
The
Silence of Dr. Lang

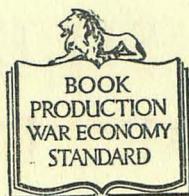


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ONE SHILLING

THE SILENCE
OF DR. LANG

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THE SILENCE OF DR. LANG

OVER four years ago, the Primate of All England, The Most Rev. Cosmo Gordon Lang, appointed a committee to investigate Spiritualism. After two years of patient and systematic inquiry, the committee made its report. It was sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was circulated among the diocesan bishops. And there, in the archiepiscopal and episcopal archives, it rests. For over two years, Spiritualists, responsible Churchmen, and public opinion, as reflected in the clamour of the Press, have demanded that the report be made public. But Orthodoxy remains obdurate. *The report is favourable to Spiritualism.*

THE SILENCE OF DR. LANG

THE committee was appointed in 1937 after the Rev. G. Maurice Elliott, the well-known Spiritualist, and Dr. Francis Underhill, then Dean of Rochester, had interviewed Dr. Temple, then Archbishop of York, now Archbishop of Canterbury, and pleaded that the time was ripe for the Church of England to investigate Spiritualism.

Dr. Temple, despite his statement, three years earlier, that "It is positively undesirable that there should be experimental proof of man's survival after death," was broad-minded enough to agree.

Dr. Lang thereupon nominated his committee. After it had been sitting for about a year, its chairman, Dr. Underhill, then Bishop of Bath and Wells, stated in an interview that it comprised "a number of men and women amply qualified to hear and weigh evidence," whose "sole aim is to arrive at the truth."

Yet, when they arrived at the truth, a veil of silence descended on the committee's labours. Spiritualists, Churchmen and the Press reached the only possible conclusion—that the ban placed upon publication was in reality a resounding victory for Spiritualism.

Two years after the committee began its deliberations, the Editor of *Psychic News* addressed this letter to Dr. Underhill:

"I write to you because you were the chairman of the committee set up to inquire into Spiritualism. I understand that the report was completed some months ago.

"It is now being freely stated that the reason for the report not being published is due to the fact that it presents Spiritualism in a favourable light. The suggestion is also being made that the report is deliberately suppressed for this reason.

"As this is a matter of great interest to Spiritualists, I ask you to be good enough to confirm or deny the allegations being freely made."

Dr. Underhill replied:

"The report of the Archbishop's Committee on Spiritualism, of which I was chairman, was presented to the archbishops and diocesan bishops of England some months ago. The report itself disclosed much difference of opinion, and it was consequently felt that there was need of further careful investigation into the subject. On that account it was decided that the report should not be made public."

Simultaneously with the request made by the Editor of *Psychic News*, three leading Spiritualists, Mrs. M. A. St. Clair Stobart, G. H. Lethem, and Ernest H. Hunt, wrote to Dr. Lang in these terms:

"In the interests of truth, we ask whether the report is to be made public, and whether it may soon be looked for.

"We are sincerely concerned that the nature and value of the facts for which Spiritualism stands should be made known. For we cannot believe that those facts will do other than form an impregnable base on which, even as in the earliest days of the Church, a living Christianity may ground itself, and to-day immensely widen its appeal.

"The world suffers in such dire straits that we consider that anything which truly helps the mind of men to take courage and comfort in the spiritual verities should be made patent and available to all."

Replied the Primate's Chaplain:

"It is not proposed *at present* (our italics) to publish the report. When it came up for review it was felt that further investigation was required, and that premature publication would be liable to give rise to misunderstanding."

Prominent personalities in the Spiritualist movement continued in no uncertain strain to state their views on the withholding of such an historic document.

"I am confident that the report would have appeared if it had been adverse," said Frank Hawken, secretary of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, voicing the opinion of many Spiritualists.

Maybe it did not appear because its contents provided Dr. Lang with no valid reason, to quote his own words in a letter written *after* he received his committee's report, why "spiritualism and spiritualistic services are not countenanced or encouraged in the Church of England." That was the official reply made to Martin Liljebblad, a Swedish pastor, who had inquired the position of Spiritualism in England.

Said a leading Churchman to Arthur Findlay, author of many widely-circulating books on Spiritualism:

"Spiritualism has won a great victory."

The fact, he added, that the bishops had turned down the findings of their own committee meant that the committee decided in favour of Spiritualism, and the bishops were afraid to make the findings known.

"The Nazis suppress any news which is not favourable to their creed," said Findlay. "So do the Anglican bishops. That is why they will not publish the findings of their own committee on Spiritualism.

