

# PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

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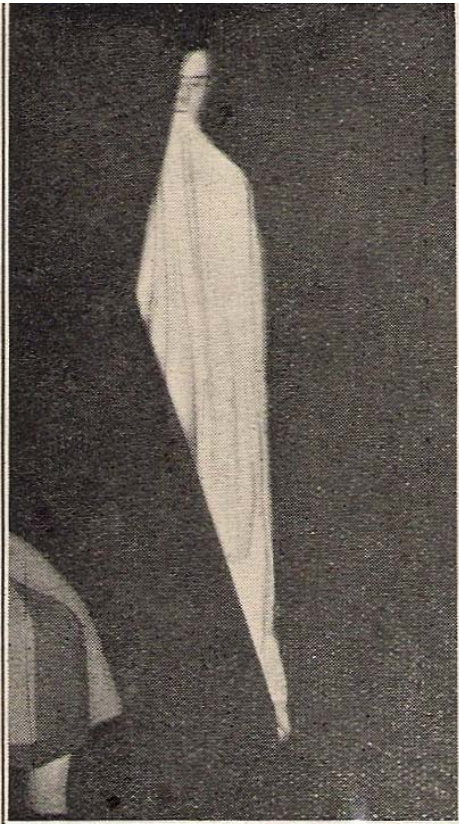
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# INFRA-RED PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE PHYSICAL MEDIUMS

Photography and physical phenomena have always been a difficult and controversial mixture, though some mediums and researchers have welcomed a photographic record of the manifestations. For example, the famous materialisation pictures of the spirit “Katie King”, taken by William Crookes, aided by an unnamed assistant in 1874. Four photographs are said to have been found amongst the papers of the well-known artist F. W. Hayes (1848-1918). The history of these early photographs will be published in the next issue.

Séance photography significantly progressed in the years that followed. The British astronomer Sir William Herschel initially discovered infra-red light in 1800, and in 1910, an American physicist named Robert Williams Wood sensitised his own photographic plates and produced the first known infra-red photographs. By the 1930’s infra-red film and filters etc., became generally available, which would potentially lift many of the barriers of seeing inside the dark séances and recording the phenomena. One early pioneer of infra-red séance photography was Leon Isaacs. But a year or so prior to Isaacs’s involvement, *Psychic News* published this article and photograph of the “New Infra-Red Process”:<sup>1</sup>



**How ectoplasm looks. You see it pouring from Mrs. Duncan**

## MATERIALISED FORM PHOTOGRAPHED

### NEW INFRA-RED PROCESS

The following is a report of an experimental sitting with Mrs. Duncan, held in the Séance Rooms of the Belfast Spiritualists’ Alliance, 29 Rosemary Street, Belfast, on Sunday June 5, 1932, at 9.40 a.m.

**By S. G. DONALDSON**

I visited the Ilford Photograph Works at Ilford a few days ago, and obtained from them particulars of new plates sensitive to infra-red rays and also of a special screen or filter used in conjunction with them.

I obtained two filters and a supply of plates and inspected their apparatus. They gave me the fullest information and offered every assistance.

<sup>1</sup> *Psychic News*, June 18, 1932, page 5

## NEW PROCESS

These plates, filters and apparatus enable a photograph to be taken in a subdued red light, as the filters pass few visible red rays but allow the passage of the infra-red rays which affect the plates. I had the apparatus assembled with the help of a Mr. G. Smith, a member of our Church.

I used two high-powered lamps, one 1,500 w. and one 1,000 w., and had each housed in a light-tight box with the special filter supplied by Messrs. Ilford.

To overcome the excessive heat generated inside the box, a hairdressers' hair drier was utilised to force a current of cool air around the lamp and out through a light-tight ventilator on the top of the box.

I also used a strip of light asbestos to line the box as I found without this the heat was too severe on the plywood. Plywood was used owing to the hurried nature of the preparations.

I had a professional photographer and his assistant and they took charge of the two cameras. I used two cameras to ascertain which type of lens would be the most suitable.

## LIGHTS ARE TOO STRONG

My idea of procuring this apparatus was to use it in connection with the Goligher circle. On my return to Belfast I asked Mrs. Duncan, who was in Belfast, if she would be good enough to book a séance with her and attempt to get a photograph with the new apparatus.

She readily agreed and at a séance that night, Albert, her control, said he would do his best to ensure success.

A séance was arranged for Sunday morning with a nurse in attendance to supervise the undressing of Mrs. Duncan, as she usually insists on this. At 9.40 a.m. the séance commenced.

Mrs. Duncan on entering the cabinet was immediately entranced. Albert spoke and I explained the procedure to him. He asked that the special lights be turned on to allow him to test and see if he could withstand them.

**Both lights proved too much for him as he complained of a prickling burning sensation as if he were being tattooed all over. He also complained of the noise of the fans, stating that the noise was more destructive than the light.**

I had the one light (1,500 w.) used and he stated he would overcome the noise and do his best to withstand the light. In a little time he said he could not build a form, but thought that the ectoplasm itself could be made to withstand the rays and would give us an opportunity of exposing plates.

## A TATTOOED FEELING

When the curtains parted I could dimly see the substance suspended from the medium's mouth and I then asked the photographers to expose plates as long as possible, risking overexposure rather than under exposure. An exposure of 30 seconds was given and the curtain closed. Albert stated he would try again.

Cameras were prepared and the same light turned on, and on the curtains parting, an exposure of 15 seconds was given.

Albert again complained of this "being tattooed" feeling and stated the medium looked very poorly, so it was decided not to risk any more exposures. Albert was thanked for his help and the seance closed.

## REACTION ON MEDIUM

Nurse MacKay led Mrs. Duncan into her dressing-room and reported to me that everything was quite satisfactory.

The photographers had the plates immediately developed in my presence and fixed.

**Mrs. Duncan on coming out of trance stated she felt a prickling sensation in her forehead and temples. Her forehead was damp with perspiration.**

I am not aware whether this method of photography has been used in psychic work before, but it seems to me to hold out great hopes specially if the filter could be improved to eliminate even more of the visible red rays without interfering with the output of the infra-red rays.

Albert at the close of the séance said had he had a number of experiments along this line he could probably prepare the ectoplasm to withstand the rays and get much better results.

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**Leslie Price notes:** In a June 2008 *Psypioneer* story *Last minute halt to infra-red tests*<sup>2</sup> I unwisely stated:

“So far as we are aware, Helen Duncan never had any contact with infra red. But the belief that she did, and was injured by it, may well have been part of Spiritualist folk lore.”

The editor's story corrects this, although there is no suggestion that the medium was injured. Why was this line of research not pursued with Mrs Duncan?

PN was also supportive of infra-red research; at what point did this change?

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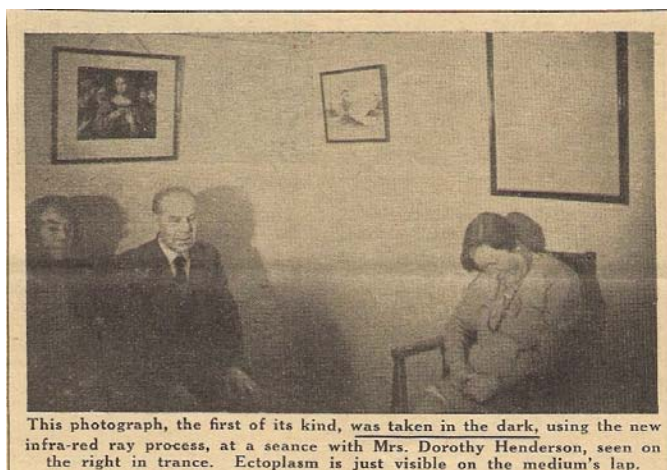
<sup>2</sup> See *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No.6:— *Mrs Duncan rejected SPR approach & Last minute halt to infra red tests*, pages 140-141:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.6June08.pdf>

We can note from the above article that the experiment was not carried out in a fully dark séance, but does give a precise date of the photograph that is used in numerous articles etc.

Again in *Psychic News*, front – page news dated April 7, 1934 we have, according to the paper the first photograph taken in the dark.

The short editorial, which accompanies the photograph, does not give any indication as to the photographer's name, but this is most probably the start of Leon Isaacs's photography – Involvement.

Isaacs was a sitter in Dorothy Henderson séances in the early 1930's. Presumably, Maurice Barbanell wrote the editorial:



## INFRA-RED RAYS IN THE SEANCE ROOM

THE remarkable photograph taken with the infra-red ray process in Mrs. Dorothy Henderson's séance room last week opens up tremendous possibilities.

It means that, in co-operation with the spirit guide in charge, Spiritualists should be able, in future, to obtain a permanent record of psychic phenomena which occur in the dark.

This photograph was obtained, using the new Ilford infra-red filter and plates, and a Sashalite lamp.

The flash takes place behind the infrared screen, and enables an instantaneous exposure to be made. All that is visible is a very dull red flash of light as the exposure is made.

It should be quite possible, where mediumship is strong enough, to obtain perfect photographs of materialised forms. Sitters would then have records of the appearance of their beloved "dead."

The new process will be of value to trumpet séances as it should be quite easy to obtain photographs of trumpets levitated in the air.

The infra-red process is an excellent aid to the Spiritualist movement, as it will help to make the chances of fraud very unlikely. It will also dissipate the old bogey of "Oh, it happened in the dark!"

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In the following week's issue, there was indeed a photograph of a "trumpet" séance, held at the home of Harry Boddington with the medium Harry Brown; again, the photographer is not credited.



"... During the whole of the sitting, the medium's hands were held on one side by Mrs. Marjorie Bell, and on the other by her husband, whom the camera has caught in the act of singing.

