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## ‘OUR ALMS AND OBLATIONS’: AN HISTORICAL STUDY.

THE object of the following paper is to investigate, solely on historical grounds, the sense of the word ‘oblations,’ as it occurs in the prayer ‘For the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here in earth’ in the Book of Common Prayer &c. of the Church of England. It is now several years since the subject was discussed at considerable length by the late Dr. Howson (Dean of Chester) and the learned liturgist, the late Canon T. F. Simmons<sup>1</sup>. The discussion was not exhaustive. A good deal of additional evidence deserves consideration, and the evidence formerly adduced claims a fresh review.

I. As is well known, the word ‘oblations’ appears for the first time in the prayer ‘For the whole state of Christ’s Church’ in the Prayer Book of 1662. Now in the same Prayer Book we find a new rubrical direction (placed immediately before this prayer and after the rubric directing the reception and presentation of money-offerings from the people), ordering that ‘when there is a Communion, the Priest shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient.’ Hence some have concluded (and not unnaturally at first sight) that in the phrase ‘alms and oblations,’ occurring in the prayer immediately following, we have a reference to the two several

<sup>1</sup> In the pages of the *Churchman* (January and June, 1882).

things placed consecutively upon the table,—in ‘alms’ to the collected money of the congregation, in ‘oblations’ to the elements. It is also to be observed that the collected money is first placed on the table, and then the bread and wine; and in the subsequent prayer the order of the words is ‘alms’ first, and then ‘oblations.’ This interpretation has the charm of simplicity, and is undoubtedly attractive. The student of Christian antiquity is pleased to see here what he thinks a revival of the rite of offering the bread and wine in a manner that reminds him of the practice of the Church in days as early as those of Justin Martyr.

Yet a further examination of the evidence will lead the inquirer to hesitate in accepting this interpretation. And, first, it will be observed that the prayer for the Church militant is ordered to be said whether there is a Communion or not. If no bread and wine have been placed upon the table, the minister is still enjoined to ask God mercifully to accept ‘our alms and oblations.’ This fact alone seems sufficient to dispose of the view of those who take the word ‘oblations’ to refer *exclusively* to the bread and wine. Hence, although this view was put forward not many years after the publication of the Prayer Book of 1662 by Symon Patrick (afterwards Bishop of Chichester, and then of Ely), it must be dismissed as inconsistent with the text of the Prayer Book itself<sup>1</sup>.

Secondly, the study of the writings of the English divines of the seventeenth century shows very plainly that there was a school of churchmen whose study of the Fathers and of the ancient Liturgies made them well acquainted with the beautiful and edifying rite of offering God’s creatures of bread and wine at the altar prior to consecration. There can be little doubt that there were some in 1661 who would gladly have seen the rite introduced into the English Prayer Book, as, in 1637, it

<sup>1</sup> ‘We pray him therefore, in our communion service, to accept our “oblations” (meaning those of bread and wine) as well as our “alms.”’ *Mensa Mystica* (*Works*, Oxford, 1858, vol. i p. 115). The editor of the Oxford edition of Patrick’s *Works* does not inform us from what edition of the *Mensa Mystica* he has printed his text. These words did not, of course, appear in the first edition (1660), but they are to be found in the second (1667) and subsequent editions. If the conclusions of this paper be accepted, Patrick’s observation is an illustration of the caution with which even almost contemporary glosses are to be viewed. For further observations on Patrick’s view, see p. 344.

had been introduced, with the approval of Laud and Wren, into the Scottish Prayer Book<sup>1</sup>. We find evidence of a disposition among the divines of the seventeenth century to regard the elements of bread and wine as 'oblations' as early, at least, as Dean Field, who wrote, 'We must observe that by the name sacrifice, gift, or present, first, the *oblation* of the people is meant that consisteth of bread and wine, brought and set upon the Lord's Table<sup>2</sup>.' Again, Joseph Mede, though from a somewhat different standpoint, laid great stress on the *oblation* of the bread and wine<sup>3</sup>. The learned layman, Hamon L'Estrange, writing shortly before the last revision<sup>4</sup>, reckons as the first of 'the sacrifices and oblations' of the Holy Communion 'the bringing of our gifts to the altar, that is the species and elements of the sacred symbols<sup>5</sup>.' Herbert Thorndike was not only a 'coadjutor' on the episcopal side at the Savoy Conference, but was a member of the Convocation of Canterbury (1661) which adopted our present Prayer Book; and his signature, as Proctor of the clergy of the Diocese of London, is subscribed to 'the Book annexed.' Two years previously he had written, 'The elements of the Eucharist before they be consecrated are truly accounted *oblations* or sacrifices<sup>6</sup>.' These passages (and others could be added) are sufficient to show that there were churchmen in the seventeenth century who were not unlikely to be willing to see a ceremonial offering of the bread and wine introduced into the English Prayer Book.

But, more than this, we have evidence that a proposal with this intent was actually brought before the revisers of 1661, and brought before them by no mean authority. Indeed, no one exercised a more powerful influence upon the work of the last revision than John Cosin. We can say with considerable confidence that Cosin's corrections and emendations of the

<sup>1</sup> The rubric of the Scottish Prayer Book runs thus: 'And the Presbyter shall then offer up and place the bread and wine prepared for the Sacrament upon the Lord's Table, that it may be ready for that service.'

<sup>2</sup> *Of the Church* (edit. 1628) p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> See more particularly *The Christian Sacrifice*, chap. viii (1635).

<sup>4</sup> L'Estrange died in 1656. The *Alliance* was not published till 1659.

<sup>5</sup> *Alliance of Divine Offices* p. 273 (Lib. Anglo-Cath. Theol.).

<sup>6</sup> *Epilogue to the Tragedy of the Church of England* (printed in the Lib. Anglo-Cath. Theol.; *Works* vol. iv part i p. 107).

Prayer Book, as exhibited in Sancroft's 'fair copy' (now in the Bodleian), was a volume actually before the committee engaged on the review of the Prayer Book at Ely House in 1661<sup>1</sup>. Now in this book we find the suggested rubric, 'And, if there be a Communion, the priest shall then offer up and place upon the Table soe much Bread and Wine as he shall thinke sufficient.' Here was a suggested rubric that came before the committee with all the weight of Cosin's well-deserved reputation; but the committee, while adopting the substance of the rubric, deliberately struck out the words '*offer up.*' It is difficult to conceive a more emphatic expression of dissent from the view that the placing of the bread and wine upon the table was to be put forward, in the Prayer Book of 1662, as an offering or oblation. And it should be observed that it is not as though the omission was *per incuriam*; the suggestion was made, and it was deliberately rejected.