"It was stupid of them ever to set up a committee, but dictators always do stupid things. Doubtless they thought that the report would be adverse, and that they would kill, once and for all, this ever-recurring menace to their creeds and doctrines."

Nor was the Press slow to comment on the suppression of the report. Said the *Daily Sketch*, to cite one instance, after quoting from *Psychic News*: "Hundreds of clergymen, waiting for a lead, are disappointed by the decision. Spiritualists are jubilant. They believe that suppression of the report is clear evidence that the war against Spiritualism has crumbled in the face of facts. They will press for immediate publication of the report."

Soon there followed the first newspaper announcement to contain any

details of the report and its circulation among the bishops, together with the names of the committee and its terms of reference. *Psychic News*, indeed, added an epoch-making chapter to psychic history when it announced in February 1940:

"The Church of England, by nine votes to three, has decided that Spiritualism is true. The nine were all the influential members of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Committee on Spiritualism. The three, unimportant and unknown, merely 'reserved their opinions.'

"Our authority for this statement is someone who has seen the committee's secret report. The statement is confirmed by a member of the committee itself. Both are famous. Both bear unblemished reputations.

"Yet, for over a year, these historic findings have been hidden from the world, smothered by Orthodoxy!

"They were arrived at after over two years of patient and systematic inquiry, after sitting with mediums, hearing witnesses and examining the evidence.

"Then the report was printed. It was circulated to every diocesan bishop of the Church of England.

"Yet it was kept back from the world.

"We challenge the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England, to dispute these facts. He can only reply by publishing the report, in full."

Psychic News subsequently corrected its first-published figures, to read "seven votes to three," upon being informed that one member of the committee had resigned and that only eleven had inquired.

The signatories to the majority report which we are asked to believe disclosed so "much difference of opinion" are:

Dr. Francis Underhill, The Bishop of Bath and Wells.

Canon H. Anson, Master of the Temple.

Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's.

Canon L. W. Grensted, Examining Chaplain to the Archbishop of York.

Dr. William Brown, the celebrated psychologist.

P. E. Sandlands, K.C.

Lady (Gwendolen) Stephenson.

The three signatories to the minority report included the Bishop of Bath and Wells's secretary and the Bishop of Derby's wife.

The committee's terms of reference were "to investigate the subject of communications with incarnate spirits and the claims of Spiritualism in relation to the Christian faith."

Its members did not confine themselves to the examination of the evidence

"RECANTEBURY"?

"*IF the committee comes 'out on the side of Spiritualism, I suppose the Primate will then be called the Archbishop of Recanterbury'*"—Maurice Barbanell in *Psychic News*, April 17, 1937.

presented by Spiritualists. They considered the views of witnesses who were unfavourable to Spiritualism, and incorporated their statements in the report.

They went in a body to séances. They asked questions of mediums and the spirit intelligences who manifested through them. Some obtained surprising results.

Ernest W. Oaten, Editor of the *Two Worlds*, and a Spiritualist for forty years, addressed the committee. With great fearlessness and courage Oaten told the Church representatives a few home truths. His address was followed by an hour of questions and answers. Some of Oaten's most cogent points are reproduced as an appendix to this booklet.

The committee's findings are printed in two sections. The bulk is taken up by the majority report, signed by the seven most influential members. The minority report, which the three remaining members signed, occupies less than half a dozen pages.

The majority report, based on impartial and wide-ranging inquiries, is drawn up by Canon Grensted. Though written from the Church point of view, and occasionally sounding a note of caution, it is a lucidly expressed document confirming the case for Spiritualism. Its language has been highly praised.

It cites some of the evidence for Survival obtained through mediumship, and includes an account by a judge of the Appeal Court whose testimony to psychic phenomena is remarkable. This majority report, states one informant, also makes a suggestion for an alliance between Spiritualism and the Church which, if it could be effected, would lead to a religious renaissance.

The announcement made exclusively in *Psychic News* and extensively quoted, was quickly succeeded by publication in the same newspaper of the committee's main conclusions. Rightly describing the occasion as "Spiritualism's Greatest Triumph," *Psychic News* printed these findings:

"Spiritualism cannot be disregarded. It fills gaps in our knowledge. It demonstrates that communication with the dead has been effected.

"After making every allowance for alternative explanations and theories, there remains a residuum which can only be explained on the ground of discarnate intervention.

"We have been unable to prove the existence of Spiritualism's physical phenomena, for we have had no evidence of materialisation, the direct voice, or apports.