"When the photograph was taken, the medium was reclining on a couch in the cabinet, in trance."<sup>3</sup>

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Below is an early profile of Leon Isaacs,<sup>4</sup> who later would produce some of the most well known photographs in Spiritualist history, i.e., the physical phenomena of Jack Webber; transfiguration photographs of Mrs. Bullock; the levitation photographs of Colin Evans at the mass Link séance in 1938;<sup>5</sup> as well as Ronald (Cockersell) Edwin, later a self-confessed fraud.

## HIS INFRA-RED SÉANCE PICTURES WERE FORETOLD BY MEDIUMS

LEON ISAACS, the pioneer of infra-red séance pictures, was told by the spirit world that he would specialise in this form of photography long before he used his camera for this purpose.

Isaacs, who has always been a keen photographer, obtained evidence of Survival at his first séance. It was soon after *Psychic News* started, eight years ago. He had suffered a bereavement. Having seen the first few issues of *Psychic News*, he decided to investigate Spiritualism.

He went to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, where he joined a group sitting



Leon Isaacs taking an infra-red cine film

<sup>3</sup> The photograph was taken when the trumpet was in the act of falling to the ground.

<sup>4</sup> *Psychic News*, August 24, 1940.

<sup>5</sup> See:—<http://www.flickr.com/photos/michellekopczyk/3260901900/>

with Alfred Vout Peters. Isaacs handed the medium an article and was told at once it did not belong to him, but to someone who had “died.” Vout Peters described this person and gave evidence which convinced Isaacs that Survival was a fact. At seances with Dorothy Henderson he twice saw the materialised face of the same individual.

### **RED CLOUD’S TESTS**

More evidence followed from other mediums. Gradually it was impressed on him that he was to work for Spiritualism by taking séance pictures by means of infra-red photography.

When Isaac’s wife sat with Estelle Roberts, she was given a message from a guide she knew that her husband ought to get on with taking photographs by red light. Red Cloud added that Isaacs had sat with his medium. This was fine evidence, for the medium did not know of any association between her present sitter and Isaacs, who had come for a sitting six months before. And Estelle knew nothing of his interest in infra-red photography.

### **PSYCHIC HISTORY MADE**

Isaacs has taken hundreds of pictures at seances, photographing psychic phenomena at sittings with many mediums. Many of these have been published in *Psychic News*. As honorary photographer to the International Institute for Psychical Research, he was responsible for taking the first infra-red film of séance happenings. For this, Isaacs invented and manufactured all his own apparatus.

Before he was offered his present position—staff photographer for a Fleet Street newspaper—he was told at a séance that he would have a change of occupation. He was given the exact date on which he would start. One medium even described the building in which he would work.

There is a psychic story in connection with Isaacs’s house at Hendon, in North-West London. Nearly a year before he moved into it, it was described by different mediums to him and his wife. They were told they would move into the Hendon district, that the house would be near a park and a school and that it would have a gabled roof and red berry bushes near the front door. One medium said there would be an association between the house and someone connected with Isaacs’s office.

Last year, they were hunting for a house in the Hendon district—soon after returning from holiday—and looked over one they had seen before from a distance, but had not examined closely. They realised it was the house that had been psychically described to them. Even the red berry bushes were there.

### **LINKS IN THE SPIRIT CHAIN**

That night they went to a Spiritualist meeting at Islington. Isaacs saw there an office friend, accompanied by a woman, to whom he was introduced. Isaacs was telling this woman about the house they had seen at Hendon. When he mentioned the bushes, the woman surprised him by saying that she had planted them herself. It was her house and had been empty for nine months!

But there was a psychic story on the woman's side, too. Her son had passed on in that house. When the mother moved, he told her he would keep it empty until the "right people" came for it. She found that for unknown reasons people who viewed the house did not rent it.

### **“DEAD” SON’S MESSAGE**

Some weeks before, the “dead” boy told her the “right people” had seen the house, they had gone on holiday and would take the house when they returned. That day, he had told her to go to a Spiritualist meeting. Her friend took her to the church at Islington and the two ends of the chain were joined up when she met the Isaacs, who became her tenant.

Isaacs and his wife are finding that after eight years of sittings they are beginning to develop their own psychic gifts. They were told when they first investigated that they had powers of mediumship, but when year after year passed and no mediumship manifested they began to doubt. But now with regular sittings in their own home, both have developed clairvoyance. Mrs. Isaacs has found she has the added gift of trance.

### **SPOILED RESULTS PREVENTED**

A new member of their circle, visiting them for the first time, told Isaacs about a new infra-red camera he was making but which no one else had seen. This friend even told him about a leak, which would spoil results, and advised him to look for it under a strong light. Isaacs did so and found two unsuspected leaks which would have spoiled all results.

Leon Isaacs is now taking a more active part in the organisation side of the movement, for he has been appointed secretary of a new Spiritualist church which has just been opened in Hendon.

For the benefit of the movement he is prepared to photograph, free of charge, any worth-while physical phenomena occurring in the homes of London readers.

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*To be continued ...*

Paul J. Gaunt

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# THEOSOPHY WAS A SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT?

**[Introductory Note by Psypioneer:—** A new book by a doctoral student at Exeter University suggests that the Theosophical Society was a Spiritualist movement.<sup>6</sup> The Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875 by Henry Olcott, Madame Blavatsky, Emma and William Britten, C.C. Massey, and others. It spread worldwide.

Jeffrey Lavoie’s book, which is sometimes critical of Blavatsky, has been dismissed by the anonymous website Blavatsky News, which observed: “No doubt the book will find favour with Lavoie’s congregation, Calvary Baptist Church in Hanson, Massachusetts, where he is Senior Pastor.”<sup>7</sup>]

**Leslie Price below questions the central thesis of the book:**



Photo: HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY. Faded photo, Madras

Psypioneer has always taken the view that organisational boundaries are of limited significance. The same workers often appear in a variety of affiliations. The fabric of many such links has been explored since 1985 by the network of scholars around the journal *Theosophical History*.<sup>8</sup>

The Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism, where Jeffrey Lavoie is researching, is of increasing importance, and the pioneers of the psychic field appear regularly in the work of its scholars. All this is a challenge to individual writers and to psychic organisations to raise the intellectual quality of our publications.

Lavoie’s book is a fine example of the new wave. He mines extensively a quarter century of TH work. He draws also on the latest investigation of the Western Esotericism tradition, in which Professor Nicholas Goodricke-Clarke of Exeter has placed Blavatsky. His is the first book to employ the new 2011 edition of *Art Magic* originally edited by Mrs Britten, and he cites material from Marc Demarest’s web site.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The Theosophical Society, the History of a Spiritualist Movement, BrownWalkerPress, Boca Raton, Florida., 2012 \$29.95.

<sup>7</sup> [http://blavatskynews.blogspot.co.uk/2012\\_03\\_01\\_archive.html](http://blavatskynews.blogspot.co.uk/2012_03_01_archive.html)

<sup>8</sup> [www.theohistory.org](http://www.theohistory.org)

<sup>9</sup> [www.ebbritten.org](http://www.ebbritten.org)

In retelling the history of the T.S. until the passing of Madame Blavatsky in 1891, he is able to show numerous links with Spiritualism. After all, many of the founders and workers were, or had been, Spiritualists; and so were some of the critics of Theosophy. So we find here extended discussion of such leaders as Stainton Moses, Emma Hardinge Britten, James Burns and Alfred Russel Wallace, as well as Olcott and Blavatsky.

But there is a problem with the central thesis. Spiritualism is defined reasonably enough as the tenet “that departed spirits of the recently deceased can communicate with the living through human beings known as mediums” (Lavoie p.23). Spiritualists participate in this. In general, the Theosophical Society denied and rejected such communication. At various times, Madame Blavatsky might concede some possibility of occasional genuine communication. Yet the main teaching was against it. There was sharp criticism of mediumship in *Isis Unveiled*, 1877. This continued in the Mahatma Letters received from her teachers. It was taken up by her chief disciple in America, William Judge. We have printed some of these criticisms in *Psypioneer*, such as those by Countess Wachtmeister<sup>10</sup> and Annie Besant.<sup>11</sup> There was even a theosophical theory that Spiritualism was a movement started by living occultists.

The situation is analogous to the emergence of Christianity from Judaism. We can say that it began as a Jewish movement, just as we can say that Theosophy began as a Spiritualist Movement, but at some point, the logic of the new beliefs brings about a formal separation, which was implicit from the beginning.

Apart from its extensive references to old and new material, the merit of Lavoie’s book is that it causes us to look again at where the essentials might be in both Spiritualism and Theosophy. It is contrarian in the best sense.

LP.

### **Jeffrey Lavoie replies:**

First, of all let me start by thanking the editorial staff for allowing me to respond to this review and for taking notice of my work.

One of the things that I had to do in preparing this book was to limit my study to a particular chronology; thus, I decided to focus on the early Theosophical Society beginning with its founding in 1875 and ending in 1891 with the death of Blavatsky. This chronological parameter does not allow for some of the more interesting discussions in relation to how Blavatsky’s writings (especially on Spiritualism) were eventually interpreted and assimilated by the next generation of Theosophists, but it at least gets the conversation started. As the reviewer above clearly pointed out, my basic premise is that between the years 1875-1891 there was never a clear ‘formal separation’

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<sup>10</sup> *Psypioneer* Volume 4, No 11:—*Spiritualism in the light of Theosophy – Countess Constance Wachtmeister*, pages 259-270:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.11November08.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> *Psypioneer* Volume 2, No 7:—*The Yucatan Brotherhood - Annie Besant*, pages 151-154:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.7July06.pdf>

See also a paper by Emily Kislingbury discussed by Lavoie; *Spiritualism in its relation to Theosophy* (1892):— <http://www.numerologic.com/theosophy/SpiritualismRelationTheosophyEK.html>

between Spiritualism and the Theosophical Society; all depended on who was speaking, and to whom. My conclusion at a high level was that these two movements remained connected though this relationship was as diverse and varying as its members and their beliefs (the article cited above by Emily Kislingbury is proof of this continuing connection and evidences this desire to reconcile these two movements; also see Alfred Percy Sinnett's later writings for a different perspective with a similar goal).

