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Vaughan, Bernard
- KIKUYU, or, "A House Divided"
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KIKUYU

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or,

"A House Divided"

By

FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN, S.J.

Words spoken in the Church of
the Holy Name, Manchester,
on the Feast of the Holy Name,
1914

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KIKUYU

or “A House Divided.”

“*If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*”—St. Mark iii. 25.

TO-DAY many earnest churchmen are perusing with painful interest a very instructive chapter in the history of the Church of England at home and in her overseas missions. This interest has been awakened by an occurrence at Kikuyu, in British East Africa, where, in June last, there was held a great conference, attended by missionaries of the Protestant Church (of the Low and Broad varieties), by Presbyterians, Methodists, and members of the Society of Friends. Two Anglican bishops, those of Mombasa and Uganda, were also present, but Bishop Weston of Zanzibar would take no part and held himself aloof. The fact of the matter was that Zanzibar, representing Anglo-Catholicism, refused to associate spiritually with Mombasa and Uganda, as they stood for Anglo-Protestantism. Zanzibar was too High for Mombasa and Uganda, while they were much too Low for Zanzibar. In fact, they were poles apart. But we must not forget that though in doctrine and in practice High Churchmen and Low Churchmen differ from one another as much as members of the present Cabinet are reported to differ, they still belong to one and the same Church—the Church of England. The note clearly by which you may know her is “comprehensiveness.”

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" COMPREHENSIVENESS "

In most questions of doctrine and matters of discipline, her members agree to differ. In one point only you may be sure of unity among them—in their united rejection of the claims of blessed Peter and his successors. By way of illustrating what I mean, let me call your attention to views held among Anglicans with regard to the Holy Eucharist. Some of them believe in a " real presence," others in a " real absence "; some maintain a presence that is " objective," while others would have it to be merely " subjective "; some hold the doctrine of Consubstantiation and a fair minority believe in Transubstantiation. I submit that a Church, that can tolerate so many conflicting views about a central dogma of Christianity, has proved up to the hilt her claim to a comprehensiveness unequalled since the day of Noah's Ark.

You will naturally ask me, if " comprehensiveness " is the recognised label of the Church of England, why, in the name of common sense, do not its bishops recognise this principle in practice ? If Zanzibar and Uganda are appointed by one and the same authority, and if both are recognised to be bishops of one and the same comprehensive Church, they surely ought to be able to meet on common ground in a great Protestant conference ? Often enough churchmen have done so before. Why has the Kikuyu conference been an exception ?

Why could not the Bishop of Zanzibar calm his conscience, solve his difficulties, keep his views to himself, and associate with his brother bishops in the conference which has given Kikuyu a name in Anglican church history ? Why, in spite of his Catholic tendencies

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in doctrine, the Bishop of Zanzibar could not at the same time tolerate the Protestant views of his brother bishops has been a question repeatedly asked in letters recently in the press. The Bishops of Hereford, Newcastle and Durham are recognised and met by their brothers of London, Oxford and Worcester ; why, then, this singular aloofness on the part of Zanzibar from Mombasa and Uganda ?

WHY THE BISHOP OF ZANZIBAR COULD NOT BE SILENT

The fact of the matter is this. The Bishop of Zanzibar could not calm his conscience, could not solve his difficulties. He found himself in a Church in which people do not know what to believe, because in it there is no one with authority to teach. Hence for relief to his burdened soul he writes, not a private, but an open letter, that all the world may know what a torture to mind and heart it is to be a bishop in a Church whose only definite note it is to be comprehensive, to live and let live, and to tolerate any opinion, provided it does not involve or imply the authority and jurisdiction of the Holy See.

OUR LORD'S DIVINITY DENIED

If you ask me what have been the special points of doctrine that have stirred Bishop Weston to write his open letter challenging the Anglican Church through the Archbishop of Canterbury to speak her mind, and to declare herself definitely, my answer is this : First, the heretical views about Episcopacy propagated at the Kikuyu Conference, and clearly accepted by Bishop Peel of Mombasa who, on the last night of the Conference, in a Presbyterian church, celebrated Holy Communion, at which delegates of all creeds, with

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the exception of the Friends, partook of the Lord's Supper ; secondly, the heresies formulated by Anglican churchmen in a recent work entitled "Foundations," in which Mr. Streeter among other things denies Our Lord's Divinity, His Resurrection and His Sacraments ; thirdly, the action of the Bishop of St. Albans, who inhibited an Anglican clergyman because he had invoked "Our Lady and two other Saints" in one of his churches, and declared he would refuse ordination and jurisdiction to any minister who ventured to practise in his diocese any such invocations.

"DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS"

The zealous Bishop of Zanzibar is altogether bewildered. He finds himself in a maze with no directions where to turn, what to teach, or how to act. In far-off missionary fields he sees his brother bishops light-heartedly steeped in heresy, and when he turns for comfort to his brother bishops at home, he finds them complacently enough tolerating the rejection of Our Lord's Divinity, His Sacraments, and His Resurrection; while one of them formulates anathemas against any clergyman who ventures to express gratitude to the gentle Mother who gave to us Our Saviour. Well may the distracted Bishop Weston lift up his hands, deploring his position as intolerable. "It is quite intolerable," he writes, "that you should send us out . . . to create a living Catholic Church in missionary fields, while you yourselves are at no evident pains to defend the traditions of the Catholic Church from erroneous speculations and interpretations." And he goes on to charge the Anglican Church with being "innocent alike of narrow-mindedness and broad-mindedness, but proven guilty of double-mindedness." And he

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utters the warning that "until she recovers her single mind, and knows it, and learns to express it, she will be of no use either in the sphere of re-union, or in the mission field." Finally, Dr. Weston declares that "if to Protestantize the world and modernize the Faith be the works officially undertaken by the Anglican Church, I, for my part, have no longer place nor lot within her borders. Let the *Ecclesia Anglicana* declare herself, that we may know our fate."

ANGLICANISM'S OPEN DOOR

"Declare herself!" Why, for three hundred years and more the Protestant Church by law established has been declaring herself, and to-day through the press, in language as un mistakeable as ever, she is declaring that hers is the open door, and that on her benches and in her pulpits and at her Communion rails must be found room for all shades of belief, from the non-Christianity of the Unitarian to the Ritualism of Cowley. The Established Church, *The Saturday Review* reminds us, is a "human" institution, a "national" institution, as *The Spectator* describes her. She is, I may add, a "Parliamentary" institution, like the Education Department, and nearly as badly managed and almost as cringing to Nonconformists. The Established Church of England, as all the world knows, was created by an Act of Parliament, it lives on the breath of an Act of Parliament, and as we are reminded by the Press, its death warrant will be an Act of Parliament. As a Parliamentary Church, as a department, like the Post Office, of the State, it has been set up to satisfy the spiritual wants of both the Anglo-Protestant and the Anglo-Catholic, of the Modernist as well as of the Medievalist, of the Low Church as well as of the High

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Church party. In the present dispute, if His Grace of Canterbury were forced to speak, he could but bow before the two great sections, suavely saying to either side, "We hope you may win, provided our friends opposite do not lose."

The English Church, says a writer in the Press, is a debating society which cannot exist without two sides. It is, exclaims a churchman, a great orchestra in which must be found every kind of vocal instrument. To my thinking, the Church of England is more like a restaurant à la carte, in which you may readily allow anyone to have what he likes at his table, provided you have what you like at your own. It is for the Bishops of Zanzibar and Uganda to choose their company, and not to interfere with anyone else. The only entrée which neither may have is one that savours of Popery.

Some contributors to the Kikuyu controversy have insisted that it is the Bible and Bible only which is England's rule of Faith, and that they must measure all their teaching by the Bible. In theory their rule may be the Bible, but in practice what is it? My observation of the Church of England during the past half century leads me to think that the Protestant rule of Faith is but little akin to the teaching of the Bible, with its ruling rigid, clear, and definite, and more like an accordion which when drawn up is "high," when pressed down is "low," and when swung out is "broad." On it may be played whatever tune you like except, "God bless the Pope."

THE OUTCOME ?

What, then, you will ask me, will be the outcome of the present wrangle among conflicting parties in the Anglican Church? Will she declare herself? I repeat

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it, she can declare herself in one sense only by saying there is much to be said for either side, that she is sure they are all agreed on fundamentals, and that they are all equally good members of that historic Church, which throughout the ages has rejected the jurisdiction of Rome in this land of freedom.