"The Church should set up a body of people who, under its direction, shall keep in touch with responsible Spiritualists."

The *Daily Telegraph*, after reading this account, telephoned Lambeth Palace and was informed, "The statement is both unauthorised and inaccurate."

Despite this disclaimer, *Psychic News* insisted on the accuracy of its account. It joyfully admitted, on the other hand, that its disclosure was "unauthorised." Not one member of the committee, when approached by

Psychic News, challenged the accuracy of its published account of their verdict.

After the main conclusions of the report were thus revealed, Dr. Underhill was quoted by the London *Evening Standard* as saying: "The position is rather delicate and uncertain now, and will not be clarified until the further investigation has been completed." Has it ever been begun? [Note.—The majority report was unanimous. It was signed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells himself! Yet publication was "considered to be unwise." What a *volte face!*]

Opined the *Daily Mirror* at the same time: "It is expected that as a result of this disclosure (by *Psychic News*), the Archbishop of Canterbury will make public the entire findings of the investigation."

This expectation still belongs to the realm of fantasy.

Said the *Sunday Dispatch*: "Some members of the committee feel that the report should be published without further delay, because their names are being quoted as signatories to it, without it being made clear what their individual views are."

We will tell you what those views are—the views of the Seven Wise Men.

Dr. Matthews (in a public address): A number of people had found in mediumship "a confirmation of their Christian faith, and even a way from agnosticism to belief." (This, he says, is an "unexpected fact" as disclosed by the evidence taken by the committee.)

Canon Anson (also in a public address): "Spiritualism is the scientific explanation of the Christian belief and faith in survival of life after death." And, in *Psychic News* after the decision had been reached not to publish the report:

"I have made no secret of my own conclusions regarding Spiritualism."

Canon Anson is the author of *The Truth About Spiritualism*, published in 1941, in which he says:

"I want to impress upon professing Christians the importance of not pouring scorn upon evidences and experiences which are in great part similar to those upon which the events which formed the foundation of the primitive gospel rest, and which must always form the core of our Christian hope and trust."

Canon Anson sums up Orthodoxy's attitude towards Spiritualism in three categories—the common belief that there is no evidence of Survival; that if the belief is accepted there is no contemporary evidence; and those who declare it is desirable that there should be no evidence.

"It is largely with such people in mind, and they are a very considerable number," he says, "that I should wish to put forward in a very simple form the accumulation of evidence for survival which (for many people) goes so far to confirm the faith of the Church that there is a spiritual body which survives death and carries on with it into a world beyond time and space the experiences, whether good or bad, which the spirit has garnered in its passage through this terrestrial life."

Of evidence for Survival obtained through mediumship, he says: "If we reject this evidence we ought also logically to reject the evidence upon which the great facts of our Christian faith are founded."

Canon Anson has had several séances with a woman friend who possesses the gift of automatic writing. Through her, he has testified, evidential messages from the Other Side have been transmitted.

Canon L. W. Grensted, yet another prominent signatory to the majority report, accepting the invitation of *Psychic News* to say "What I Think About Spiritualism," wrote:

"I hold that there is some passage of real and authentic communication through the veil which separates us so thinly with that which lies beyond. Those who are simply credulous will miss the message just as surely as those who refuse to read at all. But there is a message to be received. I believe there is sometimes given to us a real and personal contact with those who have passed beyond death."

The man who wrote that is the same man who drafted the majority report.

Other members of the committee had their Spiritualist backgrounds. Dr. Underhill, who has since passed on, was a psychic, having proved his faculty of water divining. More, he frequently attended séances.

Dr. William Brown, another of the Seven Wise Men, has devoted a quarter of a century to psychic research. He makes no secret of his interest in Spiritualism, for he has publicly revealed that he is his own automatic writing medium.

No wonder some members of the committee chafed—and still chafe—at Dr. Lang's decision. It was as a direct result of the disclosures made by *Psychic News* that some of them pressed for the report to be made known.

They could see no reason why their findings should be withheld from the public.

Lame explanations that spoke of "further investigations" . . . "premature publication" . . . "differences of opinion" . . . "misunderstanding" . . . "delicate and uncertain position" . . . served only to astonish these men who had carried out the task assigned to them and who expected the public to be told all about it.

It is now two and a half years since their majority report was completed and signed. Yet in all that time they have not been asked to conduct any of those "further investigations" that has since become one of the stock answers to baulk awkward inquiries!