In any study one can focus on the differences or the similarities. While many books have clearly listed the differences between the Theosophical Society and Spiritualism I decided to focus on their similarities, thus my project. What really surprised me was how many elements were shared between these two movements especially through the writings of one of its founders – Helena Blavatsky. As I read Blavatsky's individual works I noticed her view of spirits and their attractions to the living kept evolving. In *Isis Unveiled* this attraction was based on their relationship with the individual during a lifetime (a similar belief was held by Allan Kardec as I alluded to on p. 132. 'the spirit watches over its family member'); whereas, in Mahatma Letters Nos. XVI, XXI, and XXc (Lavoie pp. 233-235) this attraction was based on the type of death they experienced, i.e. violent deaths could communicate more easily with mediums. Then in the *Key to Theosophy* it was determined that while most spirit communications were due to adepts there was still a slight possibility of communication between the medium and the spirit; thus, as Blavatsky's thought process progressed, the ability for 'spirit communications with mediums' (the basic tenet of Spiritualism as I see it) became more and more difficult, though the potential still existed.

If nothing else, this varied opinion illustrates that Blavatsky's interpretation of the abilities of the spirit to communicate, was continually changing in the early days of the Theosophical Society. Now certainly the Theosophical Society's connection with Spiritualism evolved more drastically as it focused upon the East; however, it still maintained similar elements (and elementals for that matter!) which I examine in my book, including the possibility for spirit communications with mediums, albeit only in rare cases. But isn't this belief in communication the one belief that makes a Spiritualist a Spiritualist? If this is the case then Blavatsky could have been classified as a Spiritualist throughout her entire life, regardless of her other beliefs.

I know defining Spiritualism is a dodgy subject in itself, but I would like to take the analogy suggested by the above reviewer between Judaism and Christianity to clarify my thesis/position. Are all Christians also Jews ('Jew' and 'Jewish' are used here in relation to the religious belief known as Judaism, not ethnicity)? Are all Jews also Christians? The answer is essentially no. The basic fundamental belief that is agreed upon by all (or most) Christians is the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. If a Jew believed in this defining trait of Christ under any circumstances would he be considered Jewish or Christian? I believe he would be considered a Christian as the only requirement for this label is a belief in the three elements: death, burial, and resurrection. Now, what if this hypothetical 'Jew' said, 'I believe that God did come down as Jesus and performed these three tasks and while I don't believe in any of the Pauline epistles, John's writings, or any other New Testament book I do believe in the gospel of Mark', would this 'Jew' be considered a Jew or a Christian? Certainly the answer to this question is subjective based upon the suppositions of whoever is doing the labeling; however, I believe an argument could be made that this 'Jew' would absolutely be considered a Christian, because again the only requirement

for taking the label of 'Christian' has been met. In fact, this belief would justify labeling this 'Jew' as a 'Christian' regardless of whatever else he may believe that would make him an 'unorthodox' Christian. Now, this individual could not fairly be categorized as a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. but they could definitely be labelled as a Christian. I know some would argue that I have merely engaged semantics to make my case; however, I believe this is a legitimate justification.

Also, it seemed that Blavatsky's supposed emergence from Spiritualism began with her belief in elementals, but was this view unusual for a Spiritualist? The so-called 'father of Spiritualism' Andrew Jackson Davis held a similar belief in deceitful spirits only instead of calling them elementals he called them diakkas (Lavoie pp. 124-126). These diakkas were deceptive spirits that frequently tormented unsuspecting mediums:

I have been long familiar with, that a very large proportion of *discordant* and *repulsive* and *false* experience in Spiritualism it so be explained by admitting into your hypothesis a *fact*, namely: that the Diakka are continually victimizing sensitive persons, making sport of them, and, having a jolly laughing 'time' at the expense of really honest and sincere people, including mediums, whom they especially take delight in psychologizing and dispossessing of the use of will. There is no kind of alleged obsession, no species of assumed witchcraft, no phase of religious insanity where such psychology is not possible (Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Diakka, and Their Earthly Victims* (Boston: Colby & Rich, 1880) p. 15.).

Davis' view on the nature of diakkas was that they were involved with all aspects of earthly evil including playing 'important parts in great assaults upon bad governments, upon pernicious organized customs, upon evil social conditions, and frequently upon religious errors and superstitions' (Davis p.19); thus, the influence of diakkas on the world of the living was considerable. The only original element that Blavatsky suggested in regard to her elementals was the frequency by which they were channelled, she believed (or settled upon in the *Key to Theosophy*) that the majority of spirit-medium communications were the result of elemental spirits; whereas Davis would have said many communications were diakkas, but not most. The overall philosophical differences between these two views do not seem all that significant.

Another main element that fuelled my suspicion that the TS remained a Spiritualist movement, were Blavatsky's early critics; many of them accused her of maintaining a philosophical connection with Spiritualism. And it wasn't just the Spiritualist critics either, this list also included Arthur Lillie the gnostic 'Buddhist' (who was not a Spiritualist by anyone's standards despite the fact that he was grouped together with them in my book) and the Eastern guru Swami Vivekananda. So it seemed that this argument was grounded in historical precedent, and when one follows these leads out they seem to make some valid points. It is these similarities and elements that I attempt to identify and examine in my book.

Now, before I end I would like to clarify one thing. I am not denying that in *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky was attempting to distance herself from Spiritualism through a 'sharp criticism of mediumship' as the reviewer articulated above (and as I also observed in my book, using Brendan French's doctoral thesis and Gary Trompf's

‘Macrohistory’ as sources); however, despite these initial intentions, within a few short months after the publication of *Isis Unveiled* it seemed that Blavatsky had realigned herself with Spiritualism as evidenced in a letter which she wrote to John Bundy of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* in which she said: ‘I am a true, firm, if anything too exalted spiritualist... I have no greater enemies in the world than spiritualists themselves, whose faith or rather philosophy I would see spread throughout the world and become the only and universal belief on earth...don’t represent me as an enemy of true Spiritualism’ (Lavoie pp. 42-44). Again I think this quote merely proves my conclusion: that Blavatsky’s opinion of Spiritualism was never really defined, especially before the ‘Oriental shift.’ While I think there is sufficient evidence to prove that the TS (emerged out of and) remained a Spiritualist movement during the years 1875-1891, my main purpose in writing this book was to start a conversation reassessing the connection between these two Victorian movements. It seems to me at this point, that I have clarified my justifications for my line of reasoning as labeling the TS a ‘Spiritualist Movement’; however, exactly how successfully I have done in this defence I leave up to the reader.

### **Comment by Garth Willey:**

In proof reading this edition of *Psypioneer*, I noted well that there was an apparent anomaly in Jeffrey Lavoie’s reply when he gave an obviously shortened Blavatsky quote:

*“I am a true, firm, if anything too exalted spiritualist... I have no greater enemies in the world than spiritualists themselves, whose faith or rather philosophy I would see spread throughout the world and become the only and universal belief on earth...don’t represent me as an enemy of true Spiritualism”*

The apparent anomaly is that Blavatsky used a small ‘s’ for spiritualist’ and a capital ‘S’ in “true Spiritualism”. There is a considerable difference! A hobby horse of mine is that one does not have to profess the faith of Spiritualism (and its defined Principles, all be it no longer ‘with liberty of interpretation’) to be a spiritualist. Herein lies, I believe, the nub of the matter: it probably was not an anomaly!

Lavoie reiterates the basic tenet of Spiritualism as being ‘*spirit communications with mediums*’. Spirit communication via mediums is certainly the basic tenet of spiritualism BUT, as a religion, Spiritualism’s basic tenet, its leading Principle, is surely the existence of God. Maybe Lavoie has not observed that one will find only ‘spiritualism’ defined in most dictionaries, whereas the religion of ‘Spiritualism’ (with the capital ‘S’) does not crack a mention – much to the chagrin of Spiritualists!

Theoretically, I conjecture, one could be an atheistic spiritualist; or one could be a believer in spirit communication but a professed ‘non-Spiritualist’ if one is a Christian (or of another religion); or one could be not a “Real Spiritualist” – as Edwin Butler loved to express it – and then debate the disparate definitions; and of what might constitute an Unreal Spiritualist! Sir Oliver Lodge, who is often claimed as a “Spiritualist pioneer” by the Spiritualists, in a 1918 interview with *The Strand Magazine*, when asked “...how Spiritualism stands today?” tactfully and honestly replied “I can’t answer for Spiritualism. I don’t much like the word myself, except as a

term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don't belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people."<sup>12</sup>

Taking up LP and JL's analogy of the emergence of Christianity from Judaism, one could say that all Spiritualists are spiritualists, but not all spiritualists are Spiritualists! Blavatsky refers to herself as a 'spiritualist' – whereas, in the information available herein, Lavoie refers to her as a 'Spiritualist.'

Lavoie limits his study to the period 1875 to 1891. The major national Spiritualist bodies had not been fully established during that period – conferences had been held (over a couple of decades) and principles debated: and the Spiritualists' National Federation (UK) held its inaugural meeting in July 1890<sup>13</sup> – but 'churches' were somewhat 'individualistic' (aren't they still!). The point is: Spiritualism had not been fully and categorically defined during the study period. The much looser terminology 'spiritualist' and 'spiritualism' may have been more appropriate throughout Lavoie's work rather than attributing our contemporary understanding of Spiritualism to The Theosophical Society's and Blavatsky's origins.

Having started this note, there is another matter which crosses my mind. Psypioneer has extensively studied the origins of the British Spiritualism's Seven Principles but we have not delved into the charter of the early Spiritualist organisations. Anyone interested in another can of worms???