In spite of surmises to the contrary, the Church of England will never declare herself definitely. She never has done so in the past, and she cannot do so in the future, without at the same time disestablishing herself. To take the side of one party against another would spell disruption and denationalisation, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the official mediator and arbiter between them would be acting contrary to the traditions of his high official position. If his judgment is to lean to one side rather than the other, then, like the Press, he will of course incline to the popular side, which is not the Catholic, but the Protestant wing.

WORD OF GOD OR LAW OF LAND?

The Spectator goes even further than I do, and says that the High Church party, " who are indignant with the Bishop of Mombasa, are either ignorant of the law, or else, unfortunately, are governed by motives of conscience which place them in direct opposition to the law of the land, and the law of the Establishment." It suggests that the best way to solve the present controversy is not to refer it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but to ask the Crown to appoint a Commission of three judges or ex-judges to report as to the exact legal position of the questions in dispute. It would seem that the Church of England's position depends less upon the teaching of Christ than upon the law of the land. Her fate may be decided by three

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judges—one a Jew, another a Unitarian, and the third an Agnostic!

"CHURCH TIMES" AND "ENGLISH CHURCHMAN"

But, as a matter of fact, nothing has arisen at Kikuyu which has not occurred during my own lifetime. Some of us can well remember the Gorham case, the Lincoln judgment, the stir about the Jerusalem bishopric, the Hampden and Rowland Williams cases, not to omit the appearance of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860. For the moment there was a suppressed outcry against these incidents, as there was against the Bishop of Hereford for giving Communion to Nonconformists on occasion of the King's Coronation. But no action was taken against him, while a section of the Press would contend that the Bishop could not have done otherwise, and that every good Englishman has a right to the Lord's Supper in the National Church. Of course, the Anglo-Catholic party in the Church of England is sore and irate, because this Kikuyu affair cuts at the very root of Anglican Orders, robs them of the claim to be called a branch Church, stultifies their assumption of the name of Catholic, and leaves them with nothing Catholic but its millinery. *The Church Times* is crestfallen and tries to minimise the situation, while *The English Churchman* is positively jubilant in its note of triumph. Now is the opportunity offered by God to the High Church party to declare itself, and to become in reality what for nearly a century it has been in name—Catholic. That this party, so pious, so zealous, may correspond with the grace now being poured out upon it must be the fervent prayer of all true Catholics, who long to embrace them in the unity of the Faith.

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" SHIRKING VITAL ISSUES "

To sum up the situation in one word, let me say that what is really wrong with the Church of England is this ; it does not know what to believe, and there is no living person to tell it. There is no ultimate Court of Appeal to bind the conscience, because there is no power behind it invested with divine authority. A Church without authority must lapse sooner or later into what Bishop Weston says it has already lapsed, " a state of mental chaos." The Church of England may reign, but it cannot rule. Every time you look into it you get a new view of the situation, as though it were a kaleidoscope. A Church, without its tenets clearly defined and authority to rule, has no claim to be called a Church at all. To call itself the Catholic Church of Christ, when its actual life contradicts every characteristic of our Lord's Church, is the supremacy of folly. If any section of the community in England has the right to say what or where is the Catholic Church in this country, it surely ought to be the section represented by the old Catholic families, who since the Conquest have never been anything else but Catholic. As an Englishman, brought up on the Old Traditions, I can say of the Anglican Church this only : It is a parody of history, a conspiracy against truth, and a libel on the character of Christ, or, as Bishop Weston says in language yet more emphatic, it is " a Society for shirking vital issues."

CATHOLIC CERTITUDE

And now let me remind you that one of the chief characteristics of the Catholic Church is this, that even its poor schoolchildren know, just as well as the College of Cardinals, what they as Catholics have to believe in