Dr. Matthews, publicly protesting against the findings being pigeon-holed by Dr. Lang, based his remarks on the statement we have just quoted. Does his declaration—that a number of people had found in mediumship "a confirmation of the Christian faith, and even a way from agnosticism to belief"—provide any basis of logic for the statement that "further investigations" are desirable?

Faced with these protests, with the known views on Spiritualism of several of the Wise Men, will all the two score odd diocesan bishops

be content to go on standing idly by while this historic report is withheld?

Is Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, famous for his frankness, a party to the ban?

What about the Bishop of Liverpool? Not long ago, he recommended *Man's Survival After Death*, a Spiritualist book written by the Rev. C. L. Tweedale, to the clergy of his diocese for Lenten study, and wrote to Tweedale, saying: "Now we must leave the leaven to work."

Dr. Pollock, Bishop of Norwich, boldly proclaimed: "The evidence for Spiritualism is too strong, too widespread, and accepted by too many sober-minded people for a hasty rejection. Scientific men accustomed to deal coolly and accurately with phenomena have pronounced in favour of the truth of Spiritualism."

"The evidence for Spiritualism cannot be disregarded," said the Bishop of Chelmsford.

Dr. Hensley Henson, a former Bishop of Durham, recommended to clergy in his diocese *Talks With The Invisible*, a book written by the Rev. H. T. Lovejoy, summing up his proofs of Survival obtained in thirty years of investigation.

The Bishop of Lincoln recommended candidates for ordination to study *The Challenge of Spiritualism*, written by the Rev. G. Maurice Elliott, a pioneer in getting the committee appointed.

Take, too, Dr. Cyril Garbett. Though, in 1938, when Bishop of Winchester, he questioned the validity of psychic evidence, in 1921, as Bishop of Southwark, he opined:

"It is impossible to regard Spiritualism as confined to a few fanatical people. I would say at once, genuinely believing what I say to be true, that there are spirit messages from 'beyond the veil'."

And has not Dr. William Temple so changed his views as to declare that "the most important political questions of the day are the questions whether God exists and whether man survives after death"?

In 1920 Orthodoxy at large was thinking the same way. Then, the Lambeth Conference appointed a committee of two archbishops and thirty-five bishops "to report upon the Christian faith in relation to Spiritualism." They declared:

"It is possible that we may be on the threshold of a new Science, which will, by another method of approach, confirm us in the assurance of a world behind and beyond the world we see, and of something within us by which we are in contact with it. We could never presume to set a limit to means which God may use to bring men to the realisation of spiritual life."

The Church of Scotland, too, has inquired into Spiritualism. After the Rev. William A. Reid, of Glasgow, petitioned the General Assembly, a committee was appointed in 1920 to investigate psychic phenomena. Two years were spent on the inquiry, with the result, to quote Dr. Norman MacLean, an ex-Moderator:

"The Church decided that psychical research was not contrary to the

teachings of the Christian faith, and that members of the Church were not forbidden to exercise their minds in this field."

"The present position of the Church of Scotland," says Reid, "is that ministers and laymen have a perfect right, if they please, to investigate psychic phenomena and to believe that human survival is now proved."

Now, a Church of England committee has come out "on the side of the angels." It finds proof of Survival. Yet what happens? *Shsh!* says Lambeth Palace. Put it away! Don't publish it! Investigate, investigate, investigate! But we won't tell the public!

Meanwhile all the churches are facing the problem of dwindling attendances, "a drifting away from religion," as Dr. Lang called it.

If Dr. Lang wanted the public to "drift back" to religion, then there was no surer means of persuading them than through the issue of the hitherto suppressed report.

Fifteen thousand Anglican clergymen, bewildered by Dr. Lang's decision, know that mourners desert the Church because it cannot give them comfort in the hour of sorrow. The world to-day wants proof, not creeds nor theories.

Loyalty to truth, wherever it leads, should be the paramount consideration of all Church leaders. Many of them realise that dissemination of the truth in this case would spell materialism's greatest defeat.

Strange, is it not, that Dr. Lang, so adamant in this matter of publication, should presume to tell journalists that "a primary part of your business is to circulate news"?

Dr. Lang was addressing members of the Institute of Journalists in St. Bride's, Fleet Street's own church, nearly a year after his committee's report had come into his hands. And there was the Press being gratuitously told to publish the news when he himself was withholding a news story that would have sent circulations rocketing if there hadn't been a paper shortage! Can you make sense of it?

