

alike, in the so-called empire of reason, or in that other sovereignty which arrogates to itself attributes of the Most High, truly we behold impious man “as God, sitting in the Temple of God, declaring himself to be God.”

At least, so far as the ascription of praise and prayer in the Sanctuary reaches, and, with it, the highest aim, the worthiest means, by which worship in spirit and truth may be affected, the path is open. Here, surely, difficulties are not insuperable. The idols of tradition and conventionality have to be encountered and overthrown. Should that disestablishment, which some bishops already speak of as a question of brief years, arrive, the sifting of wheat from the chaff in public worship must needs begin, and the great question from without, as well as from within, her pale be, not only “What the Church says,” but, also, “What can the Church do?”

Is it not preferable to be timely wise?

FREDERICK ROBINSON.

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ART. II.—“ALMS AND OBLATIONS.”

IN offering to the readers of THE CHURCHMAN at the beginning of its new year (and I hope the new year will be for it one of continued prosperity and increasing usefulness) an argument on what I believe to be the true meaning of the phrase “*Alms and Oblations*” in our Book of Common Prayer, I write in the first person, partly because the subject has come before my notice in a somewhat personal manner; and partly because, taking a keen interest in liturgical studies, and yet wishing to avoid all approach to a show of learning, I find it more natural and easy to write in this way than in any other.

It happened to me, a few years ago, in the course of preaching certain sermons, which the Restoration of Chester Cathedral rendered desirable, and for which the great kindness of Clergymen in the Diocese gave frequent opportunities, to encounter two contrasted experiences, which I remember very well. In each case it occurred that the offertory for the Cathedral Restoration was taken on a Sunday morning, when there was no administration of the Holy Communion. At one end of the Diocese the Parish Priest (a moderate Low Churchman, if I may use a detestable cant phrase), on presenting upon the Lord’s Table the offerings of the people, prayed that our “oblations” might be accepted, the word “alms” being omitted from the formula which is prescribed. I saw at once the thought that was in his mind. He knew that the collection was not for the

sick and poor, but for Church purposes: he knew, too, that by direction of the rubric it was to be "reverently brought," and "humbly presented and placed." Hence he altered the prescribed form of words to fit his opinion. On a second similar occasion, at the other end of the Diocese, when the general facts of the service and the collection were the same, the Parish Priest (a moderate High Churchman, to use a phrase which to me is equally detestable) followed exactly the contrary course. He evidently viewed the word "oblations" as denoting the Bread and Wine, when placed on the Holy Table for Communion, and as being restricted to that sense only. Hence he, too, altered the appointed formula, but in the opposite way, by omitting the word "oblations," notwithstanding that the collection was not intended for the relief of suffering or poverty. Now which of these two Clergymen was right? Both were excellent, laborious, loyal men: and yet they treated in two discordant ways a rule which appears to be perfectly plain. I feel no hesitation in saying that both were wrong, but that the latter was more wrong than the other. In every offertory the sums of money collected from the congregation and solemnly presented are literally "oblations;" they are not, however, in all cases, literally "alms:" though the prescribed collective phrase "alms and oblations," like the "decent bason," which is directed to be used for the alms and "other devotions of the people," includes both, suits every variety of occasion, raises no questions, and converts into a religious offering all that is thus collected and placed.

In drawing out my argument in favour of this view, I will present it under ten separate and detached heads. This may appear somewhat formal: but it will promote clearness; and in this way it will more easily be seen what each point of the argument is worth. Even separately, every one of them appears to me to be of considerable weight: while, when they are all taken together, I think they are absolutely demonstrative and conclusive.