GAW

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## **A NAME TO CONJURE WITH – MADAME BLAVATSKY'S SPIRIT CALLING BOARD**

Jeff Lavoie kindly has kindly drawn my attention to an attempt to market a mediumistic device of which Madame Blavatsky would not have approved - a so-called "Spirit Calling Board". A brochure from Cosmic Vision Ltd of Allentown, Pennsylvania, also the home of the Flying Saucer Project Museum and Alien Liaison Unit, engaged in ancient wisdom archive and supply, was apparently produced in 1991(sic), claiming the boards were salvaged from a warehouse in Houston, Texas.

Originally the Board sets supposedly carried a patent date of May 8 1891, the date of Madame Blavatsky's death, with instructions written by a "Brother of Luxor" WQJ, that is William Judge, Blavatsky's loyal colleague in the United States. Needless to say the real Judge was a strong opponent of mediumship.

The question arises if this board was known before 1991.

LP

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.8August08.pdf> - page 207

<sup>13</sup> SNU Year Book, 2009, page 4



## BLAVATSKY NEWS – A REQUEST

We have more than once cited Blavatsky News, a recently established blog<sup>14</sup> which is very useful for alerting students to news of Madame Blavatsky. There is however, a serious problem which blemishes an otherwise valuable enterprise. The authors of the news items conceal themselves behind pseudonyms. And from time to time, they criticise other workers in the field. Anonymous blog criticism can easily become a dishonourable activity, not un-related to those individuals who post scurrilous comments on internet forums. It is surely unworthy of Theosophists, of all people, who seek to establish the nucleus of a human brotherhood, to fall below the highest standards in this respect.

Anonymous criticism also generates suspicion and ill-will. It is like having a poison pen writer in the community. Madame Blavatsky herself fearlessly put her name to some very outspoken criticisms, even of powerful interests, when she thought it justified. Why not follow her example?

LP

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### Notes By the Way:

#### DID MR MYERS BECOME A THEOSOPHIST?

In 1931, C. Bechhofer Roberts (known as “Ephesian”) published a biography of Madame Blavatsky called *The Mysterious Madame*. (London, John Lane) It was what Theosophists would call hostile. Perhaps not surprisingly it was warmly reviewed in JSPR July 1931, the SPR having published a report which branded her an impostor in 1885.

The reviewer, Mr Salter (SPR hon. sec) however had some reservations; “... in dealing with H.P.B.’s relations with the S.P.R. he is guilty of a few inaccuracies. F.W.H. Myers was never “Professor” and we should like to know Mr Bechhofer Robert’s (sic-LP) authority for the statement that he was at any time a theosophist.”

In JSPR October 1931 (p.138), Roberts replied. “Mr Salter’s first complaint is that I suppose F.W.H. Myers to have been at one time a theosophist. Well, Madame Blavatsky in her published letters to Sinnett (no. 61) refers to Myers as a theosophist; and no less omniscient a personage than the Mahatma K.H. confirms this in his letters to Sinnett (no. 83). Olcott refers to Myers’s resignation from the Theosophical Society in Old Diary Leaves (3rd series, p.235). These three (or two) individuals were in a position to know; and what is to the point in weighing their evidence, they had less to gain than to lose by mentioning that Myers had been a theosophist.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://blavatskynews.blogspot.co.uk/>

“The second “inaccuracy” seems hardly worth inclusion in a serious review. It is that, like many other writers, I called Myers a Professor. I plead guilty to this heinous offence; Myers was technically a “Lecturer” at Cambridge and not a “Professor”.

Mr Salter responded in December 1931:

“SIR,—Before I wrote my review of Mr Roberts's book, I made inquiries from persons who had been closely associated with F. W. H. Myers during Madame Blavatsky's lifetime, and was informed that though he, together with some other members of the S.P.R., was at first favourably disposed towards Madame Blavatsky, he had not at any time been a member of the Theosophical Society. I therefore asked Mr Roberts for his authority for the statement that he was at any time a Theosophist, and he refers me to Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, neither of whose testimony can, I think, be considered of much weight. Further inquiries fully confirm the information I had earlier received.

“Mr Roberts considers the description of Myers as a Professor too trivial an inaccuracy to deserve attention. I do not believe that Mr Myers himself would have so regarded it.”

Thus Mr Salter rejected the suggestion that Myers had been, at least for a time, a Theosophist. I wonder if he actually looked at the books cited by Roberts. In the to-ing and fro-ing of Blavatsky's letters to Sinnett, which had lately been published (1925), she had indeed discussed in a natural way whether or not Myers would like the replies which were sent to an English FTS (i.e. to Myers) who had raised some metaphysical points.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, Olcott wrote in his published memoirs, based on his diaries, after the 1884 Coulomb exposure:

“After a residence of only five months, Mrs. Cooper Oakley found her health suffering so much in India that about this time she had to leave us for home under medical orders. Our loss has been the very great gain of the London Headquarters, where, under a more bracing climate, she has done a prodigious amount of work.

“Our London news of that week was more calming, as it appeared that, besides Mr. F. W. H. Myers of the S.P.R., nobody had resigned his membership.”

But there was a clash between the personal memories of un-named persons who had known Myers (including possibly Mrs Sidgwick, and Myers' wife Eveleen) and the written contemporary evidence.

Mr Salter considered his information “fully confirmed” that Myers had never been a Theosophist. In the 1980s, however, Janet Oppenheim was researching her book *The Other World* (1985) and as she there noted, found in the Wren Library, Trinity College,

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v5/y1883\\_118.htm](http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v5/y1883_118.htm)

Cambridge, the actual TS membership certificate of Myers which, incidentally, misspelled his first name Frederic as “Frederick”.

Trevor Hamilton informs me the Myers papers, such as the TS certificate, were not deposited at Cambridge by the Myers family until after the Second World War. Nevertheless, was Mr Salter guilty of prejudice, not only against the Theosophists, but also against Roberts, who was a mere writer? <sup>16</sup>

LP

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## THEOSOPHICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Readers may recall that in November 2010 we published a review of a *Theosophical Encyclopedia*. We welcome the announcement which we reprint below.

LP

### **Theosophical Encyclopedia on the Web:**

The print edition of the *Theosophical Encyclopedia* was published in 2006 (Philip S. Harris, Vicente R. Hao Chin, Jr., and Richard W. Brooks, eds. *Theosophical Encyclopedia*. Quezon City, Philippines: Theosophical Publishing House, 2006. Pp. vii + 729). It was greeted with praise as “the most comprehensive single source of Theosophical knowledge ever published,” with articles covering “a vast array of different topics in useful depth.” Another reviewer recommended, “It would be good to see this available online.”

The good news is that the recommended online version is now under preparation. A new, expanded and even more improved version of the *Theosophical Encyclopedia* is being edited by John Algeo (General Editor), Vicente Hao Chin Jr. (Associate Editor), and Robert Ellwood (Consulting Editor). The expanded online edition will contain both totally new articles and updates of those in the print edition. The print *Theosophical Encyclopedia* is a compilation of 1,200 articles by 110 authors. The online version will greatly exceed that, adding many new articles, all with sharp focus on Theosophical relevance and comprehensive coverage.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.modjournal.org/render.php?view=mjp\\_object&id=mjp.2005.01.003](http://www.modjournal.org/render.php?view=mjp_object&id=mjp.2005.01.003)

## WAS MADAME BLAVATSKY A BOOK MEMORY?

In our last issue, in discussing the valuable reprint of *A Path Prepared* about the work of Mrs Isa Northage,<sup>17</sup> we drew attention to a discovery by Garth Willey that the words spoken by a communicator, Madame Blavatsky, were very similar to those recorded as from her in *Thirty Years among the Dead* by Dr Carl Wickland. I suggested that a typed copy taken from the Wickland book might have been accidentally included by the compiler with a collection of Northage records.

An alternative explanation is that the Wickland book had been read by the medium, or by a sitter in the Northage circle. There was a possible case of this with the automatist Geraldine Cummins. She published a book *The Fate of Col. Fawcett* (1955) of messages from the famous explorer who had disappeared in South America. In JSPR March 1966,<sup>18</sup> Simeon Edmunds drew attention to the similarities between some passages in the Fawcett scripts and some actual articles by Fawcett, before his disappearance, which had appeared in *The Occult Review*. Geraldine responded in JSPR September in what had become a heated debate (understandably fanned by *Psychic News*, April 23 1966!)

“I never to my knowledge read the passage in the *Occult Review* published in it in 1923 by the living Colonel Fawcett. But Miss Gibbes [companion to Miss Cummins] was a very keen investigator and therefore read all she could find about him. It is quite probable that in 1948 Miss Gibbes conveyed telepathically to myself the passage from the 1923 Fawcett article, when I was writing automatically. For this there may even be a special reason. In the Fawcett article there is a passage about obtaining extra vitality from trees. When I was a weak and delicate girl of eleven I wanted to join in the lively games of my four elder brothers, all strong. I used often, when alone, to clasp the most ancient of the trees, imploring each ‘Mr Tree, please make me strong!’ This memory might have served the discarnate Col. Fawcett as a ‘link’ for knitting into his postmortem account of Brazil some of what he had written in that article; at any rate the passages quoted fitted in well with what came both before and after, for the insertion is a sequence and not scattered as Mr Edmunds seems to imply by speaking of ‘scripts’ in the plural.”

In contrast, the Northage material from Blavatsky echoes the Wickland messages in a close but disorganised way, sometimes substituting different words for the same concept. Readers should compare the passages in the two books, and reach their own conclusion.

LP

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<sup>17</sup> See *Psypioneer* Volume 8, No.4:—*Remarkable Phenomena in Nottingham – Book Review by Leslie Price*, pages 128-129:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP8.4April2012.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> JSPR – *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*.

