

*THINGS WE OUGHT TO
KNOW ABOUT THE
CHURCH.*

—
THE CLERGYMAN'S ADDRESS.

"I went to your church last night, Tom," said an artisan to his mate on a certain Monday morning not long since; "you seemed so set on it, I thought I'd go and see what it was like, though I'm a Primitive myself."

"Well, was it to your mind?"

"I didn't see that there was much to complain of. Singing first rate, and sermon—why, he talked straight at you, like a man. I can't say that I cared for the dressing up though."

"Eh? What dressing up?"

"The black frock he'd got on, and the white gown atop of it, and the silk business round his neck. Couldn't he do his work just as well in his coat, same as our ministers? It seemed silly sort of work to me to dress up different to other folks. 'Tain't manly."

Tom scratched his head and looked on the ground; he was slow, was Tom.

Presently he got an idea.

"You're in the rifle corps, mate, ain't you?"

"Why, of course, you know that."

Tom grinned as he asked:

"But ain't it foolish-like of you to dress up in that smart red coat and them trousers with a stripe, and to set that little cap on your head?"

"Foolish-like? Why, its my duty! All the Queen's soldiers wear a uniform—it's none of my choosing, you know that! Supposing it comes to war any day, how are we to be

known without a uniform? It's to tell who we are serving under."

"Aye, aye. Well, mate, you've hit the nail on the head. The parson wears different clothes to other folks in Church to show who he's serving under; it's none of his choosing—it's his uniform."

Tom smiled, and his mate looked thoughtful.

Tom was trying to explain why a clergyman should wear a special dress. Let us go on to notice what that dress is.

It is well worthy of our serious recollection that God Himself designed to give the most careful directions for the dress of the Hebrew priests, as we may read in Exodus. Nothing which concerns His worship should, then, be small in our eyes.

Now, what does a priest put on before a service? First, a black dress reaching from neck to feet and girded about the waist; next, a white garment called a surplice; then, a stole, which is a flat silk band placed over the shoulders, the two ends hanging down in front.

These are the usual "vestments" as they are called, though in many churches a special dress is worn by the clergy when offering the Holy Sacrifice.

I have read that the cassock and surplice are much the same dress as all the Jews wore in the days when Jesus of Nazareth lived and taught and suffered; if so, we know there is something that would attach us to it apart from anything else.

Yet the surplice and stole have very beautiful meanings. More than three hundred years this was said about the whiteness of the surplice: "As touching the mystery