

Vital Questions for Canadian Churchmen

1.—Shall We Change The Communion Service ?

The attempt is now being seriously made to alter in a Romeward direction the great and all important service of the Holy Communion. It is quite plain to any thinking man, that the "Mass" is the goal. At the present hour, in the Motherland, and although more secretly, yet none the less just as certainly in Canada, a carefully organized effort is concentrated on the Order of Holy Communion to change its essential features and principles. Now the most momentous of all the changes made at the Reformation was in the order of sequence in the Communion Service, so that the so-called prayer of "OBLATION" should not appear to relate, or be made by any subtilty of interpretation to relate to the consecrated elements. As a matter of fact it is a misnomer, to speak of a prayer of "Oblation." There is no such prayer in the Communion Office of the Church of England; for in 1552, Cranmer in the "fully perfect" Book, deliberately, with a definite doctrinal purpose in view, struck out the sentence in the Book of 1549, suggesting "Oblation," and turned the prayer into one of simple thanksgiving, to be used *after* and *not before* the reception of Holy Communion: in a word—as a prayer of self-dedication. "This our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," as every intelligent reader of the New Testament knows is, "a sacrifice which consists of praise and thanksgiving." (See Heb. 13, 15.) The prayer is without question one of the most appropriate in the Liturgy, but it is not an "Oblation," and is simply an alternative to the old prayer of Thanksgiving. Every idea connected with the technical theory of oblation has been most carefully excised from the prayer. Furthermore, it is a prayer which may be used at the discretion of the individual minister. It is not obligatory, and a clergyman if he so desires, may never use it throughout his ministry.

The concerted effort which is now being made throughout the Anglican Communion, not only to change the position of this prayer, but to add to it, to place it before the reception of the elements, and to make it obligatory,