

BLACKFRIARS

particularity in space and time and an exclusiveness which deny divinity. And, to repeat, it is a question of more than mere policy. "In My Father's house there are many mansions." The rebirth of a specifically English manner of Catholic worship would add a new enrichment to the many-voiced harmony of mankind's homage to God.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

"INTEGRATIONISTS" OF THE MIDDLE AGES

"*IT is not good for man to be alone*: man is 'alone' when he is away from the turmoil of the world; thus monks and holy men build for themselves solitudes. *It is not good*, says the Lord, for such a man, a contemplative, *to be alone*, without a companion; it is best that he become active; *let us make him a help like unto himself*, that is, a people subject to him, who will minister to his temporal, as he to their spiritual needs."

The contemplative life resembles Paradise before the creation of Eve! Or, to modernize the thought as well as its phrasing: man is meant to express himself in the art of government.

The quotation comes from notes which were taken by students from a lecture on Genesis, delivered in the Paris schools round about the year 1190. The students would apply it to themselves. For the present they were "contemplatives," if not solitaries; their business, in theory at least, was contemplation which centred in the study of Scripture; and they were all potential bishops. Their lecturer passed dramatically to action from contemplation. From being a master of theology at Paris he was raised to the cardinalate, then to the archbishopric of Canterbury, and "expressed himself" in *Magna Carta*.

The career of Stephen Langton, as Professor Powicke describes it to us,¹ was magnificent in its unity. Contempla-

¹ F. M. Powicke, *Stephen Langton* (Oxford, 1928), and "Stephen Langton" in *Christian Life in the Middle Ages and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1935).

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tion had prepared him for action in the most literal way; since he discussed in the schools exactly those problems—the nature of kingship, the limits of obedience—which he dealt with so successfully as statesman and prelate. Both as scholar and statesman he showed the same characteristics, an engaging “Englishness,” a sanity and realism that give him his quality of greatness. The teaching on action and contemplation in his lectures is interesting because we know that it corresponded to his own experience.²

The bias towards action is unmistakable. Langton had sympathy and respect for the “white monks” with their contemplative vocation; he admitted that contemplation was better “in essence”; and as befitted one who welcomed the Dominicans to England, he taught that both action and contemplation had their place in a well-regulated life. So much is common ground; remarks more independent and personal keep slipping out. For instance, he will defend those who take part in secular affairs, and enjoy it, against superior persons “who think they have, as it were, purchased God” by renouncing the world. True Christians, even if they gain worldly glory, do not by their dignity and wealth estrange themselves from God; though now they busy themselves with the things of this world, hereafter “they shall attain to heaven in the plenitude of their good works.” And Langton never ceases to impress on his students that their studies must be a preliminary to action. *It is not good for man to be alone*: one hears the whisper as he settles to his favourite theme.

Langton’s colleagues felt equally conscious of their responsibilities: “he who lectures publicly on Holy Scripture has taken a way of greater perfection than has the monk of Clairvaux.”³ Among these responsibilities was the prepara-

² I am using material from my thesis on the commentaries of Stephen Langton, presented at the University of Manchester in 1929. Part of it was printed in G. Lacombe and B. Smalley, “Studies on the Commentaries of Cardinal Stephen Langton, *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* (1930).

³ From the (unprinted) *Summa* of Robert de Courson, quoted by M. and C. Dickson, “Le Cardinal Robert de Courson, sa Vie,” *Archives*, etc. (1934), p. 73.

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tion of scholars for their future prelacy. The interesting study by Miss Gibbs of the personnel of the English episcopate under Henry III⁴ has shown to what extent they were successful. After comparing the record of the scholar bishops with that of the civil servants and the *claustrales*, she concludes: ". . . on the whole, the contribution of the *magistri* to the life of their time was more original and many sided than that of the other groups; their influence was more penetrating; and certainly their memories more deep-rooted in the sympathies of ordinary people."

Now Dr. Richey, in her delightful book on Wolfram von Eschenbach, the German Minnesinger,⁵ has proved that a layman could be as "integrationist" in his sphere as the theologian in his. Wolfram was a contemporary of Stephen Langton and he has a curiously similar theme:

"Men and women who keep fair guard on their ways, these live in the world's grace here and win heaven's bliss hereafter.

"To have lived one's life without forfeiting soul for body's sake, winning God's blessing yet honoured in the sight of men, that is a useful work."

The chapter on *Wolfram's interpretation of Chivalry* explains the consistency of this theme and how it runs through everything that Wolfram wrote. "Unity and fullness of life" is Wolfram's ideal; and this causes him to reject the fashionable conception of *Amor Cortois* which flavours so much of the literature of chivalry. He has tested it and found it unsatisfying and artificial.

"Many a man who is my master in this says that Amor and Cupid . . . give people love in this way: with shot and fire. Such love is not pleasant: . . . real love is sure and true affection."

Marriage brings a more complete relationship, as in Wolfram's *Parzival*, in his charming description of the wedding, the parting, and Parzival's reunion with his wife when

⁴ M. Gibbs and J. Lang, *Bishops and Reform (1215-1272)* (Oxford, 1934).

⁵ M. E. Richey, *The Story of Parzival and the Graal as related by Wolfram von Eschenbach* (Oxford, 1935).

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the quest is over. His two themes are complementary, as Dr. Richey points out. "While the end of *Parzival* brings out the idea of chivalry as a unison mating this world with the world to come, the introduction shows it as a unison of the lives of men and the lives of women . . ."

Wolfram is the equivalent to Langton among the laity. He gives us the "literal" counterpart to Langton's allegorical interpretation of the creation of Eve.

The Middle Ages often strike us as a series of romantic contrasts. We think of St. Bernard and the Arch-poet, of the hymns and the drinking songs. But recent work on the generation that preceded St. Thomas⁶ is showing that the Thomist synthesis had its roots in experience. "Christian humanism" had been taught by Langton in the schools of Paris and sung by Wolfram in the German courts.

BERYL SMALLEY.

SIR JOSIAH STAMP ON CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

CATCHING sight of my own name by chance in a periodical several weeks old, I discovered to my astonishment that I had apparently been mentioned in a book by Sir Josiah Stamp which was published this year. Sir Josiah Stamp, needless to say, is not only a director of the Bank of England and a railway magnate, but also an "eminent economist" and indeed the chosen publicity-man who is ever ready to defend the existing financial system with voice and pen and a limitless supply of tact and urbanity.

Curiosity had to be satisfied, and at the first opportunity I looked up his book, which is called *Motive and Method in a Christian Order* (Epworth Press). As regards myself, the results of the search were very disappointing. The distinguished author had indeed mentioned me (amongst others) and even quoted extensively from a little book of mine, but only by way of illustrating how unwise some of the clergy are in committing themselves to the "Douglas Credit Sys-

⁶ Stephen Langton died in 1228, Robert de Courson in 1219, Wolfram von Eschenbach in about 1220.