Thirdly, the influence of the ill-fated Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 upon the last revision of the English Prayer Book could easily be illustrated by scores of examples. In that book in the corresponding rubric we read 'the presbyter shall then offer up and place the bread and wine' &c. But in the case of this particular rubric its influence was insufficient to effect the adoption of the rubric in its entirety in the Prayer Book of 1662: 'offer up' was not adopted.

Fourthly, of signal import, as bearing upon our inquiry, is the striking difference and contrast between the language of the present rubric with reference to the presentation of the 'alms and other devotions' of the people, and its language with reference to the placing of the elements. We exhibit the two in juxtaposition, italicizing the words that bring out the contrast.

'The Deacons, Church-wardens, or other fit person appointed for that purpose, . . . and *reverently bring it* [the decent bason] to the Priest, who shall *humbly present and place it* upon the holy Table.'

'And when there is a Communion the Priest shall then *place* upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient.'

<sup>1</sup> For an account of Sancroft's 'fair copy,' see Parker's *Introduction to the History of the Successive Revisions of the Book of Common Prayer* p. xcvi.

The alms &c. are to be *reverently* brought, and *humbly presented and placed*: while not a word is said of the presentation of the elements. They are to be 'placed,' and the rubric does not qualify the mode of their being placed. This contrast in rubrics immediately consecutive, and more particularly in view of the fact that the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 and Cosin's notes were before the revisers, seems to point to the superior influence, with regard to this question, of those among the revisers who may be called the more conservative, or cautious, or timid party. If there had been a suspicion about such words as 'offer up,' the word 'present,' one would fancy, might have been used with little danger of giving offence; yet even the word 'present' is avoided. It is impossible to ignore the significance of the contrast.

It may be here remarked that, while the first of the four considerations that have been laid before the reader is simply destructive of the theory that the word 'oblations' refers *exclusively* to the elements, the other three raise and support the presumption that since the word 'offer' and even the word 'present' have been studiously avoided, we are not warranted in supposing that the elements together with the 'other devotions' of the people were by the revisers intended to be included under the word 'oblations' occurring in the prayer following.

II. But it will be reasonably asked—If the word 'oblations' does not refer to the elements, to what does it refer? And why was it introduced for the first time at the last revision? Both these questions can, it seems to me, be satisfactorily answered.

It will be best, in the first place, to illustrate the use of the word 'oblations' as applied to offerings in money. The rubric of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 has been often pointed to in this connexion, but it is so pertinent that it may once again be transcribed. It runs as follows:—'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 Church-wardens 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!<sup>1</sup> Now in the same book, at the end of the Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper, we find a rubric directing that 'that *which was offered* shall be divided in the presence of the Presbyter and the Church-wardens, whereof one half shall be to the use of the Presbyter to provide him books of holy divinity: the other half shall be faithfully kept and employed on some pious or charitable use, for the decent furnishings of that Church, or the publike relief of their poore, at the discretion of the Presbyter and Church-wardens.' We see from this that half of the *oblations* which had been brought in the bason were always to go to increasing the clergyman's library, and that of the other half the whole, or part of it, might be spent upon such pious uses as the furnishing of the church. It was natural when the relief of the poor was only a possible destination of the money offerings to choose the more comprehensive word. Yet in the Scottish Prayer Book the adjustment of expression was halting, for in the prayer 'for the whole state of Christ's Church' we have no words referring to 'oblations' as distinct from 'alms.' This blot, as we shall see, was observed by Cosin, and a correction suggested.

At this point it may be well to exhibit some evidence illustrative of the use of the word 'oblations' with particular reference to moneys given towards the maintenance of the clergy. If the liturgical student is familiar with the application of the word 'oblation' to the offering of the elements in the service of the Eucharist, those who extend their inquiries into the wider field of Church law and custom are familiar with another technical or quasi-technical use of the term.

And, first, it may be well to glance at the use of the word in the mediaeval period. We have ample evidence of the use of *oblaciones* in the sense of money-offerings towards the maintenance of the clergy, and more particularly to the money-offerings made at mass. Thus in the Statutes of the Church of Lichfield, enacted in 1194, we read, 'Dignitas autem ecclesiae Lichfeldensis est, ut quicumque capellanus, notus vel ignotus, in aliquo altari, principali tamen excepto, celebraverit, *oblaciones omnes argenti*, quae sibi offeruntur, ad usus suos libere

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.

poterit retinere, nisi pro aliquo quinque presbyterorum celebrare sit requisitus<sup>1</sup>.'

In the Statutes of the Synod of Exeter (1287) it is provided that the erection of chapels should not be prejudicial to the interests of the mother parochial church, and therefore it was enacted 'ut sacerdotes in dictis capellis ministrantes *universas oblationes*, quas in ipsis (*al. ipsos*) offerri contigerit, ecclesie matricis rectori cum integritate restituant<sup>2</sup>.' Gilbert, bishop of Chichester, in Synod, in 1292, condemned certain accursed persons who, at weddings, churchings, and other rites, 'ad unius *oblationem* denarii *devotionem populi* restringere sunt moliti; residuum *oblationis* fidelium suis pro libito vel alienis usibus applicantes<sup>3</sup>.' In Lynwood's *Provinciale*, after learning the general sense of the word, we read, 'Specialiter vero loquendo dicitur *Oblatio* id quod in *Missa* offertur sacerdoti, quae in praecipuis festivitatibus debita et necessaria est<sup>4</sup>.' What was originally voluntary, and in theory was for a long time voluntary, came to be regarded as 'dues.' The offering-days, generally four in number, are often mentioned, but they were not, with the exception of Christmas and Easter, everywhere the same. In the Constitutions (1256) of Giles de Bridport, bishop of Salisbury, all parishioners are enjoined to *offer* four times a year, 'scilicet in die natalis Domini, in die Paschae, in die solennitatis ecclesiae, et in dedicatione ecclesiae<sup>5</sup>.' In the Constitutions of the Synod of Exeter in 1287 (referred to above) there is a whole chapter *De Oblationibus*, in which it was ordained that every adult, viz. every one of fourteen years and upwards, should bring his *oblations* to the parish church four times a year, namely at Christmas, Easter, the feast 'sancti loci,' and the feast of the dedication of the church or (if such were the custom of the place) the feast of All Saints<sup>6</sup>. Coming down to the period of the

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins' *Concilia* i 499. The five presbyters here referred to I take to be the five chaplains appointed specially to the duties of the great altar. Without the permission of that one of the five who happened to be at the time 'hebdomadary,' no one with the exception of the bishop and the dean was permitted to celebrate at the great altar. *Ibid.* 500.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ii 137.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii 183.

<sup>4</sup> *Lib.* i tit. 3 p. 21 (edit. 1679).

<sup>5</sup> Wilkins' *Concilia* i 713.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* ii 160, where other interesting regulations concerning 'oblations' will be found.