Three newspapers already have published their readers' verdicts in favour of Spiritualism. *Daily News* (now *News Chronicle*) readers voted 58 per cent that Spiritualism was true. Asked to express their opinion on "Do The Dead Come Back?" 52.75 per cent of *Daily Sketch* readers said "yes." Then the *Sunday Pictorial* instituted a similar inquiry. Their readers, too, gave a majority vote for Spiritualism.

It wasn't only the Press that used its best endeavours, in the interests of truth, to prevail upon Dr. Lang. In her official position as chairman of the Confraternity, comprising Spiritualists, clergy, ministers, and laymen of all denominations, Mrs. Stobart wrote to Dr. Lang:

"I have had communications from over 200 clergy, expressing their views upon the desirability of the publication of the committee's findings. Of these clergy, three-fourths have intimated that they are anxious for the report to be published. In the words of one, 'The clergy and the people in general have a right to receive such guidance as the authorities of the Church of England can give'."

Mrs. Stobart concluding by discussing the likelihood of Dr. Lang complying "with this widely-diffused demand."

One hundred and fifty Anglican clergymen, including thirteen holding high office in the Church, had replied in the affirmative to a questionnaire circulated by Mrs. Stobart. Some were "very insistent" on the report being made public.

Forty-five thought it should be withheld; five did not express an opinion.

Announcing this news in *World's Press News*, the journalists' own newspaper, Hannen Swaffer wrote: "Publication of the report is being demanded by hundreds of clergymen, including ten canons. If all the canons go off, what will happen to the report?"

Replied the Primate's Chaplain to Mrs. Stobart's appeal:

"The Archbishop is giving consideration to the suggestion that the question of making public the private and confidential document submitted to him and his brother bishops on the subject of Spiritualism should be reconsidered.

"This is a matter which does not concern the Archbishop alone, and *some time* (our italics) will elapse before he has an opportunity of consulting the others concerned."

The Chaplain's letter ended with these words: "Until that time, probably . . . June (1940), he will be glad to be spared further correspondence on the subject."

Thus did Cosmo Gordon Lang throw the onus of deciding the question of publication on the forty-one diocesan bishops.

Adroitly sidestepping the archiepiscopal plea "to be spared further correspondence," Mrs. Stobart answered with the suggestion, "as one who has the interest of the Church at heart, and who does understand the difficulties involved," that if Dr. Lang could see his way to an early release of the contents of the report, before the world had a chance of saying it was forced from him, and had only been withheld because the result was not in accordance with preconceived hopes, it would remove a widespread grievance.

It would establish the fact that Dr. Lang was not yielding to public clamour, but responding to the great need, felt by so many of his clergy, for guidance on a subject which forms the basis of religion—"namely, life after death."

Mrs. Stobart concluded by asking for an interview. Well, Dr. Lang had not asked to be spared that, too . . . But she was refused.

Dr. Lang's next supplication, succeeding swiftly on his expressed distaste of correspondence, was stranger still. It was no less than to ask Mrs. Stobart to "use her influence" to "suppress the Press clamour" (in other words, *public demand*) for the publication of the report. To this request Mrs. Stobart quite rightly made no direct answer. Dr. Lang should know his Press better than that. Had he not recently urged them to circulate the news? Was he now, in effect, endeavouring to retract and tell them that his advice to them was all wrong?

BISHOPS' DECISION
FORETOLD FROM
OTHER SIDE

THE Church will not have the courage to reveal to the world what they really feel about communication with us. Many of them have visions, but lack courage, and are filled with self-consciousness."

Thus, at a séance held in June, 1938, when the committee was still sitting, was forecast from the Other Side the subsequent reaction of the Church to its own report.

This fact was revealed by Baron Palmstierna, formerly Sweden's Minister to this country, in a letter to "Light."

What lead, one wonders, did he give his bishops when, in July 1940, they did eventually discuss the question of the publication of the report? Did they bear in mind Dr. Lang's own widely-reported words of three months earlier, that a newspaper's job was to circulate news? Were they conscious of the fact that it was equally their own duty to circulate the news—the news that man survives the grave?

Apparently not. For the bishops favoured continued suppression. Very loyally, in fact, after a secret conclave, they agreed to smother the report and to try to keep the world safe for Orthodoxy. The reason given for the continued clerical ban was that "in respect of practical guidance to Christian

people on a subject fraught with grave dangers, the report does not seem to be so clear as to make its publication desirable"!

That is what Dr. Lang's announcement said. The report itself says nothing about Spiritualism being "a subject fraught with grave dangers."

