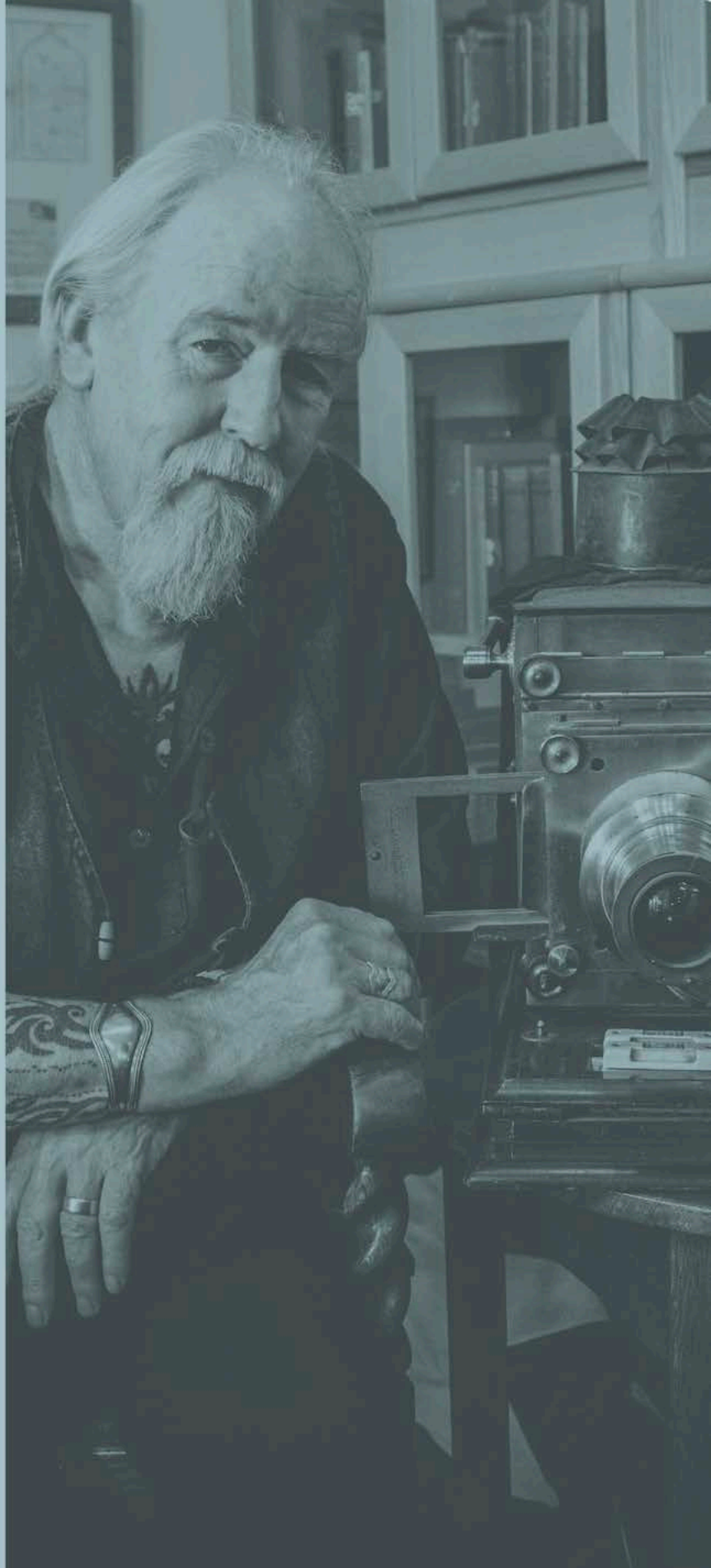
The PIONEER

The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.



the PIONEER

Volume 9, No. 5: October 2022

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The Pioneer (bi-monthly) is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.

This history journal is presented using original researched material wherever possible. Articles and quotes are taken from original sources as they were published at the time and reproduced by optical character recognition (OCR), the conversion of scanned images of handwritten, typewritten or printed text into machine-encoded text. This means that grammar, old English, spelling mistakes, etc. are not usually changed. However, long paragraphs are sometimes split for easier reading; any errors or explanations needed are noted in footnotes.

Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing this issue

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In Search of Maria B. Hayden

The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K.

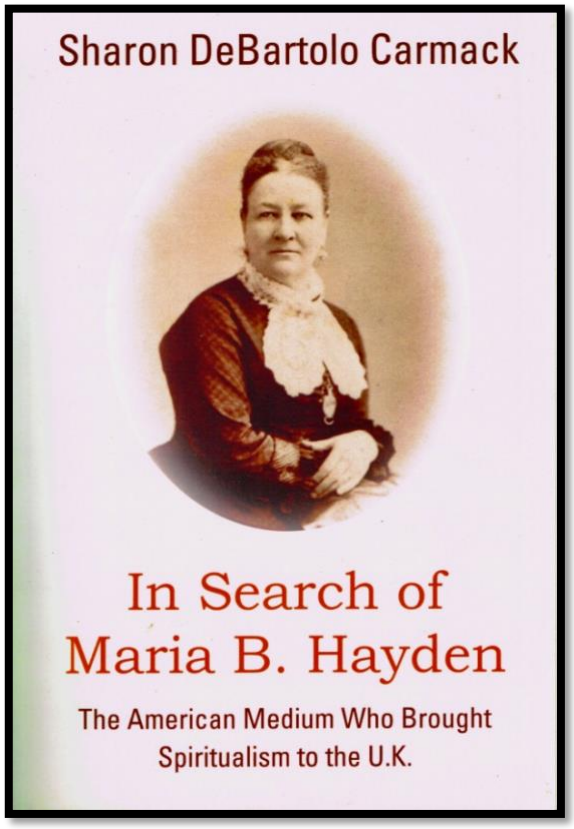
By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

During the Hydesville rappings, as they peaked in the early evening of March 31st, 1848, a neighbour, Mr William Duesler, a former tenant of the house temporarily rented by Mr and Mrs Fox and their two young children, was called (among others) to the disturbances.

Later that evening, Duesler developed an alphabet code in an effort to communicate with the alleged pedlar. The following year, at Rochester, New York, this code would bring the Fox sisters to fame using Duesler's alphabet code and it was this code, the *calling of the alphabet*, which Maria Hayden introduced to the U.K. in 1852.

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Book Review by Paul J. Gaunt:



When people come into Spiritualism and start to look into its early beginnings they would find the names Andrew Jackson Davis, Hydesville and the Fox sisters, Emma Hardinge, D.D. Home and Maria Hayden all well within the first decade of the *general* date of 1848, when Modern Spiritualism began, albeit this is not strictly true.[1]

Enquirers would find sufficient available reading materials and photographs until they came to the American lady who introduced Spiritualism to England in October 1852—Mrs Maria Hayden.

This scholarly biography is in no way a casual overview of Hayden's introduction of Spiritualism into the U.K but a dedicated, thoughtful investigation into her life, those who were close to her, and those behind the scenes, expanding into other relevant areas of the period and giving the reader a broader understanding of the surrounding environment in which Spiritualism was moving.

Carmack's skills as a professional genealogist cautiously put together the early beginnings of the young Maria B. *née Trenholm* Hayden born in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1824,[2] leading up to her meeting physician Dr William R. Hayden in the late 1840s and resulting in their marriage in 1850; soon after the Haydens would discover Spiritualism primarily at the home of Laroy Sunderland, who in Boston, July 1850, launched the "Spiritual Philosopher" after one volume became "The Spirit World", the first Spiritualist newspaper in America.[3]

[1] Please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1: "When did Modern Spiritualism begin? 1848?"

[2] To find correct birth dates at this period is not always a simple task, as different records hold contradictory information; the date given here does not appear on her gravestone (see page 17 of the book).

[3] The scope was wider than Spiritualism, for the editor, Laroy Sunderland (sometimes called Leroy), was a noted reformer, with his own take on mesmerism called Pathetism.

By 1851 Maria had found her direction as a medium. Her husband William began to move away from medicine and lean more towards his journalistic skills and making a name for himself. Now with a newborn baby daughter in the latter part of the year, as their married life begins to take shape, as Chapter 4: *New Pursuits*, reveals, family tragedy hit hard the following June with the loss of their daughter Adelaide. Carmack takes the reader through the Haydens' grief and their *First Spiritualist Services*, as Spiritualism continued to spread throughout Boston, where the Haydens resided. They started holding meetings at their home as Maria's mediumship became more recognised and popularised, attracting both *believers and skeptics.* One such believer was a medical mesmerist called George W. Stone.

Although the Haydens had been previously influenced to go to England, Stone offered to sponsor their visit. Stone was well known in his field of mesmerism; he had published a book in England in 1850 and had also lectured widely in London, Manchester, Liverpool, etc. on electro-biology. Before Stone agreed to take the Haydens to England he tested Mrs Hayden's physical mediumship, as he wanted to make sure that others would be convinced. Taking her to a house in Boston, which he was certain she had never previously entered, and after "proving beyond all doubt" that the manifestations were undeniable, Stone persuaded the Haydens to accompany him to England, as Carmack explains in Chapter 6: *The Decision to Go to England*.

One doubt which the Haydens held about coming to the U.K. Carmack notes on page 97:

> "They also "feared that the English mind was not yet prepared to receive the truth of manifestations …[but] being continually assured by our invisible guardians" that they would be welcomed, William and Maria agreed to make the trip.

At this point British Spiritualist history was made on their arrival to England on October 14th, 1852. Naturally, at the start Stone conjoins the advertising between himself and Maria; as regards Hayden's séances a leaflet was produced, "Rules to be Observed at the Séances." The séances were, generally speaking, for the well-to-do, at a guinea per person at their residence. In the séances *the calling of the alphabet* was a simple process. Letters and numbers were placed on a board and each letter or number was pointed at in turn; a rap indicated whether it was the correct letter or number. The process was repeated for the second character and so on, producing the message letter by letter, word by word—no doubt laborious but effective.

The Haydens' visit, of course, caused a storm of debate, interest, acceptance and downright denial within the public press of the day; much of it was between the many eminent men of the day such as Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, where Maria's first known professional séance took place in his residence at Knebworth House. Others in debate included Dr Charles Hoyland, Dr John Ashburner, Dr John Elliotson and Robert Owen, etc. Carmack brings the stories back to life, giving a detailed overview of Hayden's historic visit of *the American medium who brought Spiritualism to the U.K.* Reports, letters, statements, etc. are given to furnish the reader's understanding of the trials and tribulations of bringing these séances and their Spiritualist claims to the U.K.

Carmack widens the reader's interest with some of the more controversial, damning reports in Chapter 9, "Slanders of the Zoist—The Rapping Phenomena", for example, on page 132: "[Dr. John] Elliotson accused Maria of cold reading by being an astute observer of body language and facial countenance, and stated there were many incorrect answers." Further, "More damming was Elliotson's hypothesis on how Maria duped her clients. He claimed that she, or an accomplice, tapped her shoes against the legs of the table or her chair…" Naturally, these skeptical assertions were to be expected from some of the men of science, but these were combated with positive reports of her mediumship which echoed satisfaction with the likes of Dr John Ashburner and Robert Chambers. Some skeptics such as Augustus De Morgan, Professor of Mathematics at University College, London, together with his wife Sophia, became strong supporters of Hayden's mediumship. The séances are detailed in

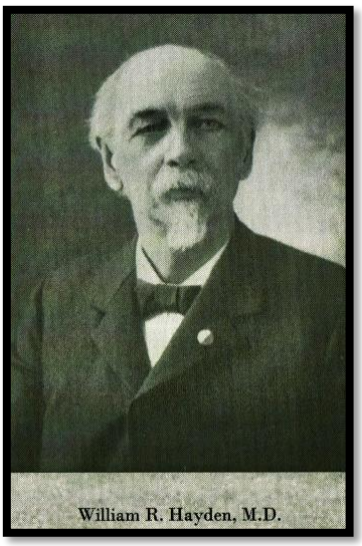
Chapter 14: *Final Months Abroad* and this concludes the Haydens' visit as they head to Dieppe, France before returning home to Boston on October 31st, 1853.[4]

On their *Return to Boston* generally favourable reports followed the Haydens. Maria gave birth to her second daughter on July 4th, 1854 and the following year the Haydens, with their baby daughter Elizabeth and another medium, Miss Jay, made another trip to London, arriving on April 23rd, 1855, but this time there was very little interest in their visit. Carmack, in Chapter 16: *A Second Trip to England*, notes: "The London correspondent for the *Spiritual Telegraph* [5] said he had hoped there would be a renewal of excitement upon Maria's return, "but we have been sadly disappointed. Mrs. Hayden has come once more…without being noticed by the press." "

Throughout the next few chapters Maria moves towards healing, a new phase of mediumship for her, working in unison with her rapping. Her husband's business was back more fully in the medical field with his friend George Stone. Moving on to Chapter 18: *A Healing Medium*, Andrew Jackson Davis was known for his clairvoyant ability to see disease inside the patient's body. In April 1856 Maria was publicly recognised within the press for her ability to diagnose and heal. In the autumn of this year, as her success continued, Maria was once again pregnant.

