

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1876.

EASTER.

If the crucifixion is the central event in the history of the Universe, the Resurrection of the Saviour is that on which the whole fabric of Christianity rests. For if He who died for our sins, died to satisfy Divine Justice for the offences of men, died as the one oblation and satisfaction for the transgressions of a ruined world; if He rose not again for our justification, that He might present Himself in the Higher Courts above, within the veil which hides from our view the inner Sanctuary of Heaven, and that, through all time, He might be the only Mediator between God and man, then is our faith vain, and all our religion a delusive, empty mockery.

Low in death the mighty Word Incarnate was laid. He, at whose fiat the ages of eternity ever issue forth, whom the first-born sons of Light have adored ever since their creation, Who is the replendent out-beaming of the Divine Glory, the express Image of the hypostasis of Him who is the Father of all, He humbled Himself to become a man, to suffer death and to lie in a grave! But it was not possible that He should be holden of the bonds of death; and therefore He rose as the first fruits of them that slept.

On the third day He left the tomb in triumph. His resurrection is the one crowning miracle of Christianity, that on which our faith must securely rest, as being also that which is the best attested of all the occurrences that ever happened on the earth. There is no greater evidence of the existence and reign of any European monarch than there is of the Resurrection of Him who is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. And of so much importance was the event of the Resurrection felt to be by the Twelve, that they made it the topic of their most sublime discourses. If they were eye witnesses of His Majesty on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Eleven were also personally associated with Him after He had again resumed His life in the flesh; and during those mysterious forty days in which He went in and out among them, He instructed them in the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, told them of the power which was given Him in Heaven and on earth, and bade them wait in Jerusalem, until they had received the power from on high to execute the commission He had given them.

From the very earliest days of Christianity the season of the Resurrection was celebrated. This, the most joyous festival of our Holy Religion was observed by the Primitive Christians with an animation, a fervor and a solemnity unequalled in all the other festivals of the Church. Our word *Easter* appears to come from the Saxon word *oster*, signifying *to rise*. In the

first ages there was no dispute whatever about the observance of the feast itself, nor about the manner of observing it. The dispute was about the time at which it should be celebrated. The Asiatic Churches kept it on the same day as the Jews kept their passover, that is on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, which began at the new moon next the 21st of March. The Western Churches, however, kept it on the Sunday after the Jewish passover, in order to distinguish themselves from the Jews, and thus do more honor to the celebration. The Western Churches professed to derive their custom from St. Peter and St. Paul; while the Eastern Church claimed the authority of St. John. As time went on, the disputes on the subject waxed sharper and stronger, until at last they reached such a height that one might almost suppose they could find nothing else to dispute about. At the Ecumenical Council of Nice however, a canon was passed which settled the whole matter, so that the whole Catholic Church have since that time agreed upon the time of observing Easter. The canon enacted "That everywhere the great feast of Easter should be observed upon one and the same day; and that, not on the day of the Jewish Passover, but, as had been generally observed on the Sunday afterwards." It was also enacted by the same council, "That the 21st day of March should be accounted the vernal equinox; That the full moon happening upon or next after the 21st day of March, shall be taken for the full moon of Nisan; That the Lord's day next following that full moon be Easter Day; But if the full moon happen upon a Sunday, Easter Day shall be the Sunday next following." As no branch of the Catholic Church disputes the authority of the Council of Nice, so for the last fifteen hundred years a uniformity in the time of observing the festival has prevailed.

After the lapse of so many centuries, it appears strange that the Christian Church should ever have been divided on so very unimportant a question. We can scarcely believe it possible. And the time is not far distant let us hope, when Churchmen will have learned to be less contentious about other matters, which now they fancy to be so important, and to involve by some mysterious alchemy, principles of the highest value. Both of our extreme parties are equally guilty of assigning a fictitious value to tones in which the service is celebrated, to the dress and position of the Eucharistic celebrant, the colour of a stole, altar lights, use of incense, and some other things of a similar character. There may be a propriety and a fitness in the use or in the disuse of one or other of these things; but to give them the doctrinal significance which is assigned to them, both by the fancy ritualists and by the extreme Puritans among us, is not only unwarrantable, it is some-

times ridiculous, always mischievous. It brings us into fierce contentions about trifles; when there is the most urgent need that we should contend for the one primitive faith of the Gospel; and confine our best energies to the work of the Church's mission to an ungodly world.

In the early Church, the Easter festival extended to Whitsunday. But as devotion flagged, and the Church became more and more influenced by worldly maxims, it was reduced to one week; and then in the eleventh century the festival was finally brought down to three days. The Church of England however makes provision for the solemn observance of the whole week, by appointing a preface suitable to the occasion in the office of the Holy Communion.

Easter Day is the only day in the year when the Venite before the Psalms is not used. On this occasion a special anthem of the most jubilant character is appointed instead of it, special Psalms are also adopted, and the Athanasian Creed is required to be recited.

COMMERCIAL DEPRESSION.

The question of the general depression among all classes, in every branch of industry, among all the professions, in agriculture, commerce, trade, and everything else, as well in the old world as in the new, has been exciting universal inquiry. Committees have been sitting, witnesses have been examined, and every means adopted to discover, if possible, some hidden cause or other, for an unfortunate state of things so nearly universal. But yet there is, as might be expected, considerable variation in the effects produced by a stagnation so general, and so nearly uniform, and it behoves us in Canada to mark well the signs of the times as they present themselves; never for a moment forgetting that, so far as we are concerned, the whole subject always resolves itself into this one question:— Shall we connect ourselves the more closely with Great Britain or with the United States? There is probably no one specific cause which can be assigned for the general depression of trade and commerce; but it must not escape our observation, that a more intimate connection with the United States would most certainly render us just as liable to those excessive fluctuations we witness among them: while by drawing the bonds of our intercourse with the mother country as close as possible, we may expect proportionately to share her stability, as we claim to form an integral portion of the greatness of the empire. In the United States, they are at this moment, asking the question:—Why is it that England seems to feel so little the falling off of her trade with the United States? They have ceased to be buyers, they say, of English productions, and they can undersell English