It is hard to understand why Lambeth Palace should circulate this attack on Spiritualism, seeing that its own committee did not reach that conclusion.

Indeed, the committee carefully considered this question and dismissed it. It is not their view. One member at least was more than surprised to find the bishops resorting to this subterfuge as a reason for holding back the report.

If Spiritualism is "gravely dangerous," why did not Cosmo Gordon Lang come out into the open and say so several months earlier, when his hand was so far forced as to find and put out "reasons" for suppression? Then the "position" was no more than "delicate and uncertain," and merely needed "further investigations" to clarify it. But, if, apparently, you are bent on evading an issue, what does a phrase here and there matter? One is as good as another.

That the report was "not unanimous," for example, was another of the "reasons" dragged up in support of its concealment. Yet the Church has a precedent. Four years ago it published "Doctrine in the Church of

England", the report of a commission appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Its twenty-five leading theologians met for fifteen years, and on practically every Christian doctrine they agreed to differ! Yet Orthodoxy did not consider that the publication of their findings, expressing contradictory opinions on all its beliefs, was "fraught with grave dangers."

Commenting on the ban at a meeting of the Society for Psychical Research, Dr. Matthews, one of the Seven Wise Men to sign the document that was to become such a source of embarrassment to Dr. Lang, suggested that the findings had found their "final resting place in the archiepiscopal pigeon-holes, if not in the archiepiscopal mind."

Is *his* mind the best judge? What of the public, the millions who in wartime are crying out for spiritual sustenance and comfort as never before, sustenance and comfort and healing that the Church will not and cannot provide? Is not their mind better calculated to decide whether Spiritualism is fraught with "grave dangers," on the nature of which Dr. Lang's spokesman is not unsurprisingly silent? Give the *public* the report and let *them* accept or reject it!

By what right do the archbishops and bishops set themselves up as sole arbiters in the affairs of the soul? Have they not pathetically confessed already to the failure of their own antiquated theology, as seen in the drifting away from the Church? One word from Dr. Lang, and the drift could have been halted before it developed into an avalanche. One word from Dr. Lang, and there might have been a religious renaissance, not alone in this country but throughout the western world. There is much, meanwhile, that Dr. Lang can tell us.

Were, firstly, all the diocesan bishops unanimous in their verdict that suppression of the report should be upheld? Was the Bishop of Liverpool a "yes man"? And the Bishop of Norwich? And Chelmsford? And Lincoln? And his Grace the Bishop of Bath and Wells himself? *Spiritualists would like to know*. We invite Dr. Lang to follow Parliamentary procedure and publish a list of "Ayes" and "Noes." Or would that be "premature"? Would it lead to "misunderstanding"?

What, secondly, has been the reaction of those clerical members of the committee who are known to believe in Spiritualism since the bishops, according to Lambeth Palace, decided that the ban should not be raised? Has Canon Grensted retracted his published conviction that "there is a message to be received"? We haven't heard so.

Has Canon Anson recanted his statement that "Spiritualism is the scientific explanation of the Christian belief and faith in survival of life after death"? Has he denied "the accumulation of evidence for survival" which he mentions in his new book, *The Truth About Spiritualism*? We haven't heard so.

Has Dr. Matthews gone back on his asseveration that a number of people had found in mediumship "a confirmation of the Christian faith, and even a way from agnosticism to belief"? We haven't heard so. Has the Church

ORTHODOXY'S BEST
"SUBSTITUTE"!

THE diocesan bishops, after agreeing to suppress the report, proposed that "a pamphlet should shortly be issued setting out the positive teaching of the Church on the subject of eternal life"! This was to be written by Dr. Temple in collaboration with others.

Did the bishops seriously think that its "positive teaching" on eternal life, which cannot be proved, would bring one grain of comfort to any mother whose son has been killed in the war?

If our Press cuttings are any criterion, the pamphlet apparently caused little or no stir. Small wonder. Dr. Temple is frank enough to admit it is an "inadequate treatment" of "so great a theme." We sorrowfully agree.

disciplined these outspoken members of its flock? We haven't heard so.

Have those 150 Anglican parsons concerned for the swift dissemination of the report been told by their sees to go and be good boys and "spare" their superiors any further embarrassment? We haven't heard so.

If any party to the proceedings was entitled to be embarrassed it was surely the hard-working, long-suffering committee. It received Dr. Lang's decision with mixed feelings. Some of its members were disappointed—at least one was angry—that the fruits of their labours should be dismissed in such an off-hand manner and then concealed from the world.

