

days of the Church's History, the prayers were said by the minister towards the *chancel*; but that the lessons were read towards the *people*. Now, certainly, there must have been some reason for this. We shall find that it was but simply a perpetuation of a custom that had been handed down from time immemorial; and a carrying out, in active practice, of the advice of one of the councils of the Church, 'Let ancient usages prevail.'

The Jews prayed towards the Mercy Seat, which was the most prominent part of the Temple; and so Christians, in early times, during the Confession of the Faith, turned towards the East; and, in conformity with this universally primitive custom, we find in the Church of England, the Prayers said toward the Altar, which, under the present dispensation, occupies the same position as did the Mercy Seat of old—namely, in the Holy of Holies; for every one who is imbued with a true feeling of reverence for the sacred edifice, which has been reared to God's glory, will, instinctively, shrink from deeming the chancel less worthy of respect than the nave of the Church. For many reasons which will commend themselves to a thoughtful Churchman, the East has been selected as the appropriate place for the Altar, and as the visible manifestation of the Divine Presence rested over the Mercy Seat or Propitiatory, so may we imagine that Divine Being more especially present where the Holy Altar is placed. What position, then, is more fitting, either when we are offering up our prayers, and the Priest is interceding for us with God, or when we are confessing our Belief in Him, than that of turning towards the Altar, and addressing ourselves to Him who is present there, though to us invisible?

After the Reformation, in consequence of less regard being had for Worship than for personal comfort, pews were erected, and immediately following this innovation came the setting up of reading desks. Thus, the good old custom of saying the prayers before the Altar, and of singing the Psalms in the choir stalls was changed—and instead of a uniformity of method in conducting the Divine Worship, we find clergy and congregation placed so as to please the whim of some individual carpenter. As a necessary consequence, that which before had been habitual and symbolical, now became exceptional; and, thus it is, that they who *know little, and care less*, about the deep significance of many ancient and laudable practices, are open-mouthed in their denunciations of what they, in the fulness of their wisdom, are pleased to term innovations, whereas the seal of antiquity is impressed upon all alike. But, Mr. Editor, laying aside the historical associations connected with this practice, and the deep symbolism, which it shadows forth, it is one that appeals to our reason and our feelings; for, thus, instead of the Minister saying the Creed, as it were, to the congregation, he is occupying the position of the Leader of the Faithful, when they, thus, with one heart and one voice, give utterance to that "form of sound words," which has been for ages the palladium of the Catholic Church. It is, in this act too, simple as it may seem in itself, that the relation between Priest and people is most clearly manifested; they, the warriors on the side of God, His Church, and Truth, fighting under the banner of the Cross; he their leader, under whose guidance and direction they may bring that struggle to a successful issue. If, then, we feel that this is an appropriate position to assume when we recite the Creed, does it not commend itself to our hearts, as being even more appropriate when the Priest is engaged in the highest and holiest of his priestly functions?

I trust you will pardon me for encroaching too much upon your space, but there is one point to which your correspondent might very fitly have referred, and that is, the reverence that should be paid to the Holy Name. I doubt not but many think that this act of reverence (the bowing of the head) is to be confined to the saying of the Creed. This, however, is surely a mistake, for the language of the 18th Canon of 1603, is very plain upon this point, that at every mention of the Blessed Name humble reverence shall be made in acknowledgement that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the World." Is not that Name just as Sacred wherever It occurs? Why then should we *restrict* the act of reverence,

and in this particular portion of the service *obey*, and yet in all other portions *ignore* the Apostolic injunction, "At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow."

Yours,

AN ANGLO CATHOLIC.

FEAST OF THE CONVERSION }  
OF ST. PAUL, 1868. }

### THE OFFERTORY.

SIR,—If you think the enclosed remarks of sufficient importance for insertion in the "Church Standard," they are at your disposal. They were the immediate cause of inducing a large congregation to stand up last Sunday during the reading of the sentences and the collection of alms.—S. A.

Permit me to say a word about this to-day, for I fear some are not well informed as to its nature and object. The *Offertory* is another name for the *offerings* of the people to God in His Sanctuary. It was the advice of the inspired Apostle that these offerings to God should be made every week, in the assemblies of Christians; and we know, as a matter of historic fact, that this counsel of God's Holy Spirit through His Apostle, was enforced among all the disciples of Christ in the Primitive Church. On each Lord's day—immediately before the celebration of the Lord's Supper—the people came forward themselves, and brought to the Deacons whatever they could most conveniently give;—some offered money; some brought food; some clothing. All was received in a large dish or vessel, and solemnly presented to the Lord, as a token of gratitude for the unspeakable mercies, temporal and spiritual, bestowed on them; a thank offering, especially for the redemption of their souls by the all-sufficient Sacrifice of the death of Christ Jesus, of which the Holy Communion was a perpetual Memorial and Representation. Then, especially when they were reminded of the great things done for them by the Lord and Saviour, and of the continual and everlasting supplies of spiritual grace provided for them in this Heavenly Banquet, were they encouraged to come forward and testify their gratitude in whatever manner they could best afford. Accordingly each person then did come forward and as I have said, deposited in the large Alms-dish his or her offering of money or other articles of food or clothing. This having been received by one of the minor Orders of the Clergy—usually a Deacon—and duly presented to the Lord on His Altar, by the officiating Priest. A distribution was subsequently made, one part being given to the destitute poor; one part given to the Ministers for their support; and another part reserved for Church expenses and repairs. In passing, I may just remind you that this was regarded as a very solemn act and duty on the part of the congregation. It was not merely the act of the Minister, it was the most solemn act of each individual Christian—rich or poor—the coming forward of him or herself, and making an offering to the Lord God Almighty;—an act to be done, therefore, not carelessly, nor lightly, nor grudgingly, but with every outward mark of reverence, and every inward feeling of love, and joy, and generous gratitude. This being the Apostolic practice, commanded in God's Word; our Reformers here, as in all else, enjoined its universal adoption by the Church of England. And if you will take the trouble to read, with attention, the rubrics in the Communion Office; and the "Offertory Sentences" to be said, while the Alms are being collected, you will observe how closely our Church has followed the Primitive model. You will see that these Sentences are selected, with reference, 1st. The general duty of Almsgiving; 2ndly. With reference to the duty of maintaining the Ministers and Teachers of the Church; and, 3rdly. With reference to the duty of providing for the sick and needy. Then, "while these Sentences from God's Word are in reading, the Deacons, Churchwardens, or other fit persons appointed for the purpose, shall receive the Alms for the poor and other devotions of the people in a decent basin to be provided by the Parish for that purpose, and reverently bring it to the Priest, who shall humbly present and place it upon the Holy Table."

You must, of course, bear in mind that this rubric was written for a somewhat different state of things from what we have here.