

CORRESPONDENCE

WILLIAM LANGLAND

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

SIR,—While gratefully admiring Fr. Conrad Pepler's article in your December issue on William Langland, it should be pointed out that his rather curt dismissal of the other English mystics in its beginning would do them less than justice in its imputation that they do not share Langland's sense of the supreme importance of the mystical unity of the faithful in the Body of Christ, and by linking them with the 'individualistic religion of the post-Reformation period.' The realisation of the essential importance of this doctrine is equally apparent in, for example, the *Cloud of Unknowing*, Chap. XXV, on Charity: —'for Christ is our head and we be the limbs if we be in charity; and whoso will be a perfect disciple of Our Lord's, him behoveth strain up his spirit in this work ghostly, for the salvation of all his brethren in nature as Our Lord did His Body on the Cross.'

Quotations could be multiplied especially from Mother Juliana of Norwich, to show that the contemplatives considered themselves to be striving as part of the mystical body for the welfare not only of themselves but also of their 'even Christians' in their active life. Langland's peculiar contribution is in applying this teaching of Christian Unity to a social order which he saw to be thoroughly disorganised.

Perhaps Fr. Pepler will give us further articles on the doctrine of 'union in the life of grace,' with examples from the other English mystics.

I am, Sir,

Yours, etc.,

FR. FRANCIS MONCRIEFF, O.P.