Unfortunately, they were bound to secrecy. The pledge to leave the decision on publication to Dr. Lang was given before they started their inquiry!

Had they known how the report would be dismissed, because it conflicted with Orthodoxy's preconceived theories, it is unlikely that they would all have agreed to a pledge of silence. Now, of course, they are in an impossible position. They cannot make any public comments.

Not so the Anglican Canon Gerald H. Rendall who, in a letter to the *Modern Churchman* in the autumn of 1941, roundly denounces the suppression. He writes:

"The ill-advised fulminations or injunctions of reverend 'Fathers in God', or the hush-hush policy which prompted suppression of the findings of the Archbishop's Committee of Inquiry, reflect the timid clericalism which has so often been the bane of the official Church. Few realise the extent and weight of the resentment which action of this kind provokes. Taboos on free discussion not only irritate: they give colour to the slogan, 'Clericalism is the enemy'."

Yet out of Dr. Lang's very refusal to publish the report there emerges a great triumph for Spiritualism. If the committee, after its methodical inquiry, had produced a result antagonistic to Spiritualism, we repeat

that it is extremely doubtful whether it would then have been suppressed.

Very unwisely, Dr. Lang and his bishops have decided to defend Orthodoxy rather than circulate a document which would have marked a turning point in Church history, one which, by demonstrating that the psychic phenomena recorded in the Bible are being repeated to-day, would give guidance to thousands of loyal members of the Church.

Unlike Paul, Dr. Lang has decided, "Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would *rather* have you ignorant."

FOOTNOTE BY THE EDITOR OF *PSYCHIC NEWS*

SINCE this booklet was first issued there have been some developments. Early in 1942, when Dr. Temple succeeded Dr. Lang as Archbishop of Canterbury, I addressed an Open Letter to him in *Psychic News*.

I asked Dr. Temple to publish the suppressed report. "You are a courageous man," I told him. "You have already revealed that you are not afraid to change your opinions."

I reminded him that he had condemned the narrow outlook of some of his colleagues as, for example, when he said: "I think that one of the worst criticisms of our religious instruction is that we have created the impression that God was singularly active in one part of the world, namely, Palestine, until A.D. 66, but that He did not do anything anywhere else, and has not done anything since."

We Spiritualists, I said, were proving that God was still active to-day, that the power of the spirit was still available and still descended through many instruments.

"The publication of the report," I wrote, "would dispel the belief that the Church resorts to evasion and suppression rather than face up to Truth." I ended with these words: "I urge you to make the fruits of this committee's labours known to the world, reminding you that Truth cannot hurt Religion. Indeed, I hope you will forgive me if I say that your attitude towards this suppressed report will be regarded by many as a test of your sincerity. You have an historic opportunity. Will you take it?"

The result of this Open Letter was a vigorous but friendly correspondence. I would like to tell you what Dr. Temple wrote, but unfortunately I cannot. His first letter is marked, "Not for publication", and his last letters are prefaced by the word, "Confidential".

In my last letter to him I wrote: "At a time when we are engaged in fighting for freedom—and you have spoken very eloquently about what the post-war world must be like—it ill-behoves the Church to use the weapon of suppression."

Dr. Temple drew my attention to his pamphlet, "The Christian Hope of Eternal Life", which the bishops had asked him to write. This pamphlet begins with a reference to the fact that in these days of bereavement "many turn to spiritualistic practices in the hope of gaining the assurance which they so deeply desire". He himself has "the gravest anxieties about these practices". He prefers "the Christian doctrines of eternal life" which, together with the Gospel, he believes give "more inspiring confidence than any recourse to spiritualistic sciences and the like".

Yet this same Dr. Temple has declared: "The tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible commonly held in the Church until the beginning of the nineteenth century cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge now at our disposal."

Soon after his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Temple, interviewed by a newspaper, said that when any member of the armed forces passes on "his spirit remains with his dear ones always". Yet when Spiritualism proves that fact, and the Church confirms that it is so, its findings are suppressed!

It is strange, too, to learn the different excuses advanced for the smothering of the Church's report. When, in July 1943, Dr. Temple was questioned about it at a London meeting of workers in an ordnance factory, he said the report was not prepared for publication and there was never any idea of publishing it. Here I comment that no member of the committee was told beforehand that the report would never be published. They were informed that the decision on publication would be left to Dr. Lang.

