

INCAUTIOUS CONTROVERSY.

A CORRESPONDENCE

CAUSED BY CERTAIN STATEMENTS MADE AT A MEETING OF THE

CHURCH ASSOCIATION,

AT

ST. LEONARD'S-ON-SEA,

BETWEEN THE

REV. G. BLAKE CONCANON, M.A.,

Secretary to the Association,

AND THE

REV. H. E. PLATT, B.A.

JOHN HODGES,

47, BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.
ST. LEONARD'S-ON-SEA: JAMES DORMAN.

Sixpence.

SPEC
CAPAM

INCAUTIOUS CONTROVERSY.

THERE seems to be an inevitable tendency in platform oratory to run into incautious statements. Addressing, for the most part, audiences which are prepared to agree with him, the speaker is always tempted to take the easier line of appealing to prejudice, instead of trusting to the more difficult appeal to reason. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.*

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

29th December, 1870.

DEAR SIR,

You may remember that at the Meeting of the Church Association at St. Leonards, on the 15th, I questioned a statement which you made that the "Ritualists" teach that the Real Presence depends on their wearing a Chasuble.

You referred me to the Cautels in the Directorium Anglicanum for your authority. I was unwilling at the time to trust my memory so far as to say that there was no one of the Cautels which could be misunderstood in such a sense.

But, on reading them through, I cannot find that any one of them is to my mind patient of it. May I ask you kindly to give me a reference to the Cautel which was in your mind?

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

The Rev. G.^r B. Concanon.

Avonhead, Upper Norwood, Surrey,

31st December, 1870.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter has followed me here, and I hope to reply next week from town, and show the oneness of the Cautels with the "defectionibus" of the Roman Missal, and that Ritualists teach that the Chasuble and the Sacrifice are involved each in the other.

Will you, in the mean time, allow me to offer for your consideration a few points in support of

another statement made by me, and objected to by you, viz., "The Church of England has no judicial absolution for the forgiveness of sins as committed against God."

I write principally in reference to the Absolution dwelt on by you, viz., that in the Visitation of the Sick, and this, you may remember, I stated was simply from ecclesiastical censures, and not a Divine sentence.

1. The words "auricular and secret confession" were in the first Prayer-book, and removed on revision.

2. The words "open his grief *secretly*" were changed to "open his grief."

3. The rubric ordering this absolution for communicants seeking counsel was removed, and so it became special.

4. The words "of us as the ministers of God and His Church" were changed to "by the ministry of God's holy Word," and further "after this *form*" was changed to "after this *sort*," so not requiring the exact form, while Rome considers the *exact form necessary*. (See Liguori, Moral Theol., lib. 6, tract 4).

5. A *prayer for pardon* follows the absolution of the Clergyman.

6. If a Divine sentence of pardon, it cannot be confined to a special case.

7. If a Divine sentence, the Church could not be so unmerciful as to leave it *OPTIONAL* with each

Clergyman to use it or not. This, of course, you know is the subject of our 67th Canon.

I make no remarks on the Absolution in the Communion as being purely precatory, and the one in our Morning Service explains itself, being *brought in* by the Reformers in 1552.

To you I give the fullest credit for an ardent desire to hold our Church's teaching as you see it. Your tone and manner demand that. From you I ask a belief in my sincere dislike to controversy, and my prayer that we should be all one in love to Christ and to each other, but I believe the time has come when the Church's teaching must be defended from the insidious attacks of secret enemies.

I am faithfully yours,

G. BLAKE CONCANON.

Rev. H. E. Platt.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,
9th January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

I have waited for your reply to my letter before answering yours, but it occurs to me that you may be waiting for me. As you may suppose,

the points which you offer are not new to me. But to reply to them as fully as I might would expand my letter to the size of a book, and take more time than I can afford to give. I shall, therefore, content myself with a few words on each.

1 and 2. If the meaning be clear, it is of little importance that one word or another in stating it is left out. The Exhortation in the Communion Office is necessarily spoken to people who are frequently making general confession and receiving general absolution. It speaks of making confession and receiving absolution in another way. What that way is, is sufficiently indicated by the Priest's words, "Let him come to me or to some other," &c.

