

The BEREAN.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xvii. 11.

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THE TIME FOR PRAYER.

When is the time for prayer?
When the first beams light up the morning sky—
Ere for the toils of day thou dost prepare—
Lift up thy thoughts on high,
Commend the loved ones to his watchful care:
Morn is the time for prayer.

And in the noon-tide hour,
If worn by toil, as by sad cares oppressed,
Then unto God thy spirit's sorrow pour,
And he will give thee rest;
Thy voice shall reach him through the fields of air:
Noon is the time for prayer.

When the bright sun hath set,
Whilst yet ere's glowing colours deck the skies,
When with the loved at home again thou'st met,
Then let the prayer arise,
For those who with thee joys and sorrows share:
Eve is the time for prayer.

And when the stars come forth,
When to the trusting heart sweet hopes are given,
And the deep stillness of the hour gives birth
To pure, bright beams of heaven,
Kneel to thy God, ask strength life's ills to bear:
Night is the time for prayer.

When is the hour for prayer?
In every hour while life is spared to thee,
In crowds or solitude, in joy or care,
Thy thoughts should heavenward flee;
Alone—abroad—at home—with loved ones there,
Bend thou the knee in prayer.

(Copied by a friend.)

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.

QUEBEC, 27th March, 1845.

Reverend and dear Brethren,

I have been only waiting for the close of those additional duties which occur in the seasons of Lent, Passion-week, and the festival-days of Easter, to give my attention to the subject of our meeting this year in triennial Visitation at the See, and to notify you of the arrangements to be made in that behalf. I have been anxious that you should have early intimation of my purpose, not only because I found, three years ago, that in the case of the Clergy who are stationed in the District of Gaspé, the space of time remaining after their reception of my Circulars, was insufficient to enable them to undertake the voyage from that quarter, but also because I wish you to come prepared to the Visitation, 1. with a full statement of what you may have been enabled to effect, in your respective Cures, in the cause of the CHURCH SOCIETY, with which, I believe, that you are all united, and which is vitally interwoven with the present and future interests of the Church within the Diocese; and, 2. with detailed information arranged under the proper heads in a tabular form, respecting the state of your Parishes or Missions; the condition of your Churches or Chapels and their appurtenances within and without; the number of your services during the year; the number of places at which you officiate, and the distance of each place from your residence; the number of square miles over which your charge is considered to extend; the number of persons who compose your Congregations; the number of baptisms, marriages, and burials in those Congregations in 1844; the number of your communicants; the number of persons whom you presented for confirmation at my last visit; the number and description of schools which the children belonging to your Cures attend, together with an account of the Sunday-Schools which are under your authority. In all the Missions of the Diocese, this information must be prepared in such a manner as to be fitted for transmission to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

As the Anniversary Meeting of the Church Society will, with the divine permission, be held this year at Quebec, on Wednesday the 2d July, I have fixed upon the forenoon of the same day, for the delivery of my Charge;—for which purpose Divine Service will be held in the Cathedral Church, at 10 o'clock, A. M. You will appear, on both these occasions, robed in your proper habits. It may, perhaps, be necessary, both for myself and for some others of our number, to leave Quebec in the afternoon of the following day, in order to attend the periodical meeting of the Central Board of the Church Society, on Friday the 4th, at Montreal. You will take care, therefore, if you please, to furnish me with the information mentioned above, at the very latest, on the morning of Thursday the 3d.

And here, but for a particular occurrence, I might close this communication, reserving (which had been my intention,) for the solemn occasion of our meeting, such recommendations upon certain points agitated at this moment in the Church, as I may venture, after all the special examination bestowed upon them of which my scanty leisure and moderate resources render me incapable, to press upon your attention: Such also as I have led you (in my Circular of the 26th April, 1844,) to expect from me: Tho' occurred to which I advert, is the agitation of these very questions, which have been under my deliberation for your benefit, coupled with very free animadver-