1. At the last revision, which made our Prayer Book what it is, there is no doubt that some members of the Church of England, and some very important and influential members, desired that the unconsecrated Bread and Wine in the Communion Service should be formally and expressly made an "oblation." To illustrate some questions of this kind, we have very peculiar and valuable evidence in the existence of certain Prayer Books with manuscript notes, which were used in preparation for this revision, or during its process. The most important of these books is the "Photozincographic facsimile of the Black Letter Prayer Book of 1636, with marginal manuscript notes and alterations," which was subscribed in 1661 by the Convocations of Canterbury and York and annexed to the

Act of Uniformity 13 & 14 Car. II. c. 4. This book is like a battlefield still fresh from the struggle, where we can see from what lies on the ground how the contention wavered to and fro, and in what way it was finally decided. Thus, to note what we observe in a neighbouring part of the book, we find that, in the rubric preceding the prayer which immediately follows the offertory, the words, "the good estate of the Catholic Church of Christ," were proposed instead of the words, "the whole Estate of Christ's Church Militant here on earth," which were there before, and which are there again now. Had the proposed change been accepted by Convocation and Parliament, this prayer might have reasonably been viewed as including public prayers for the dead, instead of excluding them, as is now the case.<sup>1</sup> So with the subject before us. In the present instance, however, the evidence is supplied, not by this book, but by the book preserved at Durham, which contains Bishop Cosin's preliminary notes, and the book preserved in the Bodleian Library, which contains Sancroft's preliminary notes. These three books ought to be brought carefully together, and every minute particular that comes to view on comparison should be noted and recorded. This, so far as I know, has never been done. As regards the point before us, the question seems to have been settled before the final debates were reached. We are concerned only with the result. And the result is this, that though the phrase "offer up" as well as "place," in imitation of the Scotch Prayer Book of 1637, was strongly urged by both Cosin and Sancroft,<sup>2</sup> this proposal was decisively rejected: and there appears in the margin of the first-mentioned newly-discovered book, simply the rubric as we have it now. The plan for inserting the expression "offer up" had been considered and refused. And if it was not permissible to use this expression, then it cannot have been intended that the placing of the unconsecrated Bread and Wine was intended to be made an "oblation." If they were not an "offering" they were not an "oblation." The words are synonymous. Let it be remembered, too, that what we have to do with here is not a mere casual careless rule, but a rubric adopted after serious debate and careful thought. The present rule embodies the deliberate

<sup>1</sup> It must not, however, be forgotten that the concluding part of this prayer, which is so full of solace for the bereaved, was added at the last revision.

<sup>2</sup> Cosin's proposed rubric ran thus: "*If there be a Communion, the Priest shall offer up and place the Bread and Wine in a comely paten and chalice upon the Table, that they may be ready for the Sacrament, as much as he shall think fit.*"—See vol. ii. p. 55 of his Correspondence, as published by the Surtees Society. For the similar proposal of Sancroft, see Cardwell's "History of Conferences," p. 390.

rejection of a proposal that the placing of the Bread and Wine should be made an oblation.

2. Reference has already been made to the Scottish Prayer Book of King Charles I. and Archbishop Laud. A careful inspection of this book may with great advantage be made the second point in this argument. In two very important senses—partly by contrast and partly by suggestion<sup>1</sup>—this book may with much truth be said to have been the precursor of our present English Book. Some things appeared in the former of these books which are very distinctly rejected in the later, and thus proofs are furnished of the mind of the Church of England on certain important particulars. On the other hand, there are some things in our Book of 1662, the first intimations of which are to be found in the Scotch Book of 1637. We have seen that the "offering" or "oblation" of the unconsecrated elements, contained in the former, is rejected in the latter. But this is by no means the only part of the contents of the Scotch Book which has an important bearing on the question before us. On comparison we find suggestion as well as contrast. The rubric relating to the offertory in the Scotch book, immediately before the prayer for the Church Militant, runs thus:—"While the Presbyter distinctly pronounceth some or all of these sentences for the offertory, the Deacon, or (if no such be present) one of the Churchwardens, shall receive the devotions of the people there present in a bason provided for that purpose. And when all have offered, hee shall reverently bring the said bason with the oblations therein, and deliver it to the Presbyter, who shall humbly present it before the Lord, and set it upon the Holy Table." Here we observe three important particulars—first, that the terms "oblation" and "offering" are co-ordinated as being synonymous; secondly, that the "oblations" mean the same thing as the "devotions of the people," and, thirdly, that these "oblations" are placed in the "bason," and are in the bason presented. Nothing could be more clear or unequivocal than the sense in which the term is here employed by Archbishop Laud; and it is made all the more conspicuous by the fact that, as we have seen, there is prescribed in the book a separate oblation of the unconsecrated Bread and Wine. It is worth while also to remark that in one respect this rubric is stronger than ours in expressing the religious principle involved in this employment of the word "oblations." They are not simply to be reverently brought, and humbly presented, but they are to be presented "before the Lord."