On pages 229-30 Maria termed her healing mediumship as "clairosympathic",

"… the power of obtaining knowledge by *sympathy of the mind with matter* …."


William R. Hayden, M.D.

By merely *taking one's hand, her mind is impressed with the exact state of the physical system in all its minutiae*. Further, in 1857 William Hayden published "Seven Years with the Spirits". It is interesting to note that the author throughout the book mentions her difficult, almost never-ending search and identification for a photograph of Maria; eventually, on page 234, via a descendant, a portrait image is found of Maria as shown on the book's front cover. Moving on to April 1858, Maria would refer to her mediumship as a "clairvoyant physician", as per the title of Chapter 20. The Haydens moved in the direction of dedicating their skills to healing. They had moved to New York City in the late 1850s. Carmack gives an overview of the newspaper's advertisements, for example on page 247 the "New York Herald" on March 6th, 1859,

"… remarkable powers as a clairsympathist in examination and location of disease, when existing in the human system, are so widely and favourably known on both sides of the Atlantic."

Further mention is made of William Hayden's work on page 246, published in the "New York Tribune", February 9th, 1859:

"William run an ad to demonstrate his "lung vapor bath" …"

[4] Editor's Note: The Haydens would leave a lasting impression on British Spiritualism. On April 9th, 1855, D.D. Home came to London, staying at Cox's Hotel in Jermyn Street, (Mayfair), London, coincidentally the same hotel where Robert Owen lived. But Home's mediumship was only accessible to the select few. It would not be until the time around Mrs Mary Marshall's arrival in the 1860s that public mediumship would start to move forward in the U.K. See Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 11: "Mrs. Mary Marshall – First English public medium".

[5] Editor's Note: The early British journals can be a bit confusing with name changes: *The Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph* (Keighley), April 1855-1857, changed its name to *British Spiritual Telegraph*. It was first published weekly, then monthly, by W. Horsell and ended in December 1859, followed by the *Spiritual Magazine* (London), January 1860-1877.

As the years passed, healing became the Haydens' primary focus. On page 256 Carmack notes that in "The Progressive Annual", edited by Andrew Jackson Davis for the years 1863-4, Maria was listed under the headings: "Magnetic Operators, Clairvoyants, and Medical Mediums" and "Magnetists, Clairvoyants, and Mediums", respectively. It is further noted by Carmack that after this period Maria *did not appear* to advertise her services as a medium elsewhere, for in the New York City directory for 1864-65 Maria was under the heading "Physician".

During the Civil War Maria, at the age of 39, gave birth to the Haydens' fourth child, leading into Chapter 22: *Medical School*. Post-war, we find that William and Maria have enrolled at a new Eclectic Medical College in New York City, starting its first term in October 1866. Maria was now 42 and with three children; no doubt for a woman in the 1860s it would have been a daunting task with her family commitments given the amount of study time required to achieve a medical degree, not to mention the required costs for both parties.

William made giant steps in the purchase of a pharmaceutical company, relocating to Bedford, Massachusetts, as outlined in Chapter 23: *Bedford Springs*; in 1885 he became a registered pharmacist. While William built his business, Maria was making her name, still living in New York City, as Chapter 24: *A Remarkable Diagnostician*, suggests. Maria moved from strength to strength in her medical career as "Mrs. Wm. R. Hayden, M.D." At the Eclectic Medical Society (EMS) AGM in January 1870 Maria presented her first paper, "Veratrum Viride", with the added honour of it being recommended for publication. The veratrum viride was a remedy, an arterial sedative, controlling the heart's action and bringing down the pulse considerably without stopping the action of the vital forces.[6]

As their careers flourished, moving forward in the medical world, unfortunately their marriage did not and they drifted further apart. Maria's accomplishments did not end with obtaining her medical degree: she was also serving on committees, preparing papers and/or working as a Censor. In 1877 she moved her practice to Manhattan, while William continued in Massachusetts. Maria would continue with her Spiritualist interests: she studied another aspect of psychic ability with Doctor Joseph Rhodes Buchanan, an honorary member of the EMS, who later accepted the position of Professor of Physiology.

Buchanan was the father of psychometry, *measuring by the soul*, who coined the name in 1842, as discussed in Chapter 27: *A Psychometric Genius*. Maria studied and practised psychometry under Buchanan's guidance, where she excelled.

Albeit this review comes to its end, the book continues with much more information and an in-depth Appendix, genealogy sections and more. In this review I have kept to the Haydens and not spilled over to the many well-known pioneers of our movement which the author sidelines throughout the book, given that the Haydens rubbed shoulders with so many well-known pioneers in the history of the Spiritualist movement.

In Search of Maria B. Hayden – The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K., by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack. The book is well-illustrated, containing 592 pages and giving, for the first time, an in-depth look and valuable *referenced* insight into the life of Maria B. Hayden, *The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K.*

Available on the Spiritualists' National Union website:

http://www.snu.org.uk/shop/in-search-of-maria-b-hayden

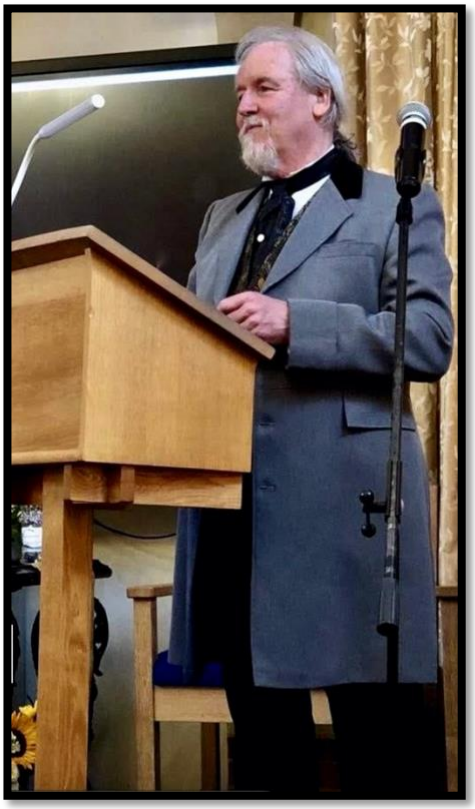
The book is published by Scattered Leaves Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 2020, and is also available on all Amazon marketplaces

[6] This first published essay is published in full in the book's Appendix.

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Also, a link to all “Psypioneer” issues often referenced in Pioneer

The Rock of Truth

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Is Spiritualism a religion?

J. Arthur Findlay caused a storm of protest within and outside the Spiritualist movement with the publication of his second book in August 1933, "The Rock of Truth", followed by his public address at Grotrian Hall, Wigmore Street, London W1. The weekly journal, *Light*, published some of the exchanges of debate. In an open letter Findlay replied to some of his critics in December 29th 1933:

> The storm of protest raised with regard to my book, *The Rock of Truth*, and my Grotrian Hall address, is largely due to a complete misunderstanding and ignorance of Christian history. Consequently, I have been misrepresented and accused of having written and said things I have never written or said at all.

Light was the journal of the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA). [7] One formidable opponent was Mrs St. Clair Stobart; the name Mabel Annie St. Clair Stobart [8] may not be familiar to some readers but most who attend Spiritualist churches will know the healing hymn she wrote:

Gracious Spirit, of Thy goodness,
Hear our anxious prayer!
Take our loved ones who are suffering
'Neath Thy tender care.
Loving Father, hear us, hear us!'

Findlay gives in his 1955 "Autobiography of a Spiritualist – Looking Back" an overview of the adverse criticism he received from Mrs St. Clair Stobart regarding the publication of his "The Rock of Truth"; he remarks on pages 321-23:



> "One day I received a letter from Mrs. St. Clair Stobart inviting me to attend her next Sunday service in the Grotrian Hall, as she thought I should hear her criticism of *The Rock of Truth*, which she proposed to make the subject of her address. This eloquent and voluble old lady, with her fuzzy white hair which, as she once said to me, made her look more like a witch than an ordinary human being, had become an ardent Spiritualist, but retained many of the religious beliefs she had been taught in childhood. She had never studied comparative religion as I had done, and her beliefs were as simple as are those of a child. Consequently, *The Rock of Truth* came to her as rather a shock, and she rushed in to refute it with all her eloquent zeal.

[7] Today the LSA is known as "The College of Psychic Studies", based in South Kensington, London; *Light* continues to this day.

[8] For more information on St. Clair Stobart (1862-1954) please see Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 8: "Mrs. Mabel Annie St. Clair Stobart – Paul J. Gaunt".

"I attended the service because of curiosity, but not expecting any reasoned intellectual nourishment. Eloquence and rhetoric I expected, and received, in fact she carried the large audience with her from start to finish, which shows the power of oratory over the masses. Never did she reply to the facts I gave in my book, these being passed by in her emotional eloquence, and when she had ended her audience knew no more than it did before she started. Before I published this book I gave it to Professor Burkitt, the Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, in manuscript form, to read over to check my facts. This he kindly did, and then he and his wife came to lunch with us, when he told me that everything said was true; and honestly set out. Nevertheless, this much esteemed old lady, who gloried in her eloquence, disposed of it in this reckless manner."

"Consequently when the Grotrian Hall service ended that Sunday morning I congratulated Mrs. Stobart on her eloquence, though I said I could not agree with the way she had handled her subject. Moreover I thanked her for her forceful condemnation of the action of the Council of the London Spiritualist Alliance towards me, as expressed in an article she wrote which appeared in *Psychic News.* We have since remained friends, just as people of all shades of opinion stay with us at Stansted Hall."

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This is what Mrs Stobart said about Findlay's book, "The Rock of Truth," as published in "Psychic News", October 7th, 1933:

MRS. STOBART ON THE WARPATH

SHE ATTACKS "THE ROCK OF TRUTH"

"J. ARTHUR FINDLAY, in his new book, 'The Rock of Truth,' has stolen the thunder of Jesus—and he has written 321 pages to justify the theft," declared Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, leader of the Spiritualist Community, at Grotrian Hall, London, on Sunday.

"Mrs. Stobart maintained that so far from Spiritualism being the "only religion for the future," as Findlay claimed in his book, it was in fact no religion at all, unless it be the real Christian religion.

"I will not attempt to define Religion, but in my opinion it is not morality, it is not ritual, it is not worship, and it does not consist of dogmas, creeds and doctrines.

"There is, however, one thing we can predicate on religion—in almost every case the religion connotes the teachings which were given by the founder of that religion. We cannot divorce Christianity from the teachings which Jesus gave to the world. I am speaking of Christianity—not Churchianity.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

"However much Religion may be impaired by subsequent accretions imposed by councils and churches, the religion must be judged by the teachings of the founder.

"Is Spiritualism synonymous with Religion? Is it a religion? Does it follow as a logical inevitability that all Spiritualists are more or less religious?

"There are Spiritualists confessedly interested only in the scientific aspects of the subject. They would resent being told they had joined a religious cult.

"There are Spiritualists who are only concerned with establishing contact with their friends who have passed, and it is a travesty to suggest that this practice has anything necessarily to do with Religion.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

"A Spiritualist is one who believes that there is a spirit plane, and that it is possible under certain conditions for human beings to communicate with that plane. Beyond that, it would be unsafe to predicate what Spiritualists believe. Anyone who believes these two axioms can be called a Spiritualist. I am attacking the proposition held by many Spiritualists that Spiritualism is a religion.