sions upon my Circular just mentioned, by a writer professing to be a Presbyter of the Diocese, and assuming very summarily to dispose of points, in which certainly his Bishop has had much more difficulty in coming to a conclusion. It cannot be supposed that I shall enter into a newspaper discussion with that writer, and as he appears in disguise, I can address no expostulation personally to him. But his proceeding being in itself of a nature tending most needlessly to disturb the peace of the Diocese, and his representations such as may, in some instances, infuse unpleasant doubts, and, possibly, create distressing difficulties in the minds of his brethren, I shall here address myself to the task, so far as it may be permitted to me, of obviating these effects,—thus anticipating, to a certain extent, the portion of my charge in which it will be my endeavour to assist your judgments in matters of the nature here in question. And in order the more fully and freely to discuss them, I shall not rigorously observe the constraints of a formal and official style.

I must begin by pointing out, because it carries a caution to the Clergy of some importance, in all similar cases, the great impropriety and imprudence of the course taken by this writer, (although I attribute to him no improper intentions,) presuming him to be, what he declares himself, a Presbyter of the Diocese.

I must premise that my present observations will be confined to the single point of the surplice question: and if I succeed in affording you any satisfaction upon this point, I will entreat you to suspend your opinion upon others which are brought into question, till we meet.

In the first place, then, it is at a time when the Bishop within whose immediate jurisdiction he exercises his functions, has intimated to his Clergy that he has these very points under his deliberation, with the purpose of communicating to them the result of his researches, and before it could possibly be known whether the decisions to be rendered might not be actually in accordance with the views of the Presbyter himself; that, not content to wait for the issue, and passing by the obvious expedient of at least laying his doubts and objections in the first instance privately before his Bishop, and submitting to the consideration of the Bishop the reasons which render it painful to him to comply with the recommendations which had been issued, he must drag the Bishop and the Church in this hitherto discreet and quiet Diocese, into the arena of public and popular dispute, before the eyes of the "mixed multitude" who surround us, and bring the cause to the bar of the PRESS—acquiescing, apparently, in that principle which is described, with a very different estimate of its propriety, in a recent publication, by the Bishop of Vermont:—

"Meanwhile the irresponsible autocracy of the Press takes hold of the opportunity. Error and novelty gain ground. The clergy and the people choose their editorial leaders; and when, at last, the sentiments of the Bishops are declared, they are merely used as the complements of parties already formed, and are praised or blamed, just as the prejudice of the party may dictate. The Bishops, in theory, are, indeed, the governors of the Church. In practical effect, however, on the minds of the majority, the editorial chair stands far above them; and as the inconsistency, however gross, belongs to the spirit of the age, I doubt much whether it admits of any effectual remedy."¹

In the second place, the opportunity seized upon by the Presbyter for thus putting himself forward, is precisely when the extraordinary disturbance of public feeling created by the injunction laid by a highly distinguished prelate at home upon his Clergy, to preach in the surplice, had induced him to withdraw his order—a manifest proof that, even in the eyes of those who most decidedly maintain the propriety of the practice, it is not a practice binding upon the consciences of the Clergy, as constituting part of the obligations contracted at their ordination,—for, if it were so, could the order to adopt it be recalled?

In the third place, this inopportune sally is made at the very moment when we have been reached by an earnest and affectionate address from our own Metropolitan, the venerated Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he charges it upon us all to forbear from insisting vehemently on either side, upon the points of this nature which divide the Church, and to await a proper adjustment of them collectively, by authority—pointing out at the same time, in a general

¹ This result, with reference, in particular to the practice of preaching in the surplice, was as I have been assured, anticipated by some of the Clergy in Montreal, from the manner in which they regarded the expressions of my Circular.
² The Novelties which disturb our peace. See also pp. 48, et seq. of the fourth letter in the same work.
³ It is possible that it might not have reached the Presbyter; but it was abroad in this Diocese before he appeared in print, and is dated exactly two months earlier.

way, that there are justificatory reasons to which both parties (when not running into extravagant deviations either way,) may appeal in support of their respective practice. My brethren of the Clergy in this Diocese will not only feel the deep respect with which, upon every possible ground, we ought to receive this exhortation, but must be all aware that it is an exhortation addressed directly to themselves—the See of Quebec being comprehended in the Province of Canterbury, and its Bishop, (according to the language of the Letters Patent of Erection,) being made subject and subordinate to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Primate who may be in occupation of it, in the same manner as any Bishop of any See within the Province of Canterbury, in the Kingdom of England.