Reformation we find the Act 27 Hen. VIII c. 12 (1536) ordaining 'that the Feasts of the Nativity of our Lord, of Easter Day, of the Nativity of St. John Baptist, and St. Michael the Archangel be accounted, accepted, and taken for the four general Offering-Days.' The bearing of the Offering-Days (which were continued in the Reformed Church, and were referred to in the rubric up to the last revision of the Prayer Book) on the choice of the offertory sentences will be seen later on.

It was, of course, quite common to make an offering for the use of the priest on other days beside the days known more particularly as 'offering-days.' And in the accounts kept of the expenses of noble and royal personages in the mediæval period the frequency of such oblations is very observable. In vernacular books of devotion for the laity references to the general practice are common<sup>1</sup>.

As to the exact time at mass and the manner in which the offerings of the laity were made, the rubrics of the English missals are, so far as I know, silent. But the popular books, which we may call 'Companions to the Mass,' show that the people made their oblations immediately after the Mass-Creed and Offertory had been sung. At this point those who wished to offer went up towards the altar<sup>2</sup>. Though this was probably the general mode of the laity making their offerings, it is likely enough that there were local variations, as there were certainly abuses that had to be corrected, such, for instance, as that condemned in a thirteenth-century Scottish Statute, from which it appears that at the communion of the laity on Easter Day certain priests would hold the host in their hands and not deliver it till the lay communicant had actually handed over his oblation<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Much information on the subject will be found in Canon Simmons' notes to the *Lay Folks Mass-Book* (E. E. T. S.) pp. 222-244.

<sup>2</sup> Canon Simmons (*Lay Folks Mass-Book* p. 236) gives evidence in support of the following statement: 'Up to the Reformation the offerers used to come up to the altar, upon the celebrant giving them a signal by turning round; perhaps, if they were slow in coming, by asking for his offering; or by coming down the altar steps, attended, if it were high mass, by deacon and sub-deacon; or, in a small church, by the parish clerk. The offerings were placed in the hand of the celebrant, or in the paten held by the deacon, or in a bason held by the clerk or by laymen of estate' &c.

<sup>3</sup> *Statuta Ecclesiae Scotticanae* vol. ii p. 40 'Audivimus a quibusdam cum in die

For the purpose of this paper this hasty glance at mediaeval usage will suffice; and we come down to what for our object is of more importance, the use of the word 'oblation' in the reformed Church of England. There is a pertinent passage in Hooker, which though familiar deserves citation, because it is not only itself an historical testimony, but from the weight and authority of the writer it would naturally have influenced the thoughts and the language of the divines of the seventeenth century. T[homas] C[artwright] had objected to the word 'offerings' being applied to the money given to the clergyman by women at their churching. Hooker thus replied—'The name of Oblations applied not only here to those small and petit payments which yet are a part of the minister's right, but also generally given unto all such allowances as serve for their needful maintenance, is both ancient and convenient. For as the life of the clergy is spent in the service of God, so it is sustained with his revenue. Nothing therefore more proper than to give the name of Oblations to such payments in token that we offer unto him whatsoever his ministers receive<sup>1</sup>.'

I next present an example of the use of the word 'oblation' of an earlier date, and this time in association with the word 'alms.' It will be seen too that it is used in a wider sense than that of offerings for the clergy, and its application extends generally to gifts for 'pious uses.' The passage is from the royal 'Injunctions' of 1547<sup>2</sup>. 'They shall provide and have within three months after this visitation a strong chest, with a hole in the upper part thereof . . . which chest you shall set and fasten near unto the high altar, to the intent the parishioners should put into it their *oblation and alms* for their poor neighbours . . . the which *alms and devotion* of the people the keepers of the keys shall at times convenient take out of the chest, and distribute the same in the presence of the whole parish, or six of them, to be

*Pasche fideles Christi suscipere debent Eucharistie sacramentum, quidam presbyteri (quod dolentes referimus) illud prestare denegant impudenter nisi prius oblationes suas tunc porrigant ad altare, et eodem die exactiones faciunt a laicis, corpus Christi tenentes in manibus ac si dicerent Quid mihi vultis dare, et ego eum tradam.'* At Salisbury we find an ordinance against receiving after mass oblations from the laity who have communicated on Easter-Day. See Frere's *Sarum Customs* p. 162.

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical Polity* V lxxiv 4 (Keble's edit.).

<sup>2</sup> Wilkins' *Concilia* iv 3. The *Injunctions* will also be found in Cranmer's *Miscellaneous Writings* (Parker Society) p. 503.

truly and faithfully delivered to their most needy neighbours ; and if they be provided for, then to the reparation of highways next adjoining<sup>1</sup>. For proof that the repair of public roads was regarded as a work of Christian charity at a date before the Church of England had rejected the supremacy of Rome, we need not go further back than to a sermon of Latimer preached at Cambridge as early as 1529. 'Oblations,' he said, 'be prayers, alms-deeds, or any work of charity : these be called oblations to God.' And again, 'Evermore bestow the greatest part of thy goods in works of mercy, and the less part in voluntary works. Voluntary works be called all manner of offering in the Church, except your four offering-days and your tithes. Setting up candles, gilding and painting, building of churches, giving of ornaments, going on pilgrimages, *making of highways*, and such other, be called voluntary works ; which works be of themselves marvellous good and convenient to be done<sup>2</sup>.'

In this passage from Latimer, the word 'oblations' is used in a wide sense, and in that wide sense it included 'alms-deeds.' But the passage from Hooker shows how it was also used more particularly with reference to offerings made towards the maintenance of the clergy<sup>3</sup>.

It has already been pointed out that in all the editions of the English Prayer Book up to 1662 there stood, immediately after the rubric respecting the offering or gathering of the devotion of the people at the Holy Communion, a rubric enjoining that upon 'the offering-days appointed every man and woman shall pay to the Curate the due and accustomed offerings.' But while this rubric was omitted in the Prayer Book of 1662, the offertory sentences referring to the maintenance of the clergy were retained ; and for the first time in 1662 we have in this place the *express* mention of 'alms for the poor *and other devotions* of the people.' This change suggests the thought that the revisers of the Prayer Book in 1661, while no longer seeming to enforce the practice of the payment of 'dues' on offering-days (which, it would seem, had

<sup>1</sup> This order is repeated in Elizabeth's *Injunctions* (1559). See Cardwell, *Documentary Annals* i 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons* (Parker Society) pp. 17, 23.

<sup>3</sup> The frequent association together of the two terms 'alms' and 'oblations' must have been inevitable for men familiar with their Latin Bible. See *Acts* xxiv 17 'Eleemosynas facturus in gentem meam veni et oblationes' &c.

fallen into desuetude), kept in view the possibility of the collection at the offertory being made use of, in more or less degree, for the support of the clergy. The 'other devotions' of the rubric and the 'oblations' of the following prayer would cover and include this application of money collected, as well as other applications to pious uses.