# THE MYSTERY OF STANTON MOSES

**Introductory Note by LP:** The 1992 centenary of the death of Stainton Moses passed largely unnoticed, but at the SPR conference of that year, which I was unable to attend, Miss Mary Rose Barrington kindly read a paper I had written about him. This paper was published in 1999 as a slim booklet, and is reproduced below. A few copies of this and other Psychic Pioneer Publications are available from Psypioneer Journal. The paper is prefaced by some introductory remarks. No attempt has been made to update the paper, and readers will note, not without melancholy, that several organisations mentioned have since expired.

**At the end of the paper is an announcement about a lecture to the SPR in June 2012 which will deal with some further mysteries!**

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Stainton Moses was the first President, in 1884, of the body now called the College of Psychic Studies.

Leslie Price is a former Librarian of the College of Psychic Studies.

This paper was presented at the 1992 International Conference of the Society for Psychical Research.

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## INTRODUCTION

Stainton Moses was the most influential medium in late Victorian England. The centenary of his death in September 1992 coincided with the annual conference of the Society for Psychical Research, of which in 1882 he had been a founder Vice-President. Though I was unable to attend, the conference kindly permitted a paper to be read *in absentia*, here reproduced.

Lacking as it does proper references, the paper is not worthy of journal publication, but it may assist enquirers. I have not attempted to update the material, but prospects for further research into Stainton Moses's work are now excellent.

The main reason for this is that the College of Psychic Studies in London has begun a project to catalogue carefully and preserve all their archives. Though this means that their large collection of Moses material is temporarily unavailable, in the long term the College may at last achieve the goal of Mr Trethewy, an earlier student, of issuing the full records.

In July 1999, the journal *Theosophical History* published John Hamill's paper on Moses and Masonry. There are known to be references to Masonry (among other matters) in letters from Moses preserved by the Theosophical Society at Adyar, and this is one of a number of archives that could contribute much to our understanding of his work.

Although I recognise the importance of Stainton Moses, I do not always agree with his views, nor for that matter with those of his sparring partner Madame Blavatsky, and in March 1998 *The Christian Parapsychologist* published my paper "Spirit Teachings", which offered a Christian critique of the medium and his messages.

The Noah's Ark Society is a Spiritualist body based in England which promotes physical mediumship, and it has republished on its web site material about Stainton Moses from its journal. Historians of psychical research will be grateful for what the NAS has rescued from the past, and want to follow its expanding programme. Unfortunately the hope that it would provide new scientific evidence of physical mediumship, apparent in my paper, has yet to be realised.

The Psychic Pioneer web site launched in 1999 expects to feature Stainton Moses quite prominently, and it is advisable to consult it regularly for news of scholarship; likewise the sites of the College of Psychic Studies and of *Theosophical History*.

Another web development is the appearance of complete books such as *Spirit Teachings* and *More Spirit Teachings* (though the latter selection may still be in copyright). Despite the web, there is still a demand for traditional books and the notable success of the Spiritualists National Union (SNU) book republishing programme for pioneers (see the SNU web site) will I hope lead to Stainton Moses's inclusion.

In 1992 the first steps were taken to end the Cold War between the SPR and Spiritualism. SNU Leaders such as Eric Hatton, and researchers including Professor Archie Roy, Professor Arthur Ellison and Professor David Fontana, played important parts. The SNU and SPR even co-operated in the emergence of PRISM, a group to promote research with mediums. The war was over. I believe that Stainton Moses would be pleased at this new spirit.

LESLIE PRICE



# THE MYSTERY OF STANTON MOSES

(Paper presented *in absentia* to SPR conference, Manchester College Oxford,  
4 September 1992)

The passing of Stainton Moses on 5 September 1892, precisely a century ago, was deeply felt in English Spiritualism, for whom he was “the foremost champion in this country of the doctrine of Spiritualism properly so called: the system of philosophy which ascribed the phenomena in general to the agency of spirits of dead men and women, and believed in the advent, under spirit guidance, of a worldwide religion.”<sup>19</sup>

The death came a few weeks after that of Col. Bundy, editor of the leading American psychic paper, *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, with whom Moses had once corresponded about mediums for research. Stainton Moses had been editor of *Light*, President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and a founder Vice-President of the Society for Psychical Research. Under the pseudonym ‘M.A. (Oxon.)’, while teaching English by day at University College School, London, he produced copious high-quality journalism on mediumship and the problems of Spiritualism, where his sympathies lay with the moderate Christian and upper-class London centres, rather than the plebian provincial militant radicals of the movement. He had been personally associated with the rise and fall of several psychic groups since he began his own investigations in 1872.

But Moses, son of a Lincolnshire grammar school headmaster and once a clergyman, had aspects to his life which made his friend F. W. H. Myers describe it as “one of the most extraordinary which our century has seen.”<sup>20</sup> He developed mediumship, and received messages from biblical worthies, Greek philosophers, English historical characters and modern people, some of whom he had not known in life. His main guide, the prophet Malachi but given the pseudonym Imperator, claimed that the teachings so conveyed were part of a plan inspired by Jesus to take divine revelation further. This material is recognizably a forerunner of the New Age Movement.

Stainton Moses also produced, chiefly in a small circle with friends in the 1870s, a variety of physical phenomena, including perfumes and bell-sounds. He is perhaps the only SPR Vice-President to have had such powers, though he resigned all connection with the Society on 18 November 1886 in a letter published in *JSPR* December 1886, p.488.

History’s response to Stainton Moses has been mixed. Myers accepted his good faith and attributed to their meeting a considerable influence. “That evening was epoch-making in Gurney’s life and mine.”<sup>21</sup> Perhaps then, as Guy Playfair suggested in *The Indefinite Boundary*, Moses encouraged in his friends the search which led to the foundation of the SPR, and which they might otherwise have given up in disgust. (No Moses, no SPR?) After the medium had died, Myers compiled a report, almost a book, “The Experiences of W. Stainton Moses” published in *SPR Proceedings IX*, pp. 245-

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<sup>19</sup> Frank Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, p.38, 1897

<sup>20</sup> *Human Personality*, Vol 2, pp. 225-6

<sup>21</sup> *Human Personality*, Vol. 2, p.223

352 and *XI*, pp. 24113. Myers accepted that the evidence of identity furnished to Moses by most communicators was poor, although there were several who seemed to go beyond reference books and newspaper obituaries that might have been seen by the medium. Moses was especially impressed by the case of Abraham Florentine, an obscure American spirit, but also much discussed was Blanche Abercromby, whose real name appears to have been Lady Kate Amberley, and who died on Sunday 28 June 1874, communicating that evening.

Frank Podmore, Myers's colleague, was scathing about the religious content of the spirit teachings, which he suggested was shallow liberal theism quite familiar to any clergyman, and he exposed additional deficiencies in the evidence of identity. Podmore was quite ready to entertain the idea that, consciously or unconsciously, Stainton Moses fabricated the physical phenomena.<sup>22</sup> A similar verdict, of course, had already been offered in 1885 for the case of Madame Blavatsky, who also produced perfumes and bell-sounds. The Podmore approach has generally prevailed in the SPR, exemplified by Mrs Sidgwick and Mr Salter, although Continental researchers like Richet and Sudre were more tolerant of the physical phenomena.

Mr Salter, while acknowledging that the Moses mediumship was a turning point in the history of mediumship, thought the controls were dramatizations of aspects of the medium's subconscious:—

The primary consideration was, I think, that only through the Controls could he effectively fulfil his mission of giving to the world the philosophy embodied in the *Spirit Teachings* dictated by them. They provided a multiple alias for the expression of views formed by him over many years, which it would have been impossible to reconcile with the doctrines of the Church of England of which he was a priest, though he no longer had a cure of souls. Moreover these opinions were more likely to impress the world if they issued over the names of a host of saints and sages than they would have done if he had claimed to be their author. A secondary motive may have been that in the company of the saints and sages he obtained welcome relief from the dull routine of a schoolmaster's life, diversified otherwise only by frequent bouts of illness. Perhaps "Little Dicky" [a child communicator who briefly and mischievously appeared-LP] was a relief from too many saints and sages.<sup>23</sup>

Moses, however, did not welcome the claims to high status of his controls, and concurred with their desire that their identity should not be disclosed with the teachings. Like many other mediums, he could have put the message across with just one supposed guide rather than a big team, and one may wonder if Salter does justice to the complexity of communicators.

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<sup>22</sup> See, in addition to *Studies in Psychical Research*, the chapter on Moses in his *Modern Spiritualism*, Vol. 2, 1902

<sup>23</sup> *Zoar*, p.116, 1962

Dr G. K. Nelson observed in *Spiritualism and Society* (1969):—

In view of the diversity of phenomena and beliefs there is not and cannot be any generally agreed body of beliefs amongst spiritualists. The nearest we can get to this is probably contained in a book called *Spirit Teachings* by the Rev. W. Stainton Moses. This book was produced by Stainton Moses as the result of communications he received through automatic writing. It has been described as the “bible” of Spiritualism.<sup>24</sup>

Emma Hardinge Britten said in *Nineteenth-Century Miracles* (1884), in her generally eulogistic style about co-workers:—

One of the most esteemed and gifted writers in the ranks of Spiritualism is the gentleman known by the nom de plume of “M.A. (Oxon.)” Amongst this truly inspired author’s collected writings, the most popular are the four volumes entitled severally, *Psychography*; *Spirit Identity*; *The Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*; and *Spirit Teachings*. Nothing in the whole realm of occult literature can surpass the deep insight and profound mastery of Spiritualistic problems, manifested in these works. And yet they are but a small part of “M. A. (Oxon)’s” contributions. His fine magazine and journalistic articles are to be found in most of the high-toned periodicals of the last few years, whilst his well-known signature invariably attracts every thoughtful reader who desires to be instructed, as well as interested.<sup>25</sup>

Mr Podmore, in his *Studies*, p.38, notes:—

The inspired writings of Mr Stainton Moses form the gospel of modern English Spiritualism.

