

PSYPIONEER

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Psychical Research's longest research project continues – see p. 45

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Stainton Moses and Masonry

Readers of this medium's funeral report in PP2 will have noticed a masonic wreath. SM appears to have been an inactive mason in the last years of his life. John Hamill, then librarian and curator of the United Grand Lodge of England, provided me with some information in a letter of 10 July 1992.

William Stainton Moses was initiated in St Thomas's Lodge No. 142 London, on 4 March 1876. As far as I can trace he did not take office in this lodge and resigned from it in 1887.

In 1880 he became a joining member of Campbell Lodge No. 1415, Hampton Court. Again I can find no trace of his having taken office in the lodge.

In 1877 he was appointed Provincial Grand Chaplain of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Middlesex, holding the appointment for one year (usual custom.)

In the Royal Arch he was exalted in Campbell Chapter No. 1415, Hampton Court, in 1877 but took no office.

In the Ancient and Accepted rite he is listed as an unattached member of the 18th degree (Rose Croix) in the 1877 Year Book. In 1879 he is listed as a member of Palestine Rose Croix Chapter No. 29, London, of which Capt. F.G. Irwin was the senior member. He continues to be shown as a member of this Chapter to the end of 1882 then appears, again, as an unattached member in the 1883-5 lists.

There were no obituaries for him in the Masonic press.

John Hamill was also the author of a valuable paper “ Additional Light on William Stainton Moses and the Theosophical Society” published in “ Theosophical History” V11/7 July 1999, which quotes from private letters to show SM’s loss of interest in masonry. (see www.theohistory.org.)

Hamill mentions SM’s brief encounter with the Swedenborgian Rite, of which he was the first Supreme Grand Chaplain. R.A. Gilbert gives more information in his paper “ Chaos out of Order: The Rise and Fall of the Swedenborgian Rite” (1995) published in full in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (Vol. 108) and now - but without the comments on the paper and the author’s replies - at www.freemasonry.bcy.ca/aqc/swedenborg.html

On the same web site can also be found Ellic Howe’s seminal AQC 1972 study “ Fringe Masonry in England 1870-85” which puts SM’s interests in a wider perspective.

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DAVIS LETTERS IN UK?

The earliest surviving letters by A.J. Davis at Virginia Beach predate Hydesville. Others from his long career are scattered about the States. But are there any here? In his book “Spiritualism: the Open Door to the Unseen Universe” (1908) , James Robertson recalls:

“Many of the addresses which I prepared for delivery before the Glasgow Association found a larger constituency in the pages of “The Two Worlds”. Four lectures on “The Rise and Progress of Modern Spiritualism “were printed from week to week, and afterwards issued in a small volume. This *resume* of the Spiritualism of the age brought down to date has already found a large sale, and may form a skeleton upon which a larger history may be built.

Nothing delighted me more than the receipt of a letter from Andrew Jackson Davis regarding my little book. Carlyle was never more thrilled by letters from Goethe than I was by the kindly words of commendation of the greatest seer of the age. He said of it : “ *It is a clear, manly, true presentation, and the world will be better for it.* “

In a postscript he added some words regarding his own life’s work which I have treasured. It read as follows. “*Since the noble Galen’s first visit in 1843 to this hour my life’s motive may be stated thus: To make it a paramount duty to develop to the utmost all natural faculties, whether of mind or body; not as instruments of self-gratification, nor even self-advancement, but in order to render them more efficient tools in the service of humanity.*”

Robertson continued: “Since that day I have had many letters from the great spiritual teacher. No honour could have been conferred which I should have valued more than this coming close to one of nature’s nobles, the most highly –illuminated man of any age. “ (p313-4).

Where might those letters be now? With other papers of James Robertson perhaps- in Scotland?

NEW LIGHT ON MONCK

Francis Ward Monck was the first medium to be jailed in England under the Vagrancy Act 1824, and his physical phenomena interested Alfred Russel Wallace, Stainton Moses and William Oxley. He has recently been rescued from obscurity by John Randall (2003) in a sympathetic paper “ Francis Ward Monck and the problems of physical mediumship” (JSPR 67 243-259.