Suppose that while the old form had been in use you had been in the habit of making private confession, do you think that you would have considered yourself debarred from it in future because it ceased to be called "auricular and secret?"

3. The words omitted were, "and the same form of absolution shall be used in all private confessions." When the former part of the rubric was so altered as to leave a discretion in the form to be used in the Visitation of the Sick, this latter part lost its meaning, and was, therefore, of course left out. The words were obviously never meant as a direction that absolution should be given. That is assumed. They only prescribed the form to be used in giving it. The omission of them simply extended

the liberty given in the particular case of the sick to other cases of private confession.

4. You do not say in what sense you understand the "ministry of God's Word." I know of only one consistent with the context, and that is one which would be readily understood at the time when the change was made. The Absolution is a ministry of God's Word as being pronounced in the Name of, and by the authority of God. S. Paul thus speaks of Holy Baptism as a cleansing of the Church "with the washing of water by the Word." The Church holds the form and matter—the invocation of the Holy Name and water—to be essentials of Baptism, which is therefore also a "ministry of God's Word." Hooker describes Absolution after private confession as "forgiveness of sins, as out of Christ's own Word and Power, by the Ministry of the Keys." (Eccl. Pol. vi. 4-14).

The form given is indicative, and the discretion is limited to other forms like it. A simply declaratory or precatory form would not be "after this," but after another "sort." The direction is imperative. "The Priest shall absolve him." None but an indicative form could satisfy this condition.

I have not the means at hand of using your reference to Liguori. But the Roman practice is not in question between us. Your argument, as I understand you, is this:—

The Prayer-book does not enforce the use of an "exact form."

Rome considers an "exact form" necessary for a valid Absolution.

And what Rome considers must be right.

Therefore the discretion allowed by the Prayer-book shews that it was not intended that the Absolution should be valid.

I should hesitate to use the argument in any case myself. It seems not only to involve the acceptance of the Roman view as necessarily true because it is Roman ; but to charge the revisers of the Prayer-book with the intention of deluding people into thinking that they were being absolved when they were not. And you must, I think, yourself see that this is what it comes to.

5. This objection would apply equally to the intention of the Absolution in the Roman Office, in which the same prayer stands in the same place. It was there also in the Sarum Manual. It was retained in its place in the first Prayer-book, and has remained there ever since.

In short, the compilers of the Prayer-book never put it there at all, but simply left it where they found it.

6. What was God's message to David by Nathan but a "Divine sentence of pardon confined to a special case?" And did our Lord never confine His own sentence of pardon to special cases during His life on earth? I need not quote instances.

7. The Church does not leave it optional, excepting so far as the Priest must use his judgment as to

whether the faith and contrition of the penitent be real. If he be satisfied of that, he is bound to give Absolution. The words "the Priest shall absolve" leave no room for doubt of this.

To seek Absolution is left optional; to give it when sought with faith and contrition is not.

After what was stated at the meeting, it seems advisable to add that the ratification of the Absolution by God depends on knowledge which He alone can have.

I confess that I never clearly understood the 67th Canon. What is the "Communion Book?" The Office for Holy Communion cannot be meant, because that contains no special form of "instruction and comfort" for the sick. The Exhortation in the Visitation Office is the only form of the kind in the Prayer-book. But in any case the Canon simply gives the "minister," "if he be a preacher," leave to use his own words in instructing and comforting the sick person. The question of Absolution is not touched by it at all. This view might be confirmed, if necessary, by comparison with the 57th Canon. The Exhortation in the Communion Office distinguishes between "Absolution" and "ghostly counsel and advice."

I may add to my remarks on (1), (2) and (4), that Edward's 2nd Act of Uniformity (5 and 6 Edward vi. c. 1), which authorized the 2nd Book, states that the "alterations made were adopted with no intention of condemning the doctrine of

the former book," which "contained nothing but what was agreeable to the Word of God and the Primitive Church."