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matters of faith and morals. They all believe exactly the same doctrines ; and no matter into what Catholic school, in any part of the world, you were to enter, you would find that every child in it, come to the use of reason, believed in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and in the Catholic Church as His one and only divinely appointed Witness and Teacher of the truths of His revealed word. I know it will be urged by some here present that, to accept without question the teachings of the Catholic Church, is to rivet for oneself the chains of mental slavery ; and to that as Englishmen, born to freedom, they would never submit. To submit to the authority of a Church without well-established claims to be Christ's unerring witness to truth, would be, I readily admit, to subject oneself to the yoke of a slave ; but, on the other hand, to refuse to accept the ruling of a Church, with those claims divinely sanctioned, would be to invest oneself with the cap and bells of a fool. We are Catholics because we believe in the divine authority of our Church. To this Church founded upon Peter, the Rock-man, and to none other Christ has said : " He that heareth you, heareth Me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." That one word coming from the lips of the Master is enough. It makes Christ Himself the voucher for our allegiance, our loyalty, and our love to the Church set up upon the Rock-man, defying the gates of hell. If the Church in union with blessed Peter be not Christ's Church, then is He without witness on earth. There is no Church.

Perhaps some Anglican now listening to me will say : " How about yourselves ? You charge us with teaching conflicting doctrine, and with not agreeing on fundamentals ; but did you not yourselves bicker about Papal Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception, and

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Anglican Orders, and other questions too many to enumerate ? ”

To these plausible objections I answer that, before being defined as articles of Catholic belief, many problems may be made matters of theological disputation, but when once the Holy See has pronounced on these questions all differences cease ; there is then no room in the Catholic Church for disagreement. *Roma locuta est ; causa finita est.*

The Church of Rome can no more compromise herself than the Church of England could " declare herself." Rome has a mind, knows her mind and utters her mind in language clear, definite and terse : whereas the *Ecclesia Anglicana*, in the judgment of Bishop Weston, has yet to recover her mind, to know her mind, and to learn to express it.

Here let me say that to the members of the Church of England we offer our truest sympathy, pity, and love ; but for the Church of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth we cannot pretend to express much respect. To ask us to call a Church, which one of its own bishops describes as being in a state of " mental chaos," as an integral part of the unerring Church of Christ, would be asking us to become not only knaves, but traitors to the Cause. Is it not written that though " an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The inspired word is as strong as it is straight.

In a life of one of our greatest countrywomen in modern times, I read yesterday some such words as these, which have been echoing in my mind ever since : " The saddest thing in this sad world is not to know what to believe ; to be forced to say : ' I don't know.' " Beloved Brethren and Friends, before you can exchange

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the cry of "I don't know" for "I *do* know," you must accept the teaching of that Church which speaks, not like the Scribes and Pharisees, but as one having authority. There is one such Church only. She alone is Catholic, and I tell you that in true philosophy there is no foothold between Catholicism and Agnosticism. Between the two positions I see nothing but one prolonged inclined plane. Before it is too late let High Churchmen learn that they cannot pretend to be Catholics in a Protestant Church. They must choose between Catholicism and Agnosticism. It is flying in the face of logic to pick and choose fragments of Christianity to suit the situation, the climate, or the emergency of a case. But what is the use of being a Protestant, exercising private judgment, if you can't believe what you like?

An Anglican hand-worker seeking employment knocked at the door of a country Presbytery. The priest answered it, and asked the caller if he were a member of the One and only True Church. "No, sir," replied the man, "I am a Protestant." That is what every member of the Established Church is, from His Majesty the King down to his humblest subject—a Protestant.

THE TORCH OF TRUTH

And now, my Catholic Brethren, let me address myself to you, and let me exhort you to love the Faith that is in you as your greatest treasure out of Heaven. It is the Pearl beyond all price. It is the only thing that matters, the one gift that is worth while.

It will take the duration of eternity to thank God for calling us into His Church, in which alone is peace for the mind, rest for the heart and guidance for the will. O Holy Church, O Bride of Christ, O Mother of Men!

bring down from on High.

L. W. Martin
July 15, 1914

The Kikuyu Controversy.