Dr Michael Coleman (2004) , in a critical letter (JSPR 68 125-128) suggested that Monck may have been no more than a fake. John Randall responded (JSPR 68 185-7) that while some fraud probably occurred, there was reasonably good evidence that he did produce some genuine phenomena.

Anyone interested in Monck and his sitters will want follow this debate. SPR members have access to JSPR on its web site. (www.spr.ac.uk)

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Endor - questions rather than answers

Every writer on the first book of Samuel has to take a view of the medium of Endor in ch. 28. For Mary Evans, Lecturer in Old Testament, London Bible College, author of “ The message of Samuel – personalities, potential, politics and power “ (IVP, 2004) this volume, like the others in “ The Bible Speaks Today” series, is not a commentary but an exposition. However, a clear statement that Samuel communicated (as the author of the biblical book believed) would offend some readers.

After noting that the whole account is shrouded in mystery, she asks “ Was the woman a fraud or did she genuinely have some kind of clairvoyant skill? Was it really the dead Samuel coming back to life, or was it the appearance of an evil spirit or some kind of trick? Was the woman’s recognition of Saul based on her own insight or did his disguise drop for a second? Did Saul really hear from Samuel or just deceive himself into hearing all the things he knew and feared?” (p.154)

These questions are not answered. And they would be good questions from a psychical researcher. But why not expound what the Bible says. This has been a problem of course for Jewish and Christian authorities for 2500 years - hence the ancient suggestion that Samuel was an evil spirit, still being made today.

Samuel was angry at being disturbed by Saul – but what would he say to those over the centuries who have suggested he was an evil spirit?

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How to obtain this Newsletter

The Psypioneer newsletter is at present available on the web site www.woodlandway.org and we are greatly indebted to our Australian friends. You can obtain it free and direct by sending an e mail entitled “ Subscribe” to leslie.price@blueyonder.co.uk or “ Unsubscribe” to discontinue.

:Before the Fellowship (3)

(In 2003 was celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies (originally the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study). Previous attempts to form such bodies floundered, and it is an important historical question why the others failed, and this one succeeded. To help answer it, we are presenting a regular series of reports on the prehistory of the Fellowship.)

SEARCHING FOR ANGLICAN SPIRITUALISTS

In exploring the years before CFPS was formed, we now have a valuable scholarly study “Searching for Raymond, Anglicanism, Spiritualism and Bereavement between the Two World Wars.” (Lexington Books, 2000) by Rene Kollar. Raymond was the son of Anglican Oliver Lodge whose mediumistic communications in the book “Raymond” (1916) were sometimes misunderstood- they did not, for example, change Lodge’s survivalist outlook, proclaimed in his 1909 book “Survival of Man.”

Kollar used the archives of Lambeth Palace Library and of the Archbishops of Canterbury. He gives a detailed account of the 1920 Lambeth Conference resolutions on Spiritualism, Christian Science and Theosophy, which Rev. Charles Tweedale tried in vain to influence. He retells in more detail than ever before the confusing saga of the 1939 Report on Spiritualism, which was to remain partly secret for forty years. What the bishops said about it at their meetings was secret for 50 years – see Michael Perry (ed.) “Spiritualism: the 1939 Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury” (CFPSS 1999).

Mrs St Clair Stobart often emerges in Kollar’s pages to urge Archbishops to embrace Spiritualism. It is apparent also that the Rev. Maurice Elliott’s activities (see PP4, PP5) were known at Lambeth. J.V. Macmillan, Bishop of Guildford, objected in 1935 that Elliott was speaking about Spiritualism in other dioceses than his own, London. A.F. Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, had already complained about Elliott at a Bishops Meeting. Elliott needed an invitation from a local parish before organising a meeting in it, but had disregarded protocol.