Dr. Temple also stated at this meeting that if the report were published it might not be welcomed even by Spiritualists. And it would be bewildering to the public if it were made available to them. A few members of the committee were in favour of Spiritualism and

some against it. If the report had been unfavourable, he added, it would not have been published.

To say that some members were in favour of Spiritualism and some against it is to give a curious interpretation to the facts. Of the ten members, the seven most influential signed the majority report, which takes up the bulk of the document, declaring that Spiritualism had been proved. The minority of three, the most unimportant members, merely sat on the fence.

A different excuse for non-publication was given by Dr. Underhill, the chairman of the committee. He said: "The report itself disclosed much difference of opinion, and it was consequently felt that there was need of further careful investigation into the subject. On that account it was decided that the report should not be made public".

Incidentally, no member of the committee was ever asked to undertake any further investigation—despite the fact that Dr. Underhill later stated: "The position is rather delicate and uncertain now, and will not be clarified until the further investigation has been completed".

Dr. Lang's Chaplain also made the need for "further investigation" the excuse for non-publication. As *Psychic News* has already revealed, members of the committee were surprised to learn about these official excuses.

Canon Anson, speaking at the London Spiritualist Alliance in October 1943, contradicted Dr. Temple. Whereas the Primate had said that some members of the committee favoured Spiritualism and some were against it, Canon Anson stated—and the report was drawn up in his house: "It was an exceedingly sympathetic report." This makes Dr. Temple's statement that publication would bewilder the public rather puzzling. How can an "exceedingly sympathetic report" bewilder the public?

When *Psychic News* exclusively revealed the contents of the report, Lambeth Palace said that this newspaper's statements were inaccurate. Canon Anson, however, said publicly that *Psychic News* "proceeded to publish large parts of the report". How can the publication of large parts of the report be inaccurate?

Then Canon Anson also said: "I don't think bishops, as a whole, are hostile to Spiritualism, but I must own that at the present moment I don't think they are deeply interested." Yet they were sufficiently interested to agree to suppress the report, and this agreement is surely evidence of their hostility. It seems extraordinary that bishops should not be interested in proving Survival, which is the foundation of Christianity and every religion in the world. The truth is that the revelations made by *Psychic News* about this suppressed report have caused such a fluttering in the theological dovecotes that leading clerics now speak with confused voices.

As far as the Church is concerned, it would have been better if Dr. Lang had not decided to keep silent.

APPENDIX

"THIS THING IS OF GOD," OATEN TELLS COMMITTEE

WHEN Ernest W. Oaten, Editor of the *Two Worlds*, addressed the committee, he presented Spiritualism's case with dignity, eloquence and knowledge. Here are some of his most trenchant observations:—

"There are thousands here, and in the next life, whose happiness would be enhanced if they could be assured that reunion is a certainty. Many serious persons who have passed behind the veil are anxious to transmit to those who remain some knowledge of what they have found—and they find means to do so.

"Communication is possible, it has been established beyond doubt. The Church may debate the point, 'Is it lawful? And if lawful, is it good?'"

The Church might continue arguing, but it could not stem the flowing tide.

GUESS WHO!

"RELIGION attracts, but the churches repel."

Who said that?

Dr. Cosmo Gordon Lang, believe it or not!

Who was in control of the Church?

Dr. Cosmo Gordon Lang.

"When," he added, "you talk about spirit communion being a matter for careful consideration, we don't argue—we just smile!

"You are living in a self-constructed internment camp ringed round by doctrines. You don't know the large and beautiful world outside, and dare not trust yourselves to explore it.

"You fear that new knowledge may upset your well-established anchorage: that new information may mean the

abandonment of well-established—even well-tried—traditions and doctrines. But truth will prevail, with your consent or without it."

Spiritualism could and did prove beyond doubt that life persisted after death.

Despite the opprobrium of the Church, the persecution of the law, the misconceptions and sneers of the ignorant, and the neglect of the official scientist, Spiritualism was steadily changing and moulding the mind of man towards the future life.

We had the most important truth in this world, and the hosts of heaven were behind us.

"The time must come," continued Oaten, "when a universal religion shall supplant creedal differences, and Spiritualism offers a broad basis for such religion in the demonstrable fact of survival for all mankind.

"This thing is of God. You may retard its progress, but you cannot prevent its ultimate success."

He told the committee how, in well over 20,000 homes in Great Britain, the family meets weekly, with no professional or outside medium, to hold actual living communion with deceased relatives. The old-fashioned family worship was nearly dead, but the home circle had replaced it.

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