"Mr. Findlay not only regards Spiritualism as a religion, but as the one and only religion worthy of the human race. He belittles Christianity in words which, I am afraid, must deeply offend those whose sympathy with our case I personally wish to enlist.

CONVERTING THE CHRISTIAN?

"And yet we are told, on the cover of the book, that 'this is a book that should help more than any other to bring Christianity over to Spiritualism.' By the scruff of the neck, I should think !

"In the first place, Mr. Findlay confuses the Christian faith with the accretions to that faith added by councils and churches. The churches today are, through individual spokesmen, realising the fact that they must throw over some of the tenets which they realise are untenable today. These are not part of Christianity.

"Are not the seven principles of Spiritualism almost identical with the principles that Mr. Findlay says are the teachings of Jesus ? Should we not ask, Which came first, the S.N.U. or Jesus ? How can Mr. Findlay ask us to replace Christianity by what is a plagiarism of Christianity ?

"If he is correct in what he says, that 'There is no basis for the beliefs of Christianity,' then there can be no basis for the beliefs of Spiritualism. The teachings are in the main identical. Those who derive their information from the same source come to the same thing.

"There is no reason for claiming a monopoly of Truth. If Spiritualism is a religion, then it is that of Christianity.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUALIST?

"Spiritualism, at its best, is a corroboration of Christianity. And at its worst it is the antithesis of all Religion. You can be a Spiritualist, believing in Survival and the possibility of communication, and be utterly indifferent to Religion.

"Mr. Findlay reminds us of what is common knowledge, that Christianity was grafted on to the religions that had preceded it, and that is supposed to detract from its value. There are certain basic fundamental truths of all religions. The wisdom of the wise consists of reform, not iconoclasm. Mr. Findlay says Jesus was a reformer; all true religious teachers are reformers.

"Jesus was a reformer, reformers are not iconoclasts. Spiritualists would serve better if they were reformers. They should not attempt to throw out the churches, but to reform those things which have deformed the Christian faith.

RELIGION'S DIEHARDS

"There are diehards of Christianity, who will never depart from their dogmas, which have become rocks of truth to them; but Spiritualism has permeated the clergy to an extent that is perhaps not appreciated by Mr. Findlay.

"lf a more Christian spirit and a desire for co-operation with the churches prevailed among Spiritualists, the day would not be far distant when a clergy would return to the Christianity of early days.

"Spiritualists would then be able to bring to bear the results of culture, education and experience. Democracy is all very well, but there are spheres in which literacy and lack of responsibility to any recognised standard of competency are to be deplored.

"Few people seem to realise that, in the early Christian Church, clairvoyance and clairaudience were part of the church services.

"Spiritualists should meet the churches on those foundations they have in common—those foundations being the teachings of the author of Christianity. Let us admit those teachings were not all original to Jesus—but surely that makes them of greater value. Jesus very wisely built on old foundations and we should do the same.

"Are not Spiritualists adherents of other religions? Hindus believe in Survival and communication. Spiritualism corroborates all Religion—and that should be its role. The world will never be brought to uniformity in its religious beliefs, but it can be brought to a sense of unity between all beliefs. Spiritualism is, in effect, one of the points of unity synchronising all Religion.

"Mr. Findlay says that when the principles of Spiritualism are accepted Mankind will be knit together by one common belief. Even among Spiritualists today, do we find them all knit together by one common belief? Whose belief would it be—Harry Price's, Hannen Swaffer's, the L.S.A.'s, the S.N.U.'s, Findlay's or mine?

"There is as much harmony as is desired, and we all respect each others' viewpoints, but there would never by such uniformity as to recognise one religion. Men will not all follow blindly in a single rut, and women certainly will not.

"Spiritualism corroborates every religion, and it makes these religions real by the proofs it affords of the spirit world, but it cannot be both a corroboration and that which it corroborates.

"Mr. Findlay has, in his zeal, overstepped the mark of reasonableness. His book will alienate rather than gain adherents, I am afraid.

THE STUMBLING-BLOCK

"The views of some Spiritualists are a great stumbling-block to the acceptance of Spiritualism in Christian countries. Spiritualists already tacitly accept Christianity, and books such as 'The Rock of Truth' would seem to me to be a stumbling-block in the path of unity. The churches have stood and will stand for the religious sense, for Religion is a force in the lives of men.

"Their ministers are dedicated to the service of God. That is their ideal. Though this might be said of individuals, can we say it of Spiritualism as a whole ? Spiritualism, as distinguished from psychism, is based on revelation.

"Revelation, to be worthy of the name, is not to be obtained in scientific laboratories or in ordinary back parlour seances, but in the holy places, in sanctuaries set apart, and such sanctuaries would be found in the churches.

AID TO THE HIDEBOUND

"Mr. Findlay's book will be of value in helping the hidebound to break away from worn-out dogmas, but not as a means of converting the churches and Christian non-Spiritualists to a belief in Spiritualism.

"We Spiritualists should not seek to form a new church, which would divide at once into sects. We should use Spiritualism to bring back to the churches that Pentecostal experience which was of old the mainspring of their power.

"We should obtain from Spiritualism, and the valuable aid of the best mediums, conviction of the reality of the spirit world, and then, being convinced that Spiritualism is a reality, we should pray for light, for the inward light of which George Fox spoke so much, and for the silence. Draw aside the curtain of material thought and open wide the window of the soul.

"When the curtain of mundane things has been completely drawn aside, one day the soul will surely be illuminated with light from the Divine and we shall be led through the psychic to the spiritual plane, where alone is found that higher knowledge which is wisdom—the wisdom of those who have seen God face to face. That will be, not Spiritualism, but Religion."

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By invitation of Mrs Stobart, Findlay made his reply on November 26th, 1933 at the Grotrian Hall, London; this was published in *Light*, December 1st, 1933. Given that the "Spiritualist Community" is often mentioned, *originally* closely associated with the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), below is a brief overview published some years later in *Light*, then a monthly publication for October 1946:

THE Community (formerly The Spiritualist Community) has issued a leaflet, entitled *A Venture of Faith*, in which is set out some of the history, as well as the present aims and objects of this organization. The leaflet speaks of three main phases in the life of the Community; the early days under the leadership of Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, at Grotrian Hall, the difficult period during the War, when Mr. Ernest Hunt was Chairman, and now, since the passing of Mr. Hunt, the third phase under the new Chairman, Major O. G. Villiers, D.S.O.

It was during the chairmanship of Ernest Hunt that The Community adopted, as a sort of motto, the three tenets of belief: Survival—Reincarnation—Jesus Christ, which the leaflet describes as "established facts." The Community claims to stand for something new in Spiritualism. "The direction of the work," it says, "has now shifted from the investigation of psychic phenomena as such to the deeper investigation of spiritual awareness and illumination."

* * *

IT is interesting to recall that the original Spiritualist Community was, one might say, parented by the London Spiritualist Alliance at its old headquarters in Queen Square, the Secretary of the Alliance acting as honorary secretary of The Community for the first year of its existence. It began its activities with a series of Sunday evening meetings at the (old) County Hall, Spring Gardens, the first being held on December 7th, 1924, when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle presided and the Rev. G. Vale Owen gave the address. Sir Arthur said that their object was to appeal to intellectual people and especially to the West End. From the beginning, healing services were a special feature of the Spiritualist Community Meetings. As its activities grew, it was thought desirable for the Community to have an independent existence, and this began at the Grotrian Hall in the autumn of 1925, under the chairmanship of Vale Owen. This change was announced he expressed the gratitude of the Community for the co-operation by the Chairman in a letter to LIGHT of August 15th, 1925, in which he expressed the gratitude of the co-operation and hospitality of the L.S.A. Council.

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Findlay's reply to Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, leader of the Spiritualist Community:

WHY SPIRITUALISM MUST BECOME THE ONLY WORLD-RELIGION

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MR. J. Arthur Findlay's book, *The Rock of Truth*, has on two recent occasions been adversely criticised in addresses by Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, leader of the Spiritualist Community, and on Sunday morning last (November 26th), by invitation of Mrs, Stobart, Mr. Findlay made his reply in an address delivered at the Grotrian Hall, London. Mrs. Stobart had, in particular, taken exception to Spiritualism being regarded as a religion, holding that it is the basis of all regions; and she has repeatedly expressed the view that Christianity is the heir of the great ancient religions and the hope that the Churches would be induced to "absorb Spiritualism lock, stock and barrel."

Mr. Findlay took as his subject: ''Why Spiritualism must become the only world-religion."

"I do not mean," he said, "that the word 'Spiritualism' will be adopted by everyone throughout the world and that everyone will label themselves Spiritualists. What I mean is that the truths for which Spiritualism stands will be accepted in time by all races, by all peoples, and that creeds, dogmas, rites and ceremonies which surround this basic truth in all religions will be dropped. As I say in *The Rock of Truth*, some day all such labels as Christian, Moslem, Hindu and Buddhist will disappear and there will be no need for the label Spiritualism, as all will merge into one great religion of humanity. Spiritualism is not a religion, it is religion."

Proceeding, Mr. Findlay said there would be no question among those listening to him that they need not believe the myths surrounding the lives of Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster or Osiris. When, however, he made the same comparison with Christianity, the trouble started.

"Although *The Rock of Truth* has now been under the severest criticism for over three months," he added, "not one single fact in it has been questioned or challenged. The reason, of course, is that the facts are undeniable, the facts are there and can be verified by reference. Abuse is cheap, therefore anyone who propounds an unpopular subject receives it in plenty."

EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY

Christianity, Mr, Findlay continued, was not the teaching of Jesus. There was no more similarity between the Christianity of to-day and the teaching of Jesus than between chalk and cheese. Jesus taught a simple religion.

"There is no question or doubt," he said, "that the evidence for Christianity, so far as the New Testament is concerned, is quite valueless." He gave a number of eminent opinions. The Bishop of Gloucester bases his belief as a Christian on the findings of the early Christian Fathers, as will be found in his book *What it Means to be a Christian*, Christianity was conceived in Alexandria and born at Nicaea. What took place before that is clouded in uncertainty. That is no basis for real religion.

"There is no historical basis for the Christian religion and the name Christian cannot stand only for all that is good while the bad is ignored. We are in a transition stage to-day and Spiritualism is the cause. Spiritualism is satisfying the longings of humanity, Christianity is doing so less and less. If we have got to call ourselves something, why not call our religion by a name that we can be proud of, and that has had an honourable history in the past ?

"Some of you may say that there has been fraud in Spiritualism, but that is not the fault of Spiritualists. Wherever you have human nature to deal with you will find some trying to take advantage of others; but that is the worst that can be said about Spiritualism, and every day it is becoming better and more honourably conducted. On the other hand, Christianity has been the cause of more war during the Christian era than any other religion. It has been the cause of more cruelty and crime than any other religion. Why should we be proud of the name Christian ? I freely admit it has given comfort to countless millions, so have all religions, but we now know that this comfort was based on what was untrue, and as the truth must always prevail, and people become more educated, so the comfort must decrease.

"Some of us have now been able to drop the name of Christian; and, as a name for our beliefs was needed, until the world has a universal belief, we call ourselves Spiritualists. As the seven principles of Spiritualism fully satisfy all the needs of humanity, its aspirations and its longings, in my view the time will come and is here now when people will gradually adopt the name Spiritualist. To be a Spiritualist is logical; to be a Christian is illogical, as no Christian lives up to the official beliefs of Christianity or the teachings of the Bible. If he did so, he would be put out of society into an asylum or prison.

"Remember this, that the only true religion is the religion that can be accepted universally throughout the world. You will never make the Moslem a Christian Spiritualist, but you will be able to make him a Spiritualist. No Moslem will be able to make you a Moslem Spiritualist, but he will be able to make you a Spiritualist. Christian Spiritualists, Buddhist Spiritualists and Mahomedan Spiritualists are all in the half-way house: they see the errors in the religion they have been brought up in up to a point. Because of that, I welcome the work done by the Christian Spiritualist movement. Rome was not built in a day, neither can most people become Spiritualists all at once.