It adds that "such doubts as had been raised in the use and exercise thereof proceeded rather from the curiosity of the ministers and mistakers than of any other worthy cause."

I readily give you the credit which you ask for your dislike to controversy. And the credit is the greater in that the dislike must make the office which you hold for the Church Association especially uncongenial to you. But you will let me say that the doings of men who openly confess what they believe, and publicly teach it, are not fitly described as "insidious attacks of secret enemies."

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

14, Buckingham Street, Strand,
London, W.C.,

January 9th, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

In continuation of my former letter I now justify my statement that the wearing of the Chasu-

ble involves the doctrine of the Sacrifice; for this I point your attention to the Ritual Commission—the evidence of Rev. W. J. E. Bennett—selected because referred to by your friends at St. Leonard's.

Q. 2604.—“At what time do you use the Chasuble?”

A.—“At all times of the Celebration of the Holy Communion.”

Q. 2606.—“Is there any doctrine *involved* in your using the Chasuble?”

A.—“I think there is.”

Q. 2607.—“What is that doctrine?”

A.—“The doctrine of the Sacrifice.”

Q. 2683.—“Do you wish to modify your statement?”

“The ancient vestments present to crowds of worshippers the fact that here—before God's Altar—is something far higher, far more awful, more mysterious than aught that man can speak of, namely the presence of the Son of God in human flesh subsisting.”

A.—“Decidedly.”

Q. 2977.—“The Vestments are with a specific respect and to *vivify* His sacrifice upon the Cross?”

A.—“Yes.”

Q. 3055.—“Answer as to Vestments.”

A.—“I consider their having been adopted to be to any one who has adopted them of essential im-

portance, *because to go back from that*, would be to *deny the doctrine* you meant to teach by that."

Further I admit that when challenged at St. Leonard's I defended my statement on the platform by the Directorium as connected with the Defectionibus, and stated such exactly. I, therefore, refer you to page 87, rubric 82, for Defects in the Mass.

(A).* And after giving those arising from the Priest washing his teeth before Mass. Also from the "fly and spider." Also the "Host on account of cold." "Blood spilled." "Vomit of Eucharist." "Mouse eating the Sacrament." (B). Then at page 92, "If anything be wanting here, it must be looked for in *summa et lectura Hostien. in titul. de celebr. missarum.*"

I refer accordingly to the Defectionibus from whence all the rest are taken.

"*De defectibus in celebratione Missarum occurrentibus.*" 10. *Defectibus in ministerio ipso occurrentibus.*

"*Si omittat aliquid ex vestibus sacerdotalibus.*"

Again, I further refer you for the same to page 386 of "Services of the Church," published by Hayes, and references there also to *Cautelæ observandæ* of York and Sarum Missals.

Hoping that I have sustained my statement to your satisfaction, as certainly to my own, and pray-

* See Appendix.

ing that the Lord may bless every effort to the furtherance of His kingdom and glory.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

G. BLAKE CONCANON.

Rev. H. E. Platt.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

13th January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

I am sorry to have delayed my answer, but I wished to look at the directions in the "Services of the Church," to which you referred me, before writing. I am afraid that I cannot honestly say that I share your satisfaction as you wish. My own note of your words at the meeting tells me that what you said was that "they teach that wearing a Chasuble is necessary to the Real Presence in the Sacrament." I find my note confirmed by the reports in the local papers, as I am sure that it would be by those who heard you. This was the statement which I challenged at the time, and which you undertook to prove. I must ask you to keep to it, or we shall only be arguing at cross purposes.

I do not remember that any one referred to the report of the Ritual Commission. But your quotations are really quite beside the question. Obviously they only refer to the use of the Vestments as means of conveying teaching. As much might be said of a sermon. There are indeed two answers in the evidence of the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, and, so far as I can see, only two, which affect your statement. They are 2944 and 3066.* But they plainly contradict it, at least so far as Mr. Bennett is concerned.