Again, it is worth observing that up to 1662 there existed a rubric before the offertory which especially emphasized that the destination of the money about to be collected was for the poor. From 1552 (inclusive) onwards to 1662 we find the rubric 'After such Sermon, Homily, or Exhortation the Curate shall declare unto the people whether there be any holy days or fasting days the week following, *and earnestly exhort them to remember the poor, saying one or more of these sentences following*, as he thinketh most convenient by his discretion.' Now with this rubric before them, the Puritan divines at the time of the Savoy Conference very pertinently and justly raised the 'exception,' 'four of them' [i.e. of the following scripture sentences] are 'more proper to draw out the people's bounty to their ministers than their charity to the poor<sup>1</sup>.' The answer of the Bishops to the exception of the Ministers runs simply, 'The sentences tend all to exhort the people to pious liberality, whether the object be the minister or the poor<sup>2</sup>.' But the attention of the Bishops had been called to the matter, and we find the rubric about 'earnestly exhorting the people to remember the poor' struck out. And thus one particular destination of the offertory was no longer especially emphasized. But the revisers of 1662 did more than this: they for the *first* time wrote in the offertory rubric that the persons appointed to collect should 'receive the alms for the poor *and other devotions* of the people.' And yet further, they added at the close of the service the rubric 'After the Divine Service ended, the money given at the offertory shall be disposed of to such pious *and* charitable uses as the Minister and Church-wardens shall think fit.'

And now we feel we are approaching the answers to the questions with which we commenced this section of our subject. The attention of the Bishops had been drawn to a certain

<sup>1</sup> Cardwell's *History of Conferences* &c. p. 318, 2nd edit.

<sup>2</sup> Cardwell *ut sup.* p. 353.

inconsistency between the formerly existing rubric directing an earnest exhortation to give to the poor and four of the sentences which referred to the support of the ministry. They defended the use of these four offertory sentences, but they deleted the rubric which suggested the 'exception' raised by the Puritan divines.

The distinction between alms and other offerings collected from the people was pressed upon them. What more natural than that they should add to the word *alms*, in the prayer for their acceptance, the wider term *oblations*, with reference to offerings for 'pious uses,' as the former word had reference to 'charitable uses'?

Once again, it should be remembered that in the Prayer Book of 1662, in which the word 'oblations' occurs for the first time in the prayer, we also find for the first time a ritual and ceremonial presentation at the Holy Table of the money collected. Up to that time the practice had been first (from 1549 to 1552), while the clerks were singing the Offertory those who were disposed offered 'unto the poor men's box, every one according to his ability and charitable mind,' and afterwards (from 1552 to 1662), instead of the members of the congregation each going up and making his offering, 'the Churchwardens or some other by them appointed' gathered 'the devotion of the people and put the same into the poor men's box.' In 1662 it was sought in a ceremonial way to bring out the truth that the devotions of the people were really offerings to God. The word 'oblations' would indeed have been appropriate if it had occurred in the earlier Prayer Books; but the thoughts of those who brought the book to its present shape were now more directly turned to this aspect of the truth. And this may have possibly contributed to the feeling which introduced the word 'oblations' into the prayer.

III. Hitherto I have been dealing mainly with the texts and rubrics of successive editions of the Book of Common Prayer, and with the history of the last revision. I would now go on to notice illustrations of our subject from other sources, chiefly belonging to the seventeenth century.

At the time of the negotiations about the projected marriage of Prince Charles with the Infanta of Spain, Wren was appointed

to go to Madrid as one of the Prince's chaplains. Whether the regulations for the services at Madrid were drawn up by Wren does not appear. Among the regulations we find, 'That the Communion be celebrated in due form with *an oblation* of every communicant<sup>1</sup>.'

In 1635 Bishop Field, acting under a commission from Bishop Wren, consecrated the Parish Church of Abbey Dore in Herefordshire. The service for the consecration is preserved in manuscript in the British Museum, and was printed by Mr. Fuller Russell in 1874. This has been referred to both by Dean Howson and Canon Simmons, and the latter, with a candour which may be expected from, but is not always found in, controversial writers, adduces from it a passage which makes very distinctly for the interpretation of the word 'oblations' for which we have been contending. It confirms me in a supposition to which I have been led that (however unreasonable it may appear) there was some feeling of dislike to using the word 'oblation' in connexion with the bread and wine, even when they were said to be 'offered,' although the noun-substantive is derived directly from the participial form of the verb. Canon Simmons thus describes the part of the service with which we are concerned: 'At the offertory, after the sentence "Let your light so shine" &c., the bishop "offers and lays upon the table first his act of consecration." He likewise "layeth on the table" certain conveyances in law for the erection and dotation of the church and rectory. "Then . . . the bishop offereth [the bread and wine] also." "The priest treatably proceedeth to read other of the sentences, especially those *that are for the oblations, and not for the alms*, viz. the second ['Lay not for yourselves' &c.], the sixth ['Who goeth a warfare' &c.] . . . &c. All the while the chaplain standeth before the Table, and receiveth the *oblations* of all that offer.'" It would perhaps be impossible to find anything more pertinent to the discussion before us. It uses the word 'oblations' in the restricted sense of money-offerings which were not 'alms,' although the word 'offer' had been used of the presentation of the document containing the deed of consecration of the church and also of the bread and wine. In the following prayer the word 'oblations' alone (without 'alms') was used.

<sup>1</sup> *State Papers*, Spain, March 10, 1623.

Some ten years earlier the same Bishop Field had taken part in a still more elaborate and ceremonious function, the coronation of King Charles I at Westminster (February 2, 1626). The service for the Coronation has been recently printed by the Henry Bradshaw Society, under the editorship of Canon C. Wordsworth. Early in the service 'the king maketh his first oblation,' consisting of a pall and a pound of gold. After the Nicene Creed the king 'offers' bread and wine for the Communion, and after that comes, what in Sancroft's interlineation is called 'the second oblation,' consisting of 'a mark [i.e. eight ounces Troy] of gold,' 'offered by the king'<sup>1</sup>.

To understand the next quotation, which is from Bishop Andrewes, it is necessary to remember the form of the rubric upon which Andrewes commented. It ran as follows: 'Then shall the Churchwardens, or some other by them appointed, gather the devotion of the people, and put the same into the poor men's box, and upon the offering-days appointed, every man and woman shall pay to the Curate the due and accustomed offerings.' Andrewes remarks: 'They should not pay it to the Curate alone, but to God upon the altar<sup>2</sup>.' This points to Andrewes' sense of the lack of a solemn and ritual presentation before God of the oblations made on the offering-days, which sentiment found expression as regards both alms and other offerings in the amended rubric of 1662.