Such is the conjuncture chosen by the Presbyter for attacking the authority set over him, and thus it is that he has risked the ignition of a raging controversy upon points in which his own Metropolitan and his own Bishop had moved in a manner which might have been expected to stay his hand. Under any circumstances, I venture to point out to you that the course which he took would have been clearly wrong. There is no plea more sacred than the plea of conscience: but there is none in the use of which, and especially in the case of repugnance to the directions of the living authority set over them, men should more severely examine their own proceeding. None will either more readily offer or more insinuatingly suggest itself to cover a lurking spirit of opposition, an adherence to party, a precipitate adoption of any reigning novelties, or a fond maintenance of favorite prepossessions of the mind. Let me beg you, (and I include the Presbyter himself,) to examine the plea of conscience in the case before us. Here is a question relating to an article of dress, upon which much zeal has been expended which might have been reserved for higher things—but, let that pass, it is a question which agitates a portion of the Church and which is not decided:—(if the Presbyter considered that he was dealing with a settled point, he should have remembered that every man, and particularly in the attitude of resistance to authoritative recommendations, should have perfectly mastered his part, before adventuring himself as a Coryphaeus upon the stage—for *adhuc sub judice lis est.*) Now what is the course which in such circumstances a clergyman is to take?—He has not far to go for his answer. Look at the prefatory matter of the prayer-book, and there you find it distinctly rendered:—

"And forasmuch as nothing can be so plainly set forth, but doubts may arise in the use and practice of the same; to appease all such diversity, (if any arise) and for resolution of all doubts, concerning the manner how to understand, do, and execute the things contained in this book, the parties that so doubt, or diversely take anything, shall *always resort to the Bishop of the Diocese*, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same; so that the same order be not contrary to any thing contained in this book. And if the Bishop of the Diocese be in doubt, then he may send for the resolution to the Archbishop."²

What then, when rightly informed, does conscience prompt in the case before us?—Conscience, you observe, as guided (for that is insisted upon) by the language of the prayer-book and the vows of Ordination,—to which we must add the obligations contracted upon receiving Licence or Institution to a Cure.

The matter is taken diversely and the intention of the Rubric is subject of doubt.

The Prayer-book directs the Clergyman, in such a case, to abide by the directions of the Bishop.

The decision of the Bishop has been given by anticipation: for he has already recommended it to the Clergy to forbear, at present, from introducing any marked change in this doubtful point.

The inference does not require to be pointed out.

Again, the Clergyman, in his Ordination-vows, promises that he will *reverently obey his Ordinary*.

And in his admission to any Cure of Souls, he swears an oath that he will *pay true and canonical obedience to his Bishop, in all the things lawful and honest*.

Compliance with the formal and official signification of the episcopal wishes, with reference to the practice here considered,—the question being previously an open one, cannot be regarded otherwise than as a thing lawful and honest.

What is the result?—It may be put into the form of a syllogism.

The Clergyman has vowed and sworn to obey his bishop in all things lawful and honest.

Continuing to preach, at least *ad interim* in the gown, (there being no ascertained law of the Church against it; no violation of decency and decorum involved in it and

received custom being all in its favour,) is a thing lawful and honest.

Therefore, the Clergyman is bound by his Ordination-vows and his oath to continue preaching, *ad interim*, in the gown, if he has received the formal and official signification of the episcopal wishes to this effect.