Macmillan was also disturbed by Confraternity literature , which included a post-mortem communication from Archbishop Davidson. Archbishop C.G. Lang, in his reply to Macmillan said that one of those involved, Sharp (A.F. – see PP4) had been removed as Rural Dean by the Bishop of London, who had also prohibited spiritualist meetings being held in any churches or church halls in his diocese.

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Stainton Moses and the editorship of LIGHT.

Care should be taken in referring to the first editor of LIGHT, who was not Stainton Moses. Dr Dingwall emphasised this in his paper “Light and the Farmer mystery” (JSPR 1881 vol. 51 p22-25.) Edmund Dawson Rogers appears to have controlled the paper on its foundation in 1881, but J.S. Farmer edited it for a time., and also the “Psychological Review”. Farmer was the author of “Spiritualism as a New Basis of Belief” (1880), and “Twixt Two Worlds” a biography of the medium William Eglinton . Moses succeeded Farmer as editor about 1886.

Is Reincarnation proved?

A Psychic Pioneer is not just a dead Spiritualist. He may still be alive, and not be a Spiritualist.

The longest running project in psychical research does not involve mediums. But it does affect the nature of survival.

The psychiatrist Ian Stevenson (born 31 October 1918 in Montreal, Canada) published an essay “ The evidence for survival from claimed memories of former incarnations” in 1960. (It was, incidentally, reprinted as a booklet by Mary Peto in England.) Scientifically, the evidence was not strong, but in 1961 he went to India, to study children in particular.

He attracted funding from Chester Carlson, the photocopying millionaire, and has since travelled the world, researching cases and publishing them. Some involve birthmarks or injuries linked to past personalities. Dr Stevenson has concentrated on children who remember previous lives, because adults are more likely to have picked up information normally, for example through books.

Dr Stevenson often avoids the media, but he was interviewed by Bishop Hugh Montefiore for his book “ The paranormal – a bishop investigates” (Upfront Publishing Leicestershire, 2002). Using also his other interviews and occasional reviews of his books, we can ask- where are we now on reincarnation research?

Unfortunately, it is mainly one man’s work. “ For about thirty years” he told the Bishop” the research was entirely in my hands or with my assistants whom I recruited in different parts of the world. Beginning about ten years ago, I was able to interest some other investigators and they have published various reports. This isn’t ideal, because so far they are all my friends and they were to a great extent funded out of resources made available to me. So I’m still looking for other investigators who would be totally independent “ (p.209)

For science to make progress, there need to be other teams of researchers. Otherwise, it could be argued that Dr Stevenson is being deceived by his informants.

There are a number of problems with the hundreds of cases studied by his team. Occasionally, someone “ remembers” a previous personality who was still alive when he or she was born. That might be possession rather than reincarnation

There are also disturbing patterns. In general, among people where it is believed you can’t change sex in a reincarnation, they do not. If they believe there is no gap between lives, then there isn't. If the societies believe in a spirit world between lives, then the children have memories of that spirit world.

A more general problem is that the western investigators often hear of the case only after it has been around for some time, perhaps years, and may also have to rely on interpreters to check the facts.

Dr Stevenson is aware of these difficulties – he has even published a report on cases of fraud. But the effect of all the cases he has studied has brought him to a belief in reincarnation, though with an uncertainty about many details. Indeed no psychical researcher has ever written such long books!

“ I suppose I think of ourselves as being here in some sort of school, elementary school, to learn, to profit, to improve: and I think that if we are evolving, then possibly God is evolving, maybe experimenting with us” (p.196 ff.) he told the Bishop.

How do memories or any kind of imprint, get from the personality in one life to the next? Stevenson suggests a vehicle which he calls a “psychophore” But now we are in the realms of speculation. And the sense which one person today is one or more persons who once lived in the past is not at all clear.

Dr Stevenson’s massive investigations will make sure that his work lives on after he dies. Whether he is a pioneer on the level of the astronomer Copernicus may not be apparent for many years. Meanwhile, he has done his duty as scientist- collecting the data, analysing it, and suggesting an explanation.