HALF-WAY ACROSS

"It is not the Spiritualists who have attacked *The Rock of Truth*, but the Christian Spiritualists, those who are half-way across. Hence the so-called dissensions in Spiritualism, which are caused by some still retaining some of the beliefs of Christianity. What I want to do is to bring the Christian Spiritualists the whole way across, to become Spiritualists only, and drop the prefix.

Mr. Findlay added that Christian Spiritualists said the Christ-spirit would conquer the world, but they might equally well speak of the Buddha-spirit. What did they mean ? To some it meant all that was good, but this need not have a sectarian name given to it. Also, to hold up Jesus as a perfect man was to him (Mr. Findlay) just as wrong as to hold him up as God.

"I am not a mystic," he said, "but I can assure you that in my view the philosophy of Spiritualism should be enough to satisfy the mysticism of the most mystical and the longings and aspirations of every type of mind of mankind. That is why I believe that Spiritualism must become in time the only world-religion.

"I wish now to come to the point at which Mrs. Stobart and I are at variance. It is the only serious matter of difference between us. We have talked the matter out privately and we can see eye to eye, with this one exception. I refer to her policy towards the Church. Mrs. Stobart thinks that if we are tactful we should be able to induce the Christian Church to adopt Spiritualism, lock, stock and barrel, and then there would be no need for us lay people carrying on what is really the Church's work. I have given very serious consideration to this question and I am fully convinced that the Church has irretrievably lost its opportunity. Time and again it has had the opportunity over the last 85 years of adopting Spiritualism, and its most favourable opportunity was in the conclusion of the

great war. Mule-like and stubborn, it would have nothing to do with it, and to me the reason is obvious. Should the Church adopt Spiritualism, the whole organisation would fall to pieces. Its power lies in keeping the people ignorant, in keeping up the mysteries—in other words, in bluff.

"Once the people know the truth, once the people realise that salvation and reaching Heaven is not dependent on a belief or the performing of some rite or ceremony, the whole Church organisation falls to pieces like a pack of cards. If the clergy to-day in every pulpit in the land told the people the truth that survival was scientifically proved, and that we all entered the etheric world at death, and that our place there would be determined by our characters and our lives here, and not by our beliefs—when the people came to believe this, the entire ecclesiastical organisation of the Christian Church would cease to function.

"Spiritualism is not dependent on churches, on clergy, on holy books, on rites and ceremonies. Spiritualism is a scientific fact, which can be discovered by anybody in their homes; and once the principles of Spiritualism are accepted by the people there will be no further need for parsons or Churches as presently constituted."

[The above abbreviated report is taken from a typescript copy of the address kindly supplied to us by Mr. Findlay.]

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Editor's Note:

The various strands of the different Spiritualist organisations have mostly stayed independent and on some points it can be understood in Mrs St. Clair Stobart's criticism that not *all* Spiritualists see Spiritualism as a religion as does the Spiritualists' National Union based on its Seven Principles. But on a more negative side of Stobart's address Maurice Barbanell makes a strong point in his editorial comments:

"Back-Parlour Seances"

Mrs. M. A. St. Clair Stobart is a woman for whom we have a great admiration, but we do not always agree with her views.

Speaking on the subject of "The Rock of Truth," J. Arthur Findlay's new book, on Sunday, she said, "Revelation to be worthy of the name is not to be obtained in scientific laboratories, nor in ordinary back-parlour seances, but in the holy places, in sanctuaries set apart, and such sanctuaries would be found in the churches."

We want her to tell us of the revelations which have come through these sanctuaries.

It cannot be said of the revelation of Buddha, who revolted against the exclusiveness of the Brahmin priesthood.

It does not apply to Mohammed, who was a camel-driver. It does not apply to the revelations of Joan of Arc, which she received in the fields of her native village.

Incidentally, she was burned by the Roman Catholic Church.

Where are these people who receive their revelation in the sanctuaries of the churches? George Fox was not one of them; Wesley was not one of them; Andrew Jackson Davis was not one of them.

Were it not for the revelations received in the "back-parlour" of the Fox home by two little girls, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart would not be a Spiritualist today.

We deny that a church, because it is a church, is a holy place. God is not to be found only in churches. God cannot be captured by stained-glass windows, by altars, by steeples, by bricks and mortar.

Revelation is not the exclusive property of the churches. The story of revelation is usually the story of opposition by the churches. In fact, revelation had to come to oppose the teaching of churches.

Whilst in the churches there are many admirable men devoting their lives to the cause they espouse, you do not become a minister of God by preaching sermons in churches, or being trained in a theological college.

Charles Bradlaugh, who was an Atheist, rendered great service to God and Man.

Science has revealed some of the infinite wonders of God's universe, and has enabled us to have a grander conception of the Being Who is behind all life.

Thousands of mourners who could obtain no satisfaction from the Church in the hour of bereavement have received communications from their beloved "dead" in a "back-parlour" seance.

Who are we to say whom the spirit of God will move? Who are we to say where the truth of God will be found? Usually it does not come to us through men of culture and education, but through those the world calls illiterate and uneducated.

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In May 1934 Findlay became the President of the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA) but before the year was out he resigned. Maurice Barbanell reported the story in some detail in Psychic News as its founder editor on December 15th, 1934:

FINDLAY RESIGNS FROM THE L.S.A.

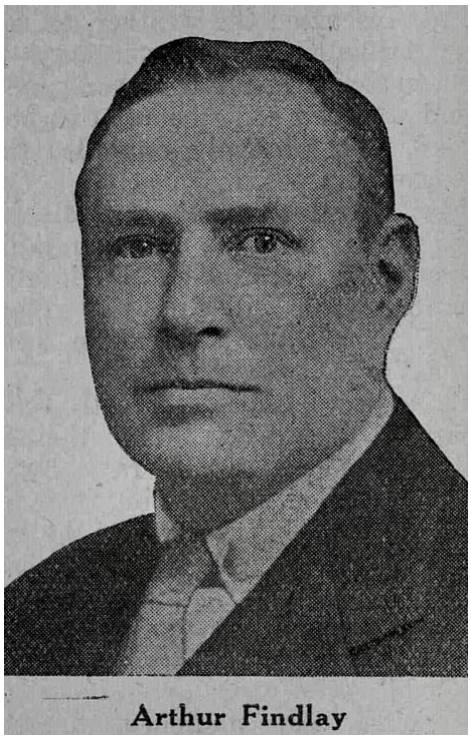
STORY OF INTRIGUE BEHIND THE SCENES

ARTHUR FINDLAY has resigned his presidency of the council of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and his chairmanship of the company that owns "Light."

In an interview I had with him, he gave the reason.

"My resignation has been caused by the action of a minority of the council inducing the secretary to call an irregular council meeting," he said, "for the purpose of publicly announcing, in 'Light' this week, that the Alliance disassociated itself from certain opinions on theology expressed in a lecture I delivered to members of the L.S.A. on November 29."

In this lecture, he attacked the myths and creeds that have grown up around Christianity—and said that Spiritualism would become the world religion.



Arthur Findlay

"As the members of the council, who met in the irregular way they did, knew at their meeting that I had telephoned to say I had posted my resignation," added Findlay, "this announcement, if published, will doubtless have been toned down, if it appears at all." [9]

Findlay told me that this council meeting was called at less than eight hours' notice. He actually received his notice on the morning of the meeting itself !

This was contrary both to the articles of association of the Alliance and the Companies Act.

These articles of association, he said, do not specify that its president must be an orthodox Christian. Neither do they say that if he is asked by the council to give an address on Spiritualism as a religion, he must not criticise the creeds of the Christian Church.

"As the Alliance is a limited company, and can have no religious opinions of its own," said Findlay, "it is absurd to call a council meeting to draw up a resolution disassociating the Alliance from the opinions expressed by its president.

"The Alliance is a body of people with all shades of religious opinion. They sign no creed on joining. For a small clique to convene a council meeting to be held within eight hours of the members receiving notice, without having consulted the president of their intentions, is not only grossly irregular, but savours of the worst possible form of intrigue."

The address which Findlay gave is similar to one he has given at the Queen's Hall and up and down the country ! It is called, "Why Spiritualism Must Become the only World-Religion." *It was published in "Light" last week, starting on the front page—and commented on favourably in a leading article in the same issue !* The action of the council is an attack on the right of free speech by its own president.

The editor of "Light" was present at the meeting. No word of criticism was heard until this council met.

I am told that Findlay's speech incited the wrath of the more "respectable" members of the council, who wish the Alliance to be run as an orthodox Christian body, and do not desire to see "Light" expressing views contrary to the creeds and dogmas of Christianity.

"This intolerance must react most unfavourably on the Alliance, the Quest Club and 'Light,'" said Findlay, "as it is quite contrary to everything that Spiritualism stands for."

L.S.A. now means, apparently, "Leave Spiritualism Alone."

Findlay's resignation will be especially unfortunate for the L.S.A. just now. Under his guidance, both the Alliance and "Light" were regaining their old position in the Spiritualist movement, which they lost owing to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's resignation.

After Doyle resigned, their membership fell from about a thousand to approximately five hundred!

Since Findlay became president, last spring, the steady decrease has been stopped. Members have been joining the Alliance and the Quest Club, an activity which Findlay conceived and brought into being, at the rate of forty to fifty a month. At this rate, the old membership would have been re-established some time next year.

When he became chairman of "Light," which had been appealing for money for years, Findlay said it was losing £1,000 a year. He stopped the wastage that was going on, and

[9] J. Arthur Findlay's resignation was briefly mentioned in *Light*.

the over-staffing, and obtained new quotations from printers, with the result that, for the first time in fifty years, "Light" made a profit—last week !

Only a few days ago, Findlay said to the secretary of the L.S.A., "Now we have managed to put 'Light' on its feet, I hope, within a year, to have the Alliance showing a surplus, instead of its present loss of £700 a year."

What was it in Findlay's speech to which these very "respectable" members took exception ? Here is a summary of some of the things he said in his address:

"It is just because of the evidence Spiritualism gives that we are at the beginning of our career, that the knowledge of survival is of vital importance to religion.

"This being so, we begin to realise that, what today stands for religion in the minds of most people, is not religion at all—that creeds, dogmas and ceremonials are only crutches to help the mentally undeveloped along the road of life, and that as the mind develops these are discarded.

"I consider it is our duty as Spiritualists to teach humanity that it is not creeds and dogmas that matter, but the life we lead. Humanity is still wedded to the drapings, and thus ignores the central truth which these have hidden.

"The vast majority think that the truth is contained in creeds and dogmas, whereas these symbols hide the truth.

"The light, however, is now breaking through, and Protestant countries are leading the world into the New Knowledge. In time—how long, no one can say—religion will not consist of drapings, myths and legends which are behind the creeds and dogmas; but instead, it will stand for something real and true—for something that really matters, and not for something that does not matter.

"So I foresee that, some day, mankind will worship in one cathedral, whose dome is the firmament, and whose true and only priests are the interpreters of Nature."

"MANIFEST ADVANTAGE"

When, in May, "Light" announced Findlay's acceptance of the presidency of the L.S.A., it said, "*Readers are so well acquainted with Mr. Findlay's work and position in the Movement, that nothing further need be said as to the manifest advantage of his generous acceptance of their responsibilities*."

Yet, already Findlay had delivered his lecture over a score of times !

It is strange, considering the origin of the L.S.A., that its council should take exception to a speech which prophesied that Spiritualism would become the only world religion. The Alliance was started by the Rev. Stainton Moses, who, in his book, "Spirit Teachings," put on record how, through his own automatic writing, he was forced, step by step, to abandon his orthodox Christianity and accept the religious implications of Spiritualism.

This book is the copyright of the L.S.A. ! They still sell it ! If they had published it at a cheaper price, instead of 6s., they could have sold thousands of copies, for the book is really Spiritualism's Bible.

Stainton Moses was forced to accept Spiritualism as a religion. The organisation which he founded is now too timid to follow his lead !