These testimonies could be multiplied, and it is therefore with some surprise that one learns from the Atlantis Bookshop that nothing by Stainton Moses is in print, except for a spirally-bound edition of *Spirit Teachings*.

Now this paper is not intended to be a purely antiquarian contribution. In my view, Stainton Moses has much to teach us today, rather more in some ways than Mrs Piper, who never professed to have any general ideas on the implications of her phenomena. It is unfortunate that when A. W. Trethewy, after the First World War, prepared for publication a complete record of the communications received by Stainton Moses, it was possible to issue this in abbreviated form only. (*The Controls of Stainton Moses*, London, Hurst & Blackett, 1923, which disclosed for the first time in a book the identity of Imperator and his colleagues.) Trethewy might well have been the last person to give long thought to understanding the Moses mediumship, and to read through the surviving records. The Librarian of the CPS, however, who has been of immense help in tracing material, has drawn my attention to the paper by Constance Sitwell on “Unpublished records of Stainton Moses”<sup>26</sup> in which she says:—

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<sup>24</sup> p. 209

<sup>25</sup> pp. 202-3

<sup>26</sup> *Light*, Dec. 1957

I borrowed these volumes, and have been absorbed in them, for I do feel that they are among the most remarkable things I ever came across. These records seem to me to be an encyclopaedia of spiritualism, almost the classics of the subject.<sup>27</sup>

It is desirable that those full records be now published. Had Dr Medhurst been spared, he might have taken further the valuable accounts of Stainton Moses and contemporary physical mediums which he contributed to *Light* from 1963.

When the idea of an SPR was mooted, Moses was doubtful, as Janet Oppenheim discovered (*The Other World*), yet he gave his support and was at first positive about its work. But the researchers soon ran into difficulties in locating physical mediums with whom to research, though they were able to sit with Eglinton, who by then was specializing in slate-writing mediumship.

Eglinton is a somewhat mysterious figure, and it is a tragedy that the recent passing of Mr Mostyn Gilbert, who had made a special study of him, deprives us of his final verdict, which I understand had become negative. The predominant SPR view, typified and expressed by Mrs Sidgwick, was that Eglinton was a fraud. Stainton Moses did not feel that the Society was being fair to the evidence, and resigned. Mrs Sidgwick was not sorry to see him and a few other Spiritualists go.

The history of psychical research is punctuated by rows—what was so special about this one? It marked the end of significant co-operation between the research community and the Spiritualist movement. Subsequently, individual researchers established good relations from time to time, such as Dr Crawford with the Goligher circle in Belfast, and there were some successful investigations of individual mediums, but the respective institutions were seldom in touch. Mrs Sidgwick, who found the emotional and religious approach of Spiritualism uncongenial, was not bothered by the loss of temperamental colleagues, who had mostly failed, by 1886 at least, to get the SPR access to the remarkable physical phenomena reported in psychic papers.

It may be that, by that time, Stainton Moses had become difficult to work with; that he was proud, even vain, not familiar with scientific procedure, failing in memory, unsympathetic to the emerging complexities of the subliminal self and racked by ill-health, such as gout, depression and even (as Arthur Lillie suggested, though more likely at an earlier time) obsession, which caused him to be irritable and to seek comfort in drink. But the testimonies of those who knew him best, as Podmore did not, suggest a quite outstanding person. As Nellie I. Shaw put it in *Light*:—<sup>28</sup>

It is doubtful whether, viewed in years to come, even one of our present-day exponents will rank on the same level with this great Spiritualist of last century, great in his character and action, great in the demonstration of his mediumship, as in his message: a true Spiritualist in the full meaning of the name.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> p.105

<sup>28</sup> “William Stainton Moses, 1839-1892”, April 1944

<sup>29</sup> p.104

But in the mid-1880s, the Spiritualists felt disappointment that the SPR did not endorse them, and leading researchers clearly did not accept their word about particular experiences which they had witnessed. With the subsequent development of Spiritualist denominational bodies such as the SNU and GWCSL, the two worlds of psychical research and Spiritualism drifted further apart.

It is perhaps worth pointing out that Stainton Moses, though a spiritual seeker, and ready to accept, in his essays on *The Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*, that the movement would undergo much change as it developed, never attempted to create Spiritualist churches. He did hope briefly that Freemasonry might provide a spiritual focus, but soon found, as John Hamill has lately described (in a paper to appear in *Theosophical History*), that the ban on religious discussion and the consumption of six-course dinners frustrated this. He was interested too in the new Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky, Col. Olcott and others. His guides were at first appreciative of the Russian lady, but when she challenged the source of his communications, he resigned from the New York T.S., and for the rest of his life was obliged to argue against Theosophical interpretations of mediumship; though he felt that the SPR report on Theosophical phenomena did not do them justice. The 1986 Harrison critique of the Hodgson findings has supported Moses in that.

There was a time between the world wars when it looked as if psychical researchers would establish the reality and nature of physical mediumship, but for reasons that remain obscure, research reports with such mediums largely ceased. This was I believe a great pity and if it was due in part to a desire to achieve greater respectability for the subject, by avoiding the sort of controversies that bedevilled the Margery case and others, it did not work. The aggressive sceptics have been inflamed rather than mollified by the ground surrendered, and psychical research has slipped back in several respects, including the health of the SPR. It is good to note that the present editor of the SPR Journal has been generous in space for physical mediumship, not least in the latest issue (July 1992), where there are two papers on Palladino and one on Kluski.

Stainton Moses was fervently opposed to dark seances with cabinets, which had led to doubts and charges, but he was not against physical mediumship as such, despite the warnings by his spirit teachers that the entities involved in such phenomena were not to be trusted. Of course the rest of the Spiritualist movement paid little attention to him (and D. D. Home) in their rejection of dark seances and cabinets, and as late as the 1980s were still reaping the harvest that such methods bring. Moses argued that the sort of people convinced by such evidence were not worth convincing.

The recent foundation of the Noah's Ark Society, to revive physical mediumship, shows a way ahead. The Society offers a sympathetic environment for the development of such phenomena. But it has already acquired the infra-red video equipment which can make the darkness no longer dark, and put behind us the era when attempts were made to control mediums by holding hands. The NAS may be able to do what was not possible in 1886 when Moses left the other society, the SPR.

Finally, let us look again at the supposed spirit origin of the teachings received from Imperator. Much has been learnt since those days about spurious messages. Charles Richet spoke for most researchers:—

The human mind is very prone to create a personality. The phenomenon is the same whether it proceeds from external suggestion, from some exterior event, or from autosuggestion. It is not metapsychic, but pertains to normal psychology: and when subconscious actions take place they group themselves round the personality that has been created.<sup>30</sup>

Theodore Flournoy, speaking specifically, pointed out:—

Very intelligent, well-read, having traveled, it is difficult to believe that Moses had never been shaken in the narrowness of his orthodoxy by interior doubts in this contact with different minds. These doubts, suppressed in some measure by his constancy and obstinacy, must have accumulated in the subconscious mind and become organized into a system of affirmation, very different from his primitive beliefs, and finally attained a degree of tension sufficient to cause their irruption in his trances. These were stimulated by the suggestions of the environment, and plenty of time was allowed for the necessary subconscious elaboration.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, Myers and Trethewy, who read the Moses records in full, clearly gave them more weight than most parapsychologists do today. Researchers who think they have witnessed genuine physical phenomena with various mediums will obviously have less difficulty with parallel events in the Moses circle than those who do not so think; similarly the people likely to be convinced that Moses was spirit-guided in his written messages and trance orations may be those who accept the Spiritualist outlook already. So the final status of the Stainton Moses material is unlikely to be settled until the survival problem is resolved, a matter to which I hope to return in a lecture to the SPR on new developments in survival research on November 12.

It is also possible that demons were involved in the phenomena, especially the physical ones; certainly low entities were frequently said to be lurking around Moses and other mediums seeking to make mischief. Against these perils, his guides were trying to protect him. Many Christians would go further. The late Canon J. Stafford Wright, one of the few Evangelical members of SPR, wrote:—

There is nothing more tragic for an evangelical Christian than a book *Spirit Teachings* (1883) in which the Rev. Stainton Moses gives the communications which gradually drew him away from the basic truths of the Christian faith.<sup>32</sup>

Of these truths the atoning death of Jesus Christ was especially denied. A Bible Christian would have no difficulty in finding suspect factors in the life of the medium, such as the use of alcohol and tobacco, initiation into Masonry, theosophy and other occult groups, separation from the Christian fellowship and breakdown in mental and

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<sup>30</sup> *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, p.71, 1923

<sup>31</sup> *Spiritism and Psychology*, pp. 141-2, American edition, 1911

<sup>32</sup> *Spiritualism*, Vine Books, revised edition 1977



physical health, though Stainton Moses in his last months affirmed acceptance of the Bible as the source of Truth, without however repudiating his psychic work.<sup>33</sup>

It is clear that several groups of people have an interest in Stainton Moses, and this reflected in the surviving documentation. Stainton Moses once estimated his letters at 3000 a year. There are unpublished letters in the Theosophical Society archives at Adyar; in Freemason's Hall, London; in the SPR and other psychic organizations; and probably in the extensive Bundy papers in Chicago. Among the long papers on psychic subjects, even in 1893 Myers noted that Moses's *Researches in Spiritualism*, was "an unfinished work published in *Human Nature*—a periodical now extinct—in 1874-5, and not reprinted. It is now difficult of access." Moses also contributed important discussions of psychic and theosophical matters to *Psychological Review*, which flourished from 1878-1883, to some extent filling a gap left by *Human Nature* (1867-78). It goes without saying that there is also much in *Light*. I am informed by John Cooper, who is editing the letters of Madame Blavatsky, that a hundred letters by her have lately been discovered in Russia, and these may well throw light on her connection with Stainton Moses, as well as her own case.

