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UNDER GOD.

# VOICE

INTEGRITY  
FREEDOM  
RESPONSIBILITY

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## VOICE

A JOURNAL OF STRATEGY FOR PERSONAL,  
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

"Freedom consists in the ability to choose or refuse  
one thing at a time."

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### APPEAL

Would any regular reader of *Voice* who  
would be willing to undertake to send us each  
month the Diocesan Notes for his or her own  
diocese, kindly write to the Chairman,

The Christian Campaign for Freedom,  
Penrhyn Lodge, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W.1.

(Addresses for enquiry for these notes can be  
supplied.)

### Bishop Grosseteste: Apostle of Light

Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175-1253), the manly bishop  
of Lincoln, disposes of several illusions about the England  
and the Church of his day. Grosseteste means Big Head,  
and the name was used because he was a Suffolk peasant's  
son and only had a Christian name. Yet through sheer  
merit he rose to be a moral and intellectual authority in  
Europe; he was a friend of the Queen of England, and  
opposed the King or even the Pope if he thought they  
needed restraint. As a scholar he might be called the  
Apostle of Light, and he further demonstrated the Church's  
interest in right applied to business and particularly to  
money.

He used Latin freely as well as Norman-French, but  
the tradition that he knew Hebrew lacks foundation appar-  
ently although G. G. Parry remarked (in *The Life and  
Times of Robert Grosseteste*):

"William the Conqueror had permitted great numbers  
of Jews to come over from Rouen and to settle in England,  
about the year 1087. They increased rapidly, and spread  
themselves through the various towns of England, where they  
built synagogues. In 1189, there were no less than 1,500  
at York. At Bury, in Suffolk, there was a synagogue. . . .  
In the reign of William Rufus, the Jews were especially  
numerous at Oxford, and had acquired a considerable  
property, and some of their Rabbis were allowed to open  
a school in the university."

Grosseteste may not have taken advantage of this school

to learn Hebrew, but in 1231 he projected the conversion  
of the Jews. Indeed, a book on *Robert Grosseteste and  
the Jews*, by L. M. Friedman, appeared in Cambridge,  
Massachusetts, in 1934. However, he found it prudent in  
1240 to form a bank from which poor scholars might borrow  
without interest, and S. H. Thomson (in *The Writings of  
Robert Grosseteste*, 1940) notes the document through which  
Grosseteste founded this chest at St. Frideswyde's, Oxford.

He blended science and religion happily enough, as the  
following example from his treatise on prayer shows: "For  
like polished bodies, when placed close together and  
illuminated by the power of the sun, in proportion to their  
number, shine the more on account of the multitude of the  
reflections of the rays of light, so the more souls that are  
illuminated by the rays of the sun of righteousness shine  
the more on account of the reflection of mutual love."

In 1235 he was elected Bishop of Lincoln by the Dean  
and Chapter. The King approved and sent a letter to  
Archbishop Rich to confirm the election. In attacking  
diocesan evils, Grosseteste pronounced: "The laws of  
princes must yield to the divine laws, and not oppose the  
laws of the Church."

He acquiesced in the Pope's demand for tribute at the  
Council of Lyons in 1245, but in 1250 he revisited Lyons  
and declared: "O money, money, how infinite is thy power!  
Most of all in this court of Rome." And his protest against  
financial evils continued: "The origin of all this is the  
court of Rome. . . . Woe to those who say, let us do evil  
that good may come, whose denunciation is just." He  
refused the Pope's request to instal his nephew as a canon  
of Lincoln. And when he considered that exaction was  
threatened, he wrote to the Nobles of England, the citizens  
of London and the Commons of the whole kingdom: "Rise  
like men to repel it." And he quoted Gregory, "He is  
not free from secret complicity who will not oppose a mani-  
fest crime."

The Bishop maintained the principle of boldly rebuking  
vice and of giving authoritative guidance to the end, as  
his dying words testify: "Although many popes have  
afflicted the Church, this man hath brought upon it a more  
grievous servitude than all, and has multiplied evils. The  
Causines, open usurers, whom holy fathers have caused by  
their preaching to be cast out of France, and who had not  
before time troubled England, this Pope has raised up and  
protects, and if anyone speaks against them he is vexed  
with losses and troubles, as was the case with Robert, Bishop  
of London. The world knows that usury in either testament  
is stigmatized as detestable, and is forbidden by God, but  
now the merchants or changers of our lord the Pope, in spite  
of the murmers of the Jews, openly carry on their business  
in London, contriving divers hardships against ecclesiastics,  
and especially against religious, compelling those who are in  
want to lie, and affix their seals to lying letters, which is  
the sin of idolatry, and the renouncing of truth, which is

God." Parry noted that "there is frequent mention of these Italian usurers in contemporary chronicles. They seem to have preyed like a disease on the England of that day, especially had they got in their clutches the monasteries."