The article then continued in a different direction, which does not concern us on our subject. Moving forward three months to March 1935, Findlay published his third book, "The Unfolding Universe", on August 11th at the Grotrian Hall; once again Stobart launches a fierce attack on Findlay and his new publication. Mrs Stobart,

> "… declared Findlay to be a "bigot" and "intolerant," and likened him to Saul, "persecutor of Christian churches."

Pioneer will not publish this renewed attack owing to space and repetition; later, in the Two Worlds, October 4th, 1940, its editor, Ernest Oaten (1919-1945), announced:

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart Retires !

> I VERY much regret to hear that after a long and honourable period with the Spiritualist Community, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart is resigning her leadership of the Community, which she was largely successful in founding. Circumstances have arisen which compel her to dispense with her house and leave London, though she still hopes to retain her connection with the Community.
>
> As we announced last week, the services at Wigmore Hall, owing to transport and air-raid difficulties, have been closed, but the work is still being carried on at their headquarters in Gloucester Place. At a meeting held on September 23rd it was resolved that every effort should be made to carry on the work of the Community, and Mr. Ernest Hunt, the Rev. Dr. A. F. Kauffmann, and Dr. E. Leith-Clark have been added to the Council. Though I have frequently been at variance with Mrs. Stobart's views, there has always existed between us a very cordial and fraternal bond, and I hope in her retirement she may be cheered by the knowledge of good work dutifully done.

Today all of Findlay's books are still in publication:

List of Arthur Findlay's books about Spiritualism and Religion

First Edition Dates:

On the Edge of the Etheric: September 1931.

The Rock of Truth: August 1933.

The Unfolding Universe: March 1935.

The Torch of Knowledge: August 1936.[10]

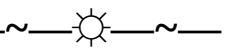
The Psychic Stream: June 1939.

The Curse of Ignorance: Two volumes, 1947.[11]

Where Two Worlds Meet: 1951.

The Way of Life: 1953.

Looking Back: 1955.[12]



[10] The story is based on Findlay's psychic experiences; he noted: "One thing I would like to emphasise, which is that all the characters in this story are fictitious and are not portrayed to resemble anyone. Having said this I wish also to emphasise the fact that all the psychic phenomena, which run through this story, have actually happened. What I have done has been to change their setting and the details." (JAF, August 1936).

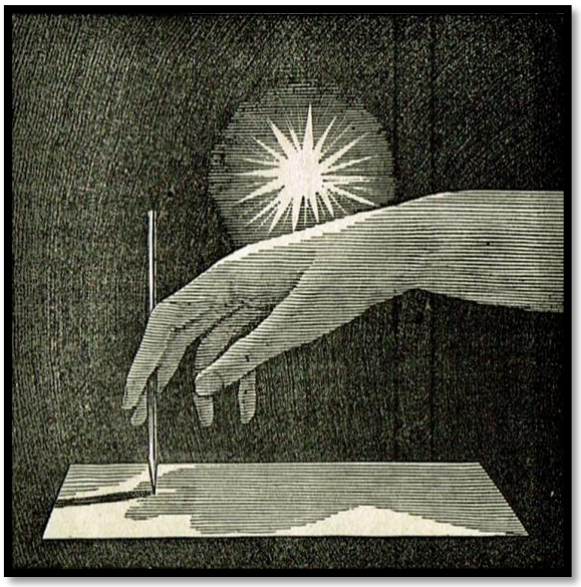
[11] These two volumes in some references are entitled "A History of Mankind".

[12] Arthur Findlay's autobiography.

PSYCHOGRAPHY

Direct - Independent Writing

William Crookes:



"This is the term employed to express writing which is not produced by any person present. I have had words and messages repeatedly written on privately-marked paper, under the most rigid test conditions, and have heard the pencil moving over the paper in the dark.

"The conditions—pre-arranged by myself—have been so strict as to be equally convincing to my mind as if I had seen the written characters formed."

"The first instance which I shall give took place, it is true, at a dark *séance*, but the result was not less satisfactory on that account. I was sitting next to the medium, Miss Fox, the only other persons present being my wife and a lady relative, and I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, whilst her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us, and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil.

"A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up over our heads, gradually fading into darkness." [13]

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The last issue of Pioneer reported on automatic writing, which generally falls under the heading of mental mediumship, as opposed to direct writing, which is independent of the medium's hand—hence direct or independent mediumship using the medium's psychic magnetism, for a better description; this phase of mediumship was referred to by some as "psychography" or "abnormal writing", a phrase used by M.A. (Oxon), an early pseudonym of William Stainton Moses. Below is taken from "The Facts of Psychic Science" by A. Campbell Holms, first published in 1925:[14]

Direct Writing—Slate Writing

"In the presence of a suitable medium spirits can write directly without the intervention of the human hand. This is known as psychography, or direct spirit writing. A sheet of paper and a pencil having been laid on the table of a darkened séance room, a luminous hand has been seen to pick up the pencil, write a message on the paper, and then disappear. On rare occasions a visible hand may appear and write in a lighted room. Or a pencil may be seen to get up and write apparently unaided.

[13] "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism", by William Crookes, F.R.S., published in 1874.

[14] A. Campbell Holms, "The Facts of Psychic Science", published in 1925; it was later reprinted in 1969 with a new foreword from Leslie Shepard.



"The most convenient way of obtaining spirit writing is by means of ordinary school slates, on which in a brightly lighted room the sound of the writing may be heard while in progress. Describing one of the many procedures: two slates are placed face to face, so that the wooden frames only are in contact, and, though not essential, a tiny fragment of slate pencil is put in the space between them. The medium and sitters then place their hands on the slates as they lie on the table, writing is heard, raps signal its completion, and, on taking the slates apart, they are found to have writing on them, perhaps only a word or two, or a statement or messages covering both slates.

"Though a common phenomenon in the past, slate writing is now very rare.[15] Its success is due to the fact that the slates themselves provide the ideal condition of a dark, secluded chamber for the occurrence of the actual phenomenon. Also, as the hands of the medium and sitters may be placed close to the writing, their psychic force is effectively concentrated. The fact that the space between the slates is contracted, is no hindrance, for spirits can write on surfaces in actual contact.

"Conjurers, by means of trick slates and tables, pretend to obtain writing on what a moment before was a blank surface.[16] Their slates, however, are not ordinary school slates such as mediums use, but are carefully made apparatus in which what appears to be a single slate is really two thin pieces of slate to face, one of which is detachable and can be dropped when required, perhaps into the frame of another slate, and thus display new surfaces previously written on."

"The calligraphy of direct spirit writing is not usually recognisable as that of the deceased friend it purports to come from; probably because the actual writing is usually done by the medium's controlling spirit, who, having experience and skill, acts as amanuensis. In many cases, however, it is recognisable, especially the signature; and its sense is often strikingly applicable, and evidential as regards the identity of the communicating spirit.

"Investigators of slate-writing phenomena often use their own slates, but writing comes more freely on those of the medium, which, through contact with him, have absorbed some of his "magnetism" or psychic energy. With a strong medium, however, the newness of a slate is little hindrance to the phenomenon. Sometimes two slates are hinged together, so as to open like a book, and they may be provided with a good lock, so that a sitter, having cleaned the slates and written a question or name of a deceased friend, can lock them and retain the key until the answer is written.

"Sometimes two slates are fixed together with screws through the frames by the sitter, in private, after writing his question, and unscrewed at his leisure after the séance. Otherwise, they may be bound together with string and sealed. None of these precautions

[15] Mrs. Pruden of Cincinnati is one of the few available public mediums for this phenomenon. Sir Conan Doyle had a successful sitting with her in 1923, which he mentions in his *Our Second American Adventure*, Lond., 1923 (p. 44), and he describes her as "one of the great mediums of the world."

[16] Many of these tricks are described in Robinson's *Spirit Slate Writing*, New York, 1898.

are really necessary, however, because everything may be done in broad daylight, and repeated under the eyes of the sitter.



"One of the simplest methods is merely to lay a clean slate on the table with a particle of slate pencil under it. The medium and sitters may then place their hands on it, but when the conditions are good the medium need not touch it, nor the sitters either. In most cases, however, the sitters and medium join hands, and one at least, touches the slate; and sometimes the writing will only proceed so long as contact is maintained, ceasing immediately it is broken. Another common way of using a slate is for the medium to place it underneath the table top (usually one with a folding flap), clamping it against this by placing his fingers under the slate and his thumb above the table; his other hand is then placed on the table so that both are in sight all the time.

"A slate-writing medium is not usually entranced; often, however, he is in a state of semi-trance. With most mediums the writing is accompanied by the display of considerable psychic energy, during which he appears to suffer physically, his muscles contracting and twitching convulsively. The hands of the medium, Henry Slade, seemed to be charged with electrical and nervous energy, which was communicated to those he touched. Sometimes detonating noises came from the slates and table, and there are records of slates, during and after a séance, being shattered into fragments, as if from accumulated internal stress (*Light*, 1886, p. 236). Herr Gossman relates that in May, 1878, when sitting with Slade, he saw a slate which had been placed under the table shivered into fragments as if by lightning (Zöllner, *Transcendental Physics*, p. 224). And Mrs. Louisa Andrews records in *The Spiritualist* for 1879, p. 237, having twice seen this happen with Slade; on one occasion she was holding a corner of a slate when it was suddenly reduced to a coarse powder.

"Dr. Gibier records that at a séance with Slade ten slates were broken in pieces under the table. He states that they were very strongly framed with hard wood, and that when he endeavoured to break them by striking them against the table he could not even crack them.[17]

"Slate-writing phenomena seem to occur best with a small number of sitters. Slade preferred only one or two, but successful séances have been held in public halls. It is interesting to note that W. E. Gladstone met the medium W. Eglinton at a house in Grosvenor Square, on October 29th, 1884, and had satisfactory answers to questions in a locked double slate, in Spanish, French, and Greek. Eglinton only knew a little French. Gladstone took careful notes of all that happened and appeared to be much impressed.[18]

"Direct writing on paper laid on a table is rarely obtained except in complete darkness. When a blank sheet of paper is initialled and all is ready, the light is extinguished, a few seconds elapse, raps signal the completion of the writing, and the light is turned up for its inspection. The celerity with which such writing is done is almost incredible, a rate of a hundred words per second has often been recorded, and

[17] Le Spiritisme, Paris, 1882. Cited in Richet's *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, p. 411.

[18] *Light*, Nov. 8th, 1884.

elaborate drawings may be made equally fast.[19] The explanation usually given is that the writing is not done in the usual way, but is *deposited*; this explains in a measure how it can be done in a restricted space, such as that between two slates or the leaves of a closed book, but though the explanation may satisfy to some extent our material notions, it is far from adequate. That it is true, so far, is evident from the fact, often noticed, that the paper, though thin, shows no sign of indentation by the pencil.

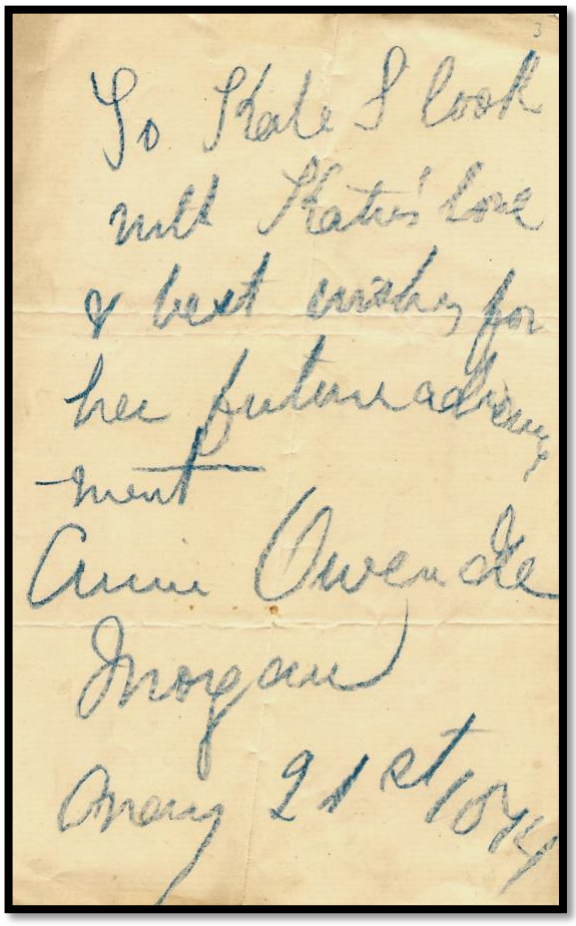
"Direct writing can be produced on paper in a lighted room if the paper is placed between two slates, or in a closed box, or between the pages of a closed book. It can also be produced if the paper and pencil are placed on the floor beneath the table, where they are in semi-darkness, and, what is equally important, secluded from the gaze of the sitters, which has an interfering action similar to that of light on psychical phenomena. The provision of a pencil is not essential, for some spirit operators can produce its equivalent at will. Writing has also been produced on paper laid on the table in the light, but, except in very rare cases only when covered by a handkerchief or cloth; for the latter gives some obscurity and hides the actual writing from the sitter's gaze. The movements of the pencil in writing can then be seen by the movements of the handkerchief.