To pass on to the Cautels in the Directorium. I suppose that you admit that I was right in saying that there is no mention of, or reference to, the Vestments of the Priest in these at all. But then you say that, notwithstanding this, the reference to the Missal justifies your statement. Now here you put me into a difficulty. I must assume one of two things, whether I will or not. Either you have read the chapter on the "defectus" in the Missal, or you have not. If not, you will admit that you ought to have done so before making use of it as you

* 2944. *Q.*—"In any of your private ministrations do you use what is called a portable Altar?"

A.—"My custom is to have a little basket, or box, which contains a surplice, and all the things necessary for the administration of the Holy Communion."

3066. *Q.*—"Why do you not wear the Chasuble in private administration of the Holy Eucharist?"

A.—"Because the law of the Church does not sanction the use of the Chasuble except in the public ministration."

have. If you have read it, I would rather attribute it to carelessness than to any other cause that you should claim support for your statement from what not only does not support it, but simply contradicts it.

The preface divides the "defectus" which follow into two classes—one containing such as would affect the validity of the Sacrament, the other such as would not. The first includes defects in three conditions only: (1) "*Materia*," i.e., the bread and wine. (2). "*Forma et intentio*," i.e., the words of consecration, and the intention of the Priest in saying them. (3). "*Ordo sacerdotalis in conficiente*," i.e., that the Minister should be in Priest's orders. The second class includes all the rest, as being such as "*veritatem Sacramenti non impediunt*."

You will see, therefore, that it could not be more plainly asserted than it is in the "defectus" of the Missal that the Vestments are not necessary to the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

The principle, indeed, is one which I cannot suppose that you would not, as a matter of course, admit yourself. You could not dispute the necessity of the three conditions, and you would, I am sure, allow that it would not be decent to celebrate in a dirty surplice, if you could have a clean one. Decency and necessity are different things. You will see now that the "defectus" preserve the distinction between them in a way which you overlooked.

I presume that your reference to the "Services of the Church" has been made hastily, or that your memory was at fault. If you look again, you will see that the "Directions, &c.," to which you refer, contain not one word which could possibly be understood to have the most distant reference to the Vestments of the Priest.

Let me, in all good will, add a few words for your consideration. You have publicly charged certain of your brethren in the ministry with teaching, the foolishness of which would only be equalled by its blasphemy. I suppose that this is not the only occasion on which the same statement has been made. I willingly believe that this is the first time that in your presence it has been repudiated; and I am sure that its having been so will guard you against repeating what you now know to be untrue. But this, after all, is only one among many statements of the kind, equally without foundation, by which the minds of uninstructed people are being continually poisoned or perverted at such meetings. I need scarcely say that I fully believe that, when you made your statement, you were not in the least aware that you were uttering a slanderous falsehood. But is it too much to say that before making a public statement of the kind it would be, at least, more charitable not only not to know that it is false, but to make sure that it is true?

We wish to think charitably of the agents of the

Church Association, to believe that they say these strange things about us from want of knowledge, rather than from want of honesty. But is it surprising that people should sometimes find it rather difficult to believe?

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

14, Buckingham Street, Strand,

London, W.C.,

14th January, 1871.

Saturday Night.

DEAR SIR,

I was actually replying to your letter of the 9th when yours of the 13th was handed to me.

Controversy never can be useful when not carried on in a Christian spirit, which certainly is not that of your letter charging me with "slanderous falsehoods," the result of either "carelessness" or "ignorance;" no correspondence could be carried on with such language. My assertions were made on a public platform, my letters are in your hands. I did not use the word "necessary;" it is not in my note book, nor in the report of a speech where

I followed the same line, nor in the memory of my brother deputation, Mr. Bardsley ; but I think the word applies from your own admission, that there would be a certain defect without the Chasuble ; nor do I see that a defect in not wearing the Chasuble is more absurd, or more contrary to the teaching of our Church, than that the Sacrament might be vitiated if a drop of rose water was used in the wheaten flour, and this is one of *three conditions* which you say in your letter of the 13th inst, I "*could not object to.*"

Faithfully yours,

G. BLAKE CONCANON.

Rev. H. E. Platt.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

January 17th, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

I am sorry that my words should seem to you to express a spirit of which I was not conscious in writing them. And I do not think that they will fairly bear the construction that I charged you with slanderous falsehoods. On the contrary, I

was careful to acquit you of any intentional want of truth in what you said. If I have failed to make this intelligible before, I hope that you will accept my assurance of it now. Carelessness, I think, is a charge within the limits of courtesy, if made with sufficient cause. Ignorance is a word which I did not use.

