamations of joy and praise, He proceeded to clear His Father's house, the House of Prayer, of those profane buyers and sellers who were making of it a house of merchandise. And on this and the succeeding days, occurred those other events, and the discourses were pronounced, which the evangelists have given so graphically and so minutely.

On Wednesday the fourth day of Passion Week those remarkable chapters, the 23rd, 24th and 25th of St. Matthew were delivered. All human language, except from the lips of the great Teacher would fail to indicate even remotely, the great subjects to which these wonderful chapters refer. The deepest and tenderest pathos, the loftiest sublimity, the most magnificent profusion; all that can move the feelings, touch the affections, influence the will, or inform the intellect—which had ever come from any other source—would pale before the simple beauty of the Saviour's most impressive words. No human being can possibly read them without deep emotion.

The Thursday of the great week has been called Mandate or Maunday Thursday, from the Institution of the Eucharist, the great act of worship for the Christian Church through all ages; also from Christ washing His disciples' feet, and commanding them to do as He had done to them. On this day in the early Church, penitents were accustomed to be restored.

On Friday—Good Friday—came that mysterious eclipse of nature's God, that laying down of life by Him who was the author of all the beautiful forms of life,

so that through death He might triumph over him that had the power of death—might hasten away to the regions of the departed, and announce to them the completion of Redemption's work; might assure them of a future manifestation of His Church in her completeness and beauty; and after a few more hours had elapsed, might drag from His chariot wheels, the "dominations, principedoms, powers," which had set His authority at defiance: and triumphing over them, might ascend up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.

In the meantime, however, the Church keeps the last day of Holy week, Easter Eve, with calm and unswerving faith in her Master's promises. He has gone from their gaze; His enemies have apparently silenced His loving voice for ever; the watch is set; the seal is sure; the authority of the Roman empire is pledged to overwhelm His cause with confusion. But the Church has been accustomed to wait till the dark clouds that often surround her path, shall be cleared away, and the sun that sheds its beams in a calmer, a higher, and a serener heaven shall shine upon her with its own native splendor, undimmed by the clouds and storms of a lower sphere. She knows who has said:—"He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision:" she is assured that the proudest of His enemies shall lick the dust; and she therefore waits in calm and humble confidence, resting satisfied that she is passing through scenes of tribulation, which are just as essential to her existence and completeness as the bride of the Lamb, as are the more joyous and the apparently more prosperous indications of her march onwards.

THE CHURCH AND THE CIVIL COURTS.

In an article lamenting over "the bondage and degradation of the Church of England," one of our contemporaries asserts that "the Sovereign is its head, and that it can only do and believe as the Sovereign's highest court rules." And further that "if a minister in any Presbyterian or non-endowed Church, were to exclude from the communion table any member of that Church, the right of appeal belonging to the party aggrieved would never be in the last resort to the Privy Council, but to the highest Ecclesiastical Court of the denomination to which the parties belonged;" with a great deal more of a similar character. To the first of these statements, we reply that the Head of the Church is not the Sovereign of England, but the Sovereign of the Universe—Christ. The Sovereign of England is never entitled Head of the Church. Henry the Eighth claimed that title, but it is not accorded to the Sovereign. He or she is supreme, in all causes and over all persons, ecclesiastical as well as civil; but never the Head. With regard