

**THE PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH
MILITANT AND THE
SURPLICE: IN REPLY TO THE
QUARTERLY REVIEW, NO. 143**

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The prayer for the Church militant and the Surplice: in reply to the Quarterly review, No. 143 by
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AND

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IN REPLY TO

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW,

No. 148.

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TO THE READER.

SINCE the following pages were sent to the press, I have had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Robertson's interesting work, "How shall we conform to the Liturgy?" and as the Quarterly Reviewer speaks in the highest terms of this work, and "of the great satisfaction it has given him, to find his previous impressions corroborated in almost every point," &c. &c., I take the opportunity of putting in contrast the Reviewer's opinion on one of the subjects here discussed, namely, that of the use of the surplice by the preacher, with Mr. Robertson's. The Reviewer tells us, "that it has been the undeviating practice, in parish churches at least, since the Reformation," (to wear the gown in the pulpit) p. 243: re-asserts this as "a broad fact" (261); and thus closes his observations on the subject, "Thus then it appears, that it is as clear as any rubrical question that ever was mooted, that the use of the surplice in the pulpit (except in colleges and cathedrals) is wholly unsanctioned, and, as we think, forbidden by ecclesiastical authorities, and is an innovation on the practice of the Church, &c. is as uncanonical and unrubrical, as it is unusual," p. 264. The Reviewer, that is, altogether denies to the use of the surplice either authority from the rubrics, or countenance from practice, and claims both exclusively for the gown. Mr. Robertson, however, acknowledges the claims of the surplice, but "brings together grounds for thinking of the gown less vilely, than some zealous churchmen require us to do." "It is very questionable," he says, "whether we be bound by the rubric to wear the surplice in the pulpit. I am inclined to adopt the opinion of Sharp and Burn as to the literal interpretation." "In Elizabeth's reign we meet with instances on both sides; *those for the surplice predominating*, yet not so as to overpower the evidence in favour of gowns." So again, Mr. Robertson speaks with a degree of approval of the Bishop of London's advice on the subject. "Nothing," says the Reviewer, "can be less satisfactory because less reasonable." I must add, that it appears to me, that Mr. Robertson has

understated the weight of his own evidence in favour of the use of the surplice. Hooker's testimony to the use of it is all important, and implies much more, surely, than merely the practice of his own times. The perusal of Mr. Robertson's work has confirmed me in the opinion, that the right key to the difficulty in reconciling the conflicting evidence on this point, is to be found in the difference, in position, antiquity, and rubrical character, between the sermon after the Nicene Creed, and any other lecture or sermon; that there was one usage for the officiating minister, and another for the *merè concionator*.

I have now the following requests to make of the reader:—

I. To expect little more in the following pages, than a *currente calamo* notice of obviously inconclusive and unwarrantable arguments in the treatment of his subject by the Reviewer.

II. To permit me to assume that the practice of the Clergy in the use of the surplice, as the "liturgical, sacramental, sacerdotal" dress, ever since Queen Elizabeth's injunctions, is rubrically correct; and in consonance with this, to understand the word "surplice," as meaning "white alb," as well as surplice proper, if need be.

III. To bear in mind, when the use of the surplice is contended for, as appropriate to the preacher, that the preacher of the sermon after the Nicene Creed is intended.

IV. And if he wish to form a correct judgment of the regard shown to the Church by the conductors of the Quarterly, in giving the article on the "Rubrics and Ritual of the Church of England" to the world, not to forget, that the discussion of a subject of so much importance at the present moment, was refused to one of the ablest sons of the Church, and confided to an ex-Secretary of the Admiralty.

C. I. H.

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&c.

THE article in the last number of the Quarterly Review, on the Rubrics and Ritual of the Church of England, cannot but be a matter of surprise and sorrow to many of its readers. It is nothing less, from beginning to end, than an attack upon the Bishop of London's charge; and, as regards the matter and spirit of it, would have much more consistently presented itself in the pages of the Record, than in a work in which the articles on "Oxford Theology" and "The Divines of the Seventeenth Century" so recently appeared. My business, however, with it, on the present occasion, will be almost entirely confined to that part of it which treats of the use of the surplice in the morning pulpit, and the prayer for the Church militant. The influence of the Quarterly Review is considerable. Its weakest arguments must be expected to pass for strong with numbers, both of those who do not read it, and those who do; but I am not without hope, that the special pleading which it has exhibited in this article will eventually be of more benefit than injury to the cause which it is intended to destroy. If the arguments produced by the Reviewer are the best arguments that can be found against the uses attacked, there can be little fear, what the general practice on these points will at

last become, if it is to be that, which reason and the rubric require.