It is, I suggest, reasonable to believe in reincarnation on the basis of Dr Stevenson’s research or other evidence. It is also reasonable, before reaching a conclusion, to wait for other research into the children by independent teams.

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Ten Spiritual Commandments in India

Readers of Paul Gaunt’s research into the Seven Principles (see PP1 interview) know that they were preceded by the Ten Spiritual Commandments. How widely were the latter diffused? In “Nineteenth Century Miracles”, in the chapters on India (Hindustan), p.317, Emma Hardinge Britten writes:

Another talented native Spiritualist is Shibchunder Deb, a gentleman who has contributed to the stock of Spiritual literature an excellent compilation from the works of the best American authors. Amongst other undertakings of this character, Shibchubder Deb has translated THE TEN SPIRITUAL COMMANDMENTS given by the Spirits through the Mediumship of Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten at one of her London lectures, into the Bengalese dialect. These commandments, hung up in hundreds of houses as Spiritual texts in England and America, are now circulated in India as a valuable missionary tract. “

From what Emma says it appears that Spiritualists at one time used to hang up the Ten Spiritual Commandments in the same way that later ones displayed the Seven Principles.. Do any framed copies survive? They might be in USA or Britain in particular.

The full text of the Ten Spiritual Commandments, and a valuable discussion of their context can be found in the Journal archive section of www.woodlandway.org

Rasputin Reconsidered

Grigory Rasputin (1869-1916) would not today be eligible to join the SNU. As a practising Russian Orthodox layman married with children who aspired to be a spiritual father, his association with “ restricted bodies” (i.e. other religions) would prevent him joining the main Spiritualist group in England.

In her book “ Psychic Healing through the Ages” Joyce Cooper defended Rasputin from the charge of exceptional evil, and played down his political involvement. (See the extract in “ Psychic News “ 21 February 2004.)

Since the fall of the Society Union in 1991, much new information about Rasputin has emerged, including the papers of an official 1917 investigation. This is discussed in Edward Radzinsky’s biography ” Rasputin- the last word” (Weidenfeld 2000). We can conclude:

- 1) Rasputin was a successful healer who also had clairvoyant impressions
- 2) After a failed assassination attempt just before the war in 1914, he deteriorated markedly and began drinking.
- 3) He had long exercised a major political role, usually in support of the Tsar’s wife. He was, for example, opposed to Russian involvement in war. A telegram from him to the Tsar even caused a temporary cancellation of mobilisation in 1914.
- 4) Rasputin was involved with many women, especially prostitutes. But these meetings were often a distorted expression of the Khlysty (Flagellant) religious impulse.
- 5) Was the Russian Revolution, with its catastrophic effect on twentieth century history, caused by the actions of a small number of people, like the Tsar, his wife, Rasputin or Lenin? Or was it the product of wider social forces? While it is excessive to blame everything on Rasputin, he did have a central role in the unfolding tragedy. The Royal Family’s attachment to him continued to their murder in 1918, when his amulets remained on their bodies.

Thus Rasputin was one of the most influential psychic (and religious) figures in history, and his life is worthy of study as a case where the paranormal and politics collided violently.

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Noah’s Ark Society closure

The decision by members of the NAS on 15 August 2004 to dissolve it, is a serious setback to studies of the pioneers. Although members enjoyed the phenomena of contemporary physical mediums, the Society through its Review and web site gave much attention to earlier workers- indeed for some mediums, it is the main electronic source of information. It is to be hoped that as much as possible can be salvaged. There were hopes when it was formed that the NAS would promote the scientific study of physical mediumship, by encouraging infra-red observation for example.

Notes by the Way: GOD, SPIRITUALISM AND MODERN THEOSOPHY

The Spiritualists National Union is currently exploring the basis of its beliefs - but how far back in history should they look?

