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CLERICAL VESTMENTS.

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It pleased God to give directions for the official attire of the Jewish priesthood. It was simple and becoming. The high priest only was to be decked in splendid array. Gold and jewels were lavished on his "clothes of service," and "the blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen" were skilfully combined to form garments "of glory and beauty." This was in accordance with a dispensation which was adapted to a state of religious infancy—was temporary in its duration—and was to give way to "the glory that excelleth"—the spiritual and enduring glory of "the ministration of righteousness."

The Lord Jesus Christ has established the "kingdom that cannot be moved." Having initiated his disciples into its leading principles during his earthly ministry, he added special instructions after his resurrection, "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Apostolic action, as recorded in the Acts and illustrated in the Epistles, was the Commentary on those instructions.

"Bishops and deacons" were appointed. Their qualifications are enumerated with considerable minuteness of detail in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. It was essential that they should "hold fast the faithful word"—that they should be holy men—and that they should have "a good report of them that were without." And the churches also were reminded of their duty. As the bishops or elders were to "feed the church of God" with heavenly truth, so they were to receive sufficient support, not grudgingly rendered, but in cheerful compliance with the Lord's will, who has "ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

But there is not a word about vestments. For any thing we can tell, Paul and Peter preached in their ordinary clothing, and that did not differ from the common dress of the age. This, at any rate, we know, that our Lord was strongly opposed to religious pomp, and all that was showy. He condemned the pharisees, who "made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments," and the scribes, who "desired to walk in long robes." Nor is it to be imagined that the Apostles affected priest-like attire. It would have been contrary to the spirit of the new dispensation: The reference to Paul's "cloak" (2 Tim. iv. 13.) proves nothing save that his wardrobe was scanty, on which account he was desirous of regaining possession of the article before the approaching winter:—though, whether it was a "cloak," or a travelling bag, or a portmanteau, has not yet been decided by the critics.

Ministers of religion were not distinguished from other men by their dress during the first three hundred years of the christian history. Gowns and surplices were then unknown.

When persecution ceased, and the church began to enjoy imperial patronage, a declension in religion took place. The terms of admission were lowered, so that great numbers became members of the churches who were destitute of those spiritual qualifications which were deemed essential in purer times. To such persons the plainness of christian worship was distasteful. They wished to assimilate to the gorgeous forms of Judaism and Paganism. Splendid buildings were erected, in the arrangement of which there was a studied imitation of the temples. Priestly robes were next devised. At first, they were of a grave and dignified character:—but numerous additions were made from time to time;—varieties of ecclesiastical dress were invented, and mystical reasons adduced for the different colours employed;—the episcopal attire was gaudy and expensive, golden and jewelled ornaments being profusely used;—and about the fourteenth century the church wardrobe was completed.

Chaloner, in his "Garden of the Soul," gives a list of the articles in use in the Roman Catholic Church, and states the reasons assigned for that use. These are his words:—

"With regard to the vestments in which the

priest says mass; as the mass represents the passion of Christ, and the priest there officiates in his person, so these vestments in which he officiates represent those with which Christ was ignominiously clothed at the time of his passion. Thus the *amice* represents the rag or clout with which the Jews muffled our Saviour's face, when at every blow they bid him prophesy who it was that struck him. St. Luke xxii. 64. The *alb* represents the white garment with which he was vested by Herod; the *girdle*, *maniple*, and *stole*, represent the cords and bands with which he was bound in the different stages of his passion; the *chasuble*, or outward vestment, represents the purple garment with which he was clothed as a mock king; upon the back of which there is a cross, to represent that which Christ bore on his sacred shoulders: lastly, the priest's *tonsure*, or crown, is to represent the crown of thorns which our Saviour wore.

Moreover, as in the old law, the priests that were wont to officiate in sacred functions, had, by the appointment of God, vestments assigned for that purpose, as well as for the greater decency and solemnity of the divine worship, so to signify and represent the virtues which God required of his ministers; so it was proper that in the church of the New Testament, Christ's ministers should in their sacred functions be distinguished in like manner from the laity, by their sacred vestments, which might also represent the virtues which God requires in them; thus the *amice*, which is first put upon the head, represents divine *hope*, which the apostle calls the *helmet of salvation*; the *alb*, innocence of life; the *girdle* (with which the loins are girt), *purity and chastity*; the *maniple* (which is put on the left arm), *patient suffering of the labours of this mortal life*; the *stole*, the sweet yoke of *Christ*, to be borne in this life, in order to a happy immortality; in fine, the *chasuble*, which is uppermost, and covers all the rest, represents the virtue of *charity*.