We may note his identification of Truth with God. Evidently he had time to deal with financial questions of the day and considered it within his pastoral office to lay down principles to guide or to deter. Fortunately we have a lead from some bishops today in the relation of Work, Leisure and Life. Again we find the means, work, turned into an end called employment, just as money was turned into an end in Grosseteste's time.

During his stay in Paris from 1209-1214, he wrote in Norman-French a book called *The Marriage of the Nine Daughters of the Devil*. The gist of the work is given in a diagram. The devil had as daughters Simony whom he married to Clerks, Hypocrisy whom he married to Religious, Rapine to Soldiers, Sacrilege to Farmers, Dissimulation to Servants, Deceit to Merchants, Usury to Citizens, Secular Pomp to Matrons, Luxury to the Greedy. He concluded a sermon, later, with the taunt: "But your mind was set on usuries."

He wrote to Simon de Montfort, referring to his extortion from another Simon, Curlevice, and advised him to be a master of mercy, not of cruelty. And he was later able to acknowledge an apology from de Montfort. The bishop never hesitated to demand conformity with the right.

Grosseteste collected a number of his sayings, 147 in all, and some of them can still instruct today: "The evil would like their bad actions to be good and just." He suggests the trinity in man of Memory, Intelligence and Love. Another of the sayings is a short treatise on usury, in which he says that the price of an article should not be determined by the expectation of its future value but by its present value, while "gain from usuries is unjust and authority does not allow it." We might wonder what he would have said about the vast gain that the national debt has brought to certain institutions today or about the crazy rise in price which the same institutions have fostered.

Grosseteste dispels the further illusion that England was an ignorant and oppressive backwater; indeed, we find it suggested nowadays that England never was anything else until the advent of the socialists and servility merchants who would fit human nature to their theories and the facts of reality to their figures. S. Harrison Thomson, in *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste* says that he "had very un-Aristotelian ideas on eternity and motion and avoided formal logic whenever he could. He was not favourably disposed towards the Emperor, Frederick II. . . . His familiarity with the scientific works of the Arabs might have been acquired, or at least increased, at Paris; yet the strongly scientific tradition connecting England with Arab centres in Spain goes back to the twelfth century. . . . Grosseteste may have had to wait until he returned to England from Paris to continue his scientific studies."

A few instances will suffice to show what a peasant's son could do in those days. Part of one manuscript has survived in his own hand, and in this copy he uses an Arabic technical term. He cited Avicenna's *De Anima* in his Commentary on the Galatians. He acquired Greek only towards the end of his life, but translated the *Ethics* of Aristotle.

In a paraphrase of the *Physics* he made three brief quotations from Averroës "rendered necessary by the unsatisfactory nature of the Latin translation." He used an Arab-Latin translation of the *Metaphysics*. And his summary of the *Ethics* was published in Venice together with Averroës's commentary.

Unfortunately the bishop's scientific works are hard to see. I have recently heard from the German publisher of them, through a friend, that all copies not sold were destroyed in the war. Thomson lists 44 works, twelve of them never published. William of Ware, writing on Grosseteste's commentary on *The Hierarchy of the Church*, ascribed this sentiment to the bishop: "Lincolniensis said that as all things are seen not in the sun but in a sort of superfusion of light, so these matters are seen not in God but in the perfection of divine light."

We still ask God to lighten our darkness, and the individual doubtless will find such light as he is prepared to receive: but the Church has the office of lightening the darkness of the community that people may know the right path to follow. Grosseteste had time for much study, for much pastoral care; but he also found time to head off his flock from blind alleys. Anything less would have shewn a lack of faith in the Light of the World.

And England, merry England, soon knew a glorious development. Under Edward I, the spirit of England which had been safeguarded in the Charters sought further safeguards against arbitrary power in statute laws which were still venerated five centuries later.