I hope there may be some interest in making more generally available the writings of this pioneer, who was, I suggest, the most intelligent or educated seer between Swedenborg and Rudolf Steiner. It is acknowledged that today interest is more in the New Age and the controlled study of psi, but in the history of psychic studies, the questions raised by this case have yet to be answered. As Myers concluded his account of *The Experiences of W. Stainton Moses*:—

And when all is done there will remain a mystery which neither our belief shall comprehend nor our incredulity unravel.<sup>34</sup>

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## **SPR LECTURE**

### ***The Secret Life of Stainton Moses by LESLIE PRICE***

**This lecture will focus on a number of mysteries in the life of Moses, and attempt to explain them.**

**This is an anniversary year for Moses who began to investigate mediumship in 1872 and died in 1892.**

**When:**

**14th June 2012 – 6:30 PM  
Lecture Hall of the Kensington Central Library  
Campden Hill Road  
Kensington, London, W8 7RX**

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<sup>33</sup> *Light*, memorial issue, 1892

<sup>34</sup> *Proc SPR*. IX, 352

# SPIRITUALISM CAUSED DISORDER AT SWEDENBORG SOCIETY



In our issue of May 2006, I called attention to “The Problem of Swedenborg” for students of the pioneers.<sup>35</sup> The study of that problem has been greatly assisted by the Swedenborg Society in London, founded in 1810. Now a full account of its history has been written by Richard Lines, the Secretary of the Society.<sup>36</sup>

The main business of the society has always been to publish the works of Swedenborg, especially English translations from the Latin, but its collateral publications and library are also of immense help to the student.

Several persons eminent in psychical investigation have served as president of the Swedenborg Society, including Sir William Barrett (1913), Baron Palmstierna (1937) and David Lorimer (1999-2001). But in 1860 objections by more

orthodox members to the sale from the premises of Spiritualist literature by the then manager of the Society, William White led to a dramatic legal case. At one stage, hired pugilists seized the building. White was supported by William Wilkinson, until then the secretary of the society, and founder of *The Spiritual Magazine* in January 1860.<sup>37</sup>

Richard Lines gives the first full account in book form of the 1860 imbroglio. He has since presented more details in a paper for the Bloomsbury project.<sup>38</sup> Even that is not the last word, because in 2012 library staff at the society are cataloguing the mass of newspaper articles, pamphlets, case papers, and correspondence generated by the case, as part of the new on-line catalogue of the library and archives, available to the public.<sup>39</sup>

We may sometimes wonder which account of the next world has been most widely published: in their day *Life Beyond the Veil* (Vale Owen), *Road to Immortality* (Geraldine Cummins) or *Testimony of Light* (Helen Greaves) have enjoyed a wide

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<sup>35</sup> Pyspioneer Volume 2, No. 5:—*The Problem of Swedenborg - Leslie Price*, pages 102-104:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/2.5%20PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Richard Lines:—*A History of the Swedenborg Society 1810-2010*, London, South Vale Press, 2012: ISBN 978-1-4710-1274-7. An earlier account was Freda G. Griffith “*The Swedenborg Society 1810-1960*” London, 1960.

<sup>37</sup> Some reference works speak of the magazine being founded towards the end of 1860, but a full year of issues was produced:—[http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/spiritual\\_magazine\\_uk/](http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/spiritual_magazine_uk/)

<sup>38</sup> Bloomsbury Project:—<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/articles/events/>

<sup>39</sup> The Swedenborg Society Library:—<http://www.swedenborg.org.uk/library>

readership. Consider however, some figures presented in this book. In 1938, the Penguin edition of *Heaven and Hell* by Swedenborg was of 25,000 copies. (p.112) For some years the society had a fruitful relationship with Dent's *Everyman's Library*. Four books by Swedenborg appeared in the series, including *Heaven and Hell*. 20,000 copies of *The True Christian Religion* were printed in this edition (p.107) and 21,000 copies for the second printing (p.111).

I would suggest that *Heaven and Hell* is by far the most widely circulated description of after death states. No wonder that Alfred Russel Wallace is quoted as saying that Swedenborg was one of the twenty greatest men that the world had produced.<sup>40</sup>

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**Leslie Curnow's *Historical Survey* continued:** written in 1924 for *The Two Worlds*, serialised weekly. In November 2011 issue,<sup>41</sup> we published the first part; the second part was published in last month's issue.<sup>42</sup> The full serialisation will now continue in *Psypioneer*, some of this material will cover well-trodden ground for readers, but it also brings forth much long forgotten material.

# The Physical Phenomena of the Past

## An Historical Survey

*The Two Worlds*:—<sup>43</sup>

### Movement of Objects Without Contact “A Hitherto Unrecognised Force”

By W. Leslie Curnow, B.A.

FARADAY, who died in 1876, is reported to have manifested at many Spiritualist circles since that date. I have often wondered—if, indeed, it were he—whether that was a form of pious expiation on his part for one crowning silliness in the life of a great scientist. I mean his “proof” by means of his toy machine constructed to show that all table movements at seances were due to Unconscious Muscular Action. He knew nothing of *movement without contact*, which, of course, entirely upset all his pretty theories.

Faraday is one among many scientists who have cut a sorry figure in their contact with psychic phenomena. Dr. W. B. Carpenter, F.R.S., who came such a cropper over his attempt to upset the evidence for Home's famous window levitation, is another. So, too, Sir David Brewster (who said “Spirit is the last thing I will give in to”) was neatly

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<sup>40</sup> Who Are the Twenty Greatest Men?:—<http://people.wku.edu/charles.smith/wallace/S691A.htm>

<sup>41</sup> See Volume 7, No.11, pages 349-355:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.11November2011.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> See Volume 8, No.4, pages 132-138:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP8.4April2012.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> *The Two Worlds*, October 24, 1924, pages front and p. 590

exposed by a letter of his published after his death by his daughter, Mrs. Gordon, in her book, *The Home Life of Sir David Brewster*, where he privately admits the phenomena with Home which in public he denounced. Huxley, who wrote "Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me," and others might be cited.

The evidence is over whelming that spirit operators are able to use forces of which we know nothing. Mr. F. W. H. Myers speaks of "transcendental chemistry." But whatever it is, at least we know that there is a mysterious force at work, and that that force is controlled by intelligence. In the present article we propose to deal with its manifestation in moving objects without contact.

Physical phenomena are rare nowadays, because mediumship has changed to higher forms, or at least has gone from the physical to the mental plane. In proof of this observe the character of present-day psychic books. In the old days, when an investigator was seeking for evidence it was a common remark, "I sent him to the Marshalls," meaning the two Mary Marshalls,<sup>44</sup> wonderful mediums, who did a great work. From 1850 to 1880 there was an extraordinary outflow of powerful mediums, such as, to name a few, the three Fox Sisters, the Koons, the Davenports (brothers and sisters), the Eddys, D. D. Home, Henry Slade, Eusapia Palladino, Madame d'Esperance, William Eglington, Mrs. Everitt, and William Stainton Moses. Marvellous phenomena were witnessed with them.

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

I have attended seances with three mediums with whom objects were moved without human contact. They were all dark seances, but the conditions were as satisfactory as could be arranged in the circumstances. In the first with the Thomas Brothers, from Wales, Will Thomas was very securely bound, and had been searched before the proceedings began. A tambourine floated about the circle, touching various sitters. Tom Thomas, who was among the sitters, drew the attention of White Eagle, the control, to myself and asked that I should be favoured with a special manifestation. White Eagle inquired the exact position I was in, and then almost immediately a coat was flung into my lap. At the close of the séance, when the electric light was turned on, the medium was found to be roped in the same way as at the start, but he was without his coat. It had been taken off his back without disturbing the roping and had travelled in the dark to my lap, a distance of about ten feet.

My next experience was with Evan Powell at the British College on April 11th, 1923.<sup>45</sup> With this remarkable medium many phases of phenomena were manifested at the one sitting. We had Spirit Lights, the Direct Voice, and movement of objects. My face was brushed by spirit drapery, and a flower was placed in my hand. It should be mentioned that Evan Powell had been securely tied with rope, all the knots being covered with sealing wax, and his thumbs tied with cotton. At the close all these fixtures were found entirely unaltered. A small table was lifted out of the cabinet and

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<sup>44</sup> See *Psypioneer* Volume 7, No.11:—*Mrs. Mary Marshall- Paul J. Gaunt*, pages 355-362:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.11November2011.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> See *Psypioneer* Volume 7, No.7:—*Evan Powell's Mediumship - Leslie Curnow*, pages 226-227:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.7July2011.pdf>

pressed against a lady sitter, whose handbag was taken from her and placed on the table. My third experience must be told in another chapter, that on Apports.

### STAINTON MOSES

The mediumship of Stainton Moses furnished many instances of movements without contact. On one occasion, when he was visiting a gentleman interested in psychic matters, a small pillar work-table filled with needlework had been lightly touched, and began to move. It danced about "like a live thing," first on one foot and then on another, and finally lay down on the floor. "It rose again unaided, bounded off the floor, and waltzed round the room. When it was still I held my hand *over* it, and it began to quiver, and finally rose from the floor until it touched my hand, which was ten or twelve inches above it." Stainton Moses adds the curious fact that while this was going on a column of light was visible over the table.

On another occasion he called on a friend, and a sitting was proposed, but when they tried there was no result. They drew back from the table, and the host asked how it was that nothing had occurred. At this moment the table, which was untouched, rose and gently touched Stainton Moses on the throat and chest three times. At the time he had severe bronchial trouble, and this table movement was intended to indicate that he was in no fit state to hold a sitting. Here we see intelligence coupled with movement of an object without contact.