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<sup>1</sup> Under the head of suggestion may properly be included the fact that, in harmony with the New Testament, "Presbyter" is here given as the true explanation of the ambiguous term "Priest."

The whole of the argument, however, derivable for our purpose from the Scotch book is not yet exhausted. At the end of this section of it we find the following rubric:—"After the Divine Service ended, that which was offered shall be divided in the presence of the Churchwardens, whereof one half shall be to the use of the Presbyter, to provide him books of holy divinity; the other half shall be carefully kept and employed in some pious or Christian use, for the decent furnishing of that Church, or the publike relief of their poore, at the discretion of the Presbyter and the Churchwardens." Here the points of importance are the collective character of that which is included under the term "oblations" and placed together in the bason, and the divisibility afterwards of this fund for co-ordinate purposes of different kinds. Part is viewed as an offering to the Clergy for a specific (and, we may add, a very important) use; part is to be applied to the requirements of the church fabric and to the alleviation of the necessities of the poor.

3. But let us pause here on one feature of the case which has a separate argumentative value of its own. In our own Prayer Book all that was suggested by the Scotch Book, in regard to our offerings at the Holy Communion for the poor and for Church purposes, may be said to have been fully considered and brought to maturity. Let us now, therefore, compare the two rubrics which relate to these Offerings on the one hand, and the Bread and Wine on the other. The two rubrics are set side by side. They both appeared first in their present place, and in their present form of expression, at the last revision. Could any contrast be sharper and more instructive than that which distinguishes these two rubrics from one another? That which is gathered from the people in the congregation is to be "reverently brought" and "humbly presented." The very words are a sermon. They are evidently meant to inculcate a truth, to enforce a duty, and to assert a principle. Whatever sympathy there may be for the suffering and the poor, whatever zeal for church building and church adornment, and for the support and dignity of the Clergy, all that is brought together at this time under such motives is to be made likewise an offering to Almighty God. But how different is the other rubric! It is simply this: "*When there is a Communion, the Priest shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient.*" It is merely a direction for convenience and propriety. There was previously no rule as to the time when, and the person by whom, the unconsecrated elements were to be "placed upon the Table." The right time is evidently when the ante-Communion service is over, and when the remainder of the service is about to become strictly the Communion Office: and can it be doubted that the right

person to do this ministerial act is the officiating Clergyman? But is it credible, if the placing of the Bread and Wine upon the Table was intended to be viewed as a solemn offering to Almighty God, that language would be used, so bare and mean, and so strangely contrasted with the language used in the other case, where the doctrine and practice of oblation are expressly asserted and taught?

4. Once more (and it may be well, in a few simple words, to state this point separately), that which is presented on the Lord's Table during the Communion Service, with injunctions of such solemnity, is gathered at the time, under the influence of devotional feeling, from the worshippers. "*The Bread and Wine for the Communion*" are, as we learn from a rubric at the close of the service, to be "*provided by the Curate and Churchwardens at the charges of the Parish.*" The force of this contrast will be variously estimated by different students of the Prayer Book. To me it appears one of high significance; and I lay special stress on this, that it corresponds with the other contrast which has just been considered. The harmony of our Book of Common Prayer, as to provisions which were very carefully considered and deliberately adopted in 1661, is a feature of the case deserving of the utmost attention. I will not add more of my own as regards this particular, but I will simply quote what is said respecting it by two of our eminent modern liturgical scholars. Dr. Blakeney's words are these:—"The communicants do not present the elements; one of the Communion rubrics directs that the bread and wine shall be provided at the charge of the parish; but the prayer refers to the voluntary offerings of the communicants, who do not embrace the whole parish, the charge upon which does not necessarily imply a free-will offering."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Procter, after quoting the contemporary French Version of Durel in favour of his view, simply puts the matter thus:—"Whatever is included in the term *oblation* has been received from the people in the bason, whether simply for the poor, or for the minister, or for the service of the church, or for any charitable use; the elements for Communion are not so gathered from the people."<sup>2</sup>