"In order that the sheet of paper when written on may be identified with the original blank one, a corner should be torn off the latter by a sitter and kept by him, for, of course, there is no other sheet in the world that this corner will exactly fit. Otherwise the sitters may initial the blank sheet."

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Editor's Note:

As noted, the above quotes are taken from Archibald Campbell Holms' (1861-1954) "The Facts of Psychic Science". In my opinion it is a most valuable and comprehensive encyclopaedia of Spiritualist phenomena; much of the contents of its 512 pages are well referenced for research purposes. Much of the above-quoted material has numerous references, quotes, etc., but far too much to publish here, though I will publish some examples below; the above images of the slates shown belong to the Britten Museum and Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall.



In addition, the Britten Museum holds a valuable note produced by direct/independent writing at Florence (nee Cook) Corner's farewell séance held on May 21st, 1874 with her alleged spirit guide, Annie Owen Morgan, better known as Katie King. The message written was for Kate S. Cook, Florence's younger sister, who herself would follow her elder sister in later years as a materialisation medium.[20]

[19] *The Spiritualist*, July, 1874, p. 75.

[20] Florence (Florrie) Cook, who in April 1874 married Captain Edward Elgie Corner. Following Florence's death on April 22nd, 1904 from pneumonia, aged 47, he married her sister, Kate Selina Cook (1859-1923), in October 1907.

It should be noted, to save any confusion in reading any further reports, that there were three farewell séances according to William Harrison, the editor of "The Spiritualist Newspaper" (1869-1882).

They started on Wednesday May 13, the next on May 16, and the final séance on May 21, 1874, William Crookes attending all three. However, just prior to these dates there was another farewell séance, held on May 9th; Crookes was again present at this séance. A report of the final séance is given by Harrison and he notes who was present: Mr Crookes, Mrs Corner, Mrs Ross-Church, Mr W.H. Harrison, Mr G.R. Tapp, Mr and Mrs Cook and family, and the servant Mary (Cook residence). Many of these reports can be read on-line in "New Light on Immortality", by Fournier d'Albe, 1908.

Below are given two quotes from Holms' book, "The Facts of Psychic Science"; all the information in this article, unless stated, is taken from Chapter XIII, "Direct Writing—Slate Writing".

> The following quotation is from an article in *The Spiritualist*, for October 12th, 1877, by Epes Sargent. It describes a slate-writing séance at which he was present alone, with the medium, Charles E. Watkins. It was on the 18th September, 1877, in Boston, U.S.A., at noon in a bright sunlit room. Sargent says:—
>
> "He now handed me two slates, which I cleaned thoroughly with a wet towel, which I had asked for. The theory that by some chemical process there might be some writing upon a slate ineffaceable by scrubbing, but made visible after a minute or two, was wholly disproved by subsequent occurrences. Mr. Watkins did not touch the slates after I had washed them. He simply placed a crumb of slate-pencil between them, and told me to hold them out at arm's length. This I did, first satisfying myself once more that they did not bear the mark of a single letter on any of their surfaces. I held the two joined slates out in my left hand, the medium being four feet distant from them. 'Do you hear writing ?' asked he. I put my ear down, and distinctly heard the light scratching of the bit of slate-pencil. 'It is finished,' said he, as a slight rap came on the slate.
>
> I did not see how there could have been time for more than a simple name to have been written; but when I took one slate from the other, on the surface of the lower slate, was a letter of *fifty-four words*, signed with the name of a deceased brother, which name I had not written down among those on the pellets (referring to a previous pellet test). The letter was characteristic, but gave no startling proof of the writer's identity. The hand-writing had a general resemblance to my brother's, but I omitted to take steps to compare it carefully before the writing was rubbed out."
>
> Sargent, describing Watkins, says that he was twenty-nine years old, and a man of a highly nervous and sensitive temperament. He writhed as if in torture every time the slate-writing took place. It was evidently accompanied by some powerful nervous excitement on his part. Sargent brought with him two slates of his own, which gave equally good results. But the medium explained that he usually charged extra when sitters used their own slates, as they caused him greater nervous exhaustion than his own well-charged slates. It is a well-known fact that spiritualistic manifestations occur more readily when the material objects employed have been used by them before, and have thus been charged or surrounded by the necessary psychic aura.
>
> Watkins was offered 50,000 dollars by Mr. Hiram Sibley, of Rochester, N.Y., if he would disclose to him the "trick" of his slate-writing, and he further offered to give a bond not to disclose the secret. Unfortunately for Watkins, he was, of course, unable to earn this tempting reward. Epes Sargent had a letter from Sibley, dated May 10th, 1880, confirming the fact of his offer.[21]

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[21] *The Spiritualist*, Aug. 20th, 1880.

Stainton Moses obtained much direct spirit writing through his own mediumship. The following experience is interesting as showing how easily a spirit operator can get over a supposed physical difficulty. Quoting Stainton Moses' words: [22]

> "I have known such writing to be almost instantaneously produced; and experiments, to which I shall refer in their place, confirm me in the statement that the process employed is not always the same. Whereas at times the pencil is seen to write as if moved by a hand, at times invisible, but at others visibly guiding and controlling its movements, at others the writing would seem to be produced by an instantaneous effort without the use of the pencil. . . .
>
> "I was present at a séance held at the house of an intimate friend, three friends only present. Paper, previously initialled by each of us, was put on the floor under the table, together with an ordinary black-lead pencil. One of us, feeling the pencil against his boot, put his foot upon it, and held it there till the séance was over. Writing, however, was found on the paper; and we debated the question how it could have been done, seeing that no pencil was available for use.
>
> The paper bore our marks, and had not been removed, so far as we could tell. We met again during the same week, and I privately provided myself with the means of testing the matter. I brought a bright green pencil, and substituted it without remark for the black-lead, keeping my foot upon it all the time. When the paper was examined, the writing—a very short scrawl—was found to be in green. The pencil, therefore, was used in some way unknown to me."

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To conclude:



Fred P. Evans was a well-known medium for direct/ independent writing on slates, who demonstrated to large public audiences; he produced not only writing (some in colour) but also drawings, portraits on the slates. Some of his demonstrations included messages for the audiences with multiple messages for different people appearing on one slate, sometimes in different foreign languages. [23]

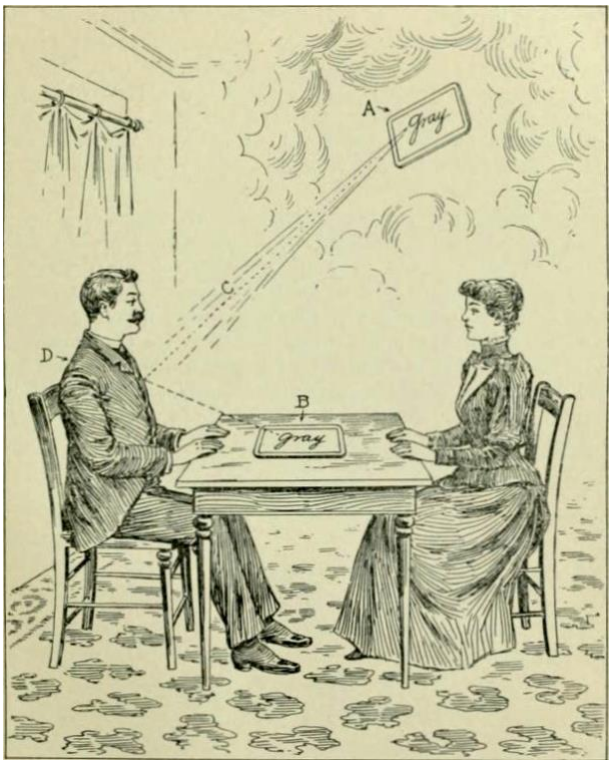
In 1893 James J. Owen published "Psychography; marvelous manifestations of psychic power given through the mediumship of Fred P. Evans, known as the "independent slate-writer.", which contains many images of his work. [24]

On pages 208-210 of the book Evans' control, John Gray (1816-1837), explains some of the methods as to how the messages get on to the sealed slates:

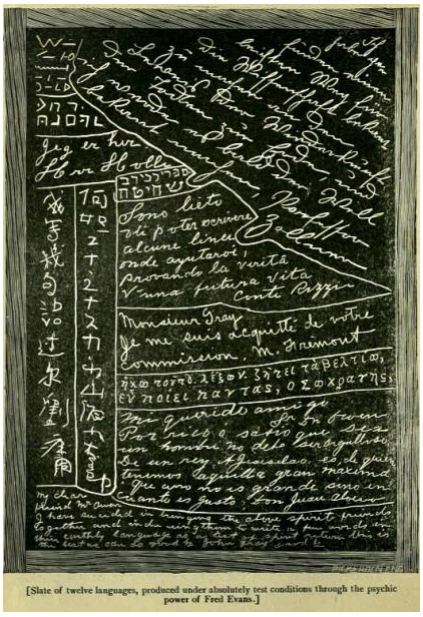
[22] *Psychography*, by M. A. (Oxon).

[23] For further information see Psypioneer Vol. 4, No. 10: "Profiles… Fred Evan's Mediumship".

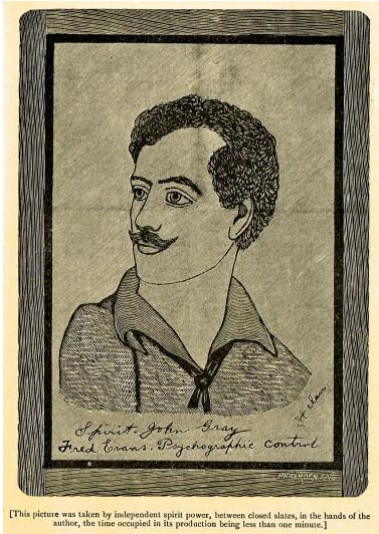
[24] Available as a free download.



"Now, the writing is not produced either by personal contact of the medium or his spirit friends. Everything done in the spirit world is governed by a natural law, and it would be an unnatural law that would permit a materialized hand to go between the surfaces of slates one-sixteenth of an inch apart and grasp a pencil with which to write. The principal methods that we use to transmit messages are by a law that is beginning to be well known and understood by you mortals on earth, viz.: electricity and magnetism. Psychography is produced exactly as telegraphic messages are produced. Let me explain: Suppose A, in New York, wishes to send a message by telegraphy to B, in San Francisco, is it necessary for him to come to San Francisco to do so ? Certainly not; he merely operates on his key in New York, and every letter or sound is reproduced in San Francisco. Suppose I wish to send a message by psychography. I write on slate A (see diagram) in the spirit world. The medium being a sensitive, I establish a circuit or current, C, (we need no wires to conduct the current, and in the near future you mortals will learn to dispense with them) to and through the medium D to your mundane slate B, so that every movement made by us on the spirit slate is responded to by the pencil on the mundane slate, and is reproduced. So you see we use the medium for a battery, and your earth plane for a ground, to establish our circuit.


[Slate of twelve languages, produced under absolutely test conditions through the psychic power of Fred Evans.]