Nothing can possibly be here farther from my intention (and I am anxious to be distinctly understood upon this point,) than to charge those with a deliberate violation of vows and oaths who, notwithstanding my sufficiently pointed recommendation, may have since adopted the practice of preaching in the surplice.* But as your consciences have been appealed to, from another quarter, I wish now to assist you in judging how they should be guided to a right conclusion. If there are any among you who, with the whole case set before you as it is here done, wish to take benefit of the distinction between a very decided recommendation, with reasons for it assigned,† and a positive order, and so to say that obedience is due to an order, but obedience is *not* due to such a recommendation, this is an escape which is certainly open. For my own part, without declining, as you perceive, to afford help by my opinion to any who are perplexed, I shall now leave the matter without any sort of authoritative direction to your consciences and your judgments: for my own conscience, according to my ideas of conscientious obligation, obliges me to do so. I have professed upon oath, in the solemnity of my Consecration, *all due reverence and obedience to my Metropolitan*. And he has issued the recommendation to which I have already had occasion to advert.

I now proceed to the examination of the question itself. And I must premise that so far from affecting to pronounce in a dogmatical and peremptory manner upon a question in which a view differing from my own has been taken by persons of much higher qualifications than I possess, and much more extended opportunities than those which I enjoy, I speak *entirely under correction*; and entering upon the subject as one confessedly encumbered with doubt, shall be quite prepared to surrender my judgment upon the case whenever my interpretation of the precedents and authorities which I produce may be shewn to be wrong, or other authorities, to which I have no access, may be brought forward to silence them. If there should be a final decision in the Church in favour of preaching in the surplice, in that decision I shall most cheerfully acquiesce. The recommendation which I made to you some time ago was prompted, not by any passion for the practice of preaching in a gown, (although I do prefer it) but by a desire that in doubtful matters, we should not be disturbed by any sudden changes or deviations from long-established custom, breaking out here and there, unconcerted among the Clergy and unauthorized by the governing authority of the Diocese.

In reasoning upon the subject a priori, and according to the general analogy of usages different in themselves, which have been passed on to our own and (although more sparingly) to other Protestant communities from times preceding the Reformation, I should be led to infer that the act of preaching was not originally intended to be performed in our Church, in the surplice. In cases of the nature here under review, the absence of special and explicit direction would seem to carry the tacit authorization of continuing the practice which before subsisted. This would be understood and assumed as a matter of course. Now, I believe it will be found that it is the practice of the Romish Clergy, (and I presume that they have received this practice down from some former ages,) to divest themselves of the distinguishing robes in which they officiate at the altar, when they pass to the act of preaching; and although they generally, I think, do preach in the surplice, yet the principle which appears in their change of attire is directly adverse to the arguments which are mainly urged in favour of the surplice in our pulpits.

In fact, the duty of preaching, where performed at all, was at one period so very generally in other hands than those of the officiating clergyman, that this circumstance itself would tend to associate the act with a feeling of something separate and distinct in its nature; and I am under the impression—(although I do not speak confidently,) that friars and others who went about preaching, preached in their ordinary monkish habit. The sermons also at Paul's Cross and in other places in the open air, as for example in the stone

* I cannot, however, avoid mentioning with commendation, the proceeding of a clergyman who, after the reception of my Circular, would not continue to preach in the surplice (although his own leanings were probably in favour of the practice,) even at one of his stations where he was at a loss for any convenient means of taking his gown, till he had first procured my express sanction for doing so.

† The Presbyter is mistaken in saying with reference to any point of my recommendations that there was no adequate or other reason assigned for them. Whether they were adequate or not, there were very plain reasons assigned, applying to the whole.

‡ Not invariably, for I have reason to believe that at least upon some occasions, and in some parts of the world, they preach in a black dress. See, *inter alia*, a letter which has appeared lately in some of the papers from a clergyman in Plymouth, to the Churchwarden of a neighbouring Parish.

pulpit (if I remember right) at Magdalen College, in Oxford, were evidently something in a manner disunited from the usual liturgical services of the sanctuary.