This medium preserved records of six cases in which a light table, and one in which a dining table large enough to seat eight people, followed the movement of his hands as he made passes over them. In broad daylight he was able to keep a table in an abnormal position by holding his hands over it, but with no contact. Mr. Sergeant Cox, in his book *What Am I?* relates a striking incident that happened at his residence in Russell Square on June 2nd, 1873. He says that a "personal friend" called to dress for a dinner party to which they were both invited. It was six o'clock, and broad daylight, and the friend (who, we know from other sources, was Stainton Moses) was sitting reading *The Times* with one arm resting on the table. Loud rappings came on the table, and it began to quiver and sway about. It was nine feet long by six feet broad, and was resting on a heavy Turkey carpet. A subsequent trial showed that it took the united efforts of two strong men to move it. Serjeant Cox suggested that with such power present it would be a good opportunity to make a trial of motion without contact.

"Accordingly we stood upright, he on one side of the table, I on the other side of it. We stood two feet from it, and had our hands eight inches above it. In one minute it rocked violently. Then it moved over the carpet a distance of seven inches. Then it rose three inches from the floor on the side on which my friend was standing. Then it rose equally on my side. Finally my friend held his hands four inches over the end of the table and asked that it would rise and touch his hand three times. It did so, and then, in accordance with the like request, it rose to my hand held at the other end to the same height above it, and in the same manner."

## THE EDITOR OF *THE SPIRITUALIST*

Mr. W. H. Harrison, who was Editor of *The Spiritualist* (that fine periodical which ran from 1869 to 1881), has related many interesting incidents of his early experiences in his little book, *Spirit People* (1875). He was led to investigate Spiritualism by discovering that Cromwell Fleetwood Varley, F.R.S., the famous electrician and engineer to the North Atlantic Telegraph Company, was a Spiritualist. At a séance at Mr. Varley's house at Beckenham, Kent, on May 24th, 1868, in the presence of himself and Mr. and Mrs. Varley, a table with their fingers lightly touching it, laid itself down and moved along the floor. Then the hands were removed, and after several attempts the table lifted itself up. On Jun 26th Mr. Varley took Mr. Harrison to a séance with Mrs. Mary Marshall. Mr. Harrison writes: "While we were sitting round the table I heard a lumbering noise behind me, and on looking round saw the great six-foot table running up to us all by itself. After taking a run of about four feet it rested with its edge against the edge of the little table round which we were sitting." A good example of unexpected, spontaneous movement was when a table in the nursery at Mr. Varley's house was twisted round while the children were playing near it. They were frightened, and came downstairs and told what had happened. A sitting was held, and spirits said they wanted the Varley circle to meet in the nursery instead of downstairs, and that was why they called attention to the room.

Sir William Crookes mentions that on many occasions he witnessed heavy bodies, such as table, chairs and sofas, moving when no one was touching them. His own chair was twisted partly round, while his feet were off the floor. A chair was seen by all present to move slowly up to the table from a far corner of the room. An armchair moved up to him, and then retired at his request, and on three successive evenings a small table moved slowly across the room, without contact, under special test conditions. Sir William also had several repetitions of the movement of a heavy table in full light, with the sitters kneeling on their chairs, which had their backs turned to the table. As this experiment was considered conclusive by the Committee of the London Dialectical Society, let us glance at their account.

### EXPERIMENT WITH THE DIALECTICAL SOCIETY

On January 6th, 1869, the London Dialectical Society resolved to appoint a Committee to investigate and report on "the Phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations." The historic Report of this Committee of thirty-three persons, the majority of whom were thorough sceptics, should be read by every Spiritualist. It is a wonderful mine of information, and a very impressive document. The members heard evidence from competent witnesses, but they also investigated for themselves. For this purpose they divided themselves into six sub-committees, and it is with the evidence of one of these sub-committees that I am now concerned.

Eleven members turned the backs of their chairs to a heavy dining table, knelt on the chairs and rested their hands on the backs of the chairs. There was a good light, and any contact with the table would have been at once detected. In less than a minute the table, untouched, moved four times, at first about five inches to one side, then about twelve inches to the opposite side. These sceptical gentlemen then examined the table and took it to pieces, without finding anything to account for the phenomena. There was full gaslight over the table throughout. The Report says, "Altogether your Sub-committee

have witnessed upwards of *fifty* similar motions without contact on eight different evenings, in the houses of members of your Sub-committee, the most careful tests being applied to each occasion.” In conclusion they reported the “unanimous opinion” that motion may be produced in solid bodies without material contact. As to the operative cause, they would only say that it was “some hitherto unrecognised force.”

As with the other Phenomena we are considering in this series, the field is so vast that much must pass without reference. For instance, the movement of objects without contact occurred very frequently with D. D. Home. Then we have said nothing of musical instruments, though they will be dealt with in a chapter devoted to Music. Nor have we touched on those noisy demonstrations known as Poltergeist phenomena, where stones and objects of every description are hurled about in an apparently aimless way. In our two succeeding chapters on Apports and Levitation we shall have to chronicle further movement of objects.

### A TRIUMPH FOR THE FOX GIRLS

Let me close with a touching story. Stand by the spirit people and they will stand by you, was the experience of many of the pioneers, and many are able to say the same today. When in 1849 the Fox girls obeyed the spirit behest and submitted their Raps to the cold scrutiny of a public meeting,<sup>46</sup> the audiences appointed special committees to investigate the girls privately. They got through the first and second of these private tests successfully, much to the chagrin of many people. At the next public meeting the audience selected what was known as the Infidel Committee, because it contained the most confirmed opponents in Rochester (U.S.A), where the meetings were held. The Committee of “scientific infidels,” as Leah Underhill calls them, appointed three ladies to disrobe the Fox girls and clothe them in fresh garments of their own selection, after which the gentlemen locked the doors and told the girls to “carry on” and produce their “ghosts.” No manifestations were forthcoming. As it was near dinner time, the gentlemen proposed they should go home for dinner, suggesting that later on there might be better success, but really meaning that the girls would have had the chance of preparing themselves. The girls refused to leave the hall, upon which the committee ordered dinner to be brought there. Let Leah Underhill (*The Missing Link*, etc., page 69) tell the rest:—

“A sumptuous dinner was prepared and brought in to us, and all took seats at the table. They taunted us in every way. Sometimes we felt ourselves forsaken, and disposed to give up in despair. Our friends were locked out, and not permitted to come into the room; but we could hear their faithful footsteps outside the door in the hall of the hole – Isaac and Amy Post, Mr. and Mrs. Pierpont, George Willets and others. My young sister Maggie was by my side, bathed in tears. Dr. Gates was carving. I was struggling with a choking emotion, and could not taste food. The party were joking and funning at our expense when suddenly the great table began to tremble, and raised first one end and then the other, with loud creaking sounds like a ship struggling in a heavy gale, until it was finally suspended above our heads.

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<sup>46</sup> Update of Psypioneer’s research into the events at Hydesville, and the Fox family. See Psypioneer Volume 8, No.1:—*Hydesville – Fox Special*:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP8.1January2012.pdf>

“For a moment all were silent and looked at each other with astonishment. The waiters fled in every direction. Instantly the scene was changed. The ladies threw their arms around us, one after another, and it was their turn to cry.

“They said to us, ‘Oh, you poor girls, how you have been abused! Oh, how sorry we are for you; after all, *it is true?!*’ The gentlemen with one accord said, ‘Girls, you have gained a victory. We will stand by you to the last.’”

Once from a Spiritualist platform (at Grovehale Hall) I essayed to read the above extract, to illustrate something I was saying. I could hardly get through it for emotion.

At a subsequent public meeting in Rochester to hear the verdict of the examining committee tar was heated ready for the girls, and they were in danger of their lives.

The Fox girls were truly pioneers, heroines, martyrs.

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## BOOKS WE HAVE REVIEWED

*If you have any problems locating a copy we can contact the author*

**An Extraordinary Journey:—The Memoirs of a Physical Medium**, by Stewart Alexander, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England, 2010. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9557050-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 294-296:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

**Helen Duncan The Mystery Show Trial**, by Robert Hartley published by H Pr (Publishing), London 2007. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9553420-8-0. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 244-247:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.11November07..pdf>

**Aquarian Evangelist: The Age of Aquarius as It Dawned in the Mind of Levi Dowling**, by John Benedict Buescher Theosophical History Volume XI available at:—<http://www.theohistory.org> then—Occasional Papers. Psypioneer references by Leslie Price page 7:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

**Dead Men's Embers**, by Gerald O'Hara, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2006. Large Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9514534-6-9., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 1-2:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf>

**Mrs Miller's Gift' - a Celebration of 75 Years of the Edinburgh College of Parapsychology formerly Edinburgh Psychic College & Library**, by Gerald O'Hara & Ann Harrison, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England 2007. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-951-4534-9-0., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 1-4:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08..pdf>

**Mrs Miller's Gift CD:—Helen Duncan Séance, Ernest Oaten and Harry Edwards**, Written and produced by Gerald O'Hara B.Sc. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 106-107:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.4April09.pdf>

**The Indescribable Phenomena – The Life and Mysteries of Anna Eva Fay**, by Barry H. Wiley published by Hermetic Press, Inc., Seattle Washington 2005. ISBN: 0-945296-50-9., available at:—[http://www.hermeticpress.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=45](http://www.hermeticpress.com/product_info.php?products_id=45) Psypioneer references by Leslie Price pages 39-42:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.2February09.pdf>

**Immortal Longings – FWH Myers and the Victorian Search for Life After Death**, by Trevor Hamilton published by Imprint Academic in Exeter, U.K (also VA, U.S.A) 2009. ISBN: 9-781845- 401238 H.B, 9-781845-402488 PB, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 157-148:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.6June09.pdf>

**Talking to the Dead – Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism**, by Barbara Weisberg published by HarperSanFrancisco New York 2004. Hardback ISBN: 0-06-056667-1., available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 9-10:—[http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie\\_Price\\_PP2.pdf](http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP2.pdf)

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Paul J. Gaunt