The question of what you said I am content to leave to the judgment of those who heard you, only reminding you that you did not question my accuracy at the meeting, but defended your statement as quoted from my note. If you had told me then that you did not mean what you had said, or what I had understood you to say, I should of course have been satisfied.

Is it necessary for me to repeat that whatever any one may think about the decency, propriety, or expediency of wearing a Chasuble, no one ever believed that not wearing it would cause a defect in the Sacrament?

I must point out to you that your reference is again misquoted. The words of the "defectus" are, "If the bread be *made (confectus)* of rose water, *vel alterius distillationis*, it is *doubtful* whether the Sacrament be valid."

Compare our rubric. "It shall suffice that the bread be such as is usual to be eaten, but the best and purest wheat bread that conveniently may be gotten."

Would bread made with rose water answer this

description? I gather from your letter that you agree with me that enough has now been written between us on the subject.

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

14, Buckingham Street, Strand,
London, W.C.,
21st January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

Absence from town has delayed my reply. Quite plain you did not read my letter carefully; the word "might" conveyed the doubt contained in the Defectus as to rose water.

May I remind you that in my first letter, as well as in my last, I denied having used the word "necessary;" the words in my note book are "involve and represent."

Just kindly reflect on your position—you, a minister of the Protestant Reformed Church of this country, have written three letters defending and supporting the Defectibus of the Roman Catholic Missal, exemplifying (though I presume perfectly unintentional on your part), the statement relative to Ritualists contained in the posthumous charge

of the late Archbishop Longley, viz., they remain amongst us to change the Communion into the Mass, while the Reformers changed the Mass into the Communion.

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

G. BLAKE CONCANON.

Rev. H. E. Platt.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

23rd January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

At the risk of seeming to be always setting you to rights, I ought to point out to you that you are mistaken as to the object of my letters. They were not written in defence or support of the "defectus." You appealed to the "defectus" in support of your statement. I have only referred to them to shew that what you supposed to be in them is not.

Like any other book compiled with equal care, the Directorium Anglicanum has just so much authority as it can claim on its own merits; but I suppose that no one would claim for or concede to it more than this. I tell you this because you seem to be under a false impression about it.

I must ask you to let me regard our correspondence as ended now. So far I am willing to comply with your request that all the letters, if any, should be published. But you will see that I cannot undertake this for a correspondence of unlimited length.

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

14, Buckingham Street, Strand, London,

28th January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

You must kindly leave it to the public to judge whether you have supported and defended the "defectibus" of the Roman Missal or not, and also whether, in your letter of the 13th, you have not stated that I could not object to the *three conditions* mentioned in the "defectibus" as vitiating the Sacrament, which involve doctrine not only opposed to Holy Scripture, but to the Articles and Rubrics of our Reformed Church.

If I publish the correspondence I shall send you a copy, a courtesy I am sure I shall receive at your hands.

I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

G. BLAKE CONCANON.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

31st January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

Forgive my correcting you again, but the right use of words is important in a discussion of this kind. The "three conditions" are mentioned as necessary to the validity of the Sacrament, not as "vitiating" it.

(1) Bread and Wine, (2) The words of Consecration, (3) A Priest to consecrate, are the three conditions. And these are obviously necessary to the Office for Holy Communion in the Prayer-book of our Reformed Church being used at all. This is why I supposed that you would not object to them.

On looking again at your letter of the 21st, I see that I omitted to notice an important point in it. Allow me to add a word on it now.