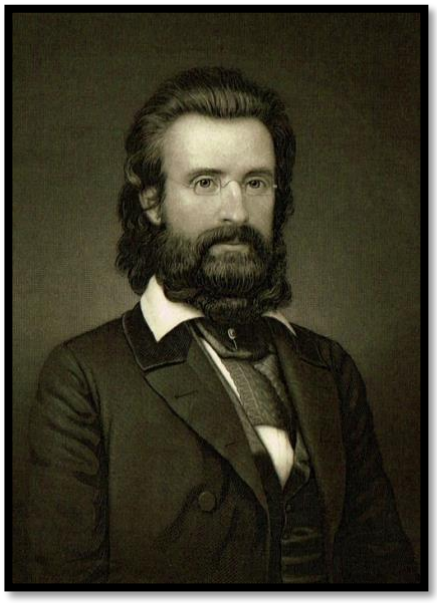
"We also have other methods of producing the writing, etc. One of them is by transference, that is to say that we can prepare sufficient writing or pictures in the spirit world to fill the surface of the medium's slate, and then transfer it instantaneously upon said slate (one example of this kind was produced through this medium in the presence of Professor A. R. Wallace). To produce this manifestation we must first thoroughly sensitize the slate to be operated upon, and disintegrate the pencil into fine powder and precipitate it evenly over the surface of the slate. The transfer is made somewhat similar to photography. The color writing is produced through somewhat the same method, except that the color matter is procured on your earth plane and brought into the room and on the slates in almost invisible dust or powder, and precipitated on the slates the same as the former. These latter methods are much more difficult to produce, and better conditions are required. …"



[This picture was taken by independent spirit power, between closed slates, in the hands of the author, the time occupied in its production being less than one minute.]

JOHN GRAY.

"WHERE IS THE SPIRIT WORLD" – *We are in it !*



Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910) [25] is sometimes not easy to read with some of his terminology, such as the word 'Univercœlum',[26] but his philosophy and writings underpin much of the philosophy of Modern Spiritualism. Davis' books, around thirty, are an encyclopedia, which many early Spiritualists regarded as expressing the essential principles of science, philosophy and religion and of immense value. Prior to Hydesville he wrote in his two-volume work, "Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind", published in 1847, page 675:

"It is a truth that spirits commune with one another while one is in the body and the other in the higher spheres – and this, too, when the person in the body is unconscious of the influx, and hence cannot be convinced of the fact; and this truth will ere long present itself in the form of a living demonstration. And the world will hail with delight the ushering in of that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established …"

Davis's work was inspired by the spirit of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). In 1741, aged 53, Swedenborg entered into a spiritual phase, which consisted of dreams and visions, and three years later he claimed he could freely visit heaven and hell and communicate with angels, demons and spirits. He termed himself a "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ". In 1758 he published "Heaven and Hell". Later, in 1787, a group of his followers formally established the 'Church of the New Jerusalem' or Swedenborgianism.

However, some aspects of Swedenborg's teachings appealed to other groups and were in some respects continued by Andrew Jackson Davis. Swedenborg revealed that the afterlife consisted of three Heavens, three Hells and an interim place – the world of the spirits – where everyone went directly upon dying and eventually graduated to other like-minded spirits in the different spheres. Swedenborg's descriptions were vivid:

Life was much the same in the Spirit World as on earth Cities, handsome buildings, parks, trees, flowers etc

James J. Morse asked some leading Spiritualists, "Where is the Spirit World?", a question he asked Andrew Jackson Davis—for his full response and reference please see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 5.

Davis concluded in his reply:

"Where is the Summer Land?" Wait for the answer until we are all a "little larger grown." Give yourself time enough to unfold and expand. Wait till your little quart measure will become developed enough to hold at least a bushel !

We have found the location of the Spirit World. Unknowingly, we live in it every day and night; but the good Swedenborg *knowingly* lived in it many years.

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[25] Photo: Andrew Jackson Davis, circa 1857.

[26] Part II, Davis' "Principles of Nature …", page 121; the work is available on-line as a PDF download: "IN THE BEGINNING, the Univercœlum was one boundless, undefinable, and unimaginable ocean of LIQUID FIRE! …

Published on the front page of *Light*, August 18th, 1933, "Swedenborg's claim was that he described what he had seen himself by open spiritual vision." The Rev. G. A. Sexton, D.D., was the writer of the article; he was a Minister of the New Church, who had made a close study of Swedenborg's writings:



SWEDENBORG ON THE SPIRT WORLD

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

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FROM the relationships between the spiritual world and the natural world, as indicated by the revelations given to Emanuel Swedenborg, and confirmed by the discoveries in science, it is easy to understand that when a man first opens his eyes upon the new realm, after death, he finds himself in conditions that are practically the spiritual counterpart of the things that he has been looking at on the material side.

We read in the *Five Memoribilia*: "When any man goes after death into the spiritual world (which for the most part takes place on the third day), he appears to himself in a similar life to that in which he had been in the world, and in a similar house, room, and bed; in a similar covering and clothing, and in a similar company within the house; if he has been a king or a prince, in a similar court; if a farmer, in a similar cottage. This happens to everyone after death, in order that death may not appear to be death, but a continuation of life; and in order that the last of natural life may become the first of spiritual life, and from this progress to its goal, which must be either Heaven or Hell. The reason that such an exact likeness of all things appears to the deceased is that the mind remains the same, and as the mind is not only in the head, but also in the whole body, he has a similar body: and as after death he is the same man, there exist similar things according to the ideas of his mind which he possessed in the world at home. But this lasts for some days only."

In this state the man finds himself in a world as real to all sensation as this world is to us; and it is, in a very true sense, the more real of the two, since it is one degree nearer to the Creator. He finds himself also in exactly the same sort of body, so much so that he would be recognised by any one whom he had known on Earth. Swedenborg writes in *Arcana Coelestia* (5078): "Man rises immediately after death, and then appears to himself in a body exactly as in the world, with the same kind of face, members, arms, hands, feet, etc; and when he sees and touches himself, he says that he is a man just as in the world. . . . That I might be certain of these things, it has been granted me to touch spirits themselves, and to speak with them often about this subject."

By the expression "immediately after death" is of course to be understood within a few days, without waiting for any general resurrection day at a distant date.

And in *Heaven and Hell* (461): "When man passes out of the natural world into the spiritual, he takes with him all things that are his, or which belong to him as a man, except his earthly body; for when he enters the spiritual world, he is in a body as he was

in the natural world. To all appearance there is no difference, since he does not perceive any distinction, but his body is then spiritual. When that which is spiritual touches and sees that which is spiritual, it is just the same as when that which is natural touches and sees that which is natural; and therefore, when a man becomes a spirit, he does not know but that he does not know that he has died. He sees as before, he hears and speaks as before, he smells and tastes as before, and when he is touched he feels as before; he also longs, desires, wishes, thinks, reflects, is affected, loves, and wills, as before; and he who is delighted with studies, reads and writes as before. In a word, when a man passes from one world to into the other, it is like passing from one place to another."

This is all easily understood when we remember that it is the life within, and not the body, that lives, and in which are the real sensations, even here.

Swedenborg was permitted to see and observe the experiences of many, under all conditions, including the first awakening; and talked with some a very short time after their death. He gives us interesting descriptions of how very many persons find it difficult to believe that they have passed death, but the things that bring it home to them first are the meeting of different people, especially those whom they knew to have left the earth; and the discovery that their own senses are actually keener, the small disabilities, such as defective sight, due to the limitations of the body, being speedily corrected.

All limitations due to bodily defect are corrected in the other world, but not instantly; because the spiritual body is an exact expression of the mind; even as the material body, being also built up into its shape by the power of the life within, is healed through that life power in it, so also the spiritual, only more quickly, and without limitation. Thus, a lame man will continue to limp until he gets courage to try and use his foot, and finds that he can do so; and marks that carry the impress of deep soul-stirring emotion, like the wound-prints on the hands and feet of Jesus, will still be seen, when the mind reflects on that experience, as when Jesus showed His disciples the wound-prints, when in a body that was clearly of spiritual substance, because it passed through the material doors or walls.

Having awakened in the other world, the changes that follow come by the natural process of adaptation to experience. There are essential differences between that world and this, which may be summed up in the expression that this world has a greater material fixity, while in that world everything is more sensitive and adaptable, because it is a degree nearer to the source of creation, that is God, whose essence is Infinite Love and Wisdom, that is Infinite Mind.

The first thing that is discovered there is that it is impossible to speak differently from what one thinks or feels, and be believed; because those there see through the deception, consequently, very quickly, the first lesson is learned—namely, to be oneself in all expressions. Thus the man passes from the first state, which is called the state of the exteriors, to the second state, or state of the interiors. After that is accomplished, he appears more and more as the expression of his own mind. Those whose mind is good, hate the evil, and seek to escape from it.

The best man, however, has many habits in his nature that are not in harmony with his true character, which Swedenborg calls "his ruling love." Temptations resisted in the world have suppressed for ever some evil inclinations; but before the man can become truly himself, all that remains out of harmony with the ruling love must be put away. That, being a process of real character development, can only be achieved by actual experience, until the man, after seeing where his lust would lead him, begins to hate it, and spurn the very thought away from him. That experience is not hard—indeed it is welcomed—with a man who has set his mind on realizing the highest ideals that he can

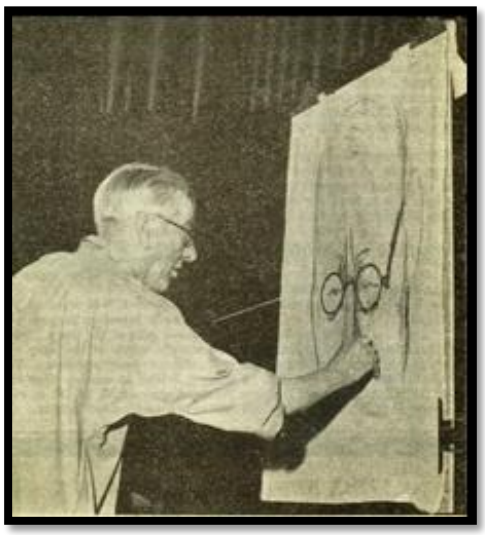
achieve; but with those who, through wishing no evil to anyone, have followed every allurement, regardless of duty, and regardless of the consequences to others, it may be very hard. That process is called "visitation" to distinguish it from temptation; and the parts into which the following of the worldly allurements leads such people and in which those experiences are undergone, with those in whom the evils are deeply planted, are called the "Lower Earths."

These must not be confused with the Hells, which are the permanent state of those in whom the ruling love is essentially evil, that is selfish, for these experiences are remedial. Swedenborg tells us that only those come into these sates who can be reformed thereby. Those who are diabolically evil, who take a pleasure in hurting other people, who commit brutal crimes and gloat over them, immediately seek their own kind, with whom only they can be in any sort of comfort; thus, having come together with their own like, they learn by experience that it does not pay to vent their selfishness on each other, and ultimately, to avoid the retaliation of others equally selfish, they are restrained, and live an outwardly orderly life, somewhat analogous to a sort of communal workhouse. Thus the evil is led to restrain itself, but even there we are told that there is a government or regulation from the Heavens, to maintain that balanced order. In this condition, even when there is outward order, the uses of life are only performed under compulsion, and the evil just restrained by force; while with the good, the uses of life are performed as a delight, and the good desires developed to the full.

As soon as the good have learned by experience to hate all that is cruel and unkind, and to tune their lives absolutely into harmony with the best that is in them, they go on to the next experience, which is that of instruction; for they desire to learn all that they can about Heavenly order. There are many wrong ideas, which can only be corrected by instruction, and it is with delight that that instruction is sought. There are colleges there, for those who want to enter deeply into the study of Heavenly science.

Swedenborg writes in *Heaven and Hell* (513): "The places of instruction are various . . . so that each and all may be there instructed according to their own nature and faculty of reception. . . . Good spirits who are to be instructed are led thither by the Lord when they have passed through their second state in the World of Spirits. But not all; for they who have been instructed in the world have also been prepared for Heaven there by the Lord; and are led into Heaven by another way."