5. I now come to a point of the argument which with all archaeological students must, I should imagine, have great weight. There was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a recognized ecclesiastical meaning of the term "*oblations*," which on that account merely it is natural to connect with the

<sup>1</sup> "The Book of Common Prayer, with its History and Interpretation," third edition, p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the Book of Common Prayer, with a Rationale of its Offices," fourteenth edition, p. 531.

occurrence of the word in this place. As to the general fact, I will cite an authority whom certainly no one can accuse of a prejudice in the direction of the present line of argument. Sir Robert Phillimore says, in his elaborate work on the Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England, “Offerings and oblations are one and the same thing. . . . The term *oblations*, in the Canon Law, means whatever is in any manner offered to the Church by the pious and faithful.” But perhaps it is still more to my purpose to adduce instances of the casual and incidental use of the word; for such instances show what was accepted as a matter of course during that period of our history. I will give simply two illustrations of this kind. In the old statutes of Chester Cathedral (dated 1544) part of the duty of the Sacrist is defined thus:—“*Oblationes etiam in Templo, si quæ fuerint, recipiet et in usum Ecclesiæ nostræ tradendas servabit.*” In another part of the same statute, but quite separately, and under a different head, he is directed to provide the wine and whatever else may be necessary for Divine Service. The other example shall be taken from an unexpected source, a hundred years later. In Herrick’s “Fairie Temple” we find the following lines:—

Now, we must know, the elves are led  
Right by the Rubrick, which they read:  
And if report of them be true  
They have the text for what they do,  
Aye, and their book of Canons too.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Bason stands the Board upon  
To take the free Oblation.

\* \* \* \* \*

The elves in formal manner fix  
Two pure and holy candlesticks,  
In either which a tall small bent  
Burns for the Altar’s ornament.  
For sanctity, they have to these  
Their curious copes and surplices  
Of cleanest cobweb, hanging by,  
In their religious vesterie.<sup>1</sup>

The context has been sufficiently quoted to show that the whole spirit of the poem is not Puritanical, but very much the contrary. Yet we clearly see here not only the Oblation, but the Bason which is to receive it. With such passages before us, can we really feel any doubt as to the meaning of the word under our consideration? Is it not reasonable, and even necessary, to interpret it according to the habit of the time? Why is a new

<sup>1</sup> “Hesperides,” vol. i. p. 125.

sense to be "read into it," if I may use an expression which has been very familiar to us of late?

6. But I now invite attention not simply to the old usage of the word "oblations," but to a certain manner of employing the collective phrase, "alms and oblations." This may be exemplified by instances taken from three very different periods. The first dates from the year 1547, two years before the issuing of King Edward the Sixth's First Prayer Book. In the Injunctions put forth by that Prince to the Clergy and Laity, we find it directed that a chest is to be placed in each church, "to the intent the parishioners should put into it their oblation and alms for their poor brethren." It is pointed out that "to relieve the poor is a true worshipping of God." In regard "to which alms and devotion of the people," careful regulations are laid down for their distribution to the "most needy neighbours:" and it is further provided that part of the contents of this chest may be "bestowed upon the reparation of the church, if great need require."<sup>1</sup> We observe here, at this early date, the same features of the case as those which are so prominently marked in our present Prayer Book, with the one exception that these gifts are not made a public offering in Divine Service. "Alms and oblations" are co-ordinated in one phrase: this phrase is used as synonymous with "alms and devotion:" and two different, though parallel, modes of applying the collective fund are contemplated.