In these vestments the church makes use of five colours,—viz, the *white*, on the feasts of our Lord, of the blessed virgin, of the angels, and of the saints that were not martyrs; the *red*, on the feasts of Pentecost, of the invention and exaltation of the cross, and of the apostles and martyrs; the *violet*, which is the penitential colour, in the penitential times of *Advent* and *Lent*, and upon *vigils* and *ember days*; the *green*, on most of the other *Sundays* and *Ferias* [common days] throughout the year; and the *black*, on *Good Friday*, and in the masses for the dead.

The English Reformers lived in difficult times. They found it impossible to establish the Reformation in England—so great was the ignorance of the people, and so bitter the hostility of the leading men, political and ecclesiastical—without submitting to certain temporary compromises. The Prayer Book was for the most part the Mass in English, somewhat shortened and shorn, with Protestant adaptations. The outward form of the hierarchy remained unchanged. And the clergy continued to use the "habits" in the celebration of service. In the first Prayer Book, issued by authority of an Act of Parliament in 1549, the second year of the reign of Edward VI., it is directed that in "the ministration of the holy communion, the priest that shall execute the holy ministry shall put upon him the vesture appointed for the ministration, that is to say, a white Albe plain, with a vestment or Cope." The following general directions are given at the end of the book:—

"In the saying or singing of Matins and Evensong, Baptizing and burying, the minister, in parish churches and chapels annexed to the same, shall use a Surplice. And in all Cathedral churches and Colleges, the Archdeacons, Deans, Provosts, Masters, Prebendaries, and Fellows, being graduates, may use in the quire, beside their Surplices, such hood as pertaineth to their several degrees, which they have taken in any university within this realm. But in all other places, every minister shall be at liberty to use any surplice or no. It is also seemly that graduates, when they do preach, shall use such hoods as pertaineth to their several degrees.

"And whensoever the Bishop shall celebrate the holy communion in the church, or execute any other public ministration, he shall have upon him, beside his rochet, a surplice or albe, and a cope or vestment, and also his pastoral staff in his hand, or else borne or holden by his chaplain."

A revised edition of the Prayer Book was published in 1552. This note occurs just before the "Order for Morning Prayer":—"The Minister, at the time of the Communion, and at all other times in his ministration, shall use neither Albe, Vestment, nor Cope; but being Archbishop or Bishop, he

shall have and wear a rochet; and being a Priest or Deacon, he shall have and wear a surplice only." (Two Liturgies, set forth by authority in the reign of King Edward VI. Parker Society Edition, pp. 76, 157, 217.)

When Hooper was appointed to the bishopric of Gloucester he absolutely refused, for some time, to be invested with the episcopal habiliments at his consecration. "The grounds he went on were (says Bishop Burnet), that they were mere human inventions, brought in by tradition or custom, not suitable to the simplicity of the christian religion; that all such ceremonies were condemned by St. Paul as 'buggery elements'; that these vestments had been invented chiefly for celebrating the mass with much pomp, and had been consecrated for that effect; therefore he desired to be excused from the use of them." His consecration was delayed several months in consequence of these objections, and his refractoriness, as it was regarded, was punished by imprisonment. At length he so far yielded as to be "attired in the vestments that were prescribed, when he was consecrated, and when he preached before the King, or in his cathedral, or in any public place; but he was dispensed with upon other occasions."

The controversy was revived in Queen Elizabeth's reign. The Queen was fond of the old service, and she was extremely jealous of the uprising of private opinion in matters of religion. She would have every thing prescribed by law, and obedience strictly enforced, even in the smallest particulars. No freedom was to be allowed, nor the least indulgence given to tender consciences. Uniformity was the idol before which all were to bow in reverent submission. The London clergy were summoned before the Royal Commissioners, March 26, 1565. "Mr. Thomas Cole, a clergyman, being placed by the side of the Commissioners, in priestly apparel, the Bishop's Chancellor from the bench addressed them in these words:—'My Masters, and ye Ministers of London, the Council's pleasure is, that strictly ye keep the unity of apparel, like this man who stands here canonically habited, with a square cap, a scholar's gown priest-like, a tippet; and in the church a linen surplice. Ye that will subscribe, write, *Volo*; those that will not subscribe, write, *Nolo*. Be brief, make no words.'" (*Neal's Puritans*, i. 211.)