It was, I take it, with a feeling for the distinction between alms and other money-offerings that Andrewes, in his own practice, adopted what would seem to us nowadays a rather strange ceremony. Bishop Buckeridge, in the sermon preached at the funeral of Andrewes, says: 'He [Andrewes] kept monthly communions inviolably . . . In which his carriage was not only decent and religious, but also exemplary; *he ever offered twice*

<sup>1</sup> All these features appear in the service as used at the coronation of Queen Victoria. Her 'first oblation' was a 'Pall or Altar-Cloth of Gold . . . and an Ingot or Wedge of Gold of a pound weight.' At the proper time she 'offers Bread and Wine for the Communion.' Then, after a prayer said by the Archbishop, the Queen makes her 'second [not her third] Oblation,' viz. 'a Purse of Gold. . . And the Archbishop coming to her receives it into the Bason and places it upon the Altar.' A special prayer for the acceptance of 'these oblations' follows. See Maskell's *Monumenta Ritualia* (2nd edit.) ii pp. 94 and 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Minor Works* p. 155.

at the Altar, and so did every one of his servants, to which purpose he gave them money lest it should be burdensome to them<sup>1</sup>. And by a piece of singular good fortune Prynne has preserved, in his *Canterburie's Doome*, Andrewes' inventory of the furniture, plate, &c., of his chapel, which records the existence of two basons, one for 'alms,' and another for 'offerings<sup>2</sup>.'

A passage anticipating the practice of receiving the offerings of the people in a bason, as enjoined in 1662, will be found in the Form of Consecration of Jesus Chapel at Southampton used by Andrewes on September 17, 1620. And it may first be recorded that among other prayers offered up by the Bishop, *flexis genibus ante sacram mensam*, 'for all Thy servants who shall come into this Thy holy temple,' we find the following, 'When they offer, that their *oblation and alms* may come up as a memorial before Thee, and they find and feel that with such sacrifices Thou art well pleased.' The allusions to Acts x 4 and Heb. xiii 16 show what was in the mind of Andrewes when he spoke of *oblation and alms*. Later on we find the rubric directing as follows: 'populus universus non communicaturus dimittitur, et porta clauditur. Prior sacellanus pergit legendo sententias illas hortatorias ad eleemosynas, interea dum alter sacellanus singulos communicaturos adit, atque in patinam argenteam oblationes colligit; collecta est summa 4*l.* 12*s.* 2*d.*, quam dominus episcopus convertendam in calicem huic capellae donandum decernit<sup>3</sup>.'

In 1641 the House of Lords appointed a *Committee of Religion* 'touching innovations in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England; together with considerations upon the Book of Common Prayer.' Among the results of the proceedings of this committee we find noted 'among innovations in discipline': 'By introducing an offertory before the communion, distinct from the giving of alms to the poor<sup>4</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *Andrewes' Sermons* v p. 296 (Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology).

<sup>2</sup> 'Plate for the Chappell—

Two Candlesticks gilt for tapers . . . . 60 ounces at 5*s.* 6*d.* the ounce.

A round Bason for Offerings, gilt and chased 31½ " 6*s.* 8*d.* "

A round Bason for Almes, gilt and chased 30 " 6*s.* 0*d.* "'

*Canterburie's Doome* (1646) p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> Andrewes' *Pattern of Catech. Doctrines &c.* (Lib. Anglo-Cath. Theol.) pp. 317, 326.

<sup>4</sup> See Cardwell's *Conferences &c.* p. 273.

At the trial of Laud there was cited against him from the volume entitled the *Select Statutes of the University of Oxford 1638* (p. 79) an ordinance as to the ceremonies to be observed 'in die Comitiorum,' where it is directed that at St. Mary's 'primum Vice-Cancellarius, postea singuli Inceptores in Facultatibus, deinde Procuratores, Bedellis praeceuntibus, ad Mensam Eucharistiae sacram, cum debita reverentia, *oblaciones faciant*!'. The passage is cited here only to illustrate the use of the word 'oblations,' and the practice, apparently, of the oblations being presented at the holy table.

Matthew Wren, bishop, successively, of Hereford, Norwich and Ely, was regarded as one of the liturgical experts of the Anglican Church in the seventeenth century. He was early in life chaplain to Bishop Andrewes. And it will be remembered that the *Book of Common Prayer for the use of the Church of Scotland* (1637) had the advantage of his criticism before its issue. After some eighteen or nineteen years' imprisonment in the Tower, he resumed his place among the bishops at the Restoration. Though his name does not appear among the bishops who sat at the Savoy Conference, he was one of the eight appointed, November 21, 1661, as a Committee of the Upper House of Convocation for the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. Now in the directions given by Wren on the occasion of his Primary Visitation of Norwich in 1636 we find, 'That the holy oblations, in such places where it pleaseth God at any time to put it into the hearts of his people by that holy action to acknowledge his gift of all they have to them, and their tenure of all from, and their debt of all to, him, be received by the minister standing before the table at their coming up to make the said oblation, and there by him to be reverently presented before the Lord and set upon the table till the service be ended'.<sup>1</sup> It does not appear whether this was distinct from the presentation of the alms or not. Attention is drawn simply to the use of the word *oblation* as applied to what is evidently an offering in money, and to the *oblation* being reverently presented and set on the table.

The late Bishop Jacobson, of Chester, did good service to the

<sup>1</sup> Prynne's *Canterburid's Doome* p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Wilkins' *Concilia* iv 526; Cardwell's *Documentary Annals* ii 205.

historical study of the Prayer Book by publishing, in 1874, his volume entitled *Fragmentary Illustrations of the History of the Book of Common Prayer from manuscript sources*. In this volume may be seen some notes upon the Prayer Book written by Wren with a view to its revision. These notes, as we can infer from his introductory remarks, were written about 1660 or 1661. The notes are throughout full of interest to the student; but I am now concerned only with those relating to the subject in hand. Wren suggests that after 'the Banns for Matrimony' have been published, the minister shall 'signify the contents of such Briefs as are brought to the Parish, for Collections.' The proposed rubric then proceeds, 'And then he shall say, Hear now the Monitions of the Holy Ghost, as it is written, naming the Chapter and Verse whence it is taken, and reading one or more, as he shall think meet in his discretion.' Wren then groups the offertory sentences into three classes: the first seven suited 'in general for all kind of Charitable Gifts.' 'The seven next,' he says (and to this special attention is invited), 'tend particularly to that which they called *Prosphora* in the Primitive Church, that is a freewill Offering unto God,' and the six last especially 'for the *Eleemosyna*, that is, our Alms Deeds to the Poor.' First, it will be noted that there is no hint of the large interpretation which some would give to the word *alms* as it occurs in the Prayer Book, viz. as a word that might include the gifts for pious uses and the support of the clergy. Secondly, let us see what Wren had in mind when he wrote the liturgical word *Prosphora*. This we can gather from the sentences which he appropriates thereto. The first is 'Lay not for yourselves treasures upon earth' &c.; the second is 'Charge them that are rich' &c.; the third is 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you' &c.; the fourth is 'Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things' &c.; the fifth is 'While we have time let us do good unto all men' &c.; the sixth is 'Blessed be the man that provideth for the sick and needy' &c. [the word 'sick,' as I should suppose, suggesting to Wren that this sentence belongs rather to *Prosphora* than to the *Eleemosyna*]; and the seventh is 'Be merciful after thy power' &c.