The Injunctions of Queen Elizabeth have recently been mixed up with much angry controversy in this country. I have no intention of touching them here in that respect. I only invite attention to the fact that, in 1559, just a year after a very important revision of the Second Prayer Book of King Edward VI., that monarch's words, in regard to the subject before us, are reproduced identically by Queen Elizabeth. The order for fixing the chest in the church, the use of the same phrases, with this slight difference, that here they are "oblations and alms" and "alms and devotions," and the permission to apply to church reparation part of a fund primarily intended for the relief of the poor, are found again.<sup>2</sup> Still, however, the principle of religious offering was not embodied in the rules for Public Service.

From the earlier parts of this period of about a hundred and fifty years we may now turn to the later. All who are acquainted with English Church History are aware that, if the authority of Cosin and Sancroft can be quoted for a point like this, such authority is very worthy of attention. Now there is extant a form of consecration for Churches and Chapels, drawn up by the former of these prelates, for use in his Diocese: and

<sup>1</sup> Cardwell's "Documentary Annals," vol. i. pp. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Cardwell, *ibid.* p. 190.

in this form we find the following direction: "*Then shall the Bishop reverently offer upon the Lord's Table, first, the Act of consecrating the Church or Chappell under his seale before published, then the Bread and Wine for the Communion, and then his own alms and oblations. . . . Then one of the Priests shall receive the Alms and Oblations.*"<sup>1</sup> We have seen that the second of these three oblations was disallowed by Convocation and Parliament. This, however, only makes more prominent the separate use of the form of expression which is now under consideration.

I now pass to 1686, when Sancroft was Archbishop, and when that principle of religious offering had been formally expressed in the Prayer Book under circumstances in which he had been very actively engaged. One of his questions in his Articles of Inquiry is this: "When the Holy Communion is administered amongst you, are the alms and oblations of devout persons duly collected and received? Are they constantly disposed of to pious and charitable uses by the consent of the Minister and Churchwardens, or, if they disagree, by the appointment of the Ordinary?" Here the word "devout" makes the term "oblations" synonymous with "devotions," while the "collecting" and "receiving" utterly separate the term from all connection with the Bread and Wine. In fact, Sancroft, who, sixteen years before, when Chaplain to the Bishop of Durham, pleaded earnestly for the expression of one kind of oblation in the Liturgy, and pleaded in vain, did not on that account hesitate to insist firmly on that other kind of oblation, to which liturgical sanction had been given.

7. This seems the natural place for setting out another section of the argument, which is necessary for the completeness of the whole. Throughout all the range of the history of the subject, from the dawn of the Reformation to the period of the Revolution, there is a parallelism between "alms" and "oblations," which appears at every point, till the parallelism becomes contact also, when both classes of gifts are officially made one combined offering. Let us examine, with this point in view, our successive English Prayer Books in order.

In 1549 there was a box to receive the offerings intended

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<sup>1</sup> Form and Order of Dedication or Consecration of Churches and Chappells. See vol. ii. of "Cosin's Correspondence" (Surtees Society), p. 109. We have no means of knowing when this form of service was first compiled. It is said to have been used in 1668; but we have no reason for believing that it was so used as to contradict the Prayer Book; nor does this question at all affect the point before us, which relates only to the use of one phrase.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix to Second Report of Royal Commission on Ritual p. 654.

as alms for the poor, and Offering Days were prescribed for what was contributed towards the sustentation of the Clergy. The rubric preceding the sentences is worthy of notice, in the first place, because of the manner in which we find the word "offer" there employed. "*Then shall follow for the Offertory one or more of these sentences of Holy Scripture, to be sung while the people do offer; or else one of them to be said by the minister immediately before the offering.*" A subsequent rubric contains the following: "*While the Clerks do sing the Offertory as many as are disposed shall offer to the poor man's box, every one according to his ability and charitable mind; and at the offering days appointed, every man and woman shall pay to the Curate the due and accustomed offerings.*"