Religious Spiritualist bodies commonly express belief in God – one God who is love (Greater World), the fatherhood of God (SNU), the Eternal Spirit who is both Father and Mother (White Eagle Lodge), the Great Spirit of some guides. Sometimes philosophical Spiritualists equate God with Divine law. In general, however, belief in a personal God is widespread in the Movement, though this God is much more tolerant than the one found in some other religions. Even Christian Spiritualism sometimes has only a tenuous link with the God of the Bible.

Some people definitely do not believe in God, and we usually call them atheists. If they are humanists and secularists as well, they often reject all psychical phenomena and the possibility of life after death.

There is however another group of religious believers, more numerous in the East, who can properly be called non-theists. They may well accept the reality of after-death states and of some remarkable phenomena, but a personal God plays no part in their outlook. Many Buddhists and yoga practitioners fall into this group.

It is not often realised that Madame Blavatsky and her teachers were also non-theists. In her book “The Secret Doctrine” (1888) the world is created by a combination of the natural laws of cause and effect, and the efforts of various collective groups of spiritual beings. In question and answer form, she clearly rejects any personal god in “The Key to Theosophy”(1890), though a god within is acknowledged.

Later Theosophists found this teaching unpalatable, and C.W. Leadbeater, George Arundale and others even became bishops in the Liberal Catholic Church, in which some of the trappings of religion, ejected by the founders, were restored.

Is theism a good thing? David Reigle, a Sanskrit Buddhist scholar best known to Theosophists for his defence of Madame Blavatsky’s Tibetan connection, challenged this in an important paper in “Fohat” (Spring and Summer 2003), a theosophical quarterly published in Edmonton, Canada. As this material is not electronically available, I will, without prejudice, summarise part of it here. (Contact fohat@telusplanet.net for subscription details.).

Blavatsky taught that the Wisdom Tradition began in India, and the oldest Indian religions known to us did not believe in God. For the Jains, whose religion is one of harmlessness, karma takes the place of God. Next, the historical Buddha, who awakened to truth and reality, did so without the help of God. Here too, we make our destiny through our actions. Compassion is a dominant theme. Nirvana or enlightenment is reached eventually, but there is no suggestion that God is found there. In Buddhism, individual gods may exist for a time, but when their accumulated merit is extinguished, they will fall again, and, as humans only, have the opportunity of reaching enlightenment.

Even in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, we may find a multitude of deities, but they are all fundamentally empty. This is realised in meditation.

However Buddhism was largely replaced in India by a resurgent Hinduism. Here we certainly find theism, that is belief in God. But Reigle examined each of the traditional schools of thought in Hinduism, and found that they were non-theistic in origin. This is the case even of the Vedas, the oldest Indian scriptures. They speak of many gods – polytheism – but behind this appearance is the universal Brahman, an all-pervading principle, who is not however a personal god.

As the present era went on, actual belief in a personal God developed in Hinduism, and began to be expressed in commentaries on older scriptures. Further west, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, three religions descended from Abraham, all strongly believed in a personal God. Religion even came to be defined as belief in some kind of God.

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Madame Blavatsky's teachers in the nineteenth century denounced this personal God religion as the major source of evil in the world. Looking back to the twentieth century, where Bolshevism and Nazism ran amok, we may wonder if they should be classed as religions.

At present, there is no doubt that what we call traditional religions, believing in a personal God, are involved in some scary confrontations. Islamic Pakistan versus mainly Hindu India; Jewish Israel versus mainly Islamic Palestine; Osama Bin Laden versus the West are notable examples.

True brotherhood, which the Theosophical Society was intended to promote, and which appears as the second principle of National Spiritualism ("The Brotherhood of Man") is difficult to reconcile with belief in God, at least in its strong forms. When possessed by such belief, a percentage of believers become violent towards those who do not share the same God idea.

Early Spiritualist ideas about God arose in the same era as Liberal Protestantism. It was the theologian Adolf Von Harnack who summarised Christianity as the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. National Spiritualism, as a Victorian product, can be seen as one among many variants of Liberal Protestantism.