But Wren had also in view *Prosphora* designed for the sup-

port of the clergy. Among the Scripture sentences which he tells us 'tend particularly to what they called *Prospora* in the Primitive Church' appears the sentence 'Do ye not know that they which minister' &c. (1 Cor. ix 13). Why Wren chose to use the word *Prospora* rather than oblations is matter for conjecture. I suspect it may have been because the word 'oblations' had been in former times so emphatically used for 'dues,' or moneys recoverable at law. But, however this may be, it is plain that his language lends no countenance to the notion that the word 'alms' was in his day regarded as properly applicable to money given for the support of the clergy. The main point, however, to which I would direct attention is that Wren, like other divines of that period, had prominently in view the giving of *Prospora* as distinct from *Alms*.

We now proceed to consider the view of another liturgical authority of that day. Eminent as were Andrewes and Wren in this department of research, Cosin's active influence on the last revision makes his way of regarding this matter more especially valuable. In the second series of his Notes<sup>1</sup>, commenting on 'the offering-days' he writes, 'Which order is in some places among us still observed. And the king or queen in their chapel-royal (or wherever they be at church on those days) never omit it, but arise from their seats, and go in solemn manner to present their offerings upon their knees at God's altar. And then is read by the priest or bishop attending this sentence here prescribed, 1 Cor. ix. "They which minister about holy things"' &c.

Now it is to Cosin's notes, as corrected by him in the hand of Sancroft, his chaplain, that the Prayer Book of 1662 owes the words 'the alms and *other devotions of the people*'<sup>2</sup>. And after what has been shown as to Cosin's view of the importance of a ritual presentation of money-offerings other than alms for the poor, a presumption is raised that he understood 'oblations' (in the prayer 'for the whole state of Christ's Church') in this sense. But we can advance beyond presumptions, for we are so fortunate as to possess a Service used by Cosin at the Consecration of Christ Church, Tynemouth, July 5, 1668, that is six years after the last revision; and this is the more important because Cosin in that

<sup>1</sup> *Works* vol. v p. 324 (Lib. Anglo-Cath. Theol.).

<sup>2</sup> See Parker's *Introduction* &c. p. cxcviii.

Service actually introduced the *offering* of the bread and wine for the Communion which had been rejected at the last revision of the Book of Common Prayer. After the offering of the bread and wine the rubric of Cosin's Consecration Service directs the Bishop to offer 'his own *alms and oblations*.' '¶ Then one of the priests shall receive the *alms and oblations*.' Here the phrase 'alms and oblations,' twice used, signifies, beyond all question, something distinct from the bread and wine<sup>1</sup>. Can it be contended with any show of reason that the very same phrase used immediately afterwards in the prayer refers to something different and wider, to something that includes also the bread and wine? To my mind this Consecration Service of Cosin goes to support the view that, even if Cosin had succeeded, where we know he failed, in introducing the word 'offer' (in 1661) as applied to the bread and wine, it would still, from the historical view-point, be insufficiently established that the phrase 'alms and oblations' in the prayer was *intended* to include the bread and wine.

Anthony Sparrow is said to have first published his well-known *Rationale upon the Book of Common Prayer* in 1643. Two editions, at any rate, were published before the issue of our present Prayer Book<sup>2</sup>. And the editions of the work that appeared during his lifetime, subsequent to 1662, were not throughout brought up to date. We find in the later editions of the book no notice of the insertion of the word 'oblations' in the prayer 'for the whole state of Christ's Church'; but we have some notices that illustrate how he was accustomed to understand the word 'oblations' in connexion with the offertory. Some importance attaches to his testimony, as he was appointed one of the episcopal 'coadjutors' at the Savoy Conference.

Sparrow, in his commentary on the offertory, speaks at length on the Christian duty of making oblations. 'Offerings or oblations are a high part of God's service and worship taught

<sup>1</sup> The Consecration Service here referred to will be found in *The Correspondence of Bishop Cosin* (part ii), edited for the Surtees Society by Rev. George Ormsby. Canon Simmons suggests that this Consecration Service was very probably that 'which the bishop was commanded to draw up by the unanimous vote of the united Upper Houses of Convocation on March 22, 166½': see the Acts and Proceedings of Convocation as printed in Cardwell's *Synodalia* vol. ii p. 668.

<sup>2</sup> Allibone records the dates 1643, '55, '57, '61: but of the editions of 1643 and 1655 no copy appears to be known. See note on p. 346 below.

by the light of nature and right reason, which bids us to "honour God with our substance." "Our Saviour hath carefully taught us there [in the Gospel, Matt. v 23, 24.] the due manner of the performance of this duty of oblations, like as He did concerning alms and prayers.' He reminds his readers how the Gospel commended the offering of 'gold, frankincense and myrrh' by the wise men. He tells them that 'though oblations be acceptable at any time, yet at some times they have been thought more necessary, as (1) When the Church is in want, Exod. xxxv 4 &c. ['whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering, gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet' &c.]; (2) when we have received some signal and eminent blessing from God, Psalm lxxvi . . . ; (3) at our high and solemn festival, "three times in the year shall they appear before Me, and they shall not appear empty," especially when we receive the Holy Communion.'

A pertinent illustration of how 'alms' and 'oblations' were distinguished by writers of the Church of England, not long before the last revision of the Prayer Book, will be found in Henry Hammond's *View of the New Directory and Vindication of the Ancient Liturgy of the Church of England*, which appeared first in 1645. Having dwelt at some length on the origin of the offertory, Hammond proceeds, 'Now that this offering of Christians to God for pious and charitable uses<sup>1</sup> designed to them who are His proxies and deputy-receivers, may be the more liberally and withal more solemnly performed, many portions of Scripture are by the Liturgy designed to be read, to stir up and quicken this bounty, and those of three sorts, some belonging to *good works in general*, others to *alms-deeds*, others to *oblations*; and when it is received and brought to the priest he humbly prays God to accept those *alms*<sup>2</sup>. It will be remembered that at the date of Hammond's writings 'alms' alone stood in the prayer 'for the whole state of Christ's Church': and it is easy to understand that it would be felt by those who drew these distinctions a gain if some more general word or words were added to 'alms' in the prayer.

A little later than Hammond's *View of the New Directory &c.* we have Hamon L'Estrange commenting on the sentence 'Who

<sup>1</sup> Observe the distinction.