Numbers refused to submit, and were deprived of their livings. They held that it was unlawful to wear "habits that had been consecrated to idolatrous and superstitious uses, and were the very marks and badges of that religion they had renounced." That was the commencement of the Puritan separation. The conflict was carried on during the whole of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and the Puritan party increased every year. When James I. ascended the throne hopes were entertained that there would be some relaxation of severity. But the friends of freedom were quickly undeceived. At the moot Conference held at Hampton Court in 1603, Dr. Reynolds, on the part of the Puritans, stated their objections, among other things, to "the surplice and other superstitious habits." The king, however, had made up his mind to perseverance in the course of uniformity. He behaved in the rudest manner to Dr. Reynolds, browbeating and insulting him shamefully, while prelates listened with delight, and Archbishop Bancroft fell on his knees and said, "I protest my heart melteth for joy that Almighty God, of his singular mercy, has given us such a king, as since Christ's time has not been." The next day, when the king signified his approval of the iniquitous oath *ex officio*, the Archbishop exclaimed, "Undoubtedly your Majesty speaks by the special assistance of God's Spirit!" After that the robes and the ribbons held full sway. Nonconformists were turned out.

The Canons of the Church of England, one hundred and forty-one in number, published at the beginning of the reign of James I., are not considered binding on the laity, as they were not received and confirmed by Parliament. But they are obeyed by the clergy, because they were received by the Convocation. The 58th Canon reads thus:—"Every minister saying the prayers or ministering the sacraments, or other rites of the church, shall wear a decent, comely surplice, with sleeves, to be provided at the charge of the parish."

I do not see in any canon or rubric, directions for the ministers' attire when *preaching*. Durandus says that the surplice "was so called because anciently this garment was put upon leather coats made of the skins of dead animals *super pellicem* symbolically to represent that the sin of our first parents, which brought men under the necessity of wearing garments of skin, was now hid and covered by the robe of Christ's innocence and grace."

There is now a revival of Popery in the Church of England. A large and influential body of half-fledged Romanists has risen up, threatening dismemberment. The most obnoxious of Romish dogmas are held, professed, and unblushingly taught in that Church which used to be represented as "the bulwark of Protestantism." Episcopal clergy men proclaim themselves *priests*, in the Romish sense of that word—assume power to receive confessions and grant absolution—and teach that the Lord's supper is not a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice, but that in that service the sacrifice is offered again by the priest, as is pretended in the Mass. The profane absurdity of transubstantiation is inculcated, and the communicant is instructed to believe that "God and man is within his soul and body!"

As to the vestments, these men go the greatest lengths. Not contented with the "rubric," which says that "such Ornaments of the Church, and of the ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained, and be in use, as were in this Church of England, by the authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the sixth,"—they go back to the darkest of the middle ages. They revel in medieval finery. They dress themselves in all the colours of the rainbow, and strut about in copes, dalmatics, chasubles, &c., &c. One day they appear in red, another in green, another in violet, another in white, another in black.

If for those changes they plead ancient custom or authority, it may be proper to remind them of the 74th Canon of their own Church, and to urge a strict compliance with its injunctions. Here it is:—

"All Deans, Masters of Colleges, Archdeacons and Probandaries in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches (being priests or deacons), Doctors in divinity, law, and physic, Bachelors in divinity, Masters of arts, and Bachelors of law, having any ecclesiastical living, shall usually wear gowns with standing collars and sleeves straight at the hands, or wide sleeves as is used at the universities, with hoods and tippets of silk or sarcenet, and square caps. And that all other ministers admitted or to be admitted into that function shall also usually wear the like apparel as aforesaid, except tippets only. We do further in like manner ordain, that all the said ecclesiastical persons above mentioned shall usually wear on their journeys cloaks with sleeves, commonly called priests' cloaks, without guards or welts, long buttons, or cuts. And no ecclesiastical person shall wear any coil or wrought nightcap, but only plain nightcaps of black silk, satin, or velvet. In all which particulars concerning the apparel here prescribed, our meaning is not to attribute any holiness or special worthiness to the said garments, but for decency, gravity, and order, as is before specified. In private houses, and in their studies, the said persons ecclesiastical may use any comely or scholar-like apparel, provided that it be not out or pink; and that in public they go not in their doublet and hose, without coat or cassock, and that they wear not any light-coloured stockings.

"Likewise poor beneficed men and curates (not being able to provide themselves long gowns), may go in short gowns of the fashion aforesaid."

It is a melancholy fact, which cannot be concealed, that Popery is making headway in England. All its leading tenets are admitted, and its characteristic rites practised, by men who preach in Protestant pulpits and are supported by Protestant funds. At present it is Popery minus the Pope, but many of the Ritualists are doubtless prepared to receive him, too. Indeed, they are already discussing the desirableness of union between the English, Greek, and Roman Catholic Churches.

After all, this is not a question of robes, and colours, and offices. Great principles are