I do not, of course, wish to charge you with anything but forgetfulness when I still maintain the correctness of my note of what you said. But the following reasons are, I think, enough to justify me in maintaining it:—

1. My note was taken as you spoke.
2. You did not dispute its accuracy when I quoted it at the time.
3. It agrees with the notes of a short-hand writer who was in the room.
4. Three local papers published a report of the meeting. My note is corroborated by them all.

5. I have taken every opportunity of asking others who were present what you said, without finding a single doubt about it.

6. A few days ago I was told of the same statement being made, with the addition that it must be true, because you had said it at the meeting.

I propose to include this letter, with yours of the 28th, in the correspondence, if published, and hope that, if you should publish it, you will not find it inconvenient to do the same. You may rely on my complying with your request.

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

Falmouth, Feb. 4th, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

Yours of the 31st has followed me here. You evidently wish to get out of the position in which you placed yourself when you not only defended, but adopted the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church on the Eucharist. You wish to retrace your steps, but I cannot consent now.

In my address, as well as in my first letter and in every one since I used the word involve, or represent. My brother deputation, Mr. Bardsley, has no recollection of my using any other. The

mass of evidence you produce is strangely late in the field, besides which that is necessary if its omission would create a defect.

As to the three conditions in the *defectibus*, to which you refer, the Roman Missal treats there not on what forms the Sacrament, but on what would vitiate if omitted. You naturally fell into the mistake, because you viewed it from the Roman side.

This letter will of course be included in the published correspondence; and with sincere desire that the Lord may lead every Churchman to see his obligation to the formularies and articles of his own church.

I am, dear sir,

With every kind wish,

Yours faithfully,

G. BLAKE CONCANON.

Rev. H. E. Platt, St. Leonard's.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

9th Feb., 1871.

DEAR SIR,

Excuse my saying that there is something rather comic in your view of my "position." It is

of course satisfactory to get the best of an argument, but perhaps the next best thing is to believe that one has got it. One of these two is your case, the other mine.

I am sorry that I cannot admit a doubt about what you said. The evidence, as you say, is massive, and none the less so because I did not produce it before I got it.

Let me add to it the following, which I have just read in a report of the meeting contained in a magazine edited by the Rev. S. H. Parkes. Mr. Parkes is, I believe, the local secretary of your Society.

"The Rev. H. E. Platt asked Mr. Concanon's authority for a statement he had made that the Ritualists thought that the use of the Chasuble was necessary in the Real Presence."

You will not think me uncourteous if I say that our readers will have had enough of the discussion now.

Reciprocating your good wishes.

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

APPENDIX.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

14th January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

Perhaps I ought to say that as your statement was made publicly, it is possible that I may see occasion to make our correspondence on the subject equally public.

In view of this possibility, allow me to point out a slip which you have made. I have underlined it on page 3 of your second letter. The words "*si propter frigus vel negligentiam, Hostia consecrata dilabatur in calicem,*" refer not to the "Host getting cold," but of the possibility of the Priest letting It fall through his hands being numbed with cold.

With your permission I would omit from A to B. Your argument would remain the same, and, to my mind, the treatment of the subject would gain in reverence.

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

14, Buckingham Street, Strand,
London, W.C.,

17th January, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

I return your enclosure with the alteration you suggested—a mere verbal mistake.

I have no objection whatever—the contrary—to your publishing the correspondence, but I request you publish the whole of it, this letter included, verbatim, and I decidedly object to your leaving out any portion of my letters as you wish to do. I reserve also the right to inform Mr. Hadden Parkes (as our friend at St. Leonard's) of your intention.

Yours faithfully,

G. BLAKE CONCANON.

Rev. H. E. Platt.

St. Leonard's-on-Sea,

19th January.

DEAR SIR,

I could have no interested motive in proposing the omission. I think the passage irreverent; but the responsibility is yours, not mine.

Nor, if I wished to do so, should I have a right to impose any limits on what you may wish to say to our friend Mr. Parkes. I shall be happy to shew him the correspondence, if he should wish to see it, whether it be published or not.

I am faithfully yours,

H. E. PLATT.