It is the object then of the Quarterly Reviewer to convict the Clergy, who preach in the surplice, and read the prayer for the Church militant on Sundays where there is no communion, of acting both unrubrically and unreasonably. And he commences his reasoning to this end with the use of the prayer for the Church militant; it being no unimportant point gained for the whole of his argument, if he can prove that the sermon is intended, when there is no communion, to close the service. For in that case the surplice is plainly not required again after the gown has once been put on; and thus a main argument, as will be seen, for the use of the surplice in the pulpit, is at once destroyed; whereas, if the prayer for the Church militant, &c. is to follow the sermon,—the consequence, on the Reviewer's side of the question, must be all that inconvenient and unseemly shifting of vestments which he complains of; and which alone, we may add, is no small practical argument against the use of the gown.

The Reviewer then begins his argument on this point with contending, that the Sunday altar service, 'when there is no communion,' of which the Offertory and the prayer for the Church militant are *rubrically* portions, was not designed by the Church to form any part of the morning service, to which it has been in modern times appended; and this he gathers from the following considerations:—

1. That there is no rubric enjoining its forming a part of it.
2. That the union causes an iteration of prayers, which is not reasonable, and could not therefore have been intended.
3. That in King Edward's first book, where it was provided that the Litany should precede the altar service on Wednesdays and Fridays, it was also provided that the altar service should stop short of the Church militant prayer; whereas in the subsequent books, where the Litany may be disjoined from the altar service, the service includes the Church militant prayer.

Now admit for a moment the Reviewer's case proved thus far; and what plainly must follow as the proper consequence? Not that the prayer for the Church militant alone ought to be left out, but that there never should be in our churches any Sunday altar service, as a part of the morning service, when there is no com-

munion. The reader will scarcely be content with this mode of proving the omission of the Church militant prayer rubrical and reasonable. Nor, in fact, is the Reviewer; though he plainly wishes to produce an impression by it to this end; reasoning much after this manner on the subject:—"Notwithstanding I have shown that the Church did not design any part of the altar service to be used, as it is now used, on non-communion Sundays, I am satisfied that it would be seriously injurious to the religious interests of the people, if any ultra-rubrician should insist upon its not being so used." At the same time, I am ultra-rubrician enough myself—but it is only a *very* little one—to insist upon omitting one of the prayers in it. Permit me then to take the argument that affects the use of the whole of the altar service on these occasions, and direct it against the prayer for the Church militant alone, which I have an object in proving ought not to be read." Thus far, then, the rubrical argument against the use of this prayer is scarcely conclusive enough.

But, again, "the iteration of petitions caused by this union is not reasonable, and therefore the Church did not intend it:" did not intend, that is, that the prayer for the Church militant—the peccant party on this point—should be read in the altar service.

Now, that this argument is worth precisely nothing is plain from this; that it may be made to prove that the Litany was never intended by the Church to be used with the morning prayer, (contrary to her rubric after the third collect by necessary consequence, and contrary to her express rubric in the Scotch liturgy,) or the bidding prayer with any one of the services, and certainly not therefore with all three. In fact, every person, at all conversant with our services, knows perfectly well that such an argument proves nothing whatever, by proving a vast deal too much; as in able hands it may be used to prove, that the last half of a service was not intended to be used after the first.

But then, again, it does so happen, that although the petitions in the prayer for the Church militant have for the most part been already presented to the throne of grace in other prayers, it contains at least one particular petition and thanksgiving, nothing like to which occurs in any other part of the service; a thanksgiving for the faithful dead, and a petition for grace, to be enabled to follow their good examples; a thanksgiving and a petition, which,

in all due deference to the Reviewer, cannot be omitted in the Liturgy of a Christian people, without their offices of worship being left seriously deficient. We may fairly, therefore, contend, that if it be any argument against the use of this prayer, that it contains petitions that are not needed, because they have already been offered; it is, at least, as good an argument in its favour, that it also contains petitions that are needed, and have never yet been offered.

But is this argument of the Reviewer's of any power, as showing that the Church militant prayer was not intended to be used on non-communion Sundays? Then does it show, that it was not intended to be used on communion Sundays; and the Reviewer is bound, by his own argument, not only to commend the omission of it to the Clergy on ordinary Sundays, but to recommend their omitting it every Sunday!

But the Reviewer derives another argument against the reading of the prayer for the Church militant, from a comparison between King Edward's first book, which, providing for the Litany's being read with the altar service, concludes the altar service short of the prayer for the Church militant; and the subsequent books, which separating the Litany from the altar service, includes the prayer in question within that service. "The inference," he says, "from both these facts seems clear, that it was most probably not intended that the Litany and the Church militant prayer should be said in the same service, unless there was a communion." But the very same revision, which made it no longer necessary to read the Litany with the altar service, on Wednesdays and Fridays, required them both to be used on the Sunday. Was it not then "most probably intended,"—that the time for using the Litany on the Sundays should be the same as that appointed for it on the Wednesdays and Fridays; that is, immediately preceding the other service? In this case, the Litany and Church militant prayer would be used in the same service every Sunday. And is not this borne out both by Edward's and Elizabeth's injunctions regarding the reading of the Litany "immediately before the time of communion of the Sacrament," and confirmed by the subsequent practice of the Church?

But, after all, the Reviewer himself, it will be said, does not press these arguments, as drawn from the supposed intention of the