We certainly find belief in God among spirit communicators, although interestingly, in Stainton Moses "Spirit Teachings" even his instructors profess not to know about ultimate reality. But perhaps the God of whom they speak is not personal, but something impersonal, which expresses itself through a vast and benevolent celestial civil service.

Before accepting Reigle's view, and discarding any belief in the fatherhood of God, Spiritualists would perhaps carefully examine the various spirit communications on the subject, and consider how such practices as prayer would be affected. Perhaps this task is something for what is now called the Philosophical and Ethics Committee of the SNU. For Christians, in contrast, the fatherhood of God is a revealed truth.

Leslie Price

The Whistle Blower (updated from the former Pioneer web site)

Suppose you came to believe that a leading officer of your organisation, who was venerated by many, had produced fake phenomena for some years. But to your dismay other leading officers reached an agreement with the suspected perpetrator, and even suggested that he had been subject to malicious criticism. He continued on his way. What would you do?

If you spoke out or otherwise publicised the apparent wrongdoing, you would be branded as a troublemaker, even a traitor, and after all he was doing very good work, even if he was bolstering it with cheating. But when you joined the organisation, you thought you were getting away from ecclesiastical jiggery pokery and indeed, as the motto said, " There is no religion higher than truth".

This is the motto of the Theosophical Society whose founder Madame Blavatsky (HPB) died in 1891. Although Henry Olcott her chum was to continue as president until his death in 1907, the two leading members of the T.S. esoteric school were Annie Besant in England and William Q. Judge in New York. But Judge claimed to be receiving written messages from the Mahatmas (the adepts behind the T.S.). Some of his colleagues came to feel that he was humbugging them. One message, for example, warned Annie Besant that if she went to India, Olcott might poison her. Olcott also suspected, perhaps rightly, that Judge was trying to usurp him as president.

Judge declined to resign when presented with the evidence of his supposed fraud, and a committee of enquiry decided that it could not rule on questions touching the existence or otherwise of the Mahatmas. There was every sign that the fraud charge might be now hushed up.

One of the senior T.S. officials who had access to the papers was Walter Old, who had held one of the hands of Madame Blavatsky on her deathbed. He gave the papers to Edmund Garrett, a journalist friend with the Westminster Gazette. Unfortunately, Garrett used the papers not merely to write a series of articles exposing the alleged fraud but to generally attack Theosophy. They were later published as a book " Isis Very Much Unveiled" (1895).

The story of Walter Old was retold in a fascinating biography by the astrological historian Kim Farnell " The Astral Tramp" 1998 (available in USA through <http://www.swan-island.com/astraltramp/> and in the UK and Europe through the Wessex astrologer, 4a Woodside Road, Bournemouth, BH5 2AZ <http://www.wessexastrologer.com>) The book's title is a nickname given to Old by HPB because of his astral travelling.

It is worth focusing on this moment just over a century ago in October 1894 when the Garrett articles appeared, and we find the Theosophical Society in the process of fracturing a mere three years after the death of HPB. This fracture remains to this day. Most of the American and Irish members followed Judge. And once one schism had taken place others followed, as in Protestantism. Each group eyes the others carefully

- this article, for example, may be thought not to say enough in defence of Judge, or to be disrespectful of Mrs Tingley (see below)

Old did not cause the fracture. It might have happened anyway over the Judge affair. Wild accusations were already flying about between the supporters of the various leaders. And Old never intended to discredit Theosophy - he just wanted to promote the expulsion of the supposed fraud. But he chose the wrong journalist. Theosophy got an appalling press for weeks on end, and feelings were even more embittered. He might have done better to publish the documents himself, with a commentary explaining his motives.

If Old had waited, it is possible that the situation would have passed without schism. For in two years Judge was to die from fever. However the former medium, Mrs Tingley was already bearing down on the American T.S. and she would have wanted to run her own show, and might well have split with the headquarters in Adyar, India, if Judge had not already done so.