Thus the first three states after death are: the state of the exteriors, which is exactly like the conditions on Earth; the state of the interiors when the man has put off all artificiality, and the state of instruction. These taken together are called the World of Spirits, to distinguish this state from Heaven. It is an intermediate state; and it is mostly from those who are in the earlier stages of this state that communications come to the Earth, except those which are granted under special Divine dispensation for the sake of making such important revelations as are needed to guide the progress of the Church on Earth.



Some more examples of the work of Psychic Artist Frank Leah

Frank Leah has featured in numerous issues of the Pioneer over the years. The two articles below are taken from the Two Worlds, October 16th and November 6th, 1936 respectively, and illustrate Leah's remarkable psychic art, capturing the remarkable likeness of his *deceased* subjects.

PORTRAIT PAINTINGS OF THE DEAD

By JAMES NORBURY

SOME months ago an unknown woman called on a famous medium and requested that he would give her a sitting. The woman was Mrs. Richardson, the medium was Frank Leah, and the sitting one of the most remarkable in the annals of psychic phenomena.

They sat together talking, chatting idly about London, the weather and those sundry topics that contribute to the success of a gossipy half hour. Suddenly Mr. Leah moved across the room, picked up a pad and paper, and commenced rapidly sketching a figure he could see standing by the lady.

The sketch took two and a half minutes. Without a word Mr. Leah handed it to his sitter. To say she was amazed is too mild a word. She was completely bewildered, for in her hand was an exact likeness of her father-in-law, Archdeacon Richardson. Not a living soul could have told Mr. Leah of the identity of his sitter, but a dead man had been able to prove his own and her identity in the few minutes that had passed.

Not content with obtaining the sketch, Mr Leah proceeded in collaboration with a fellow artist to model a bust of his spirit-visitor. The bust was completed, and a few weeks later a photograph of the Archdeacon himself arrived from Ontario.



THE SKETCH. THE ORIGINAL PHOTO. THE BUST BY F. LEAH.

I have given you full details of this startling case of Mr. Leah's work because I believe it is one of those fraud proof incidents that spells damnation to the carping critics who are always yelling "Fraud !" but who never stop to examine evidence even when it is as fool-proof as this.

The dead have walked with us, they have told us of their lives, they have appeared upon photographic plates . . . and I am afraid if the authorities at Burlington House are not careful, one of them will be stealing into the Royal Academy, and they will be confounded by the fact that they are entertaining angels unawares !

The plain truth seems to be somewhat vulgarly expressed in the words of the old music hall song, "He's dead, but he won't lie down." Of course he won't. Neither will you or I when our time comes to take up an active life in that world of the living dead of which seers have been conscious down the ages.

The intelligence of many average men is of such a peculiar nature that it really astounds me. The other day I was talking to someone about Leah's mediumship. After he assured me that it was all fraud I said, "But I have talked to a dead man many a time." The fellow looked at me. His voice became piteously gentle. "You know," he said, "our parson once said that all Spiritualists end up in the asylum."

I looked at him and quietly asked him if he thought I was ready for a mental home ? . . . then I told him a story.

A few months ago I happened to be visiting an asylum. I had a chat with one of the doctors and quite casually asked him if there were any Spiritualists in his asylum. He looked at me, and I explained that we often hear clergymen telling their congregation that the asylums are full of people who have dabbled in Spiritualism.

"Well," he said, "I can't find you any Spiritualists in this asylum but I can let you have one or two parsons if *those* are any use to you."

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Second article:

AN ARTIST PORTRAYS THE DEAD

ANOTHER "LEAH" TEST JAMES NORBURY

THIS is a story of rumour and reality. It is the tale of the biter bit . . . an Æsop fable of setting a trap and falling into it oneself. Like all good fables, it has a moral, and that moral is: "Every man is a fool at least once in his lifetime"—the fool in this case being myself.

I had heard much of Frank Leah's strange psychic powers in portraying those the world calls dead. I had written a report for *The Two Worlds* on one of the most spectacular feats in the history of modern psychic phenomena. Last week I had the opportunity of meeting Leah in person, of putting him through his paces, and of finding myself completely routed.

Frank Leah is one of those jovial, hail-fellow-well-met persons, who appears to spend the whole of his life laughing. His wit is never caustic; when he tells a story the laugh is often against himself. The only serious thing in his life is his psychic gift . . . and that he treats as a sacred trust. All he desires to do is to help others to realise the good news of survival until they too can share in his laughter, in which there is no room for tears.

Leah arrived at Leicester laughing at life in general, and left it laughing at me in particular. And here is where that saucy jade, Rumour, enters into the story. I examined many of Leah's drawings. They seemed too incredible to be true . . . and with the cunning of every good Psychic Researcher, I proceeded to make one of two discreet inquiries about this mystery man, who apparently could draw the dead with the same ease that a conjurer can produce rabbits from a hat.

I talked with one or two people who had sat with him. I had a telephone conversation with someone who had had splendid results some months prior to our meeting. In each case I heard that Leah had asked for a photograph of the dead man he was supposed to have drawn. My doubts increased, my speculations became a thing of torment . . . and then the miracle happened.

After Leah had delivered a lecture at the Leicester headquarters, a lady came to me and asked me if she could book a sitting. Her name was Wilson. The sitting was booked in the name of Pickering. I saw her off the premises myself; Leah left later in my company, and from then until his sitter arrived next morning he was never out of my sight. He made no telephone calls. He received no letters. As he was staying with me in Leicester I know that he had no communication of any kind either at home or at headquarters.

The sitter arrived after Leah had retired into the seance room. I chatted with her for a few moments and asked her whatever happened not to let Leah have any access to any photographs. The promise was freely given that my wishes should be obeyed, and the only photograph the woman brought along of her husband, who had been dead some years, was *left in my charge*.

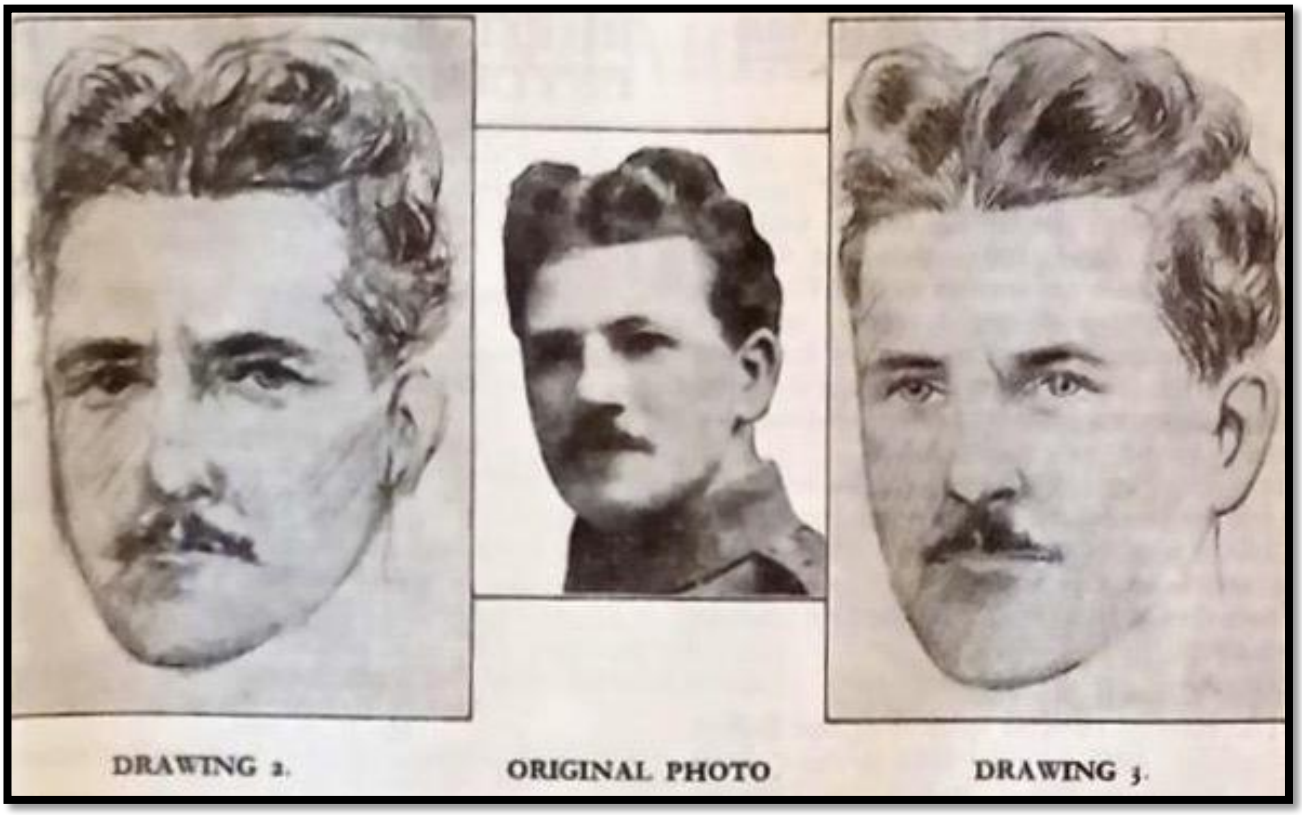
For the first twenty minutes of the siting nothing happened. Then Leah said, "Your husband is here. Why does he keep talking about football ? He tells me he had something to do with the Tigers." Leah then rapidly sketched a half side-face portrait of a man about middle age, quite clean shaven, and looking rather tired and ill.

A short time elapsed, during which Leah said little, then he started to talk about the man in detail. "This man had black, wavy hair. His eyes were blue. He says I have drawn his nose too long. Now he is worrying about the parting in his hair. He says it was in two places. Oh ! wait a minute. I have to make another drawing now of a younger man, but this time he has a moustache." Leah then made a second sketch of a younger man, bearing a striking resemblance to the first drawing, but with a neat moustache. Leah then said his powers were going, and that the sitter would have to return next day to finish the sitting.

I can account for Leah's movements all that day. I can definitely state that he had no letters or parcels of any kind the next morning. The sitter arrived and the seance continued. Leah worked much more rapidly, concentrating on the sketch of the younger man with the moustache. When it was completed, Mrs. Wilson brought the drawing to me, and when we compared it with the photograph she had left in my keeping of her husband in middle life, it was identical. I think at this point I will let Mrs. Wilson tell her own story.

"My husband was very keen on football. On the Saturday before he died he listened to the results on the radio. He played for the Tigers, the local Rugby team, and later played for the Northern Union. When first I married him he was clean shaven and parted his hair at the side, but later on he grew a small, neat moustache and parted his hair in the middle. Before he died he shaved his moustache off again."

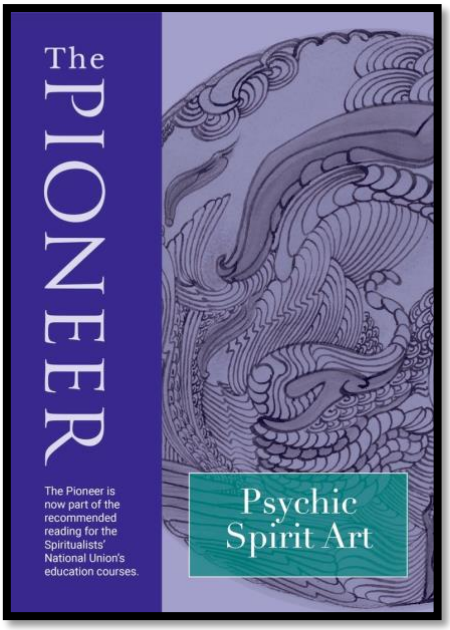
Two drawings and original photograph are reproduced here, and I leave the reader to form his own conclusions as to whether they are the same man or not. Mrs. Wilson is quite convinced, and it is a poor woman who does not recognise her own husband.



After the sitting, I sat talking to Leah, and I said, "Look here, Frank, have you ever asked a sitter for a photograph of the dead person you were drawing ?"

"Many a time," answered Leah. "I wanted them to make my lantern slide showing my drawing and an actual photograph of the spirit while alive in the flesh."

Of course Leah asks for photographs. He asked for one of Mr. Wilson. But he asked *after* the drawing was completed.



Search the Pioneer "Psychic Spirit Art" booklet for more on Frank Leah; details on the last page of this issue

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