It is a practice, I believe, to be seen in Cathedrals at home, that although the Cathedral Clergy themselves preach in the surplice, a stranger who preaches for any of them, performs that duty in a gown.* And this would seem to imply that the use of the surplice in preaching was understood to be a peculiar distinction reserved to the members of Cathedral establishments or those of Collegiate Churches. It appears, however, to involve a departure, in whatever way and at whatever time commenced, from the Advertisements of 1564, (hereinafter quoted.) In the University Church at Cambridge, in my own day, and in the different College Chapels, when sermons, upon particular occasions, were preached within them, the preacher, (unless my memory, looking back between thirty and forty years, has in this point, quite misled me) discharged his duty in a gown.†

It is well known that till very lately the use of the gown for preaching, in Parish Churches and Chapels of an ordinary kind, had been, at least for a vast length of time, universal, and that so the practice passed to the Colonies and was received in the Episcopal Church of the United States. And it would have been happy, I can have no hesitation in saying, if it had been left undisturbed; for even assuming the preaching in the surplice to be preferable, the difference is not worth the noise and ferment and party-feeling which has been engendered by the question; nor would I have bestowed the pains upon it which I have done, were I not called upon to show that the authority upon whose guidance you must wish to rely, has not been so erroneously and unadvisedly exercised as you have been told. And I cannot pass without notice the unfair mistake often made of imputing to puritanical leanings, a preference for the use of the gown in preaching, and confounding the abstinence from using the surplice in the pulpit with an absurd and fanatical objection to the surplice itself. How many thousands of Clergymen and Laymen who prefer the gown in the pulpit, are as perfectly free as their opponents in this point, from any scruple against the surplice or any dislike to it; and would, on the contrary, be most decidedly offended by any attack upon it or desire to dispense with it. And the Clergy would seem to be further removed from those precisians, as they were wont to be called, who accuse our worship of form and parade, where they appear in a different garb for different portions of the service, than where they restrict themselves to one.

(To be concluded in our next.)

* I do not remember to have witnessed this: but I have seen it stated. I think, in the Church newspaper of the Diocese of Toronto, about three years ago.

† Since I wrote this letter, I have partially examined the Article in vol. 72, of the Quarterly Review, on the Rubrics and Ritual of the Church of England, and I find it there stated that in the College Chapels, the preachers (as even the under-graduates who are on the foundation) wear the surplice on what are called *surplice-days*, but on other occasions, simply the gown.

DISTINCTIVE ORGANIZATION, WITHOUT BREACH OF LOVE.

And now, if you will allow me to take any more time, comes the important question, which must have arisen in many minds, what are the consequences of the views, now delivered, as to the importance of those great features of the visible church in which we, as members of a Protestant Episcopal Church, so widely differ from a multitude of professing Christians around us? Are the importance and duty of contending earnestly for what we believe to be of apostolical institution in the visible body of the church, in any wise diminished by this wide distinction between the outward and visible form, and the inward and invisible being of the church?

We answer—in no wise; no more than to draw an equally broad distinction between man, as he is an immortal spirit, and man's body, depreciates the importance of defending the latter against all mutilations.

There is a pregnant passage of Hooker which could be enlarged into a volume: "As those everlasting promises of love, mercy and blessedness belong to the mystical church, even so, on the other side, when we read of any duty which the Church of God is bound unto, the church whom this doth concern is a visible and known company."¹ Now each true Christian is God's temple. When you speak of that Christian, as God's temple, in his spiritual relations to God, as the receiver of his promises, and united to him, through Christ Jesus; you speak with reference to him as an invisible and spiritual being. He worships God "*in the spirit*." But when you speak of that temple, that Christian, with reference to what God has given him *to do in the world, and for the world*, you mean that man, in his visible body—because, though he can live out of the body, he cannot come into contact with the world without that body. So the Church—the fellowship of all true people of God—when you speak of what God has given it to do in the world, you speak of it as visible, under the form of a "sausable, known company," with all the attributes of an ecclesiastical body. It cannot come into contact with the world without them. Consequently, the importance of the visible form, or body, of the spiritual church; and therefore of maintaining it as God hath appointed it, is precisely measured by the importance of all that mighty and glorious work which God has com-

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Eccle. Pol. c. iii. 11.