In the later books of 1552, 1559, and 1604, the Prayer for the Church Militant is appointed to be used after the offertory; but only "Alms for the poor" are named in that prayer and in the direction at the side, the custom of paying the Oblations to the Clergy on "offering days," being still continued. The rubric throughout this period runs thus; "*Then shall the churchwardens, or some other by them appointed, gather the devotion of the people, and put the same into the poor man's box; and upon the offering days appointed every man and woman shall pay to the Curate the due and accustomed offerings.*"

Finally, when we come to the revision of 1662, and when the poor man's box and the offering days have disappeared, this parallelism still runs through the service. In the rubric before the Prayer for the Church Militant we find "alms and other devotions:" in the prayer itself we find "alms and oblations:" and in a rubric at the close of the service we find it directed that what has been collected and offered shall be applied to "pious and charitable uses." But this is not all. The offertory sentences themselves are an expression of this parallelism in its most emphatic form. Some are general; some have reference to the poor and sick, with no adaptation to Church purposes; some have reference to Church purposes, with no adaptation to the poor and the sick. Here it is much to the purpose to quote the words used, in one of his recently published Notes, by Bishop Wren, who was contemporary with the last revision, and took an important part in it. "These sentences now are all the same here that were before, but the order of their standing is a little different; to this purpose, that as they are now ordered, the seven that stand first will appear to be in general for all charitable gifts; the seven next to tend particularly to that which they called *Prophora*, in the Primitive Church—that is, a free-will offering unto God: and the six last, to be especially for the *Eleemosyna*—that is, an Alms Deed to the Poor."

We may now with advantage consider the circumstances

under which the directions of our present Prayer Book on this subject were introduced. One chief characteristic of the last revision was that it supplied directions in various points of detail which were left in an uncertain condition before. Thus, the breaking of the bread in the act of consecration (in pursuance of suggestions which came, very curiously and very instructively, alike from Baxter and Cosin) was for the first time directed at this date. To the same revision belongs the direction for Baptism: "*Then* shall the Font be filled with water," which is a rule for one sacrament corresponding with the rule for the other: "The Priest shall *then* place" the Bread and Wine. So with regard to the offertory collection. An improvement was made in this matter, too, as to the rules for manual acts. The churchwardens, indeed, or others appointed by them, had, in the earlier books, been directed to gather the alms of the people, and to place them in the poor man's box; and the offering days were definitely fixed. But everything was made more precise and more reverent, to say nothing of the new assertion of a great principle, when it was appointed that a decent bason shall be ready for the receiving of all these offerings, of whatever kind they might be, and the placing of the whole collectively on the Lord's Table.

9. I now ask attention to a feature of this part of our Service Book, which seems to come, with great simplicity, but with very great force, to clench all the preceding parts of the argument. There may be an offertory without a communion: and all the instructions as regards the offerings of the people remain the same as though there were a communion. "When there is a Communion," then Bread and Wine are to be placed on the Holy Table. But when there is not, the prayer for the Church Militant, with its contents and its marginal and included notes, remains precisely the same. There may or may not be a collection; and if there be a collection, it may be for the sick and the poor, or it may be for Church purposes, or it may be indeterminate, the application of it remaining to be determined according to the rule stated at the end of the service. But if there is no Communion, it is impossible that the word "oblation" can refer to Bread and Wine, which are not there and are not required. Nothing could more expressly separate the word "oblation" from all reference to the unconsecrated elements. It would have been quite easy to say: "If there be no Communion, then shall the word *oblations* be omitted." But nothing of the kind is said. Hence, when we remember how carefully all manual acts were defined at the last revision, we may be sure that nothing of the kind was intended; and those who at such times omit the word, violate a clear and simple rule.