<sup>2</sup> *Works* (edit. 1674) vol. i part ii p. 154.

goeth a warfare' &c. in the following way. 'This with the four succeeding sentences, 7, 8, 9, 10, have a peculiar reference to the ministry; by which plain it is that our Church intended a double offering—one *elemosynary*, *alms* for the poor—another *oblatory*, for the maintenance of the clergy<sup>1</sup>. L'Estrange regarded the bread and wine as 'oblations,' yet it is plain, after reading the passage cited above, that it would be hazardous to suppose that his opinion in this respect countenanced the notion that in the phrase 'alms and oblations' we have a reference to anything else than the two parts of the 'double offering' of which he speaks. A few lines after the passage quoted L'Estrange writes, 'In the earliest times such spontaneous *oblations* were the only income of the Church, with no other alimony did the ministry subsist. . . . And though Christian princes restored, in after time, to God his own, and endowed the Church with tithes, yet did not these *oblations* cease thereupon.'

We must content ourselves with only one other testimony from the writers immediately preceding the Prayer Book Revision of 1661. But that testimony is weighty. As is well known, when the use of the Book of Common Prayer came to be forcibly proscribed during the Great Rebellion, various attempts were made by churchmen to supply its place, as best they could, with forms that were not included under the terms of the proscription. Among these attempts perhaps the most interesting is Jeremy Taylor's *Collection of Offices, or Forms of Prayer, in cases ordinary and extraordinary* &c. (1658). Now in his *Office or Order for the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, contained in this volume, there is a rubric directing 'a collection for the poor . . . while the minister reads some of these sentences or makes an exhortation to *charity and almes*.' At that particular juncture of affairs the clergy of the Church of England might well be spoken of as 'the poor'; but, at any rate, we find among the appointed sentences, 'Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth' &c. Then comes the rubrical direction, after the minister hath 'received it from the hand of him that gathered it, let him in

<sup>1</sup> *The Alliance of Divine Offices* (Lib. Anglo-Cath. Theol.) p. 274. The first edition of *The Alliance* was published in 1659.

a humble manner present it to God, laying it on the Communion Table, secretly and devoutly saying, 'Lord, accept the *oblation and alms* of thy people' &c. It should be added that there is no mention of any previous presentation of the elements. Here then, some three or four years previous to the last revision of the Prayer Book, we find in effect an almost exact anticipation of both the ceremonial presentation of the money offerings and also of the language of the following prayer<sup>1</sup>.

From the passages cited from the English divines prior to the last revision of the Prayer Book, it would appear that the word 'oblations,' when used in connexion with 'alms,' refers to money offerings destined (as distinct from 'alms,' or money for the relief of the poor) for pious uses of any kind, and, perhaps, more particularly for the maintenance of the clergy.

IV. Something may, in conclusion, be said of the sense in which the word 'oblations' in the prayer was understood subsequently to the last revision. We have already noticed (see p. 339) how Cosin used the word in 1668, in the Consecration Service for Christ Church, Tynemouth. Of not less importance are Archbishop Sancroft's Visitation Articles of the year 1686. Among the queries we find—

'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 ministers and churchwardens, or, if they disagree, by the appointment of the Ordinary?'<sup>2</sup>

It should be remembered that Sancroft had acted as clerk to Convocation during the proceedings which concerned the last revision of the Prayer Book, and there could have been few who were in a better position to know how the phrase 'alms and oblations' was to be understood.

A few words must be said as to what may be gathered from the French, Greek, and Latin translations of the Prayer Book in the reign of Charles II.

<sup>1</sup> The *Collection of Offices* will be found in Taylor's *Works* (Eden's edit.) vol. viii 571 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix to the second report of the Royal Commission on Ritual, p. 624.

It would be easy to attach too much weight to the testimony of Durel's translation of the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 into French. Charles II had ordered (Oct. 6, 1662) that when printed, and approved by one of the chaplains of the Bishop of London, it should be exclusively used in the parish churches of Jersey and Guernsey and in the French congregation of the Savoy &c. Dr. George Stradling, chaplain to the Bishop of London, certified (April 6, 1663) that Durel's version was in accordance throughout with the English original; yet, as a matter of fact, an examination of the contents of the book shows that Dr. Stradling's certificate was not justified. The version is inaccurate and faulty in many places. It serves, however, to show that Durel, and presumably Stradling, did not understand by the word ‘oblations’ the offering of the bread and wine<sup>1</sup>. The words of the prayer are rendered ‘Nous te supplions bien-humblement qu'il te plaise [*\*accepter nos aumosnes et nos oblations et*] recevoir nos Prieres’ &c. And the marginal note ran, ‘\*Ceci sera omis lors qu'il n'y aura point d'aumosne.’ Durel seems to have failed, at this time (though he afterwards in his Latin version corrected himself), to draw any distinction between ‘alms’ and ‘oblations.’ When there were no ‘alms’ the words of receiving ‘our alms and oblations’ were to be omitted.

Duport's Greek version (1665), published at Cambridge by the University printer, John Field, and dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, is equally faulty here, but shows that while the translator made no distinction between ‘alms’ and ‘oblations,’ he did not understand the latter word to refer to the bread and wine. *Ταπεινοφρόνως ἀντιβολουμέν σε* [*\*τὰς ἐλεημοσύνας καὶ προσφορὰς ἡμῶν*] καὶ ταύτας τὰς προσευχὰς κ.τ.λ., with the marginal note, ‘\*Ἐὰν οὐδεμίαν ἐλεημοσύνη ποιηθῆ, χρὴ παραλείπειν ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα (τὰς ἐλεημοσύνας καὶ προσφορὰς ἡμῶν).’

The French translation of Durel was plainly a hurried piece of work. Much superior is the Latin version which appeared under his name in 1670, and which probably incorporates some of the work of Earle, Pearson, and Dolben. The rubric im-

<sup>1</sup> Stradling had subscribed the MS copy of the Book of Common Prayer attached to the Act of Uniformity in his capacity as Proctor in Convocation of the clergy of the diocese of Llandaff.

mediately after the sentences for the offertory shows us how he understood the words in question. It runs thus: 'Dum ista recitantur, Diaconi, Aeditui, aliive ad hoc idonei, quibus illud muneri demandatum est, Eleemosynam in pauperum usus erogatam colligent, ut et alias populi oblationes in pios usus, in Amulâ seu lance idoneâ' &c.: while in the prayer 'for the whole state of Christ's Church' we have, both in the body of the prayer and in the marginal note, 'eleemosynas atque oblationes nostras.' It is quite evident that the translator, or translators, of this part of the Prayer Book regarded the 'oblations' of the prayer as meaning the same thing as the 'other devotions of the people' in the rubric<sup>1</sup>.