The effect on Old of his misjudgement was profound. He resigned from the T.S. never to return, which gave him a curious limbo position in the occult field for the rest of his life. He changed his name to Walter Gornold. Even before his Theosophical phase, he had been active as an astrologer under the name "Sepharial", and this now became his chief means of income. He married in 1896, and had many children.

Old was also a psychic. He attended seances, professed to read thoughts, and also received visions from spirits. He could psychometrise and dowse and use stones as an aid to scrying.

The main emphasis of the Theosophical Society had always been oriental wisdom, but as years went by, Walter was drawn increasingly to more western sources. He was attracted to the British Israelites, who believe that the British are descended from the ancient Israelites, some of whose tribes were carried off into captivity in Mesopotamia and never seen again.

He was a keen student of biblical prophecy. He saw meaning in the dimensions of the Great Pyramid, and in 1925 dated the start of the Aquarian Age from the length in inches of its great gallery (1881).

Old died on 23 December 1929. He had the unusual distinction of obituaries in different places which suggested separate lives. " He devoted many years to the service of Christ" noted the British Israelites " a true soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ." One astrological notice however called him " the greatest astrologer since Lilly". The commercial detail of that life, in which he offered astrological advice to financial speculators, was not always edifying, but he had a family to support.

In 1927, three of his daughters were baptised in Worthing at a Pentecostal revival meeting by George Jeffreys, the Elim Pastor. One of them spoke in tongues, and Walter thought he recognised the language as Hebrew. In August 1929, he attended a meeting and was subsequently baptised at the swimming baths. Later he told a public meeting " I have spent all my life and travelled half way round the world in search of

the truth. Today I have found it... in the simple gospel of Jesus Christ which I learned at my mother's knee."

As his biographer Kim Farnell observes " This was not a popular statement" and because he died only a few weeks later, one might wonder if it would have endured. Four of his children, however, definitely retained their links with Pentecostalism throughout their lives, and conversion was for Walter but a culmination of many years interests.(Jeffreys was a British Israelite too).

As a young man Walter was noted for his dreamy temperament. He was undoubtedly over-enthusiastic and impulsive at times, and could never reach settled prosperity. Yet he (and his wife) managed to bring most of a large family to maturity, though their respectable friends in Brighton might have been surprised to learn that most of his income came from astrology. LP

Kim Farnell's biography of another Theosophical clairvoyant, Mabel Collins, has recently been completed.

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Tasmania was first

Anyone interested in the history of this subject in Australia, should consult Dr Harvey Irwin's paper " Parapsychology in Australia " which appeared in the American SPR Journal (JASPR) vol. 82 October 1988. p. 319- 338. Dr Irwin points out that there are minor updates in American SPR Newsletter 1993, 18(1), 11-12 and Parapsychological Association News 1996 Spring/Summer, 8-9.

The first known Australian learned paper was William Archer " Observations on Table-Moving " presented in 1864 at a meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania, which appeared in their Proceedings vol. 4 86-89. Irwin notes " Archer's paper essentially comprised a reiteration of Faraday's interpretation of table-tipping..." This attributed the movement of the table to unconscious pressure by the sitters. " Although Archer's paper is perhaps simplistic and lacking in originality, it is notable in at least two respects. First it was presented to a learned society and thus represents one of the earliest parapsychological reports to be sanctioned by the scientific community. Second, it remained for many years a report of the only parapsychological investigation to be conducted in Australia by an officially recognized scientist. " (p321.)

By 1867, Spiritualism had emerged in Australian public consciousness. As in Britain, a potential bridge between science and the movement was the creation of Psychological Societies . But Irwin comments. " A so-called " Psychological Society" was established in each of the major cities of Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, and in some provincial towns between 1878 and 1880, although with the exception of the Melbourne group, they were not notable for their longevity. Problems of geography undoubtedly played a part in limiting the sphere of influence of each of these societies. The major centers of activity were separated by too great distances for the founding of a national society to be feasible. " (p.323-4.)