

in the like cases before to other churches) to make their contributions for the relief of the poor. "Upon this day, called Sunday, (says Justin Martyr) all of us that live either in city or country meet together in one place." On this day, according to the testimony of antiquity, Christians did not think it enough to stay at home, and read, and pray, and praise God, but made a conscience of appearing in the public assemblies, from which nothing but sickness, and absolute necessity did detain them; and if sick or in prison, or under banishment, nothing troubled them more; than that they could not come to the church, and join the devotions, in the common services. No trivial pretences, no light excuses, were then admitted for any one's absence from the congregation, but according to the merit of the case severe censure was passed upon him. "Let every one (saith Ignatius) that loves Christ keep the Lord's day festival, the resurrection day, the queen and empress of all days, in which our life was raised again, and death conquered by our Lord and Saviour."

Besides the Lord's day, there were three other festivals, *Easter*, *Whitsunday*, and *Epiphany*, which latter comprehended Christmas, or the nativity, and *Epiphany*, properly so called. Of these, *Easter* has always claimed the pre-eminence for its antiquity, there being little or no reason to doubt that it has been always observed in the Church from the time of the apostles. It was an anniversary festival, in memory of Christ's resurrection, and celebrated with great solemnity. Nazianzen calls it "the holy day, and famous passover, a day which as far excels all others as the sun goes before the stars." It was a time famous for works of mercy and charity, every one striving to contribute liberally to the poor.

Whitsunday fell upon the day of *Pentecost*, a feast of great eminence among the Jews, and was sacred to the commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and disciples at Jerusalem. It was observed with the same respect to *Easter*, that *Pentecost* was with respect to the *Passover*, or just fifty days after it. It is called *Whitsunday*, partly on account of the diffusion of light and knowledge which upon this day were shed abroad for the illumination of the world, and partly because it being the stated time for baptism, those who were baptized wore on the occasion white garments, in token of the purity which they now professed to aim after.

Epiphany is the next: which, however, as we before remarked, was applied either to the nativity, or the festival properly so called. Afterwards the titles became distinct; that of the birth of our Lord, which we call *CHRISTMAS DAY* was called the *NATIVITY*, and *THEOPHANIA*, the appearance of God in the flesh, two names importing the same thing, as Nazianzen observes. For the antiquity of this festival we cannot with certainty trace it to an earlier period than the second century. It is mentioned by Theophilus, Bishop of Caesarea, about the time of the Emperor Commodus. That it was kept before the time of Constantine, we have this sad instance. When the persecution raged under Dioclesian who then kept his court at Nicomedia, finding multitudes of Christians, young and old, met together upon the day of Christ's Nativity, to celebrate that festival, he commanded the church doors to be shut, and it to be set on fire, which in a short time, with the whole assembly, was reduced to ashes.—*Philadelphia Recorder*.

ON COMING TO THE COMMUNION

Long life and health, and recovery from sickness, and competent support and maintenance, and peace and deliverance from our enemies, and content, and patience, and joy, and sanctified riches, or a cheerful poverty, and liberty, and whatsoever else is a blessing, was purchased for us by Christ in his death and resurrection, and in his intercession in heaven. And this sacrament being that to our particulars which the great mysteries are in themselves, and by design to all the world, if we receive worthily, we shall receive any of these blessings, according as God shall choose for us; and he will not only choose with more wisdom, but also with more affection, than we can for ourselves.

After all this, it is advised by the guides of souls, wise men and pious, that all persons should communicate very often, even as

often as they can without excuses or delay. Every thing, that puts us from so holy an employment, when we are moved to it, being either a sin or an imperfection, an infirmity or indolence, and an inactivity of spirit. All Christian people must come. They indeed, that are in the state of sin, must not come so, but yet they must come. First they must quit the state of death, and then partake of the bread of life. They that are at enmity with their neighbors, must come, that is no excuse for their not coming; only they must not bring their enmity along with them, but leave it, and then come. They that have variety of secular employment, must come; only they must leave their secular thoughts and affections behind them, and then come and converse with God. If any man be well grown in grace, he must needs come, because he is excellently disposed to so holy a feast; but he that is but in the infancy of piety, had need to come, that so he may grow in grace. The strong must come, lest they become weak; and the weak, that they may become strong. The sick must come to be cured, the healthful to be preserved. They that have leisure must come, because they have no excuse; they that have no leisure, must come hither, that by so excellent religion they may sanctify their business. The penitent sinners must come, that they may be justified; and they that are justified, that they may be justified still. They that have fears and great reverence to these mysteries, and think no preparation to be sufficient, must receive, that they may learn how to receive the more worthily; and they that have a less degree of reverence, must come often to have it heightened; that as those creatures that live amongst the snows of the mountains, turn white with their food and conversation with such perpetual whitenesses: so our souls may be transformed into the similitude and union with Christ by our perpetual feeding on him, and conversation, not only in his courts, but in his very heart, and most secret affections, and incomparable purities.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, NOV. 16.

UNION WITH IRELAND.

The question of the repeal for the complete discussion of which so much anxiety has been displayed in the House, has been incidentally touched upon once or twice during the week. The presentation, on Thursday, of a petition complaining of the form of the franchise in Galway, gave occasion to Mr. John Wood to state what he conceived to be the great grievance under which Ireland laboured, and which was sought to be remedied through the means of a local Parliament. The repeal of the union was clearly impracticable; and even if it could be accomplished, still he thought it would be extremely mischievous to Ireland as well as to England. But he did not believe that the Irish people wished a repeal of the Union. The fact was, that the Irish people knew that if the union had not taken place, the abuses which prevailed in the Church establishment of Ireland would have been corrected long before this by the Irish Parliament. He believed that the Irish people wanted the correction of those abuses; and that being afraid to speak out on that subject, they prayed for what they did not want—a repeal of the Union. This was a very mistaken course. Let them in an open and manly way direct their petitions against the abuses of the Church establishment in Ireland, which were real grievances, and then they would find many English gentlemen ready to support their petitions.

The mention of the Irish Church led to a conversation in which

Mr. Goulburn defended the character of its members, and denied that the number of absentees was so great as alleged.

Mr. Stowe said, no one wished to assail the character of the Irish clergy; and that for the purpose of settling the absentee question, he would move next day for returns of the clergymen who were non-resident.

MONDAY, DEC. 6.

RIDEAU CANAL.

Mr. S. Rice moved that £40,750 be granted to make good the estimate of 1820 for the charge of the Rideau Canal works.