But a further remark on this part of the subject brings me

back to the point at which I started. Under no circumstances is it allowable to alter the collective phrase "alms and oblations," which is prescribed. It may be quite certain that the collection has no reference to the relief of the poor and the sick: but this does not justify the omission of the word "alms." Whether these be alms or oblations, whatever the destination of the offertory may be, whether it is definite or indefinite, the whole of the prescribed formula "alms and oblations" must be used. No questions are asked at this moment, though the word "oblation" does indeed lay its sacred hand on the whole of what is collected and convert it into an offering to the Lord. To omit that word is to attenuate one great religious lesson of the occasion: while, as has been shown, the omission of the word from this place mentally transfers it to the place from which it has been by Church-authority excluded. To put the matter briefly, the Priest, in receiving the offerings of the people, has no more right to bisect the formula, than he has to break the bason in which the offerings are reverently brought and humbly presented.

10. My tenth point shall be this, that on this view of the meaning of the word "oblations" which has here been presented, everything became consistent; whereas the other theory, which identifies them with the unconsecrated Bread and Wine, introduces contradiction at every point. It contradicts history: it condemns those who presided over the last revision of the Prayer Book, of doing very loosely and carelessly that which they were bound to do with the utmost care and exactitude; and it forces the Clergy to break a rule which is laid down in the clearest manner. Moreover, this mode of dealing with the plain letter of the Prayer Book furnishes a sanction for a similar mode of dealing with other parts.

I know that this argument will by some be met by a general sweeping objection—that some will set it on one side for these simple reasons; that the earlier Liturgies had an oblation of the unconsecrated elements; that the Church of England must be in harmony with the early Church; and that therefore we must have in our Liturgy this oblation, whether it is clearly expressed or not; hence that, no other way of securing this expression being possible, the word "oblations" in the place before us must have this signification. To this I think it quite enough to reply that, because it is not thought worth while to answer an argument, it does not therefore follow that the argument does not require an answer. My purpose has been simply to inquire what our Prayer Book says and means in one particular. So far, we have no concern with the liturgies of other ages and other countries. They may, or may not be in harmony with ours. If they differ from ours, we may, or may not, be wrong. I have only been

investigating the facts of the case. Our allegiance, too, is due to our own Liturgy, and not to any other. With this objection before me, I am reminded of a story of a Bishop and a young clergyman. Some usage, which the Bishop did not approve, was in question: and the young clergyman quoted St. Augustine as his authority; to which the Bishop replied, "I am your Bishop, and not St. Augustine." Yet, lest these sentences should seem too dogmatic, I will end as I began, with a reference to this Diocese. Those who are minutely acquainted with it would easily select two among its Clergy, who, taken together, are, for venerable age, for varied opportunities, for wide observation, for learning and acuteness, unquestionably pre-eminent; and they altogether agree with the view which I have endeavoured to make clear, though for the laying out of the argument I alone am responsible.

But finally, this aspect of oblation at the Holy Eucharist, though negatively it may have little connection with some Liturgies of early ages, is, when viewed on its positive side, in strict harmony with Holy Scripture: and harmony with Holy Scripture is surely of more vital consequence than resemblance to liturgical forms, which, though ancient, are subsequent to the time of the Apostles. No Church in Christendom declares more emphatically than ours that the offering of our substance is properly a part of Divine worship; for not only is the act of giving made customary during our most sacred service, but it is associated with the most expressive liturgical language. We are admonished in this way that our gifts are to be viewed, not merely as a result of human charity, but as a sacrifice to Almighty God. In no way could we better fulfil such precepts as those which we read in the Epistles: "On the first day of the week let every one lay by him in store, as God has prospered him:" "To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

J. S. HOWSON.

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## ART. II.—CHRISTMAS EVANS.

**I**N the articles on "The Church in Wales," which appeared two years ago in this Magazine, written by Canon Powell Jones, mention is made of Rowlands of Llangeitho, Williams of Pantycelyn (the poet), Peter Williams (the commentator), Howel Harries of Trevecca, Griffith Jones of Llanddrownor, Charles of Bala, Jones, Rector of Llangan, and other eminent Christian workers in the Principality. Griffith Jones, Rector of Llanddrownor, was the first and foremost among the Welsh