No one single power produced these desirable results, but they sprung from a general sense of responsibility. The Church was the Church, and spoke with the voice of authority. The Law was the law, not constantly producing masses of legislation, but clarifying the common law which some trace back to King Alfred, others to the Gospel, or to the unswaying Mind of God. And the King was the King with a firm executive function.

It is quite inconceivable that all these duties could be performed by a single chamber of elected politicians, or by a small group from among them, much less by a hazy compromise between truth and falsehood. One of the last sayings of Grosseteste concerned greed: "Cupidity is the immoderate love of acquiring and keeping money." The desire for money, he says, is insatiable and leads to inevitable hypocrisy. So much for confusing the means with the end.

And the Law recognised its place. In Grosseteste's earlier days, Hubert Walter, the Bishop of Winchester, produced a treatise on law known as "Glanvil," which a modern barrister (Richard O'Sullivan in *Christian Philosophy and the Common Law*) has described as raising "law to the level of literature." And near the end of Grosseteste's life Henry of Bracton, the Archdeacon of Barnstaple, wrote *Concerning the Laws and Customs of England* a work which is described as "the crown and flower of English mediaeval jurisprudence."

Undoubtedly personal genius made its contribution to English greatness and happiness; but still more did the performance of duties by the various members of the community—Church, Law, Secular Power—in their proper order, each keeping its proper place.

## Resignation of Mr. John Mitchell

We greatly regret that Mr. John Mitchell, who has been the Editor of *Voice* since its inception and who inaugurated the Christian Campaign for Freedom and has conducted it to this point, has now resigned.

The great vigour and clarity of his writing has been an inspiration and encouragement to readers both in this country and overseas, some of whom said with gratitude that they had been waiting to take part in work of this kind. Warm admiration has been expressed for his work which has been achieved with such energy in spite of his other very arduous activities.

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## Twenty Years Ago

The Spring Session of the Church Assembly in 1935 distinguished between employment, which was labour done for money, and work which fulfilled the creative instincts of mankind. A miner might be employed in a pit, for example, and work in his garden. The report went on to demand an impartial enquiry into the financial system, and demanded that bankers should not be the assessors of this system, judging their own case. The session criticised the system because it did not fulfil the functions of a financial system. A member of the Assembly said later: "A problem is to find a monetary mechanism to distribute whatever it may be that a nation decides to grow or to make."

In 1941, these subjects were among others discussed at the Malvern Conference. Speaking of the Conference, Archbishop Temple said: "Our discussion led us to suggest that the remedy must be sought in a new appreciation of the true relation between finance, production, distribution and consumption, and adjustments of our economic system in the light of this; we further considered that a reform of the money system might be indispensable."

In 1945 a volume called *Prospect for Christendom* was edited by Mr. M. B. Reckitt and contained an essay by the Rev. D. G. Peck on "The Function of Finance," which contains the following: "The banks may create out of nothing; but the ultimate basis of the loan is the national wealth. They thus lend to the community what already belongs to it, and they then charge tribute upon it. But much more than this iniquity, they want the loan back again."

Technical knowledge of these matters is of course not to be expected from bishop or priest, but they are printed here to show that churchmen have given them attention and considered that there was a fatal flaw in this department. Finance, however, should be quite a subsidiary matter, serving the community by oiling the wheels of its material life in order that the much more important aspects of life—spiritual, cultural, creative—may take their rightful place. "Seek ye first . . ." But the material side of life will not take its right place until the truth about man's life is authoritatively voiced and spread through the land.

## "People from Beyond"

This is the heading of a useful article in the *Tablet* of November 12, describing the attitude of those who have escaped or migrated from Soviet-occupied lands to the West. The "unbelievable corruption" of the Communist system is agreed on by them, also that it is "based on incredible disloyalty and lack of trust." Waste is colossal, they say, and the workers complain that "they cannot work as efficiently as they would like to," while so many of their products are removed by Russia.

Before rejoicing too much over this situation, we should compare notes on these matters with observers of things at home—corruption, disloyalty, waste and imposed inefficiency, with so many of our products removed—by export.

Some of the intellectuals of Soviet-occupied territories deplore the clumsiness of the Russians, with the bitter regret: "What a pity that the Swiss or the Swedes did not invent Communism!"

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## "Eclipse of Eatanswill"

The Special Correspondent of *The Times* (November 25) has been commenting upon Mr. D. E. Butler's survey of the General Election of 1955.

