

TWO VOICES FROM ANGLO-CATHOLICISM

THE two voices are (1) THE GOOD ESTATE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, by Viscount Halifax (Longmans, Green and Co.); and (2) THE BRIDGE-CHURCH: An Outspoken Essay by R. Ll. Llangford-James, with a preface by Sidney Dark (Philip Allan and Co.; paper, pp. 128; 2/6 net).

These two voices are none the less impressive because of their differences of origin and aim. One is by a layman; the other by a hard-working clergyman of the diocese of Birmingham. Though both are so moved by the witness of scripture and tradition as to admit a *de jure divino* primacy of St. Peter and therefore of the Pope, the practical proposals of the clergyman are in startling contrast with the mild exhortations of the layman.

Viscount Halifax speaks of himself as an optimist who 'glories in the appellation.' But the present writer confesses that a sense of despair is the main resultant of his Lordship's optimism. A traditional Catholic, such as the present writer, cannot conceive how a sincere mind like that of Viscount Halifax can on the one hand remain in deliberate communion with Modernist and Low Church heresy and on the other hand imagine a time when Rome will re-unite with those who willingly communicate with heretics.

The Rev. Llangford-James has felt the force of this argument, when put before him by some of his Catholic friends. Little or nothing could be said when we urged the impossibility of re-union with an ecclesiastical group who, *entirely by their own will*, remained in full communion with heresy. To answer this argument, which is of a practical kind, Mr. Llangford-James makes a practical proposal. But a quotation will be the best statement of the proposed scheme.

Blackfriars

‘ It is no new thing I am suggesting. Thus Dean Inge (in *Assessments and Anticipations*, pp. 77-78) : “ Mr. Birrell, a detached critic of Church matters, enumerates four PURGES in our Church history which expelled in turn the Papists, the Laudians, the Nonconformists and the Nonjurors Since then there has been a revival of faith and fervour in the Church of England, so much so that Purge Number Five may shortly be expected.” *I am, however, suggesting a new method; not of forcible ejection but of agreed partition* Neither side should go out into the wilderness but that a peaceful partition should be agreed upon, with a share-out of endowments, buildings and other plant.’ (p. 90).

We make no claims to a share in the prophetic office; yet we can hardly help expecting, if not hoping, that what this scheme proposes may one day take effect. If one of the notes of the Church is its visibility any clearing of the issue must be to the good. Viscount Halifax’s English loyalty to the Establishment is so fundamental a devotion that whilst professing his belief in the merely local character of the Church of England and thereby denying its infallibility, he still credits it with infallibility in the matter of its Orders. The recognition of Anglican Orders he makes a point of preliminary acceptance by Rome. And until these infallibly guaranteed Orders are recognised by the See of Peter he is content to remain in communion with Bishops who look on the Blessed Sacrament as Magic!

Mr. Llangford-James, with a sense of loyalty to the Church rather than to the Establishment voices the opinion that the existing, disloyal union of parties in the Establishment should end not merely by a separation order but by a decree *nisi*. There is so much sincerity in this proposal that what was witnessed across the borders in the Free Church of Scotland may be again witnessed in the Established Church of England.

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