ALTHOUGH little is said or written in this country about the Kikuyu controversy, it still holds a leading place in the discussions of the religious public and press in England. To the June number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. T. H. S. Escott contributes a rather interesting paper, entitled "Comparative Christians and Heathen Critics," in which we find this paragraph:

Rival projects of reunion now divide British Christendom into two opposite and mutually embittered camps. That represented by the Bishop of Zanzibar would amalgamate Anglican Ritualism with the doctrines, ceremonies, and discipline of Rome. On the other hand, the Mombasa and Uganda prelates hold, like those of their way of thinking at home, that the Protestantism of the National Church can be maintained only by making common cause with the Free Churches wherever the two come into contact with each other. How widely spread is this view may be judged from the fact that while these lines are being written the Protestant Episcopalians of the United States

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Indeed, it is necessary, in these unbelieving days in which we live, when men are going away from Christ, when sin is thought nothing of, when the spiritual life is stifled, and the supernatural in no way grasped; that we Catholics should make sure that our homes, like cool oases in the arid desert; shall be filled with the pure air of Catholic faith and Catholic reverence and Catholic love, and watered with refreshing dews of grace that prayer and piety will assuredly bring down from on High.

————— *E. Maria*
 The Kikuyu Controversy. *July 16, 1914*

ALTHOUGH little is said or written in this country about the Kikuyu controversy, it still holds a leading place in the discussions of the religious public and press in England. To the June number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. T. H. S. Escott contributes a rather interesting paper, entitled "Comparative Christians and Heathen Critics," in which we find this paragraph:

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how can I adequately express my unstinted gratitude for all thou art in thyself and for all thou art to me. In thyself all glorious, without spot or wrinkle, altogether holy and without blemish, thou hast come down the ages trampling error under thy feet and holding aloft the torch of truth and the mirror of justice in thy spotless hands. True, on thy garments I see the blood of battle, and on thy brow the sweat of toil, but in thine eyes is the fire of youth, in thy step the spring of hope, and on thy lips the note of truth and the song of triumph. Princes and peoples may rise up to assail and slay thee, but they can but inflict wounds, and utter vain things ; they may check, but they cannot stay thy progress ; they may condemn, but they cannot despise thee ; they may threaten, but cannot silence thee ; for thy message is to all men, and thy mission for all time.

O Holy Mother Church ! who on thy lap hast nursed us and in Thy bosom fed us, and within thy sheltering arms folded and taught us : O thou, who art our light in darkness, repose in certitude, comfort in sorrow, and strength in weakness, rise up, we beseech thee, in the majesty of thy strength, and come forth with thy pitying eyes, and outstretched arms to gather to thy embrace and fold to thy heart our separated brethren, who like sheep without a shepherd, are gone astray on the uplands swept by contrary winds of doctrine, or are being lost in the valleys below, where the mists of doubt, like a fog upon the river, press forth from the burdened heart of so many bewildered souls the agonising prayer : " O God, if I am to believe, teach me what it is I am to believe, and in Thy mercy, send me a teacher from whom I am to learn it, that before I depart hence I may find repose in certainty, and so end my days in peace. Amen."

are intent on dispatching to England representatives for consolidating their cause.

Just what may be the writer's facilities for learning the inner workings and varied activities of the Vatican, we do not know; but he has this to say of Pius X. and his Secretary of State:

Meanwhile the sequel of Kikuyu is as close an object of attention to the Vatican as were the Tractarian movements of more than eight decades since. At the time of the Anglican Orders Commission, Cardinal Vaughan's disclosure to Pope Leo XIII. of the distance separating the immense majority of Anglicans from Rome thrilled with surprise that successor of St. Peter. It determined his present Holiness, Pius X., to avoid any ignorance of the same sort. He has, therefore, been accurately informed about the kaleidoscopic phases of the Kikuyu affair by an authority no less astute and adroit than the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, whose quick brains and world-wide experience gave his master from the first as exact an insight into all details as was gained by the Archbishop of Canterbury after his conversation with the Bishop of Zanzibar.

It is pleasant to have this Protestant writer's assurance that the Vatican is so thoroughly informed about the Kikuyu incident, though we can not help wondering how he knows this. Being "astute and adroit," Cardinal Merry del Val will learn with interest the effect of the controversy on the converts to Anglicanism in Africa, as described by Mr. Escott; for it is an obvious sequel to the whole discussion. "All this time," he writes, "the more thoughtful among the catechumens or half-fledged converts to Christianity in Africa could not help contrasting the reputed religions of the English people with the quasi-spiritual eccentricities then in high favor with English society. An intelligent Moham-medan residing near one of the clerical storm-centres of South Africa was describing the pleasure with which he read the New Testament. 'Parts of it,' he said, 'are most beautiful; but I do not see what the people round here called Christians have in common with this book.'"

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