He says: "For statisticians it was the election at which something went wrong with the 'cube law,' though they are more likely to remember it for the remarkable accuracy of the public opinion polls which forecast the Conservative lead within 0.3 per cent. And the voter? If he remembers it at all he may be pardoned for forgetting what it was about. It was hard enough to find out at the time.

"So shadowy was the contest that the Nuffield College survey written by Mr. D. E. Butler, though it comes only six months after polling day, has a flavour of the history of some forgotten military campaign in which the armies marched and counter-marched, manoeuvred and blew trumpets, and returned to their winter quarters without a battle. 'All through the election,' writes Mr. Butler, 'it was hard to avoid the impression that the two [parties'] campaigns never met. . . .'

"Is it, it has been asked, a sign of apathy or of political maturity in the present generation of citizens that the election passed in an atmosphere of unprecedented calm? The question is not sufficiently precise to answer. It is obviously sensible not to get hot and excited if there is nothing to get hot and excited about—and there was certainly very little to produce that effect in anything the parties said or did in the course of the election. But may that not have been because they deliberately refrained from raising genuinely troublesome questions? . . .

"The election was not fought about the political things which mattered most, and that can hardly be taken as evidence of political maturity. To apportion blame between parliamentary leaders and those who put them there is not easy, and perhaps not very profitable."

We may ask, Where does the blame rest?

WITH ONE VOICE

WHICH IS TO GUIDE SOCIETY?

CHRISTIAN TRUTH OR A GODLESS MATERIALISM?

There are three alternatives:

- 1. The Church can completely ignore and abandon any responsibility towards social, political and economic policies, and leave society at the mercy of selfish power-mongering materialistic forces. If they do this an increasing pressure of technology will more and more dominate education, thought and people's habits of life.
- 2. The Church can continue as at present, a Body with many differing and uncertain voices—another Tower of Babel—at the best a very inefficient brake on catastrophic trends.
- 3. The Church can be one in the Truth, crying it "from the roof-tops"—an Authoritative guide to the public, not on technical matters, but on what are Christian social policies.

If the bishops and clergy will now speak with one voice in agreement with the Bishop of Oxford, they will give a new and true direction to men's thoughts on the proper place of work, how leisure may be constructively and creatively used, what steps are necessary to prepare people for it; and at the same time provide society with a central guiding Truth which all can recognise as something to which economic and financial policies should be subordinated.

As a first step to this end we invite the bishops and clergy to tell us that they agree with what the Bishop of Oxford has said, as quoted below, and to sign their agreement.

What the Bishop of Oxford said:

" . . . The introduction of shorter working hours has given a larger amount of free time to a whole section of our population, though at the same time social changes and the shortage of domestic help have deprived others of some of the leisure they would normally have expected forty or fifty years ago. . . . Provided that enough work is done to sustain the common life of the nation, I do not see any reason to regret these changes, in so far as they have brought more leisure to more people. Work for work's sake is not a Christian maxim. We work in order to live. To reverse this principle would be to suggest that man is a mere producing or organising machine, which must indeed have a rest sometimes, but merely as a biological necessity, in order once again to go to work efficiently. Man's life, on any Christian view is something far greater and more profound than his capacity to produce goods or organise their production. Freedom from unnecessary work is something to be welcomed and even extended as far as possible. But this, like all forms of freedoms, brings its responsibilities. If leisure may be defined as the time we have free from prescribed duties, we have to give some thought to how this time is to be used. Our time is given us on trust; there is a limited amount of it; this is one of the conditions of our life here as God has given it.

"Perhaps the danger to-day is that so many people are thinking of life solely in terms of work and amusement. . . ."

The following bishops have signified their agreement with the Bishop of Oxford:

- The Bishop of Liverpool.
- The Bishop of Chichester.
- The Bishop of Bath and Wells.
- The Bishop of Sheffield.
- The Bishop of Chester.
- The Bishop of Ely.
- The Bishop of Birmingham.
- The Bishop of Lewes.
- The Bishop of Buckingham.

A number of other bishops have expressed full agreement with the Bishop of Oxford, but we are not yet in a position to publish their names.

I AGREE WITH, AND WISH TO SUPPORT THE BISHOP OF OXFORD IN WHAT HE IS QUOTED ABOVE AS SAYING IN REGARD TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

SIGNED..... PARISH.....