Thomas Comber's *Companion to the Temple* was, I think, the first systematic commentary on the Prayer Book written after the last revision<sup>2</sup>. The following passage may be cited from his *Paraphrase of the Prayer for the whole Church*:

'We humbly disclaiming our own merits beseech thee for Jesus' sake and by the Virtue of his Passion here set forth most mercifully to accept this poor acknowledgement of thy bounty, and testimony of our love in these our Alms to the Poor and Oblations to thy Ministers, intreating thee also' &c. In the margin Comber, referring to the words in italics, has the note 'This to be omitted when there is no collection.' And elsewhere, commenting on the sentences at the offertory, he tells us that St. Cyprian and the ancient canons show that 'the clergy were chiefly maintained out of the oblations made at the Communion.' From these passages it is plain how Dean Comber understood the word 'oblations.'

Patrick, on the other hand, as we have seen (p. 322), understood 'oblations' to signify the elements. But a passage in his popular work the *Christian Sacrifice* (which appeared after

<sup>1</sup> Lord Selborne (*Notes on some passages in the Liturgical History of the Reformed English Church* p. 73) considers that the dedication of this Latin version to the king suggests that it had public authority, and adds, 'There seems to be some reason to believe that this may be the Latin translation which was made under the direction of Convocation, as recorded in its Acts of April 26, 1662, and May 18, 1664, because it can hardly be supposed that a version made under such auspices would have been entirely suppressed, and the work of a private translator preferred.' But I do not claim official authority for the book.

<sup>2</sup> The third part of this work, dealing with the Communion Office, appeared in 1675.

*Mensa Mystica*) makes it plain that he had come to this view rather as inference of his own than from any knowledge of the intentions of those who in 1661 inserted the word 'oblations' in the prayer. 'These ["alms" and "oblations"'] are things distinct; and the former (alms) signifying that which was given for the relief of the poor, the latter (oblations) can signify nothing else but (according to the style of the ancient church) this bread and wine presented to God in a thankful remembrance of our food both dry and liquid (as Justin Martyr speaks), which he, the Creator of the world, hath made and given unto us<sup>1</sup>.' Those who have read the quotations cited from our earlier divines are in a position to judge whether the word 'oblations,' in this connexion, 'can signify nothing else.' Bishop Patrick's opinion then is in truth not in any sense an historical testimony as to the commonly accepted meaning of the word when he wrote; and that he expressed himself in this way points probably to the offertory having, as a matter of fact, ceased to be utilized for other objects than the relief of the poor, except in rare instances<sup>2</sup>.

In the eighteenth century Patrick's view was adopted by Wheatly in his *Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer*, and the deserved popularity of that useful book gave his interpretation of the word 'oblations' a wide currency. Similarly Archdeacon Sharp, in his *Visitation Charge* for 1735, accepts this view, though in a somewhat halting manner, for while he considers that the word 'oblations' refers to the bread and wine, he adds, 'I apprehend the word *oblations*, inserted in the prayer, may be consistently applied to a portion of the collection in the bason, viz. such share as shall be appropriated to acts of piety<sup>3</sup>.'

Canon Simmons, in his article in the *Churchman* for June, 1882, also adopts the view of this double application of the term. It may now be left to the reader to judge, not whether the words of the prayer may be privately glossed so as to

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of Symon Patrick* (Oxford edit. 1858) i 377.

<sup>2</sup> The view put forward by Patrick was eagerly accepted by the leading non-jurors and those of their school, such as Hickey (*The Christian Priesthood asserted* chap. ii § 10), and John Johnson (*Works* ii 386, Lib. Anglo-Cath. Theol.).

<sup>3</sup> *The Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer* &c. p. 76 (Oxford edit. 1834).

include a reference to the elements (which is a question quite beyond the scope of the present paper), but whether the language of the Prayer Book and the historical evidence here adduced show that the intention of the revisers of 1661, in using the phrase 'alms and oblations,' was to signify (a) 'alms and other money offerings for pious uses,' or (b) 'alms and the bread and wine,' or (c) 'alms and money for pious uses and also the bread and wine.' It will be seen that my own view is in favour of the first of these opinions<sup>1</sup>.

JOHN DOWDEN.

<sup>1</sup> I may be permitted to add that a ceremonial offering of the bread and wine seems to me a primitive and edifying rite; and, as is well known, it is expressly enjoined in the Scottish Communion Office; but I have concerned myself solely with the historical problem as to what is the true sense of the word 'oblations' in the English Book of Common Prayer. The examination of the question in the 'dry light' of facts has not been common; but it is a satisfaction to me to find that the view I have maintained is that which has been arrived at by such careful and cold-blooded historical students as Dr. Cardwell (*History of Confermers*, 2nd edit., p. 382), Mr. F. Procter (*History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 18th edit., p. 369), and Canon James Craigie Robertson (*How shall we conform to the Liturgy?* 2nd edit., pp. 204-209).

[NOTE ON THE EARLY EDITIONS OF SPARROW'S RATIONALE.]

The British Museum and Magdalen College, Oxford, possess the edition of 1661: the Bodleian, Queens' College Cambridge (see *Dict. Nat. Biogr.* s.v. Sparrow), and the Rev. H. A. Wilson of Magdalen College, possess the edition of 1657. But though Watt mentions an edition of 1655, and Lowndes and Allibone editions of both 1643 and 1655 (Lowndes' 1622 is a misprint for 1722), no copy of either, according to the *Dict. Nat. Biogr.*, is extant. On the other hand I find that the engraving of Andrewes—which is contained in the Bodleian copy of 1657, the Magd. Coll. copy of 1661, and a Bodleian copy of 1676—is signed *W. Hollar fecit* 1643, and this may have suggested that it was made for an edition of that year. The companion portrait of Overall in the same copies is signed *W. Hollar fecit* 1657: the portraits of Hooker are not dated at all.

In the edition of 1661 immediately after the preface—in the edition of 1676 both at the beginning of the book after the preface and at the end of the book after the index—in the edition of 1722 at the end only (p. 270)—is given a letter of Sparrow's in answer to certain 'liturgical demands,' of which I quote the last section as illustrating the subject of 'Alms and Oblations':

'10. You tell me Newes, that a Latine copy of our Service-book, printed at *Edin.* hath in it an office for a Communion at burials (*Celebratio Coenae Domini in Funeribus*, &c.). It is a Translation of some private pen, not licensed by Authority, as I guess; Communions by the direction of our Service are joynd with Morning Prayers, burials are mostly in the Afternoon. *Offerories* at Burials did last to be frequent (if they were considerable Funerals) to the middle of King *James* his Reign, the Ministers of Parishes keeping up the profit of oblations as long as they could; and these *Offerories* at Funerals are spoken of in the first Liturgy of King *Edward the VI.*'—Ed. J. T. S.]